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Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies

Selected Works of John R. Hinnells

John R. Hinnells



ZOROASTRIAN AND PARSİ STUDIES

‘John Hinnells is the world authority on the Zoroastrians and the Parsis. A selection of his important essays are here brought together. Not only is Zoroastrianism vital for its influence on the monotheistic religions of the West, but it represents a living presence in India and the world. He also illuminates various themes, such as Parsi philanthropy, philosophy and medicine. It is altogether a significant achievement.’

–*Ninian Smart, University of California Santa Barbara, USA*

‘John Hinnells is recognized in the academy and in Zoroastrian circles as an outstanding scholar of Zoroastrian/Parsi history and thought. This collection of Hinnells’ scholarly analyses of Zoroastrian influence on the Bible, Parsi history and philosophy, and the Parsi diaspora constitutes an important resource for contemporary research on a significant transnational religious community, reaching from its primary locations in Iran and India to establish new centers in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States.’

–*Raymond B. Williams, Wabash College, USA*

‘This is an exciting and timely collection of articles by John Hinnells, one of the most distinguished scholars of Zoroastrianism and undoubtedly the one best acquainted with the Parsi communities around the globe. This volume includes some of Hinnells’ crucial contributions on the influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism and Christianity as well as a wide range of his ground-breaking work on Parsi history, religion and diaspora. Conveniently brought together here, his *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies* are bound to be of great interest for both the general reader and the researcher.’

–*Almut Hintze, Zarthoshty Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, SOAS, London*

Zoroastrianism is perhaps the oldest of the prophetic religions. It was the official religion of Iran for over a thousand years (6th century BCE to 7th century CE). During this period it stood astride the trade routes between East and West and thereby exercised considerable influence on other religions, notably Judaism and Christianity. When Zoroastrian emigres settled in India, they and their religion flourished. Known as the Parsis, they became a pivotal group in educational, social, political and economic developments in British India. From this base they travelled and traded in 19th century China, East Africa, Sind and Britain. In the 20th century they migrated to the New World – Canada, the US and Australia. *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies* includes chapters on these various subjects.

This selection will not only be of interest to Zoroastrian scholars, but also to scholars of other religious traditions, biblical scholars, and those in immigration, diaspora or South Asian studies.

John Hinnells is Research Professor, University of Derby; Honorary Professor, University of Stirling; Visiting Professor at SOAS; Senior/Life member of Robinson College and Clare Hall Cambridge, UK.

*I wish to dedicate the thirty years work
represented by the articles in this volume
to my dearly loved granddaughter
EMMA GRACE
for she is the future.*

Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies

Selected works of John R. Hinnells

JOHN R. HINNELLS

Research Professor in Comparative Religion

University of Derby

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General Introduction

I am deeply grateful to Ashgate Publishing for producing this volume collecting some of my articles. Because some have appeared in places where the relevant scholars have not had ready access to them, they have not become as well known as any author would wish their work to be.

Looking back over thirty years of writing, it was difficult to judge what to include, and what to leave out. In part, the selection tries to balance the different areas in which I have worked: the ancient tradition and its influence on Biblical imagery; Parsi history; the living religion and diaspora communities. Most of the chapters were invited chapters, commonly research workshops, festschriften and so on. Because relatively few scholars outside the field know much of Zoroastrianism it is virtually always necessary to introduce the religion or the community. I contemplated omitting some of the introductions to avoid repetition, but decided that in practice this would unbalance the article because the introductions do focus the reader's attention on the appropriate aspects of Zoroastrianism or the Parsis.

Publishing articles in different places inevitably results in some inconsistencies of spellings, diacritics, footnoting and bibliographical formatting. I hope that each article is internally consistent. Occasionally (e.g. ch. 12 on Modern Zoroastrian philosophy) reference is made to other chapters in that original publication. My earlier publications were produced at a time when vocabulary was used which I, like many others, no longer find acceptable, for example the use of the Christian notation of A D and B C ; also the very gendered language of 'man' for person. It was tempting to remove them, but this is a collected works, not a newly written book so hardly any editorial work has been undertaken.

The publishers suggested that I introduce each of the sections of the book with a new introduction, commenting on how the subject has changed, what the subsequent studies have been and some reflections on how I view my own work. Inevitably I have changed my opinion on some subjects. I was tempted to include some of my studies on Mithraism because they occupied a large

part of my career. But that subject has moved so far so quickly, inspired in particular by my good friends Roger Beck and Richard Gordon, that my work now seems dated, and in some cases is transparently wrong.¹

The section of my work which has had less influence than I would have wished is section B, Zoroastrian Influence on Biblical Imagery. I hope that this republication in a format more accessible to Biblical scholars will result in its being considered more. My hope is that the material on Parsi history is solid, but the innovative work is that on the diaspora Parsis. I hope that this volume has another impact also. Many studies of Zoroastrianism or of British India refer to the important role of the Parsis in Indian society. Yet there have

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1. The three main articles of mine on Mithraism in chronological order are: 'Reflections on the bullslaying scene', in J. Hinnells (ed.), *Mithraic Studies*, Manchester, 1975, vol. II, pp. 290-312. In the first part of this article I demonstrated that the standard interpretation of the main cult relief, which had been accepted virtually without question throughout the twentieth century, and derived from Franz Cumont, was invalid. However, my own reinterpretation of that scene in terms of Zoroastrian eschatology cannot be sustained, not least because Beck and Gordon have shown the discontinuity between Iranian Mithra and the Roman Mithras. In 'Reflections on the Lion-headed figure' (*Monumentum H. S. Nyberg, Acta Iranica*, IV, 1975, pp. 333-69) I argued not that Mithraism was a Gnostic religion, but that it emerged from a similar thought world and that the lion-headed figure represented a concept not dissimilar from Gnostic archontic powers. I rejected both Cumont and Zaehner's interpretations of the figure as the Iranian Zurvan or Ahriman. In short, contrary to my earlier article, I turned away from the Iranian hypothesis, for the origins of Mithraism. The third article was 'The iconography of Cautes and Cautopates', *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, I, i, 1976, pp. 36-67. Continuing my rejection of the Iranian hypothesis this was an attempt to devise a method by which to study the Roman Mithraic art. In this article I argued for detailed analysis of the significance of regional variations in the study of Mithraic symbolism and noted distinctive German, Italian etc. iconographic features. In view of the precise and detailed consistency of the symbolism as a whole, whether on free standing statues, paintings or sculptured reliefs, and the importance of these details in their astrological contexts, I argued that these variations must have a doctrinal significance, as yet unknown to us. I continue to hold to the central themes of these last two articles, but it is the work of Beck and Gordon which is carrying the subject forward. A review on the state of the play until 1990 is given in 'Introduction: the questions asked and to be asked', in J. R. Hinnells (ed.) *Studies in Mithraism*, Rome, 1995.

been relatively few substantial studies of them. The work of Kulke was groundbreaking.² His collection of material was remarkable, only those who have tried to follow after him can have any idea of how thoroughly he tracked down previously unknown sources. On one occasion I recall spending nearly a month in Bombay, with the help of Dastur Dr K. M. JamaspAsa, my valued friend and mentor, and aided by the encyclopaedic knowledge of the late Prof. Marshall, librarian of Bombay university, looking for the files of the Western Liberal Federation, a movement which Parsis joined as the Indian National Congress became more militant in the early twentieth century. But at least I knew those files existed because Kulke had used them. I have no idea how he found out about them in the first place, locked in a virtually disused, rusting filing cabinet in a lawyer's office in Bombay. I have, therefore, great respect for Kulke. But as those who follow after him know, some of his details, including some important ones, are wrong. Above all, he failed to look at religion, which in the study of the Parsis is a serious omission. I hope that the articles in sections C – D of this book help to document accurately some important aspects of the Parsi community, its important place in India and its religion. Hence, for me, the importance of section C in this book. I would like to record my gratitude to SOAS for agreeing to the first publication of ch.13 in this volume. It was a public lecture delivered at SOAS in honour of the late High Priest, Dastur Dr Kutar and it had been intended to publish this lecture as an occasional paper.

The final section of the book, on the modern Parsi diaspora, is in a sense a prime example of what, for me, Comparative Religion involves. Comparative Religion has been questioned because of the religious motives of some of its exponents at the turn of the 19th /20th century, namely to compare in order to prove the superiority of Christianity. For me the purpose of comparing is to understand what comparable groups have in common and what is distinctive. The aim of comparison is to understand. In the diaspora studies I seek (a) to compare different Parsi groups, e.g. how different is it being a religious Parsi in, say, Britain compared with Canada, America or with Australia; (b) similarly I hope, not least through international collaboration (the context of the book from which chapter 16 is drawn), to understand ways in which Parsis are similar to, and different from, other South Asian groups. The theme of comparison runs throughout most of my work, whether it is comparison of

2. E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India: a minority as agent of social change*, Munich, 1974.

eschatological beliefs in Zoroastrianism and the Judaeo-Christian traditions, or modern Zoroastrian philosophy in a British and then in a Hindu setting. My three professorships, at Manchester, SOAS and Derby have all been in Comparative Religion. I believe it important that one compares what is comparable, that the historical and social contexts are studied, and that the motive is to understand not to judge. I hope that the articles in this volume, as well as having some value for historical studies, may also serve as examples of how comparative studies may be pursued.

There are some points of detail meriting comment. Chapter 11 on Parsi charity has in its original form 36 pages with thirteen appendices, lists of charitable donations for fire temples, funeral grounds, dharmshalas, baugs, Punchayet charities, secular charities for Parsis, for education, medicine, housing, charities in Iran, to non-Parsis in India, charities outside India and details gained from obituaries. Altogether this amounts to lists of 1,453 donations. The decision was taken to exclude them from the hard copy of this book, because frankly these lists do not make for entertaining reading. However, they are the historical details on which the article is based and were gleaned from sources difficult to access and therefore of some historical usefulness. Anyone wishing to consult them can either obtain the details from the original publication, or from the website which is associated with this book (www.ashgate.com).

It is difficult to express appropriate gratitude to people who have helped me over the thirty years which these chapters span. In the course of my life, the greatest influence for good has been my late wife, Marianne, a truly wonderful person who was a source of strength, happiness and inspiration. She is deeply missed. My mentor Revd Professor Christopher Evans, Professor Mary Boyce, and Dastur Dr K. M. JamaspAsa have all been valued guides. In addition to individuals mentioned in the various articles I would like to thank Sima Parmar and her colleagues at Derby for working hard and at speed to retype the articles when the scanning process proved difficult, and Maria Leontiner for help with the graphs in ch. 11. I also thank the original publishers for permission to reprint these chapters.

John R. Hinnells

Section A
Theory and Method in
Zoroastrian Studies



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1 Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism

It is a great privilege to contribute to a book in honour of Ninian Smart. He has done more to change the study of religion than anyone I know. He has been a source of inspiration and a friend to many, especially at times of need. Not only has he been both an inspiration and friend to me personally, he has also challenged me to reflect on the 'why?' and 'how?' of the study of religion. I offer the following reflections on methodological assumptions in the study of Zoroastrianism as a mark of respect and affection for one whose own methodological studies have been a turning point in twentieth century religious studies.¹

Jenkins (1991) comments on how few historians, compared with philosophers or literary theorists, have intellectually engaged with theories of modernism and postmodernism. Similarly, while a number of religious studies writers have been involved in such methodological debates, writers on Zoroastrianism have rarely done so. Two Zoroastrian specialists (Widengren and Colpe) have published in the wider field of theories and methods; but in general, academic debates on Zoroastrianism have been conducted outside the world of religious studies and in a branch of Near Eastern or Asian studies, where such theoretical issues play little part compared with philology, textual and archaeological studies. Few, if any, Zoroastrian specialists would want to accept for themselves the labels of modernist or postmodernist. In the study of religion 'the believer is always right' - and there is a reluctance to use labels not recognised by the people written about. Should we treat our academic colleagues any differently?

-
1. I wish to record my gratitude to my friend and SOAS colleague, Dr Judith Coney, and Ashley Tellis at the University of Cambridge for reading through earlier drafts of this paper and for saving me from many errors and oversimplifications. Responsibility for any which remain is, of course, my own.

The case could be made, however, that academics do not live in a vacuum and that to a greater or lesser extent we are all affected by the philosophy of our time, even if, sometimes, subconsciously. There is no simple definition of ‘post-modernism’ and as this article is essentially on methodology in Zoroastrian studies, this is not the place to attempt such a complex and different task. The literature is huge and extremely diverse, not least because almost all writers have different emphases, perspectives and assumptions.² However, at the risk of appearing simplistic and of reducing postmodernism to a list of defined rules, which it is not, some of the characteristic features of many post-modern studies of religion may be listed as:

- the rejection of the grand meta-narratives;
- each scholar’s awareness of their own ‘Situated’ position;
- the move away from the exclusive dependence on the official textual traditions to the practices associated with the home and daily life;
- the conviction that there is no such thing as ‘true’, objective, scientific History - there are only discourses about history;
- the questioning of the traditionally strict boundary around separable or

2. The constrictions of space mean that even a moderately full bibliography is impossible. Some obvious works are S. Seidman, *The Post Modern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*, Cambridge, 1994, a collection of important essays, including ones by the leading writers Lyotard and Foucault; S. Crook, J. Pakulski & M. Waters, *Postmodernization: Change in Advanced Society*, London, 1992. An interesting collection of essays on postmodernism and religion is P. Berry and A. Wernick, eds, *Shadow of Spirit. Postmodernism and Religion*, London, 1992. Perhaps the most active writer on postmodernism and religion is B. S. Turner; see for example his collection of essays in *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity*, London, repr. 1993, and his *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, London, 1994. Another notable writer is Aijaz Ahmad (1992). Although his contents page and index make no reference to religion, his discussions of ‘Third World’ literature and the construction of the notion of the Third World, of Rushdie, Said and of Indian literature, must be of serious interest to a student of religions. A stern critic of much postmodern thought is E. Gellner; see his *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London, 1992.

discrete religious and secular phenomena. A different, but not unrelated, branch of postmodernism has been a concern to deconstruct many received notions, or replications, such as the notion of Buddhism, Hindusim, etc.

If this list is accepted as identifying at least some of the important features of some postmodernist studies in religious studies, then it could be argued that they have impacted on Zoroastrian Studies. This article will look first at what might be described as the modernist studies and then at the trends towards post-modernism in more recent writing on Zoroastrianism.

Modernist Approaches to Zoroastrian Studies

Restrictions of space mean that this article cannot provide an exhaustive treatment of the history of Zoroastrian studies. The following is a broad brush stroke picture highlighting a few of the Western scholars whose work has been used most often, not simply within Zoroastrian studies but also in the wider field of religious studies. It is, of course, a selection open to question. Another figure who would have been included by many, including myself if the space allowed, is the American (Protestant) scholar A. V. W. Jackson. It would be difficult to deny, however, that the scholars mentioned below have been seen by those within and outside Zoroastrian studies to have provided 'standard' and influential works. I hope that this contextualising of their work may make the interpretations of their books more practical for scholars in religious studies.

The modernist conviction that Western (all male), unbiased, scholars could write 'scientific', objective accounts of a clearly definable, homogeneous, unitary phenomenon, Zoroastrianism, whose essence is characterised by formal theological doctrines in 'classical' texts, underpinned Zoroastrian studies until the 1980s.³

Perhaps the foundation of the modernist approach to Zoroastrian studies might be seen in Haug (1882). His work needs to be set in context. The Scottish missionary, Revd John Wilson, targeted the Parsis for his evangelistic efforts in Bombay from the 1820s because of the influential role that they had in India's growing commercial capital. The main book he produced was *The Parsi religion... unfolded, refuted and contrasted with Christianity*, published in Bombay in 1843. His onslaught on Zoroastrianism centred on six main charges.

- 1 Zoroastrianism was a dualistic faith, which robbed God of his glory and splendour because of the power attributed to the force of evil, Ahriman.
- 2 Zoroastrianism was indeed polytheistic, because of the veneration of the heavenly beings, the *Amesha Spentas* and the *yazatas*.
- 3 Because of the veneration of the physical elements (fire, water, earth), it was a form of nature worship.

3. An exception might be the French traveller, Anquetil du Perron, who, in 1771, published a two volumed account of Zoroastrianism based substantially on a two-year stay with Parsis in Gujarat (Schwab, 1934). Anquetil had originally been destined for the priesthood and it was perhaps this background which provoked him to study the religious practices and worship. His gift for languages facilitated his desire to travel in India, aroused by the study of manuscripts in the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris (Firby, 1988 pp.156-71). His account of the rituals made the Parsis look so superstitious, according to the seventeenth century writer, Sir William Jones, the great Oxford 'orientalist' (later High Court Judge in Calcutta, where he continued his study of oriental languages and founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal. See Duchesne-Guillemin 1958, pp. 10-17 and the article on him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*).

- 4 He denied the unitary authorship of the Avesta, and therefore concluded that it could not all have been written by Zoroaster.
- 5 Zoroaster, he maintained, was not a prophet, because there is no evidence that he performed miracles.
- 6 Finally, he argued that Zoroastrianism could not work for the individual's salvation because it failed to emphasise humanity's inveterate sinfulness, and thereby did not make people realise their need for salvation through Christ.

The last of these charges had little impact on the Parsis, for whom ideas of original sin are anathema; but because of the community's conviction that they were both like, and liked by, the British, the powerful invective of Wilson caused great distress among the social and religious leaders. They feared that their priests could not defend the religion because they lacked the necessary Western linguistic and textual knowledge to refute Wilson. Diverse moves were taken to provide such training for the future, and for the next one hundred years Parsi writers have sought to rebut such allegations (Hinnells, 1996b).

The first theological riposte to Wilson was provided by another European, the German scholar, Martin Haug.⁴ Haug had from the 1840s been employed as a school teacher and showed a strong interest in teaching local children about the Bible, from a Lutheran perspective. In 1848 he began studies of classical philology and oriental languages at the University of Tübingen, earning his keep by teaching some theological students. His research work was on Zoroastrian texts, and he was appointed Professor of Sanskrit at Poona in 1859, a post he took in order to further his studies of the Vedas and of the Parsis. In 1862 he published his most famous work, *Essays on the sacred language, writings and religion of the Parsis*. His crucial argument in this book, and especially in his lectures to Parsis, was that scholars must focus on the pure teaching of the prophet Zoroaster as expounded in his hymns, the *Gathas*, and separate this off from the later tradition, corrupted by priests who could not comprehend the abstract monotheism of the prophet. It was, he argued, these priests who

4. There is a biographical sketch of Haug in the 1883 and subsequent editions of his 1862 book, e.g. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1971, pp. xvii-xxxi.

reintroduced the ancient pagan nature worship, the dualism, polytheism and ritualism into Zoroastrianism. If the Parsis kept strictly to Zoroaster's message, then, he proclaimed, theirs was a faith consistent with modern scientific Western thought. Haug's polarisation of the original pure religion with the alleged priestly corruption went on to dominate not just Western scholarship but also the thinking of many educated 'reforming' Parsis. The latter were often termed the 'Protestant party' by the orthodox, because of the structural similarities of their faith with that promulgated by the largely Protestant British. The most obvious example of a Haug-style influence was the so-called 'Protestant' Dastur (= High Priest) of Karachi, M. N. Dhalla, a prolific writer whose views still influence westernised Parsis, especially in America, at the end of the century (Dhalla, 1938 and 1975).

The meta-narrative of the corruption of the pure prophetic teaching by a superstitious, religiously unsophisticated, priesthood was continued in Western, especially English language, scholarship. This is not the place to trace that lineage in detail, but a good example is the work of J. H. Moulton, who, as well as being a distinguished Professor of New Testament Greek at the University of Manchester, and produced a standard Greek grammar, was also a Methodist minister. In his Hibbert lectures for 1912, published in 1913 under the title *Early Zoroastrianism*, he applied contemporary methods of Biblical scholarship to the study of Zoroaster and to the early history of the religion. In particular, he accepted the current Protestant Biblical scholarly assumption that religions are divided into either priestly or prophetic forms, with the former associated with superstition and the latter with visionary, personal religious experience. He argued that since Zoroaster was clearly a prophet, he could not have been a priest, and therefore when Zoroaster actually referred to himself as a practising priest (*zaotar*) in the *Gathas*, he must have been speaking metaphorically. Moulton writes:

How are we to classify Zarathushtra as between the two great categories into which men of religion naturally fall? Was he Prophet and Teacher, or was he Priest? Is the religion of the Gathas practical and ethical, or sacerdotal? Now there is one passage in the Gathas where the preacher does call himself by the old Aryan name *zaotar* (Skt. *hotar*), 'priest'.

After discussing the term priest in various Indo-Iranian texts, Moulton concludes:

That Zarathushtra is teacher and prophet is written large over every page of the

Gathas. He is perpetually striving to persuade men of the truth of a great message, obedience to which will bring them everlasting life He has a revelation There is no room for sacerdotal functions as a really integral part of such a man's gospel; and of ritual or spells we hear as little as we expect to hear

The later priests, the magi, are responsible for introducing into Zoroastrianism all that Moulton finds personally unattractive in any religion, for example the purity laws associated with what he terms the Zoroastrian 'Counter Reformation' (1913: 116-19). Moulton's meta-narrative of the two great types of religion, the polarity dividing religions into priestly and prophetic, is to be found in the writings of later scholars, not least those of a Protestant persuasion. A lone voice which sought to understand textual material with practices and the interpretations of the living tradition was the French (Catholic) scholar, James Darmesteter (1892). But these assumptions (unlike his translations) had little impact on the progress of scholarship.

The stark contrast between the pure, abstract religion of the prophet and the corrupt, repaganised, religion of his followers is drawn by the majority of twentieth century Zoroastrian scholars. For example, Ilya Gershevitch (1964) writes:

To avoid confusion it is convenient to refer to the religion of the Gathas as 'Zarathustrianism' and to the doctrine of [later scriptural texts] the Younger Avestan texts as 'Zarathusticism.' The term 'Zoroastrianism' may then be reserved for the form which the doctrine takes in the much later [third to seventh century CE] Sasanian period.

Perhaps the best example of the modernist approach to Zoroastrian studies is the Catholic R. C. Zaehner, both in his article on Zoroastrianism in his *Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths* (1959, pp. 200-14) and in his widely read *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (1961). After wartime service in the Secret Service (see Wright, 1987 pp. 244-6) Zaehner studied Oriental languages at Cambridge. He was converted to the Roman Catholic Church, and as a convert was an ardent practitioner for much of his scholarly life. Perhaps as a consequence of this, one of the distinctive features of Zaehner's work is that he took seriously the Gathic reference to Zoroaster as a priest, and recognised something of the liturgical and devotional aspect of the *Gathas*, hitherto interpreted only as abstract philosophy. Because his books have been so widely read in religious studies, it is important to detail his approach and

assumptions.

It is first necessary to set his account of Zoroastrianism within the context of his introduction to the whole *Encyclopaedia* (pp. xi-xxi). Zaehner argues that there are two basic ways of thought, two types of religion. He writes that 'The living faiths of the world fall into two well defined groups which appear to have little in common.' He refers to 'the Eastern and Western ideas of religion', and to 'the sharp distinction between the "Indian" and "Judaic" conceptions of reality' and believes that the Indian inspiration informs 'Oriental religion' (note the singular), and the Judaic informs Christianity and Islam. 'A glance at the map of the world religions will show that there is a fairly clear dividing line between the limit of extension of the two main religious traditions.' He speaks of the parent stock of the national religions (Judaism and Hinduism) 'giving birth to universal faiths'. Zaehner writes of 'the Eastern mentality' (note the singular again) and of 'Eastern man' in a way which embodies the stereotyping, universal typologies, the reification of a uniform mentality, about which Said in his *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) was to protest so forcibly. The gross oversimplification hardly requires comment here - whether maps divide down the middle depends on your map; whether any of the religions are restricted to one region is clearly open to question, and religions are not the simple monolithic wholes that Zaehner implies. The point here, however, is Zaehner's treatment of Zoroastrianism and its place within this supposed divide and his grand theory, his meta-narrative, specifically his concerns within Zoroastrianism and his selection of sources. For Zaehner, Zoroastrianism clearly belongs to the Judaic, the Western, the prophetic, half of the map of the world's religions, as indicated by the subject's inclusion in that section of the book on the contents page, this despite his obvious awareness of the Indo-Iranian ancestry of the religion.

According to Zaehner, Zoroaster created a new religion. Hence, in his 1961 book the opening chapter is on Zoroaster's religion. Since it came as the result of a new revelation, it did not seem necessary to Zaehner to set the prophet's teaching in context. Zoroastrianism, he believed, was a clear, coherent, monolithic whole, so that any doctrines different from what Zaehner saw as 'true Zoroastrianism' were labelled together as the expression of a single heresy, 'Zurvanism' (see his 1955 volume), even though there is no internal Iranian evidence for the existence of a separate institutional sect or 'denomination'. The title of Zaehner's 1961 book reflects his perception of what is true Zoroastrianism, for he defines 'The Dawn' as the life of Zoroaster

and 'The Twilight' as the period when Islam conquered Iran. He had little or no interest in modern Zoroastrians, for they were not part of 'real' Zoroastrianism, which is encapsulated in the Middle Persian literature of the eighth to tenth centuries CE, whose theology he expounds so well. Not only does he dismiss twentieth century Zoroastrianism, he is even dismissive of the sixth century BCE as 'authentic' Zoroastrianism:

Of all the great religions of the world Zoroastrianism was the least well served. Zoroaster himself has every right to the title he claimed: he was a prophet and his claim to be such deserves to be taken as seriously as is that of Moses or Mohammad; but his successors never fully understood his message, nor had they a living and authentic tradition to guide them. (1961: 170)

Despite his emphasis on Zoroaster as a priest, Zaehner's account of the cult tends to emphasise the pagan elements he believed were reintroduced into Zoroastrianism by the prophet's followers who were unable to comprehend the abstract philosophy of the founder. Zaehner's own Catholic position influenced him as fundamentally as Moulton's Methodist background had him. Zaehner's identification of Zoroastrian and Western (specifically Catholic) patterns of thought is encapsulated in the final section of his 1959 article. The very heading 'Sacrament' indicates Zaehner's 'situatedness'. He describes the Haoma ceremony, at the heart of the priestly rite, the Yasna. He writes:

The Haoma ... is not only a plant... it is also a god, and the son of Ahura Mazda. In the ritual, the plant-god is ceremonially pounded in a mortar; the god, that is to say, is sacrificed and offered up to his heavenly Father. Ideally, Haoma is both priest and victim - the son of God, then, offering himself up to his heavenly Father. After the offering, priest and faithful partake of the heavenly drink, and by partaking of it they are made to share in the immortality of the god. The sacrament is the earnest of everlasting life which all men will inherit in soul and body in the last days. The conception is strikingly similar to that of the Catholic Mass. (p. 213)

The wording and the emphasis bear little relation either to what the Zoroastrian texts say, or to what the Zoroastrians themselves think, about the rite. It is noticeable that Zaehner describes no other rites, neither the domestic worship, nor the prayer practices associated with the wearing of the sacred shirt and cord (*sudre* and *kusti*) traditionally performed at least five times per day, nor the temple and the devotions before the fire, the features of worship which have been most prominent for the majority of Zoroastrians throughout the ages. His

attention was focused entirely on what he believed to be parallel with his own Catholic faith.

In his large 1961 book, the chapter on the cultus betrays the same emphasis. In the list of sub-headings (p. 79) is the heading 'Haoma, as Sacrifice and Sacrament'. The words 'sacramental liturgy' appear throughout the chapter. Indeed, if anything, the Catholic interpretation is extended from that given in the *Encyclopaedia*.

The core of the liturgy is the sacrificial immolation of the Haoma plant and its sacramental consumption first by the priests and then by the congregation. The Haoma is the plant of Immortality... The sacrament on earth, however, is only in anticipation of the final sacrifice of the bull Hadhayans performed by the Soshyans, the eschatological saviour who, in the last days, will raise up the seed of Zoroaster to restore the whole of the Good creation. From the fat of this ultimate sacrificial victim the white Haoma will be prepared, the drink of immortality, by which all men are made anew, perfect and whole in body and soul. The earthly Haoma was at least for the Zoroastrians of the ninth century A. D., only a symbol of, and pointer to the eschatological reality yet in earlier time, it would seem that there was sense of a 'real presence' in the sacrament of the plant-God. Haoma, like the fire, is the son of Ahura Mazda, ordained by his father to be an eternal priest who, as son of God, offers himself up in the form of a plant to his father on high. The earthly sacrifice as performed by human priests is merely the re-presentation of the eternal sacrifice The Haoma sacrifice and sacrament, then, is in every sense one of communion. The plant is identical with the Son of God: he is bruised and mangled in the mortar, so that the life-giving fluid that proceeds from his body may give new life in body and soul to the worshipper. (p. 90)

Zaehner's 'situatedness' as an intellectual, Western Catholic, interested in mysticism and philosophy, but not in social anthropology or the living form of the religion or the understanding of the practitioners, is evident. His concern is wholly with the great religious texts viewed from a theological perspective. The extent to which he was writing as a neutral, objective, scientific writer is clearly open to serious doubt.

The three main writers considered above each had their own substantial 'meta-narratives' or grand assumptions. For Haug, any religion worthy of respect had to be an ethical monotheism; for Moulton the great religious divide was between prophetic and priestly religion; for Zaehner, the gulf was between Judaic and Indian religion with Zoroastrianism listed among the former. An

important point to note is that in each case the scholar's presentation of Zoroastrianism is due to a desire to portray the religion in what he considers to be the best light, the most like the West, the most like their own faith. It is not done to denigrate, however skewed the resulting image may be.

It is not simple coincidence that attention has largely been focused on the English - speaking world. In continental Europe, Zoroastrian studies is anchored yet more firmly in the study of philology and archaeology - as it is in much of America; the obvious example of the strict 'scientific' focus on texts and archaeology is the work of R.N. Frye (1984). But there is, of course, one considerable and influential 'meta-narrative' which has substantially influenced continental European debates on Zoroastrianism, notably G. Dumézil's theories concerning an alleged tripartite ideology. As far as Zoroastrian studies are concerned, the strongest 'disciple' (his own word in private conversation) has been the Belgian scholar J. Duchesne-Guillemin (see for example, his exposition in Duchesne-Guillemin, 1958 chs. 2 & 3). Dumézil's reconstruction of Indo-European patterns of thought, in particular those regarding the tripartite division of human and divine society and the concept of dual sovereignty in its benign and violent forms, its priestly and military roles, were used to explain numerous facets of Zoroastrian teaching. (For an account of the debate see Lyttleton, 1973). Two of Dumézil's sharpest critics are the German Paul Thieme and the Dutch scholar Jan Gonda. Their criticisms have ranged widely over Dumézil's huge meta-narrative, but focused in particular on how his grand theory was used to determine the role of the god Mit(h)ra in the Indo-Iranian tradition, especially on his relationship to Varuna and whether that was one of homogeneity or opposition. According to Dumézil, Mitra and Varuna were in balanced opposition, with Varuna representing the potentially harsh, stern dimension of kingship, and Mitra representing the more benign and priestly role. These Vedic debates have formed a background to the interpretation of the relationship of Mithra to Ahura Mazda in Iran and in Zoroastrianism (Dumézil, 1976). For the preceding debate on his theories see the 'final' statement on this question by Thieme (1975), Gonda (1972, 1975). The central thrust of their criticisms has been that Dumézil used his grand meta-narrative to determine the translation of the texts, rather than allowing the theories to grow from scientific, objective, philological work and translation. They argue that Dumézil's sociological, anthropological and historical assumptions simply do not stand up to the tests of Indo-European philology. These criticisms have been forcibly expressed in Britain by Gershevitch (1959a and 1959b, pp. 26-44) and Brough (1959). It would be hard, however, to interpret these critics' rejection of

Dumézil's 'meta-narrative' as examples of postmodernism or deconstructionist thought.

Some Postmodernist Trends in Zoroastrian Studies

Although she herself may reject the term, it is possible to discern the first movement towards postmodernist trends in Zoroastrian studies in the writing of the influential scholar, Mary Boyce, especially 1975, 1977, 1979, and in particular in an article published for the Open University course, 'Man's Religious Quest' (1978), where she articulates her methodological presuppositions with clarity and force. These 1970's publications foreshadow postmodernist studies of religion, but they represent a bridge to such studies rather than falling squarely within their field. Perhaps her work has been even more influential in the field of religious studies than was that of Zaehner before her. Within Zoroastrian studies it has been both influential and controversial. Her work, therefore, merits serious consideration at this point.

After studying English, Anthropology and Archaeology at Cambridge (where she was influenced by H. M. Chadwick, a distinguished scholar of oral literature) she taught Anglo-Saxon literature and archaeology in London and began the study of Persian at SOAS. Under the influence of the brilliant Iranian linguist, W. B. Henning, she studied Manichaean and ancient Zoroastrian literature. But the theories for which she is now best known emerged from a year's field work among orthodox Zoroastrians in remote villages in Iran (Boyce, 1977).⁵ One of her central arguments is that an oral tradition, conveyed in a liturgical setting by traditional priests, practised in an area cut off from outside influences, is likely to be transmitted with great faithfulness. Such a setting she found in the village of Sharifabad, on the edge of the plain of Yazd. She asks, 'Who is the more appropriate interpreter of Zoroaster's words, Western scholars or the traditional priests of Yazd?' Inspired by the devout families with whom she lived, she looked at Zoroastrianism from a different perspective than that in which she had been traditionally trained in textual studies in Britain. In this, she was the first Western academic to cast strong doubt on the bias, on the scientific objectivity,

5. For a brief biography see pp. xi-xx in Bivar and Hinnells 1985.

of Western scholarship. Instead of seeing the later priestly texts as perversions of the prophet's teaching, she argued that there was a great and powerful continuity of tradition from pre-Zoroastrian times, through the prophet, and the later texts down to fairly modern times among the Iranian Zoroastrians, until they too were influenced by Western scholarship. Writing of Haug's reconstruction of a pure Zoroastrian prophetic teaching, she comments:

This approach, by which a European scholar, however, gifted, could set his judgement, slenderly based on the study of one group of texts alone (and deeply enigmatic texts at that), against all the later scripture, tradition and observances of the once mighty Zoroastrian church now seems astonishingly presumptuous; but Europe in the nineteenth century was very sure of itself and ready to instruct the world, and for a variety of reasons Haug's interpretation was widely accepted. It established Zoroaster, so long fabled for wisdom, as a teacher of whom the contemporary West could approve - a rational theist, making minimal demands for observance. Most students of the Gathas were moreover philologists, like Haug, and were happy with an interpretation which allowed them to ignore complex traditions and the living faith, and to wrestle with these great texts alone in the quiet of their studies. There were of course, those who were interested in them primarily as religious works, but some of these saw Zoroastrianism in the light of a forerunner of Christianity, whose significance ended when it had transmitted its chief doctrines to the younger faith. So they too were indifferent to its living forms, and also to those of its teachings which are unique and set it apart. (p. 604)

She picks this point up again later in the same article:

It has been a weakness in the Western study of Zoroastrianism that it has concentrated largely on texts ... but in a purely academic study of a religion it is possible to make a subjective choice of what seems significant, whereas encounters with a living faith force one to accept its adherents' own understanding of its essentials, which are likely, moreover, to be embodied in its main observances.
(p. 613)

Hence her own careful attention to rites and practices in all her works, be they the rites of the temple or the daily labours of the housewife (1977, pp. 37, 94).

Because of her conviction that throughout the millennia Zoroastrianism has been characterised by a great continuity of central beliefs and practices (although she also documents some of the inevitable changes in details), Boyce

believes it is legitimate to use substantial proportions of the later Middle Persian theology to interpret the teachings of the prophet. Such a guide to interpretation is helpful because modern scholarly understanding of the Gathic language is restricted. Understanding is made yet more difficult because these 'hymns' are in verse form and full of poetic allusions which are not easy for the modern West to appreciate. In arguing for a continuity between Zoroaster and the Pahlavi tradition, Boyce was not expounding an entirely new idea. It had been pressed before by the brilliant German scholar, H. Lommel (1930); but she added greater force to the argument by showing how, contrary to all earlier Western scholarly writing, the daily practices of the religion were in harmony with the doctrine expounded in the texts. She shows, for example, how the purity laws, so often dismissed by Western academics as part of the pagan superstition rejected by Zoroaster, can be seen as part of the Zoroastrian view on the sanctity of life; how the daily task of the wife in cleaning the home is part of the constant battle against evil; how the contemporary prayer rites associated with the sacred shirt and cord, the *sudre* and *kusti*, are consistent with Zoroaster's teaching. Indeed, she is of the opinion these practices were part of his own reforms (1979, ch. 3). Hers was the first substantial attempt to study Zoroastrian daily life and practice alongside the great texts. This questioning of the Western exclusive focus on the 'great' or 'classical' tradition and the attention paid to the living tradition, destroyed the conventional scholarly image of the uncomprehending faithless followers corrupting the pure, abstract philosophy of the prophet. It is also significant that she emphasised the domestic dimension of the religion and did not focus only on the male-dominated priestly tradition.

Boyce's work, therefore, marks a radical departure from previous studies as exemplified by Zaehner. Some of her approaches - the importance of living and domestic practice, not least the emphasis on the role of the women, the awareness of the situatedness of herself and others, the blurring (in Boyce 1977) of religious and 'secular' distinctions - may be seen as steps towards postmodernism; but it would be wrong to classify her as a postmodernist. She shares some basic convictions of traditional Western scholarship. In particular, she asserts strongly that there has been a definable orthodox Zoroastrianism which has continued for some three millennia (see especially Boyce, 1992, ch. 9). She also believes that the 'heresy' Zurvanism was a distinct movement and a powerful force, especially in Sasanian times (Boyce, 1979, chs. 7-9). There is a strong element of the meta-narrative in her work and a conviction that scientific objective history can be written.

Approximating more towards postmodernism is Shaked (1994). He is Professor of Iranian Studies and of Comparative Religion at the University of Jerusalem. He is essentially a textual specialist working on Zoroastrian and Jewish materials, often comparing them in a creative manner. He is unfortunately perhaps less well known than the other writers discussed in the general field of religious studies. He essentially argues in his 1994 volume, that what scholars think of as 'orthodox Zoroastrianism' was the creation of scholar priests writing of the Islamic conquest of Iran. He maintains that the coherent orthodoxy, posited by Boyce and others, was the imposition of a few writers working in the face of Islamic oppression who selected and interpreted their collections of texts in the light of their own beliefs and wrote their own image of Zoroastrianism back into earlier times. Shaked argues that detailed reading of these texts, and of Islamic and other sources, reveals a great diversity of cosmologies, eschatologies, theologies and practices in Sasanian Iran. The image of a unitary phenomenon, Zoroastrianism, is due, in his opinion, to channels of late (post-Islamic) priestly transmission, which 'exercised a certain process of selection on its literary heritage.'

In effect, he is arguing there is no single Zoroastrianism in Sasanian Iran, or earlier. Similarly, he does not see Zurvanism as a homogeneous separate heresy, or cult, but as several intellectual strands of thought current alongside many others. Within the spectrum of Iranian beliefs in ancient Iran, Shaked sees a plethora of movements, beliefs and practices: some mystical, some (Greek) philosophically inclined. He also believes there were various popular cults of the masses, some at least with magical interests which contrasted with the traditions of elitist religious circles, and with esoteric and Gnostic type groups. He further argues that different religious traditions were followed by different social groups and in different regions. Some, he believes, were followers of different gods, such as Mithra (ch. 4). He also emphasises the diversity of religious influences in what was a very fluid period of religious interaction between Jews, Christians, Mazdakites, Manichaeans and other Gnostic type groups (ch. 5). Essentially what Shaked was undertaking was the deconstruction of the concept of Sasanian Zoroastrianism.

Shaked's book has been strongly criticised by Boyce (1996), who argues forcibly in a seventeen-page review for her theory of a clear Zoroastrian orthodoxy in earlier times. This is not the place to enter a debate between the opposing views of two such distinguished scholars. The point here is the way that debates over the interpretation of the texts, and the interest paid to living

practice, the questioning of the 'meta-narrative' of a homogenous Zoroastrianism, are consistent with the general mood of modernist and postmodernist and deconstructionist studies of religion in the refocusing from classical texts to living practice in the home, in Shaked's lack of a meta-narrative and in the questioning of the existence of a unitary Zoroastrianism. Shaked is not alone in his postmodernist approach. Hinnells (1996b), for example, argues that a religion is what it has become; that Zoroastrianism is what Zoroastrians do and believe when they consider that they are being Zoroastrian. This article on modern Zoroastrian philosophy expounds a range of twentieth century (mainly Parsi) teachings which bear little relationship to what has traditionally been seen as Zoroastrianism, including such ideas as rebirth, *karma*, the *avatar* - ideas which Parsis, clearly, have adapted from Hinduism. But who is to say that this is not 'Zoroastrianism' when taught and practised by Zoroastrians? A postmodernist approach may also be discerned in Hinnells (1996a), specifically ch.8, on the religion approaching the third millennium, where the focus is not on even the contemporary textual traditional but on the daily practices. The social activities are seen as inseparable from religious ones, so that the divisions between the sacred and the profane, the boundaries between the religious and the secular, are blurred. Similarly in Hinnells (1996c) use is made of the secular genre of the novel to understand something of modern Zoroastrian thought and practice.

But my publications are not based on a single, consciously, carefully evolved theoretical framework. Like Topsy, 'they just grew'. One of the most self-consciously 'methodological' contemporary writers is Luhrmann (1996). She spent two periods pursuing anthropological fieldwork in Bombay, studying how the Parsis' own self-perceptions have changed from colonial to post-colonial times. Through ethnographic, cinematic, literary, biographical, poetic vignettes she seeks to draw out the contemporary community perceptions of what constitutes a 'good Parsi'. The section which most clearly relates to postmodern thought is the final chapter in which she reflects on the interactions between an anthropologist and what (s)he studies - the discourses between them, the motives behind, and the consequences of, such studies. This may be seen as an example of postmodernist reflexive anthropological agonising. But she is critical of much postmodernist writing and more confident in the viability and validity of scholarly study than many postmodernists. She is critical, in particular, of those who see anthropology as simply an exercise in creative writing. It would not, therefore, be correct simply to label her 'postmodernist'; but she is in conscious dialogue with postmodernist thought in her juxtaposition

of the future of the Parsi community with that of the anthropological community, explicitly using the other to look at the self. She addresses the issue of how power relations are embedded in the asymmetrical relationships of and dialogue between anthropologists and their subjects.

This article has not attempted to identify the 'right' interpretation of the history of Zoroastrianism (postmodernists would, of course, say there can be no such thing). What it has sought to show is that however little Zoroastrian specialists have said about modernism and postmodernism, about structuralism and poststructuralism, the sort of theories propounded concerning Zoroastrianism and the debates which have raged (unfortunately an appropriate word at times!) mirror the sort of wider theoretical debates in the study of religion, history and literature. Just as no religion exists in a vacuum, so no scholar exists in a totally secluded 'ivory tower'. We are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the 'spirit' (should a postmodernist say 'spirits'?) of our age.

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Section B
Zoroastrian Influence on
Biblical Imagery



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2 Introduction¹

Since the first of these articles was written the field of Biblical Studies has changed considerably. In this context, one of the major developments has been the growth in the study of the Intertestamental literature² and work on the Dead Sea Scrolls.³ There have also been substantial studies of the history of the period,⁴ and major works on relevant themes.⁵ In the course of these and other publications reference has been made to the theories of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism, the Intertestamental literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, but generally cautionary notes have been sounded. The most common stated ground for that caution is the problem of the dating of the relevant Zoroastrian

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1. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Prof. L. W. Hurtado of Edinburgh University who kindly read through these articles and gave valuable comments and criticisms in a most helpful collegial way. He is not, of course, responsible for any errors or misjudgements in this piece, but his response gave me valuable food for thought and reading.
 2. See, for example, R. H. Charlsworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., London, 1983 & 1985.
 3. See, for example, G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Harmondsworth, 1997.
 4. In addition to the New Schürer referred to in the second of the articles in this section, see L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, vol. I, *The Persian and the Greek Periods*, Minneapolis, 1992. The work of Barr and Yamauchi are not commented on in this introduction as they are discussed in the second of the two papers on the subject.
 5. See, for example, J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, New York, 1984.

doctrines in view of the fact that their full exposition is only in the ninth century Pahlavi texts.⁶

There has been little apparent response to the arguments of Boyce⁷ and in particular the arguments of Hultgard.⁸ Hultgard has taken care to address this issue of dating the ideas in an article published in 1983.⁹ He emphasises various points: (a) that the relevant apocalyptic and eschatological ideas do not appear only in the two works generally cited by Biblical scholars (*Zand-i Vohūman Yasn* and the *Bundahišn*), but in several others also, i.e. they are widely attested; (b) that the various books in which these ideas are detailed all have the character of secondary collections of ancient texts produced for pedagogic purposes in the face of Islamic persecution;¹⁰ (c) he illustrates how these specific Pahlavi texts display a grammar which can clearly be seen to be a translation of Avestan material (e.g. the location of the verb in the

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6. Grabbe 100-2; Collins 23f., Morton Smith, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. IV, fasc. 2, p. 2002.
 7. Notably in 'On the antiquity of Zoroastrian apocalyptic', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XLVII, I, 1984, pp. 57 – 75 which focuses on the division of world history into four (or seven) eras symbolised by metals (gold, silver etc), an idea which various Biblical scholars have suggested may derive from Zoroastrianism.
 8. See his 'Das Judentum in der hellenistisch-romischen Zeit und die iranische Religion – ein religionsgeschichtliches Problem', in W. Haase and H. Temporini (eds) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II, 19, 1, Berlin, 1979, pp. 512-90.
 9. 'Forms and Origins of Iranian Apocalypticism' in D. Hellholm (ed.) *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen, 1983, pp. 387-411.
 10. On the nature of Pahlavi literature see especially M. Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature,' in B. Spuler (ed.) *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I. *Literatur*, Leiden, 1968, pp. 31-76. On the links between ideas in the Pahlavi literature and the Avesta see the forthcoming chapter by A. Hintze 'Avestan Literature' in R. Emmerick (ed.), *Iranian Pre-Islamic Literature*, Costa Mesa.

sentence).¹¹ To Hultgard's arguments can also be added the following. Shaked has clearly demonstrated how the central and relevant ideas of resurrection of the dead, the two judgements, the concepts of good and evil, angels and demons, all form part of a tight and coherent theological logic in Zoroastrianism in a way that they do not in Judaism and Christianity.¹² For example, in Zoroastrianism there is a theological necessity about there being two judgements, since God, Ahura Mazda, created both the material and the 'spiritual' (not a good translation of the Zoroastrian term) dimensions of a person, so both must be judged and corrected if they are to be reunited in the perfect existence at the end of history. The first judgement after death is clearly of the soul, for the body can be seen to remain on earth; the judgement of the body takes place after the resurrection. The rewards and punishments following those judgements mean that the whole person, judged and corrected, can be reunited in perfect harmony. There is no such logic behind the Biblical references to the two judgements. The point is that these doctrines being a coherent whole at the heart of Zoroastrian theology, are most unlikely to be late developments. Collins notes that Plutarch states that the fourth century BCE writer Theopompus attributes the key doctrines to the Zoroastrians of his period (*op. cit.* p. 24). In fact there is clear Iranian evidence for the antiquity of the concept of the resurrection, the saviours, judgement in the ancient (Avestan) hymn, *Yašt* 19.¹³ Indeed, many scholars would argue that the foundations at least of these central eschatological ideas derive from

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11. A similar point is made by G. Widengren, 'Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptik', pp. 77-162 in the same Hellholm volume. Widengren makes this point in the context of a wider argument on Zurvanism, but the linguistic point remains independent of his thesis on Zurvanism.
 12. This argument has been elaborated by S. Shaked notably in two articles in his collected works 'The notions of *mēnōg* and *gāīg* in the Pahlavi texts and their relation to eschatology' and 'Some notes on Ahreman, the Evil Spirit, and his creation', articles II & III, in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, Variorum, 1995 and 'Iranian Influence on Judaism: First century BCE to Second Century CE in W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 1984, vol. I, pp. 308-325. See also his article 'Eschatology: Zoroastrian influence' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VIII, 6, pp.568f.
 13. The most recent substantial study of the important text is Almut Hintze, *Der Zamyād-Yašt, edition, übersetzung, kommentar*, Wiesbaden, 1994.

the visions of the prophet Zoroaster (variously dated, but generally thought 12th – 15th centuries BCE). He certainly referred to an eschatological saviour and the two judgements and central to his message was the war between the good and evil spirits.¹⁴ In my opinion the work of the scholars cited has established beyond reasonable doubt that the key Zoroastrian doctrines go back well into pre-Christian times.

The article of my own which has been quoted most frequently is a study of the Oracle of Hystaspes; an eschatological oracle circulating in the early Christian world, which I argued was fundamentally Zoroastrian.¹⁵ Unfortunately, I no longer believe my own argument as stated in that article. In my opinion Flusser has correctly interpreted this as a Jewish apocalyptic text, subject to strong Zoroastrian influence, possibly with an original Zoroastrian *Grundlage*.¹⁶ This still supports my general thesis of the powerful impact Zoroastrianism had on Jewish (and Christian) eschatology. The arguments of mine which I still hold to are elaborated in the two following articles. It may be worth highlighting, what after reflection, I see as the crucial points made in them. Whereas many writers have discussed Zoroastrian influence on individual passages, for example in Isaiah,¹⁷ or in the belief in world eras symbolised by different metals as noted above, my emphasis is rather on the considerable change in the overall metaphysical dualism, a development in the cosmological perspective which took place

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14. The scholar who has argued most forcibly for the continuity of Zoroastrian doctrine is Mary Boyce, for example in *History of Zoroastrianism*, vol., I, Leiden, but it was well argued earlier by H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, Tübingen, 1930 (repr. Darmstadt, 1971), for eschatology see especially ch. 8.
 15. 'The Zoroastrian doctrine of salvation in the Roman world: a study of the Oracle of Hystaspes', in J. R. Hinnells and E. J. Sharpe (eds), *Man and His Salvation: essays in honour of S. G. F. Brandon*, Manchester, 1973. It is referred to by Grabbe (p. 102), Collins (pp. 170, 188) and Morton Smith (p. 203).
 16. D. Flusser, 'Hystaspes and John of Patmos', *Irano-Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 12-75. Most Biblical scholars have unfortunately neglected his arguments for influence on the Book of Revelation.
 17. D. Winston, 'The Iranian component in the Bible, Apocrypha and Qumran: a review of the evidence', *History of Religions*, 1986, pp. 183-216.

between the literature in the Hebrew Bible (the book of Daniel apart) and much of the Intertestament and New Testament. The key development is in the idea of a devil, demons, hell, and their counterparts of angels and heaven. These beliefs inevitably affected eschatological beliefs, including the resurrection, judgement, the role of the saviour (however named) and the judgement for all these are now seen in a vaster mythological context. As argued in the chapters which follow, the role of Jesus casting out demons in order to defeat the strong man Satan has developed significantly from Biblical ideas of the Messiah, or the Son of Man. This cosmic eschatology parallels in remarkable detail Zoroastrian thought, and a Zoroastrian schema which unquestionably long predates that in Judaism and Christianity.

The second distinctive feature of the following chapters is the point that these developments in Jewish and early Christian thought occur at a later date than the period of influence normally put forward, namely in the last two centuries BCE and the first CE. Although I believe it is credible that there was some Persian influence in the Persian period, it is in the later centuries that the parallels are most striking. Instead of arguing for Zoroastrian influence on a group of unknown Jews who subsequently influenced their co-religionists, my argument has been that during this later period there was close contact between Iran and Judaism in the diaspora (in Parthia itself, in Babylonia, Anatolia), and Israel. Further I have argued that the historical circumstances were such that influence was not only possible but likely, for both Jews and Parthians were allies in the fight first against the Seleucids and then against the Romans. Various writers, notably Collins, have emphasised the religious trauma experienced by devout Jews in the face of Seleucid persecution precisely because they were being good Jews. The old solution to the problem of evil, that suffering was divine punishment for sin, could not explain their experiences. In such circumstances the belief in an alien force of evil, a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil, answered their religious needs. Once the understanding of evil became cosmic, other doctrines necessarily developed also. A human Davidic Messiah could not match a cosmic force of evil for example. Clearly the concept of a Messiah in this period was a complex and changing one, indeed one can hardly refer to the concept in the singular.¹⁸ The main thesis in these articles is that the influence

18. See for example, J. H. Charlsworth, *The Messiah, developments in earliest Judaism and Christianity*, Minneapolis, 1992; J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the*

of Zoroastrian cosmology on Jewish eschatology in general, and the saviour figure in particular, has been sadly neglected by Biblical scholars in general and New Testament exegetes in particular.

Barr and Collins have both argued that one factor in the resistance to theories of influence is the reluctance to admit influence from another religion on Christianity.¹⁹ Collins, like other scholars, repeatedly stresses the distinctiveness of Jewish thought. In earlier works, for example those of Eichrodt referred to in the following articles, differences between Jewish and Zoroastrian thought have been highlighted as establishing that there was no such influence. In the two following articles there is a brief discussion of the term 'influence'. In another article omitted from this collection for reasons of space, I developed this point further and it may be worth quoting from that section of the article here.²⁰ After outlining some of the objections to the theory of Zoroastrian influence as unnecessary I wrote:

To the argument that theories of Zoroastrian influence are unnecessary it is tempting to retort that it does not matter whether a theory is necessary or not, what matters is whether or not it is right! It is, however, the underlying question of presuppositions that is the basic question. The argument that because there is a *possible* Old Testament source this *proves* that the idea is not due to foreign influence implies that 'influence' denotes the sudden taking over of a new and strange idea. This is a very questionable view of the meaning of the word. It is a matter of everyday experience that influence often works as a subconscious process involving the development or emphasis of some ideas already held and the neglect of others. It is rather rare for anyone to be influenced to take over a completely new and strange idea and then to transplant it, without modification, into his system of thought. The question of what is meant by 'influence' is so basic that it requires further consideration.

Star: the Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient literature, New York, 1995.

19. Collins, *Apocalyptic*, p. 15; Barr, 'The question of religious influence: the case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 53,2, 1985, pp. 202-35.
20. 'Zoroastrian influence on the Judeo-Christian tradition', *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, Bombay, 45, 1976, pp. 1-23.

It will aid understanding of the process of 'influence' if a 'test-case' or analogy is considered. The 'influence' of the West on India in the nineteenth century is a well-documented event that illustrates the point nicely.²¹

Christian missionaries and British officials alike frowned upon some of the practices they encountered in nineteenth century India such as suttee, child marriage and the idea of untouchability. But it was not only westerners who led the movement to do away with these practices. A series of reform movements within Hinduism were 'influenced' by the western attitude and by Christian practices generally. One such movement was the Brahma Samaj founded in 1828 by Ram Mohan Roy.²² Roy is an example of a devout member of a faith *consciously* taking over ideas and practices from another tradition. Congregational hymns and sermons were introduced into the society's worship, *something most unHindu*. Roy himself paid for schools where Bengali young men could receive a western education, but even going as far as this he did not think of himself as anything other than a good Hindu. He believed he was ridding his religion of all that was harmful and using whatever means he reasonably could to expand his own faith. The first point, therefore, to draw from this 'test-case' is that even when we are dealing with *conscious imitation* of another culture it cannot be assumed, as some Biblical scholars appear to, that this necessarily means or shows a lack of devotion to one's own faith; it can indicate the precise opposite.²³

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21. Perhaps the most convenient bibliographical sources on this topic are J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, repr. Delhi 1967; E.J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, Lund, 1965.
22. S. D. Collett, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1962 (3rd ed).
23. See for example D. E. H. Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, Oxford, 1964, p.2. On the theory of St Paul's indebtedness to the Mystery cults he states: 'St Paul does not seem to have been the sort of man we should expect to borrow from pagan sources'. There may well be good grounds for doubting Paul's indebtedness in this regard, but the a priori assumption does not alone justify the conclusion.

A different form of 'influence' is evident in the reaction of Debendra Nath Tagore.²⁴ Tagore was opposed to the spread of Christianity, being convinced that India had no need of this alien religion. But despite his opposition to the western faith, his use of congregational worship and the form of his devotion to a personal god were influenced by Christian ideas and practices as well as by traditional Hindu piety. Tagore is then a good illustration of the point that opposition to another faith does not ensure that the opponent is immune to its influence. Perhaps the best example of this is Dyananda Sarasvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj.²⁵ He tried to bring Hinduism back to what he believed was the ancient faith. Just as consistently he sought to stir up his followers against the teachings of Christianity. He preached a return to the authority of the Vedas. His understanding of what was the ancient faith and what he looked for in it was largely, and unconsciously, determined by contemporary thought, a thought world significantly moulded by Christian traditions. Dyananda renounced idolatry, polytheism, child marriage, the ban on the remarriage of widows and Hindu forms of sacrifice. This represents a religious programme clearly marked by two characteristics, western influence and a passionately sincere concern for his native Hinduism. No man lives in a vacuum and no matter how much a man may oppose a faith he is still capable of being influenced by it.

An instructive example of the process of influence occurs in a much earlier period of Hinduism. Scholars speak of the Nyaya school of philosophy influencing Hindu religious thought. The school was concerned chiefly with logic and epistemological method, rather than with religious beliefs. But in order to oppose the teaching of the school, religious leaders had to adopt the school's manner of argument and in this way some of them were led to modify their thoughts, although they believed what they were doing was expressing the essence of their belief in contemporary language.

This brief consideration of the 'test-case' of influences on Hinduism shows that the word 'influence' is an ambiguous or umbrella term covering a variety of processes. It can indicate the conscious imitation of another's ideas or the subconscious modification of beliefs. It can indicate the development of certain ideas one already holds and the neglect of others, or it can indicate being provoked to adopt a certain style of argument or wording in order to oppose an idea. This ambiguity in the word 'influence' has to be taken into

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24. G. S. Leonard, *A History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, 1934, Farquhar, pp. 39-41, 44.
 25. Farquhar, pp. 101-29; L. Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, London, 1915.

account when discussing theories of Zoroastrian, or any other beliefs, on Judaism and Christianity; in particular this ambiguity must be seriously considered in this context. The argument that differences between the resurrection faith or the idea of the end of the world in the two traditions [of Judaism and Christianity as posited by Eichrodt and Charles] proves that there was no influence, cannot be held. In view of the subtle, and often subconscious, working of influence one must expect ideas to be modified or adapted as they are exchanged or taken over. Nor should it occasion surprise if Old Testament passages on Satan, the resurrection or the Messiah can be seen as a basis for later ideas which other scholars think are due to Zoroastrian influence. It is surely highly unlikely that any religion, Judaism, Christianity or Hinduism, will take over beliefs or ideas fundamentally alien to its existing doctrines. Such a taking over of wholly new or strange ideas would produce a new movement, not a development of the old. Devotion to a personal god would not have been so popular in nineteenth century Hinduism, despite Christian influence, if there had not been a strong movement in that direction from ancient times. Dyananda Sarasvati could not have condemned the practices he did if they had in fact been important in the Vedas. Contact with other religions may inspire, or influence, the most devout person to see an idea in his own religion with fresh insight, in sharp relief or in a different light. The two theories of an Old Testament background and Zoroastrian influence on later Jewish, or Christian, ideas are not therefore mutually contradictory; they are in fact complementary. Old Testament ideas provided, as it were, the 'peg' on which were hung the modified or developed concepts. Unless discussions of this subject take into account the subtle and complex working of 'influence' it is unlikely that a balanced judgement on the issue will be reached...Above all in discussions of this topic it is essential to define precisely what is meant by 'influence'. Studies in this area must undertake a meticulous study of the historical setting in order to show that that particular type of influence was both reasonable and likely in the given historical circumstances, for different situations are likely to produce different forms of influence.

Chapter 12 below, on 'Contemporary Zoroastrian philosophy' studies influence in what might be called the reverse direction, with the influence of western and Hindu thought on Parsi teaching. Here also the point is made that the influence was facilitated by the nature of the contact, and the friendly relations between Parsis and the sources of influence. By contrast, there has been relatively little Islamic influence on Zoroastrianism, one factor being the Zoroastrian experience of persecution resulting in a less positive attitude to Islam. This theme accords with the argument of Sandmel in an article on 'parallelomania'. Sandmel was critical of the piling up of broad and general

parallels in Biblical studies.²⁶ His comments were directed at supposed parallels between New Testament writers, books of the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature, Philo and the Dead Sea Scrolls. But what he said applies equally to parallels with Zoroastrian beliefs. Sandmel emphasised the importance of looking not simply at a similarity of words or phrases but considering the whole theological or textual context. In this article I am arguing for the addition of a study of the historical context, in terms of the nature and extent of the contact between the religions. Apart from vague references to the period of Persian rule, and the time gap between Persian rule and the growth of cosmic dualism and eschatology, the historical setting has all too often been neglected in studies of this subject. The question has not really been addressed, how do we explain the fact that the closest parallels (with certain Qumran texts, I & II Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and certain ideas in the gospels and the book of Revelation)²⁷ occur in the period they do, and not earlier?

This later dating of the period of influence to the first two centuries BCE marginally affects the question of the dating of the Zoroastrian sources since the doctrines do not have to be traced back so far in history, but only marginally since I believe there can be little reasonable doubt of the antiquity of the relevant Zoroastrian beliefs. It does however raise another question, namely the nature of Parthian culture. It is again appropriate to quote from my 1976 *JCOI* article.

Modi and Dhalla, following the majority of western scholars of their time, dismissed the Parthians as mere Hellenists, referring to the Parthian period as the dark ages of Zoroastrianism.²⁸ Such a view of the Parthians is no longer

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26. S. Sandmel, 'Parallelomania', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXI, 1962, pp. 1-13.
27. Working entirely independently Almut Hintze has also recently argued for the influence of Zoroastrian myth on Revelation 20. 1-3. 'The Saviour and the dragon in Iranian and Jewish/ Christian eschatology,' in S. Shaked and A. Netzer (eds), *Irano-Judaica*, IV, 1999, pp. 72-90.
28. See J. J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay, 1922, p. 215, who describes the Sasanian empire as 'the Iranian renaissance after the Dark Ages of the Parthians rule.'; M. N. Dhalla, *Zoroastrian*

tenable in view of the evidence which has become available through recent archaeological and literary studies. The view that the Parthians were Hellenists appears to be influenced by the Sasanian propaganda issued to justify their claim to be the true successors of the Achaemenids²⁹ and is due to attaching too much importance to certain pieces of archaeological, numismatic and literary evidence. A Hellenistic style coinage and architecture shows no more than that that the nomadic Parthians made use, at least in the early part of their rule, of a reasonably well developed Hellenistic technology. Far too much importance has been attached to the fact that Greek drama was popular in the Parthian empire. The evidence for this is that one king once watched a Greek play, and that while he was on a visit to another country.³⁰ Using such evidence one wonders how future historians might reconstruct the cultures of heads of state visiting other countries and watching their host's traditional dances or dramas. The claim that it was the Sasanians who suddenly introduced the state Zoroastrian church is due more to Sasanian political claims than to any valid historical evidence.³¹ Rulers rarely impose a religion from above on to a people, it is usually the case that they give formal recognition, sanction and seal to what has become a popular faith, as Constantine did with Christianity.

There is ample testimony to the Parthian consciousness of being a truly Iranian nation and not just a distant imitation of a Hellenistic state. This is shown by

Civilization, Oxford, 1922, pp. 265f. For the views of western scholars, see E. Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran*, Oxford, 1935, who grouped the Parthians with the Seleucids under the heading: 'Hellenistic period.' See also P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, London, 1921, vol. I, p.364. This view of the Parthians is perpetuated by M. A. R. Colledge, *The Parthians*, London, 1967. Zaehner's *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London, 1961 simply leaves a gap.

29. See the *Kārnāmag i Ardašir*, English translation by E. K. Antia, Bombay, 1900, ch: 1.
30. The occasion was a performance of Euripedes' 'Baachae' in Armenia when the Parthian Orodes and the Armenian Artavasdes were celebrating the betrothal of their children in diplomatic wedlock. It is reported in Plutarch's biography of Crassus.
31. R. N. Frye, *Heritage of Persia*, London, 1962, pp. 178f.

the minstrel tradition,³² the very names of the kings,³³ the personal names found on ostraca at Nisa,³⁴ and the development of coin types.³⁵ The idea that Parthian art was a mere imitation of Hellenistic art has long since been seen to be incorrect.³⁶ In the sphere of religion there is both archaeological and literary evidence to show that the Parthians built fire temples,³⁷ hardly a Hellenistic activity. There are reasons for believing it was the Parthians, not the

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32. M. Boyce, 'The Parthian *gōsān* and Iranian minstrel tradition *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1957, pp. 10-45. See also her 'Zariadres and Zarēr,' *BSOAS*, 1955, XVII, pp. 463-77, esp. pp. 472-4 on the Parthians and traditional Iranian lore.
33. Few, if any (there is doubt in only one case) have non-Iranian names, unlike many Jews during the Seleucid period who took Greek names to show their love of Hellenism.
34. Frye, *Heritage*, p. 183.
35. J. Neusner, 'Parthian political ideology', *Iranica Antiqua*, III, 1963, pp. 40-59.
36. See particularly M. I. Rostovtzeff, 'Dura and the problem of Parthian art', *Yale Classical Studies*, V, 1935, pp. 157-304. More attention has been given to the eastern evidence, with a subsequent modification in conclusions, but still opposed to the Hellenistic theory, by the so-called 'Gandharan school' led by D. Schlumberger, 'Excavations of Surkh Kotal and the problem of Hellenism in Bactria and India', Albert Reckett Archaeological lecture, 1961 and see his 'Descendants non-mediterraneens de l'Art grec,' *Syria*, 37, 1960, esp. pp. 136-42 and M. Hallade, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*, London, 1968.
37. K. Erdmann, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, Osnabruck, 1969, pp. 23ff; K. Schippmann, *Die Iranischen Feuerheiligtümer*, Harrassowitz, 1972, appendix on Seleucid and Parthian fire temples. The traditional Iranian motifs on a Parthian amulet described by A. D. H. Bivar (*BSOAS*, 30, 1967, pp. 512-25) is of particular interest in this context. For the literary evidence see Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, 11 (see the translation of W. Schoff, Philadelphia, 1914, p.9) and the *Letter of Tansar* (trans. M. Boyce, Rome 1968, p. 47 and see her comments pp. 16f.).

Achaemenids, who introduced the Zoroastrian calendar.³⁸ It is surely significant that the influence the Parthians left on other cultures, Armenia and the Kusāna kingdom (as evidenced by the latter's coinage) was Zoroastrian not Hellenistic.³⁹ In view of the Sasanian propaganda referred to above it is hardly likely that the *Dēnkard* would have attributed the collection of the Avesta to a Parthian king unless history had compelled the compiler to do so.⁴⁰ We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the many Jewish-Parthian contacts confronted the Jews and Christians with Zoroastrianism.⁴¹

Subsequent studies since my 1976 article have reinforced the traditional Iranian/Zoroastrian image of the Parthians, indeed the older picture of their Hellenism is hardly raised.⁴²

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38. E. J. Bickerman, 'The "Zoroastrian" calendar', *Archiv Orientalni*, 35, 1967, pp. 197-207 and M. Boyce, 'On the calendar of Zoroastrian feasts,' *BSOAS*, 33, 1970, pp. 516f.
39. The bibliography on this subject is enormous, the reader is referred J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Religion of Ancient Iran*, E.T. by K. M. JamaspAsa. Bombay, 1973, pp. 155-69. For Iranian culture in the region see the contemporary Strabo, *Geography*, xi, 14, 16: 'Now the sacred rites of the Persians, one and all, are held in honour by both the Medes and Armenians'. For Persian festivals in Armenia see S. H. Taqizadeh, 'The Iranian festivals adopted by the Christians and condemned by the Jews', *BSOAS*, 10, 1940, pp. 632f. For the influence of Iranian religion on Armenia see M. Ananikian, 'Armenian Mythology' in *Mythology of All Races*, L. H. Gray (ed.) New York, 1964, vol. vii and 'Armenia' in *ERE* and in general R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1947. On the Kusāna coins see J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans*, Berkeley, 1967. The activities of the Manichaeans in Parthia show that it was Iranian or Zoroastrian traditions and not Hellenism that the missionaries encountered in that region, see for example, M. Boyce, 'On Mithra in the Manichaean pantheon,' in W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater (eds), *A Locust's Leg, studies in honour of H. S. Taqizadeh*, London, 1962, pp. 44-54.
40. *DkM* 411-13= *Dk.* IV: 24 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxvii, p. 413).
41. Cf. the judgement of Boyce 'the Parthians appear to have been in the main Zoroastrians,' in 'On Mithra's part in Zoroastrianism', *BSOAS*, 32, 1969, p. 31.
42. In chronological order of publication see: G. Herrman, *The Iranian Revival*, Lausanne, 1977; R. N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran*, Munich, 1984; J.

The point within the following articles that I seek to stress is that Zoroastrianism was a powerful presence in the Jewish world of the two centuries BCE, and the first century CE. Both articles refer to contact in the diaspora and in Israel, though the first emphasises the former, the second the latter. The coincidence in time of the growth of cosmic dualism, particular religious crises for devout Jews and extensive contacts between Jews and Zoroastrians is too great, in my opinion, to be merely fortuitous. I hope that this introduction and the republication of those articles in a more accessible location for Biblical scholars may help to stimulate discussion of this thesis on the nature, form and dating of Zoroastrian influence on Biblical imagery.

If the thesis of influence is accepted, the question arises – what is the significance to be attached to such influence? From a historical point of view the thesis has various implications. Studies of the Intertestamental period tend to look at Israel from a Europocentric perspective – the interaction of Judaism with Greece and Rome, almost as though lands to the east were at that time irrelevant. On the streets of Jerusalem at the turn of the millennium Parthian Iran would have appeared to be one of the two great powers, a force encountered in trade, diplomacy, liberation. Interfaith dialogue with what was then the most powerful religion in the known world is not merely plausible, but to be expected. Increasingly scholars are emphasising the diversity of Judaisms of that period; this argument adds a further significant religious input to that cauldron of religious interaction and development. Zoroastrian influence explains why certain doctrines developed when and how they did. What merits further study is not merely to note that the Jewish beliefs differed from Zoroastrian ones, but a more coherent picture merits constructing, for a helpful outcome of comparative study is to appreciate the distinctiveness of each. Which dimensions of the Zoroastrian picture were not incorporated, and which were, will give a greater understanding of Jewish and New Testament symbols and beliefs.

There is some overlap between the two following articles, though their focus is different, both in the texts studied and each has an emphasis and proposes

Wieshofer, *Ancient Persia*, E. T. by A. Azodi, London, 1996. J. Wieshofer (ed.), *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse*, Stuttgart, 1998. On the important Armenian evidence see J. R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard, 1987.

a different historical contact between Zoroastrians and the Judaeo-Christian traditions.



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3 Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New Testament¹

Although influence of Zoroastrian eschatology on the Judaeo-Christian tradition is widely recognised,² so far little attention has been paid to the parallel concepts of the saviour in the two traditions.³

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1. Based on a paper read to the British Section of the International Association for the History of Religions in London, Sept 18th 1968.
 2. See for example M. Black, *The Development of Judaism in the Greek and Roman Periods*, in the new *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, eds. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, London, 1962, p. 696; J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, London, 1960, p. 444; W. D. Davies, *Contemporary Jewish Religion*, *New Peake* p. 705; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, London, 1961 and 1967, vol. I, p. 487, II, pp. 208f.; S. B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, London, 1952, pp. 19f., 73 ff.; R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, London, 1962, p. 128; R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, London, 1965, p. 34; T. H. Gaster articles on 'Satan' and 'Gehenna' in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, New York, 1962; E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, Oxford, 1961, p. 218; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, E.T. by D. Green, London, 1966, pp. 315, 323, 336; H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, London, 1963, pp. 43, 73; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, London, 1964, pp. 235, 258-262, reservations are expressed on pp. 385-7.
 3. Parallels between the Messiah and Sōšyant were noted by L. H. Mills, *Zaraθuštra, Philo, the Achaemenids and Israel*, Chicago, 1906, p. 437; R. Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, London, 1938, p. 251, and Von Gall argued that the post exilic Messiah was influenced by the Sōšyant imagery, *βασιλεία του Θεοῦ*, Heidelberg, 1926, pp. 251 ff. On the other hand N. Söderblom argued that the two figures developed independently, *La Vie Future*

This is rather surprising since it may be thought doubtful if there could be influence on the eschatological scene generally and not on the central figure of that scene. Further, it is generally held that the form of the later Jewish and Christian concept of the devil or Satan was influenced by Iranian tradition. If this be accepted then it has serious implications for the understanding of a saviour or Messianic figure. When Satan is thought of as the prosecuting counsel within God's court, as he is in the Book of Job, then he is not a figure with whom the saviour has to deal. When this figure becomes truly demonic, ruling over hell, leading a horde of demons and attacking the world, then the saviour is given a new task. Instead of defeating human forces at the end of the world, in the shape of Edom and Egypt, he must now defeat a supernatural being. This new task demands new imagery, and if the devil imagery be thought to come from Iran, then a most natural source for the developed saviour imagery would be, similarly, Iran.

The intention of this paper is, therefore, to trace the development of the saviour concept in the Zoroastrian tradition in order to see if it casts any light on the vexed question of the origin of the New Testament imagery.

It is important to begin by asking precisely what is meant by the term 'influence'. While this *may* imply the transference of a total concept from one tradition to another, it is a fact of everyday experience that to be

d'après le Mazdeisme, Paris, 1901, pp. 305-308. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, likewise, believes that the parallels between the two figures are vague and general, *La Religion de l'Iran Ancien*, Paris, 1962, p. 261. W. Staerk contends that the two are very different, since in Zoroastrianism the saviours are not related to the mythical figure of the Primordial Man and the Primordial King. Zoroaster and the other helpers, according to Staerk, are not returning figures of the primordial time; they are quite unmythical, and have their basis in the idea of the ethical process, *Die Erlösererwartung in den Östlichen Religionen*, Stuttgart, 1938, p. 268. W. Bousset was also doubtful about influence from the concept of Sōšyant on the figure of the Messiah, *Die Religion des Judentums*, third edition edited by H. Gressmann, reprinted Tübingen, 1966, p. 513, n. 1. A. Kohut drew attention to parallels between Sōšyant and certain Talmudic beliefs, 'Was hat die Talmudische Eschatologie aus den Parsismus Aufgenommen?', *Z.D.M.G.* xxi, pp. 552-591. Influence on the later Messianic belief was suggested by Frost, *op cit.* pp. 224-225, but he accepts the erroneous view of Glasson that Sōšyant 'does not seem to exercise a judicial function'.

influenced by someone or something is usually an unconscious process of modifying or developing one's own beliefs, in accord not only with the source of influence but also with one's own theological or philosophical convictions. It must be held to be highly unlikely that any religion would incorporate ideas totally alien to its existing faith. Since a religion is more open to influence from doctrines which bear some degree of similarity to the beliefs which it already holds one must begin by looking for a common stock of ideas on to which branches might be grafted.

There was certainly a common stock of ideas lying behind the figures of the Zoroastrian saviour, Sōšyant, and the Messiah. As the Messiah was born of the line of David, so Sōšyant was born of the seed of the great prophet Zoroaster; in each case the saviour came to establish the true faith and God's own nation; both, as it were, were God's 'trump card' against those who opposed his will, and both effected the renewal of the earth and of mankind. Whether there was anything more than a common stock of ideas worked out independently can only be decided after a study of the development of the two figures and a consideration of the historical factors involved.

THE ZOROASTRIAN SAVIOUR, SŌŠYANT

What has to be established is not what the teaching of Zoroaster was concerning the saviour, although this may be one step on the way, but rather what was the teaching of the Zoroastrianism of the pre-Christian period. In other words attention need not be confined entirely to Zoroaster's own hymns, the Gāthās, but must also include the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. Unfortunately, the extant Avesta is but one quarter of the original. Inevitably one seeks to reconstruct, as far as possible, the remaining three-quarters, and does so on the basis of the later Pahlavi texts, that is to say the Zoroastrian religious books written in Middle Persian, or Pahlavi, whose final redaction belongs to the ninth century AD and later. The dangers here are too obvious to need emphasising, and New Testament scholars in particular have expressed doubts about bringing the Pahlavi texts into any discussion of the

Zoroastrian origins of the New Testament imagery.⁴ Yet it is an old dictum that the value of a text lies not in its date but in its sources. It is important to remember the motive for the compilation of these books, and the word 'compilation' is used advisedly. The original Avesta was of enormous proportions, and, to help laymen understand its teachings, the priests made summaries and compiled selections in Pahlavi translation of Avestan texts on particular subjects put together to form a continuous theme. A good example of this is the Bundahišn, which covers creation, the nature of earthly creatures and the end of the world.⁵ Another, the seventh, eighth, and ninth books of the Dēnkard, which are the relevant ones for our subject, claim to be no more than summaries of the contents of the various books of the Avesta. It is, therefore, too easy to dismiss these Pahlavi books as merely ninth century productions. One has to assess the value of each element in the tradition to see if it can be said to be Avestan or a later innovation.

There is a further problem with which we have to contend. The extant books of the Avesta are wholly liturgical and consist largely of invocations where the functions of the divine beings are incidental to the main purpose of the text. This means that we cannot expect to find there a systematic expression of the Sōšyant imagery. The method of investigation which will be followed here in order to elucidate the Avestan belief in Sōšyant is as follows: firstly to consider the actual meaning of the title Sōšyant and to outline briefly the possible Gāthic basis of the belief; secondly to consider the Pahlavi teaching on each of the relevant points and then to turn back to the Avesta to see if there is any reason to accept that behind the Pahlavi picture there is an Avestan, i.e. pre-Christian, basis for the belief.

4. See for example C. Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and its non-Jewish Sources*, E. T. by R. G. Nisbet, Edinburgh, 1912, pp. 122 f. 139; Le P. E. B. Allo, *Saint Jean l'Apocalypse*, Paris 1933, p. 196; R. H. Charles, I.C.C. Commentary on Revelation, vol. II, p. 142.

5. On the Pahlavi Literature see M. Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature', in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, ed. B. Spuler, Bd. 4, Abschn. 2, *Literatur* Lief. 1, pp. 31-66 and J. C. Tavadia, *Die Mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier*, Leipzig, 1956.

i) *Sōšyant in the Gāthās*

The word *Sōšyant* is the future participle active from the root *su*, meaning more or less ‘to benefit’; thus *Sōšyant* should mean ‘one whose work will be beneficial’, or ‘one who will bring benefit’. A more precise connotation of the root *su* in a religious context can be gathered from the use of derivatives from this root in the *Gāthās*. Thus one text speaks of ‘the long suffering for the wicked and *sava* for the righteous’, where *sava* is generally translated as salvation.⁶ Another text reads,

‘Or (is) he an enemy, who, verily, (being) a wicked-man, opposes thy salvation (*Sava*)?’⁷

A number of texts could be adduced illustrating the same point. From this evidence Bartholomae translates *Sōšyant* as Redeemer or Saviour.⁸

The word occurs a number of times in the *Gāthās*, but its implications are far from clear. It is used in the plural, apparently to denote the future benefactors of the Good Religion. So, for example, in one *Gāthā* Zoroaster asks Ahura Mazda when the time of piety, justice, peace and general prosperity is to come:

Then shall they be the saviours (*saošyants*) of the lands who, through good purpose, by deeds in accordance with justice, shall attend-to satisfaction of thy teaching through wisdom. For they (shall be) the appointed suppressors of passion.⁹

6. Ys. 30 : 11 See M. Wilkins Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gāthās*, reprinted New York, 1966, p. 73 and J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Hymns of Zarathustra*, E.T. by Mrs M. Henning, London, 1952, p. 107.

7. Ys: 44 : 12, Trans Wilkins Smith, p.111; Duchesne-Guillein, p. 69. See also Ys. 43 : 3; 45 : 7; 51 : 9 & 15.

8. *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Strassburg, 1904, p. 1551. See also H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, Tübingen, 1930, p. 226.

9. Ys. 48 : 12, trans Wilkins Smith, p. 137; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 39. Further examples of the use of the plural are 34 : 13; 46 : 3.

The word is used in the singular in a number of texts, and it is generally assumed that in these passages Zoroaster is making an oblique reference to himself,¹⁰ although Lommel argues that Zoroaster did think of a future saviour to come.¹¹ A good example of the ambiguity of the use of the word in the singular is in Ys. 48: 9:

When shall I know (these things)? If, through wisdom, through justice, you rule over him from whom destruction threatens me, let the prophecy of good purpose be truly spoken for me. May the Saviour know how his reward shall be.¹²

From this we can conclude that Zoroaster spoke of a saviour, and the form of the word shows that the work of this figure lay in the future, but the ambiguity of its use forbids any more precise or confident statement of what he meant by it. The use of the plural suggests, however, that the word has not yet become a technical term, as it is in the Pahlavi literature.

ii) The Pahlavi teaching concerning Sōšyant

a) The Virgin birth of Sōšyant

Here it is said that at one thousand year intervals before the end of the world three 'brothers' will be born. The seed of Zoroaster was thought to be preserved in a lake, and towards the end of the world this seed will impregnate three virgins who go to bathe there.¹³ Thus each of the three brothers is of the seed of, or the son of, Zoroaster, yet born of a virgin. Their names are Ušēdar, Ušēdarmah, and finally Sōšyant who is also called Astvat.ərəta. This belief is not set out in connected form in the Avesta, yet at least the elements appear there. Briefly, the evidence is that the names of the three brothers occur in the ancient Avestan hymn, the Farvardīn Yasht, as do

10. So, for example Wilkins Smith and Duchesne-Guillemin in their translations.

11. op. cit. p. 229. Sōšyant is used in the singular in Ys. 45 : 11 and in 53 : 2, a text composed shortly after the death of Zoroaster.

12. Wilkins Smith, p. 136; Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 39.

13. Dk. VII, 8, 51-60; VII, 9, 18-23; VII, 10, 15-19.

those of their three mothers.¹⁴ Incidentally, by ancient is meant probably not later than fourth century B.C. in its presents form, yet clearly preserving even older material.¹⁵ Another of the Yashts speaks of Sōšyant 'coming up to life out of the lake Kasava'¹⁶), and this belief appears again in the Vendīdād, a work held by some to have been compiled in its present form about the time of Christ.¹⁷ Again in the Farvardīn Yasht the fravashis of the faithful are said to watch over the seed of the holy Zarathustra.¹⁸ Hence, using the Pahlavi texts in conjunction with the hints which appear in the Avesta, it can be said that the basis of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Sōšyant is clearly Avestan.

In the later Avesta, that is the extant Avesta excluding the Gāthās, Sōšyant is sometimes used in the plural, as it is in the Gāthās themselves, with reference to the prominent leaders of the religion, the future helpers, those who have not yet appeared and are therefore nameless.¹⁹ It can even refer to the priests who celebrate the Yasna sacrifice.²⁰ Yet 'Sōšyant' in the singular is a definite reference to the last of the three brothers born towards the end of the world, as benefactor *par excellence*.

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14. The three brothers are mentioned in Yasht 13, the Farvardīn Yasht, st. 128. The names being given, of course, in their Avestan form. The names of the mothers are given in sts. 141-2 of the same Yasht.
 15. A. Christensen, 'Études sur le Zoroastrisme de la Perse Antique', in *Det Kgl. Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser*. xv, 2, 1928, p. 34, argues for a pre-Achaemenid dating for the material on the grounds of the geography implied by the Yasht and the proper names which appear in it.
 16. Yt. 19 : 92.
 17. Vd. 19 : 5.
 18. Yt. 13 : 62.
 19. Yt. 11 : 17; 13 : 38; Vsp. 3 : 5 ; Ys. 9 : 2. See further, Lommel, *op. cit.* p. 229.
 20. M. Molé, *Culte Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran Ancien*, Paris, 1963, pp. 86, 120, 133, 135.

b) Sōšyant as restorer of the world

Despite the characteristics of the Avesta that we have already referred to, nevertheless certain of Sōšyant's functions are so clearly defined that we have no need even to look to the Pahlavi texts. One such function is his restoration of the world. This is set out most clearly in the very old Zamyād Yasht, where it is said:

We sacrifice unto the awful kingly glory ... which will cleave to the victorious one of the Saošyants (i.e. to *the* Sōšyant) and to (his) other companions, so that he shall restore (literally make *fraša*) existence, not ageing, not dying, not decaying, not rotting, ever living, ever benefiting (literally ever having *su*), ruling at his will.²¹

It is also contained in a number of Avestan texts. His mother Erədat-fədri for example, is worshipped in the following terms:

We worship the Fravashi of the righteous maid Erədat-fədri, who is called Vīspa-taurvairi. Therefore she is Vīspa-taurvairi (the all destroying) because she will bring him forth, who will destroy the malice of Daēvas and men.²²

Similarly Sōšyant is called the 'fiend smiter' in Vd. 19:5. In the Pahlavi literature Sōšyant has a number of helpers;²³ these also occur in the Avesta, and they, too, are described as destroyers of demons. The Zamyād Yasht again:

And there shall come forward the friends of the victorious Astva.ərəta, (that is Sōšyant) well-thinking, well speaking, well-doing, of good conscience, and whose tongues have never uttered falsehood. Before them shall flee the ill-famed Aēšma with bloody club... (the notorious demon of wrath)²⁴

21. Yt. 19 : 89 ff. The translation is based on that of J. Darmesteter, *Sacred Books of the East*, reprinted Delhi, 1965, vol. xxiii, p. 226.

22. Yt. 13 : 142.

23. Ir. Bd. 34 : 16; Dk. VII, 11, 8. Lommel, p. 215 points out that even the number of helpers is the same in the Avesta as in the Bd., fifteen, although in the Bd. this has become fifteen men and fifteen women.

24. Yt. 19 : 89 ff.

and there then follows a general onslaught of the powers of good on evil. Hence part of the restoration of the world by Sōšyant includes the final defeat of the demons.

c) The resurrection of the dead

The Pahlavi Bundahishn states that another part of the restoration is the resurrection of the dead by Sōšyant.²⁵ This seems to have been part of the Avestan doctrine also. Certainly the resurrection is part of the restoration effected by Sōšyant. So, for example an Avestan fragment translated by Jackson states that at the coming of Sōšyant when Ahura Mazda rules over his creatures, then:

In the earth shall Ahriman hide,
In the earth, the demons hide.
Up the dead again shall rise,
And within their lifeless bodies
Incorporate life shall be restored.²⁶

The Farvardīn Yasht, again, supports this:

We worship the Fravashi of the righteous Astvat.ərəta; Whose name will be the victorious Saošyant... He will be Saošyant (the Beneficent One), because he will benefit the whole bodily world; he will be Astvat.ərəta (he who makes the bodily creatures rise up), because as a bodily creature and a living creature he will stand against bodily destruction, to withstand the Drug of the two-footed brood...²⁷

Here the fight against the devil involves the destruction, or reversal, of one of his chief weapons, death. Thus it can be seen that the Pahlavi doctrine of the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world by Sōšyant is Avestan.

25. Ir. Bd. 34:3 (edition of B. T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ākās̄h*, Bombay, 1956).

26. 'The ancient Persian Doctrine of a Future Life,' in E. Hershey Sneath, *Religion and the Future Life*, New York, 1922, p. 136.

27. Yt. 13 : 128 f.

d) The eschatological judgement

In the Iranian Bundahishn it is also stated that it is Sōšyant who executes the eschatological judgement:

Sōšyant, at the command of the creator will give all men their reward and recompense suiting their actions.²⁸

This passage has the appearance of a translation from the Avesta, rather than a later addition, since it is not introduced by the customary commentator's gloss 'there is one who says. . .' whereas the two passages on either side of this text are so introduced. One may also see how this belief could develop from the teaching of Zoroaster, since in one Gāthā which looks forward to the defeat of evil, it is said:

Then shall they be the saviours of the lands who, through good purpose, by deeds in accordance with justice, shall attend to the satisfaction of thy *səngha*.²⁹

'*Səngha*' has been given a variety of meanings, 'decree', 'doctrine', 'judgement', 'speech', 'word' etc. and is rendered as teaching here by Bartholomae, which is the basis of the translation quoted above. But it appears to be used elsewhere in the Gāthās for 'judicial decree', 'judgement' - in an eschatological sense.³⁰ Zoroaster may here be saying, therefore, that at the end of the world the saviours would not only defeat evil, but would also administer the judgement of Ahura Mazda. Naturally, anything done by the Sōšyants (plural) would be thought to be done by *the* Sōšyant *par excellence*. Furthermore, in the Gāthās Zoroaster himself is called a judge (*ratu*).³¹ As Sōšyant brings the revelation of Zoroaster, and is his son, it would not be surprising if he too were thought of as a judge. Hence, it would be the extreme of scepticism to attribute this belief in Sōšyant as the mediator of the eschatological judgement simply to the period of the compilation of the

28. Ir. Bd. 34 : 25, based on the translation of Anklesaria, p. 291.

29. Ys. 48 : 12, trans Wilkins Smith, p. 137.

30. e.g. Ys. 51 : 14, perhaps also Ys. 46 : 3. On other occasions it is quite definitely 'doctrine' rather than 'judgement', see for example Ys. 44 : 14.

31. Ys. 44 : 2 & 16. See Pavry, V pp. 56 f.

Pahlavi books, that is to the ninth century AD. Not only can one see how the belief would arise at an early period, but also the way it is presented in the Pahlavi books suggests that it was an Avestan belief.

e) The end result

The effect of Sōšyant's work is to restore man to his primeval state. The first step on the path to sin, it is believed, was when he first began to eat and drink, for this left man open to the assaults of one of the chief demons, Āz, Greed. Thus, as man at first began to drink water, eat vegetables, drink milk and to eat meat, so at the end he will give up eating meat, drinking milk, eating vegetables and drinking water.

(One) says in (the) Scripture: 'Whereas, when Mašya and Mašyāne³² grew up from (the) earth, (they) first drank water, then ate vegetables, then drank milk, and then ate meat, men, too, when their time of death (shall have) come, will desist first (from) eating meat, then (from) drinking milk, and then even from eating bread, (and) will be drinking water (only) till death.'

Thus too, in (the) millennium of Ušēdarmāh, (the) strength of appetite will so diminish that men will be satisfied (for) three nights and days, by eating one (single) meal. And then after (that), (they) will desist (from) meat food, and will eat vegetables and drink (the) milk of animals; and then, (they) will abstain even from (that) milk diet, (and then they) will abstain even from vegetable food, and will be drinking water, and ten years before Sōšyant will come, (they) will remain without food, and will not die, and then Sōšyant will raise (the) dead.³³

This return to the primeval state also involves the defeat of death, since death is one of the weapons used by Ahriman to harm the Good Creation. Thus as the primeval bull was killed at creation by Ahriman,³⁴ so Sōšyant will, at the end, sacrifice the mythical bull Haḍayans, and from this sacrificial victim will come the elixir of immortality.

And Sōšyant with (his) associates will perform (the) rites for (the) restoration

32. The first human couple in the Zoroastrian tradition.

33. Ir. Bd. 34 : 1-3, trans, that of B. T. Anklessaria, pp. 283-5.

34. Ir. Bd. 4 : 19 ff.

(of the) dead; and (they) will slay (the) 'Haḍayāns gāv' for that rite; out of the fat of that 'gāv' and the white hōm (they) will prepare (the) immortal (beverage), and give (it) to all men; and all men will become immortal up to eternity (and) eternal progress...³⁵

The problem of the dating of these beliefs is a very vexed one. It is therefore essential to state clearly the object of this section: it is to consider the dating of the general parallels between creation and the end, not just that of the two examples cited. Since the bull sacrifice raises wider problems, it will be advisable to take the former belief and examine that:

The passage cited above explicitly states that the author is quoting scripture, i.e. the Avesta. But the quotation only draws parallels between creation and individual, not universal, eschatology:

Whereas when Mašya and Mašyāne... men, too, when their time of death (shall have come) ...

This text cannot, therefore, on its own, be used as evidence for the Avestan basis of the universal eschatological belief. The *Dādistān ī dēnīg* and the *Dēnkard* also refer to the idea that men will not need to eat food at the coming of *Sōšyant*. The appearance of this idea in *Dēnkard* 7 is important, since this section of the work, as has already been noted, is not just a priestly work of the ninth century, but is largely a collection and précis of Avestan passages. In the first appearance of the belief, *Dk.* 7 : 8 : 50, it is not said whether or not this is a quotation from the Avesta, but in 7 : 10 : 2 the introductory formula reads, 'as what it says. . .' the 'it' being explained in paragraph 4 as 'revelation'. The passage then goes on to say that men do not have the same need for food during the millennium of *Ušēdarmah*, and that one meal is sufficient for three days. The same idea, in fact occurs in the extant Avesta. *Yasht* 19 : 96 declares that at the end hunger and thirst will be smitten. This last passage on its own might be taken to imply that the after life is a time of feasting, but in the total context of Zoroastrianism, where hunger is a weapon of *Ahriman*, and in the light of the above passages, it is more reasonable to take it as referring to a belief that men will not need to eat and drink, and thus will return to their primeval state. Dr Shaul Shaked is, therefore, fully justified in saying that the basis of the creation/eschatological scheme is to be

35. *Ir. Bd.* 34 : 23, trans. that of B. T. Anklessaria, pp. 289 ff.

found in the Avesta.³⁶

It may be possible to take this a stage further and see the patterns between the beginning and the end as pre-Zoroastrian, perhaps even Indo-Iranian. Thus, in the Haoma ritual, the central rite of Zoroastrianism, the worshipper looks back to the first slaying, and forward to the last slaying of the bull.³⁷ Although this ritual has been thoroughly Zoroastrianised it is in origin an Indo-Iranian rite. This alone might not be significant if it were not for the other examples of Indo-Iranian or even Indo-European elements of Zoroastrianism that have such a pattern. So Yima, ruler of the primeval golden age, constructed a *vara* into which he took the best of men, animals and plants (Vd. 2.) to preserve them from a great and terrible winter so that he could repeople the world at the end. The eschatological element appears only in the Middle Persian texts, the Bundahishn and Dēnkard, but because of the narrative's non-Zoroastrian character, and its parallels with Norse tradition, this story is often thought to be a fossilised form of an Indo-European myth.³⁸ In another story, again of a non-Zoroastrian character, the monster Aži Dahaka was bound in chains at the beginning of the world, but it is said that at the end he will break free, and attack the creation, finally being destroyed by the resurrected hero of old, Kərəsaspā. Again this has a striking similarity to Nordic belief, and may represent an extremely old myth.

The return of the primeval state, therefore, in the work of the saviour can reasonably be said to represent an old rather than a late tradition.

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36. 'Eschatology and the Goal of the Religious Life in Sasanian Zoroastrianism', paper to the Study Conference of the I.A.H.R., Jerusalem, July, 1968. I am indebted to Dr Shaked for giving so generously of his time during the conference to discuss this matter with me.
37. See the forthcoming work of M. Boyce, 'Haoma, priest of the sacrifice', in the W. B. Henning Memorial Volume (in the press).
38. See especially N. Söderblom, *La Vie Future d'après le Mazdeisme*, Paris, 1901, pp. 169 ff., A. V. Ström, 'Indogermanische in der Voluspá', *Numen*, xiv, fasc. 3, Nov 1967, pp. 167 ff. E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, London, 1964, p. 278 and H. R. Ellis-Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, Pelican 1964, pp. 206 ff.

These are all the functions of Sōšyant germane to this study. To summarise the conclusions so far; the title Sōšyant can be translated Redeemer or Saviour, and the form of the word shows that the work of the figure lies in the future. The title is used both in the plural and the singular in the Hymns of Zoroaster. In the plural the word is used freely to denote future leaders of the religion, in the singular it may denote a future saviour to come, or Zoroaster himself - or, of course, both. The implication of this may be that the word has not yet become a technical term (i.e. in Zoroaster's own vocabulary). The word is still used freely in the Avesta, again it is used in the plural for the future benefactors, or to denote the priests. Nevertheless in the singular it definitely refers to the eschatological saviour who will be born of a virgin at the end of the world, but who will also be a son of Zoroaster. His task is to restore the world, which involves the defeat of the demons, raising the dead, assembling men for judgement, and the administration of the same. All this means a return to the primeval state which existed before the assault of Ahriman.

THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN SAVIOUR IMAGERY

The purpose of this section of the paper is to do no more than to note certain developments in the Judaeo-Christian saviour imagery.

The Saviour and the Devil

That a belief in a devil is a late entry into the Jewish faith needs no demonstration. In the Old Testament Satan is simply an accuser at the heavenly court and there is nothing inherently evil about the figure. The verb *śatan* means prosecute, attack with accusations, accuse.³⁹ In the books of Job and Zechariah a particular figure is denoted as 'the accuser' in heaven,⁴⁰ his role is to question, test, accuse, the motives of men. The first indication of a supernatural adversary is in the post-exilic I Chronicles 21:1 where *ha-śatan*, 'the accuser', is replaced by *śatan*, a personal name. Although he seduces David into doing evil, in this text he is still the messenger of God and a member of the heavenly staff. It is only in the inter-testamental period that

39. W. Eichrodt, vol. II, p. 206.

40. Job 1 : 6 f., 2 : 1 ff., Zech. 3 : 1 f.

Satan becomes a devil, ruling in Hell with a horde of demons. Even here, however, the concept has not assumed a fixed form. The figure can be called by a variety of names, the devil (The Life of Adam and Eve 12: 1 dated about the time of Christ⁴¹ Satan (The Similitudes of Enoch, mid-first century BC⁴² Satanail (II Enoch 18:3 original Jewish work dated pre A.D. 70),⁴³ Mastema (Jubilees 10:8, 150-100 BC and the Dead Sea Scrolls),⁴⁴ Beliar (Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, c. 100 B.C. and the Dead Sea Scrolls).⁴⁵ Azazel and Semjaza are the figures said by I Enoch 9:6f (c. 160 BC⁴⁶) to have been responsible for the bloodshed and lawlessness on earth. It may not be, of course, that all these names refer to the same figure. The functions of the 'devil' and his demons are variously described, but the general stress in the inter-testamental literature is on their role as beings who seduce men into evil,⁴⁷ punish the wicked,⁴⁸ and cause physical ill by inflicting disease.⁴⁹

As the Messiah in the Old Testament was thought to defeat the enemies of Israel, so in some intertestamental literature the saviour figure is said to defeat

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41. O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction*, E.T. by P. R. Ackroyd, Oxford, 1966, p. 637, D. S. Russell, p. 59.
 42. Eissfeldt, p. 619; Russell, p. 52; E. Sjöberg, *Der Menschensohn im Äthiopischen Henochbuch*, Lund, 1946, pp. 35-9; M. Hooker, *The Son of Man in St. Mark*, London, 1967, pp. 47 ff.
 43. Eissfeldt, p. 623; Russell, p. 61. In the form we have it the book has been subject to Christian redaction.
 44. Eissfeldt, p. 608; Russell, pp. 53 f.
 45. Eissfeldt, pp. 633 f.; Russell, p. 55 f. P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der Jüdischen Gemeinde*, Hildesheim, reprinted 1966, pp. 30 ff.
 46. Eissfeldt, p. 619 Russell, p. 52.
 47. H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, E.T. by D. Green, London, 1966, p. 315.
 48. Russell, p. 254.
 49. Tobit 3 : 8, Ringgren, p. 316. This last function is stressed more in Rabbinical literature.

the demons. In Jubilees 23:29 it is simply asserted that in those days

there shall be no Satan or evil destroyer⁵⁰

but in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs it is said that the 'new priest' raised up by God will bind Beliar,⁵¹ and that he will

... make war against Beliar
And execute an everlasting vengeance on our enemies;
And the captivity shall he take from Beliar
And turn disobedient hearts unto the Lord.⁵²

Although not all Jews believed in a 'devil' at the time of Christ, (the Sadducees, for example, did not), in the New Testament the defeat of the demons by Jesus plays a very important part in the Christology of more than one writer. Thus Mark expresses one aspect of the work of Jesus as the binding of the strong man, the devil, and the plundering of his house.⁵³ The writer of Colossians, also, interprets the cross as the disarming of 'the principalities and powers'.⁵⁴

If one accepts, with Eichrodt,⁵⁵ that Iran was a source of influence in the shaping of Jewish demonology the matter cannot rest here, for, as Eichrodt

50. Trans R. H. Charles, in R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha of the Old Testament*, Oxford, reprinted 1964 (hereafter cited as 'Charles'), vol. II. p. 49.

51. Testament of Levi 18 :12, Charles, p. 315.

52. Testament of Dan 5 : 10 f., Charles, p. 334.

53. Mark 3 : 23 ff.

54. Colossians 2 : 15.

55. *Theology*, II, p. 209. He adds that the Persian belief in 'the eternity of the evil as well as the good spirit, at no time became proper to the concept of Satan'. It is not true to say that the evil spirit is eternal in Iran. The texts quoted above show that the evil spirit has an end, as Eichrodt's source, E. Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, London, 1949, p. 63, recognises.

again notes, the increase in demonology in late Judaism is symptomatic of 'a radical change in man's feelings about the world.'⁵⁶ Influence at this point, therefore, implies influence at the heart of a modified or developed theology and might be expected to show itself in other doctrines as well.

The Saviour and the Resurrection

The resurrection doctrine is another late and important innovation in the Jewish faith. It may be contained in the Little Apocalypse inserted in the book of Isaiah, ch. 24-27, variously dated between the second and fourth centuries BC.⁵⁷ The belief does appear in Daniel 12 but not, interestingly, in association with the Son of Man in ch. 7.

There is no unity of tradition in the intertestamental literature. The author of I Maccabees (c. 100 BC⁵⁸) does not seem to accept the doctrine,⁵⁹ nor do the writers of I Baruch (second century BC⁶⁰) and Judith (mid second century BC⁶¹) nor did the Sadducees. The position of the Qumran sect on this point is not clear. If the resurrection was part of their faith, then they kept very quiet about it. Only a few passages can be interpreted as referring to the resurrection, and these are very ambiguous.⁶² Among those who held such a belief there was no unity of teaching. II Maccabees (c. 100 BC) teaches a

56. p. 227.

57. Eissfeldt, p. 325; Frost, p. 154; Russell, pp. 367f.; Ringgren, p. 322; R.H. Charles, *Eschatology, The Doctrine of the Future Life*, reprinted New York, 1963, p. 132.

58. Eissfeldt, p. 579; R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times*, London, 1949, p. 491; B.M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, Oxford, 1957, p. 130.

59. So W. Bousset and H. Gressman, *Die Religion des Judentums*, reprinted Tübingen, 1966, p. 273.

60. Eissfeldt, p. 593; Pfeiffer, pp. 413 ff.

61. Eissfeldt, p. 587; Metzger, p. 43; Pfeiffer, p. 297.

62. See for example Russell, pp. 373 ff; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Pelican, 1962, p. 51.

resurrection of the righteous only,⁶³ as do the Psalms of Solomon (dated mid-first century BC⁶⁴). In different passages the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and I Enoch both include the contradictory ideas of the resurrection of the righteous only, and the resurrection of all men.⁶⁵ Some texts have no resurrection of the body, but instead the immortality of the soul.

The evidence suggests, therefore, that at the time of Christ there was no uniform interpretation of the resurrection doctrine even among those who held the belief. This implies that the doctrine was in its infancy. Again it is important to note the remark of Eichrodt that the doctrine of the resurrection came into Judaism at a time of 'neurotic anxiety'.⁶⁶ It arose in answer to a theological need which in turn was provoked by the traumatic experience of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Whilst some of the 'raw material' for the symbolism may have been at hand in the Jewish heritage, much was not, and the question has to be asked, to what extent did the Jews, in their search for an answer to a desperate problem, look to outside sources for guidance in teaching and imagery?

In view of the variety of inter-testamental traditions, the unity of the New Testament tradition on the doctrine of the resurrection is, perhaps, surprising.⁶⁷ Although two passages in Luke, 14 : 14 'the resurrection of the just' and 20:36 'sons of the resurrection' do sound like a doctrine of the resurrection of the just, the general teaching of the New Testament is of a

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63. 6 : 26; 7 : 9, 14, 36; 12 : 43 f ; 14 : 46. On dating see Eissfeldt, p. 581, Metzger, p. 141.
64. Eissfeldt, p. 613; Russell, pp. 57 f.
65. On the resurrection of the righteous only Test. of Simeon 6:7; Judah 25 : 7 f and I Enoch 46. 6. On the resurrection of all men Test. of Benjamin 10 : 8 and I Enoch 51 : 1.
66. p. 509 and Volz, p. 232.
67. This unity cannot be explained simply in terms of the belief in the resurrection of Christ. It is true that Paul links the two in I Cor. 15, but, as the Corinthians saw, there is no necessary connection between the two.

physical resurrection of all men at the end of the world.⁶⁸ Although it is God who raises the dead in I Cor. 6: 14 it is 'at the coming of the Lord' i.e. the saviour, that the dead are raised, I Cor. 15:23. John, at least, develops this so that it is the Son of Man who raises the dead, John 5:28

... the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his (i.e. the Son of Man's) voice and come forth.

That this is not only a reference to the Lazarus episode, but also to the eschatological resurrection is shown by the words which follow:

those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and
those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement.

Similarly in John. 6:54 Jesus declares:

I will raise him up at the last day.

The background to this development is not clear. In the intertestamental literature the earliest text to speak of the dead being raised at the advent of the Messiah is II Baruch 30: 1 second half of the first century AD which may be subject to Christian influence.⁶⁹ In I Enoch 51: 1-3 the resurrection is said to occur in the days when the Elect One arises, if one accepts Charles' transposition of verse 5a to the end of verse 1,⁷⁰ but that is far from certain. Unless this transposition is made the passage simply refers to the resurrection without relating it to the arrival of the saviour. There is, therefore, no earlier evidence for the association of the saviour with the resurrection than the New Testament.

The Saviour and the Judgement Scene

The idea of a final judgement of those who oppose the will of God is an old one in Israelite belief. Precisely how old does not matter here, it is sufficient

68. Mt. 22 : 23 f; Jn. 11 : 24; Acts 17 : 32; I Cor. 6 : 14; I Thess. 4 : 16.

69. Eissfeldt, p. 630; Russell, pp. 64 f; Volz, p. 255.

70. *Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha*, II, p. 218.

to notice that it occurs in Isaiah 3. The general belief was in a judgement of the nations who opposed Israel, and in the establishment of God's chosen nation, Israel. Some of the prophets, Amos 5:8 for example, condemned blind hope in this, and warned that it would be a day of darkness and not of light.

The intertestamental literature generally stresses the forensic character of the judgement scene in terms unlike the Old Testament.⁷¹ Some books retain the idea of the establishment of the nation of Israel (e.g. the Psalms of Solomon)⁷² but the tendency becomes more and more to stress the judgement of the individual, as in IV Ezra (latter part of the first century AD).⁷³ The Judgement scene is now given a cosmic setting, not only men and nations being judged, but also fallen angels and demons (I Enoch 16 : 1), the prince of demons himself (I Enoch 10 : 6), even the sun and moon (I Enoch. 18 : 13 ff.). In the Old Testament, God himself is always the judge (Gen. 18 : 25, Isa. 33 : 22, Ps. 94 : 2), and this is so in Daniel 7, in much of the intertestamental literature (I En. 47: 3, 90, Sib. Or. 4 : 41, 72, IV Ezra 7 : 33), and in the teaching of many of the rabbis.⁷⁴ The difference, however, is that the saviour can also act as judge. This idea is best represented in the Similitudes of Enoch. In ch. 46 it is the Son of Man with the 'One who had a head of days' who carried out the judgement, in 49 : 4 it is the Elect One, and in 61 : 8 it is said:

And the Lord of Spirits placed the Elect One on the throne of glory.
And he shall judge all the works of the holy above in heaven,
And in the balance shall their deeds be weighed.⁷⁵

In 41: 1 this judgement is extended to men. In II Baruch 40:1, 72:2, IV Ezra 12:33 and the Targum on Isaiah 53 it is the Messiah who administers judgement.

71. See Russell, p. 383.

72. See also I En. 38 : 1, 62 : 1 ff; Sibylline Oracles 3 : 742.

73. Eissfeldt, p. 626; Russell, p. 62.

74. Volz, p. 274; Russell, p. 383.

75. Charles, II, p. 226.

The New Testament follows the tradition of the intertestamental literature, with regard to the cosmic setting, the forensic character of the judgement and the confusion over who is judge. Thus God is judge in James 4 : 12 and Acts 10 : 42, and the saviour in a number of other passages. So in Mt. 13:41 the Son of Man sends out his angels to gather together causes of sin and evil-doers and they are thrown into the furnace of fire. He sits on his glorious throne and separates the sheep from the goats in Mt. 25:31; he repays every man for what he has done (Mt. 16:22) and in Jn. 5:27 Jesus is given authority to judge because he is Son of Man. Jesus is also called judge in James 5:9, I Pet. 4:5 and II Tim. 4:1.

Conclusion

This study is, of necessity, a limited one, but certain points have emerged. The development in the eschatological imagery in the intertestamental period, a development which is usually attributed, in part at least, to Iranian influence, involves a corresponding development in the concept of the saviour: he is said to defeat the demons, the dead are raised at his coming or by him, and he introduces and administers the eschatological judgement. Precisely the same functions are carried out by the Zoroastrian saviour Sōšyant, and since the apocalyptic setting of both is so similar one might reasonably conclude that the development in the Judaeo-Christian saviour imagery is indebted to Iranian influence.

One point should be noted. There does not seem to be one Jewish or Christian figure which has been taken over in *toto*. The influence is of a more fragmentary nature than has sometimes been suggested.^{75a} It is spread over a number of figures: the priestly saviour and his defeat of the demons, the Elect One as judge, and the resurrection of the dead at the coming of the Son of Man or Messiah. It is in the New Testament that the various functions are attributed to one figure. It should also be noted that the effect of the influence has not been to introduce a new or alien idea, but rather to develop and modify existing concepts. Thus the Messiah, who originally suppressed the enemies of Israel and established God's own nation, now defeats the forces of evil, and at his coming men are raised to share in God's kingdom.

75a. e.g. by the 'History of Religions School'.

One cannot understand the developed idea without looking *both* at the Old Testament and at the source of influence, Iran. Indeed, there is a third factor to be taken into account before a proper understanding of the development can be gained - the historical situation.

The Historical Background

A study of the historical background to the question of influence deserves far more attention than it is usually accorded, for two reasons. In the first place, although one must stress the Old Testament background to the developed imagery, the development is nevertheless a major one involving the adaptation of a new mythology. But religions do not cast off and take on new mythologies lightly. Myths are not simply 'Purely fictitious narrative',⁷⁶ they are condensed symbols expressing men's deepest feelings about the world in which they live. They are:

told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements.⁷⁷

They are expressive of men's innermost religious convictions and practices. To think of *any* religious group exchanging myths as minstrels might traditional songs is to misunderstand completely the character of myth. They are not stories that can be neatly lifted from one system and transferred to another without affecting the framework of the latter. In arguing for the influence of one religion or culture upon another it is important to take into account the circumstances and conditions under which such influence was possible and likely. Hence the importance of Eichrodt's observations that the increase in demonology in late Judaism is symptomatic of 'a radical change in man's feelings about the world', and that the resurrection doctrine appeared in Judaism at a time of 'neurotic anxiety'.

The second reason why the historical background should be given more attention is that all the elements of the developed saviour imagery which have been noted occur in books dating from the end of the second century BC

76. The Oxford English Dictionary definition.

77. B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, quoted by M. Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, London, 1963, p. 20.

and later, yet it is generally assumed that the period of influence was that of the Achaemenids, that is between the sixth and fourth centuries BC. While it cannot be denied that there may have been influence at this time, why should the influence of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic become more marked in the second and particularly the first century BC? Granted that the historical circumstances favoured the growth of apocalyptic at the time, and that influence takes a long time to become effective, the problem still remains, why did it take 150-200 years of *Greek* rule for the *Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery* to percolate through? This point has led Glasson to doubt the extent to which Jewish Apocalyptic was influenced by Zoroastrianism.⁷⁸ The popular theory of some kind of 'deep freeze' for these ideas, or of the preservation of the beliefs in circles for whose existence no evidence has been adduced, is notconvincing. Unless some historical explanation of this phenomenon can be given the theory of influence must remain, at best, doubtful.

Some account of the history of the first two centuries BC must be given. It will be easier to begin by considering the Jewish/Iranian contacts in this period. Professor Widengren has noted the many points of contact that took place between the Parthians, who ruled Iran from the third century BC onwards, and the Jews.⁷⁹ The period of contacts may go as far back as the beginning of the Seleucid rule in Palestine, since the Seleucids also ruled over Parthia, and both the Jews and the Parthians were seeking to throw off the Seleucid yoke at the same time. Indeed Professor Neusner has pointed to a series of instances where an uprising by one nation provided the other with the most timely relief.⁸⁰ For example, the Jewish rebellion between 170 and

78. T. F. Glasson, *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology*, London, 1961, p.1. Eichrodt, *Theology*, takes a similar position. Frost, p. 225 notes the date of the Jewish developments and suggests that Iranian influence was conveyed to Northern Palestine by 'Chaldeanism'.

79. *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbewegung in parthischer Zeit*, Cologne, 1960. (AGF Nordrhein-West. Geisteswiss. Reihe, 70) *passim*, a development of his 'Quelques rapports entre juifs et iraniens à l'époque des Parthes,' *Vetus Testamentum*, supplement IV, 1957, pp. 197-241.

80. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, vol. 1, *The Parthian Period*, Leiden, 1965, p. 24.

160 BC eased pressure on Mithridates I when he was seeking to gain his nation's independence from the Seleucids. On the other hand the Jews were assisted by the attack of Phraates II on Antiochus Sidetes in 129 BC. Another example is the assault of Hyrcanus on Syrian cities whilst Antiochus was attacking Parthia. Opportunism may explain the odd coincidence, but in view of the number of coincidences one may suspect, with Neusner and Downey, some kind of *entente* between the two nations.⁸¹

The evidence for the contacts between the two in the first century BC is much less speculative. There is a reference to Parthian ambassadors visiting Jerusalem during the reign of Alexander Janneus (103-78 BC) and these ambassadors mention previous visits that they had made.⁸² Contacts between the two reached a climax in the period 54-38 BC. To appreciate the significance of the contacts it is necessary to consider the state of the Jews in the Roman Empire at that time.

During the first century BC, in particular from the time of Pompey, the Roman rule in Syria generally had been hard. The gentle and conciliatory acts of Julius Caesar were soon nullified by the exactions and cruelty of Gabienus, and the taxes of Anthony.⁸³ But the acts of Crassus in 54 BC left the Jews even more disaffected with Rome than ever. In that year Crassus wintered his forces in Syria before marching against the Parthians. Not only did his forces ravage the land but he himself went further than even Pompey had done, in that he invaded the Temple and also stole the Temple treasure. Within a matter of months, on the sixth of May 53 BC, to use the Julian calendar, he took his army to Carrhae and although his troops outnumbered the Parthians 3: 1, he suffered a defeat on a scale almost unparalleled in Roman

81. Neusner, p. xii; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton, 1961, p. 126.

82. Neusner, p. 25.

83. On the nature of the Roman rule, see Downey, pp. 158 n74, 159. E. Schürer *A History of the Jewish People*, Edinburgh, 1885-1890, E.T. by various translators Division I, vol. I, p. 339. On Gabienus see Dio Cassius 39 : 55 f and Schürer, op. cit., pp. 330 f. On the greed of Crassus see F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Paris, 1952, vol. 1, p. 298 and Cambridge Ancient History (hereafter C. A. H.), vol. IX, pp. 403 f. On Anthony see Appian, *Civil Wars*, 5 : 7.

history; only 10,000 of the original 44,000 troops returning alive.⁸⁴ While it is speculation, it is not unreasonable speculation, to say that this may well have appeared to the Jews as the hand of God at work. Their hopes must surely have been high for a Parthian invasion and a repetition of the Messianic role of Cyrus.⁸⁵ These hopes would be fanned by the unpopularity of the Roman-supported Idumaeen king of Jerusalem - Herod. He was not eligible for the throne; he flouted the Jewish law by summarily having a brigand put to death on his own authority, and not by decree of the Sanhedrin; and he actually led an army against Jerusalem itself to avenge the insult of being tried by a special court for flouting the Jewish law.⁸⁶ The looked-for Parthian invasion came in 40 BC. It is indicative of the Jewish feeling towards the invasion that the Parthians delayed their final assault on Jerusalem until the Passover so that they could receive the help of the pilgrims.⁸⁷ After the expulsion of the Romans from Palestine a Hasmonean was placed on the throne, Mattathias Antigonus, and following the policy of their Achaemenid forbears, the Parthians withdrew.

Although the period of Jewish independence was short, only two years, one can imagine the effect this must have had on their hopes and aspirations. The fact that these hopes were never fulfilled would in no way dampen their aspirations since at that time the outlook was promising, for the Parthians made repeated attempts during the following hundred years to invade again. Just as there was a pro-Hellenic movement during the reign of the Seleucids, so it can be supposed that before, during and after the Parthian invasion there would be a pro-Parthian party in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was among such circles that Apocalyptic speculation flourished. The historical circumstances would certainly favour religious influence. An attempt to enforce one's own religion usually meets stubborn opposition, but a period of co-operation to liberate a country is perhaps more likely to stimulate an exchange of ideas, providing the ground is prepared - as it was by the long period of Achaemenid rule. In particular the historical situation would favour the exchange of

84. For details and sources see C. A. H. IX, pp. 606-612.

85. Isa. 45 : 1.

86. C. A. H. IX, pp. 404 f.

87. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIV, 13, 4.

Apocalyptic beliefs, of speculation about the coming of God's kingdom and the overthrow of evil, and thereby of saviour imagery.

There is another important way in which Parthian influence might make itself felt on Jewish, and later on Christian apocalyptic thought, and that is through the Diaspora. Scholars have increasingly recognised the interaction of Diaspora and Palestinian Judaism.⁸⁸ It is therefore very important to note the many points of contact of the Parthians with the Jewish Diaspora. Such contacts can be seen in Parthia itself, in Babylonia, Adiabene, Syria (in Palmyra and Damascus for example), Commagene, Armenia, Pontus, Cappadocia and Cilicia.⁸⁹ To take but one example - that of Pontus: there were trade contacts between Palestine and Pontus from an early time⁹⁰ and there are specific mentions of the Jewish communities there in the Parthian period. Philo, for example, mentions such a community,⁹¹ and he is supported by Acts which lists people from Pontus at Pentecost in 2 : 9, and in 18 : 2 mention is made of Aquila, a Jew of Pontus. I Peter 1 : 1 also refers either to a Jewish community of Pontus, or perhaps more likely, to an early Christian community there. On the other hand, while it was inevitably under Hellenistic influence, particularly the area around the Black Sea, Pontus was also an important centre of Iranian culture. It was founded by a Persian noble sometime in the fourth century BC⁹² and the names of the kings, particularly the number of Mithridatae (a name meaning, of course, 'the gift of' or 'given by Mithra') implies that this character was not forgotten. Mithridates Eupator laid great stress on his alleged descent from Cyrus and Darius, and he claimed to have inherited some of these kings' valuable treasures.⁹³ Whether or not

88. For example W. D. Davies, *New Peake*, p. 687.

89. For Bibliography see Hinnells, 'Christianity and the Mystery Cults,' *Theology*, vol. 71, no 571, January, 1968, pp. 23 f.

90. C. A. H. IX, p. 212.

91. See Schürer, II, II, p. 226, n. 21.

92. C. A. H. IX, p. 216.

93. Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*, 112, and Polybius, *The Histories*, V, 43, 2 record his claims to be descended from Darius, and Appian, *Wars*, 115 refers to his claim

these were valid claims is an irrelevant question - the point is that they illustrate the cultural, and presumably religious, inclinations of Mithridates. His children were also given Persian names, for example, Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes.⁹⁴ Strabo reports that the Iranian goddess Anāhitā was worshipped there, as was Omanos, that is, Ahura Mazda⁹⁵ The Iranian element in the character of Pontus received fresh impetus in the first century B.C. not only from the rebellion of Mithridates Eupator against Rome, but also from the Parthians who invaded Pontus at the same time that they invaded Palestine, i.e. 40 BC.

Hence the Jewish contact with the Parthians was not limited to one isolated invasion of short duration, but was an important feature throughout a long period of history. Thus, Zoroastrianism was not a dead force of the past, but a living faith encountered in many places by the Jews in the first century BC. It was also encountered in the most favourable circumstances, not only as the religion of the liberating forces, but also as the faith of a man who instigated an enormous and almost successful revolt against Rome. Professor Neusner writes:

There can be no doubt whatever that the Parthian government and the Jewish community of Babylonia, and that in Palestine as well, worked together consistently, frequently, and in substantial and important ways to oppose Seleucid, and then Roman hegemony in the Mesopotamian Valley.⁹⁶

What Professor Neusner here writes of the Mesopotamian valley may therefore be extended to a much wider area. And a further implication could arise from this. The Parthian culture was firmly established in centres into which the Early Church moved, and it had been there for a long time. Hence it is *historically* possible that, contrary to the usual assertion, Zoroastrian influence may have been conveyed directly to early Christian Apocalyptic without the mediation of Jewish thought. This may be important in the case

concerning the treasure.

94. Appian, *Wars*, 64, 111, 117.

95. *Geography*, XII, 3, 37 and XV, 3, 15 respectively.

96. *op. cit.* p. xii.

of the Book of Revelation, and other elements of the saviour imagery, but this requires a further study.

To sum up: the influence of Zoroastrian Eschatology on the Judaeo-Christian tradition is likely to have included the influence of the saviour figure. This influence is to be seen particularly in the saviour's defeat of the demons, his gathering of men for the judgement scene, his raising of the dead, and his administration of the judgement. It is noteworthy that these elements occur for the first time in the Jewish tradition at a date later than Daniel 7, i.e. in the intertestamental literature and more clearly in the New Testament. This suggests that influence took place at a later date than is usually suggested, and that the occasion for it lay in the Jewish-Parthian contacts which began in the second century BC, but which came to a climax in the middle of the first century BC. The conditions of this period, the raising of Apocalyptic hopes first by the Seleucid and Roman oppression and then by the Parthian liberation, would explain why the answer to the Jewish anxieties was given in a developed mythological form under the influence of a sympathetic ally.

4 Zoroastrian Influence on Judaism and Christianity: Some Further Reflections

James Barr has commented how Biblical scholars have remained ‘aloof’ from the study of Iranian language and religion even though he believes it would not be surprising, at least in theory, if there were Iranian influence on Jewish doctrines, such as angels, dualism, eschatology and the resurrection of the body. Despite significant advances in scholarly studies of Iran he comments ‘Much of Old Testament scholarship in the 1980s shows little greater consciousness of the Iranian sources than existed before the mid-nineteenth century’. He advances two possible reasons: (a) it is easier and more natural to move from Biblical Hebrew to Ugaritic and Akkadian than it is to Iranian languages and (b) the personal religious difficulties some leading scholars had in attributing the origin of their own faith to a foreign religion.¹ One suspects that another factor is that for many writers Iran is perceived as a distant and remote power whose relevance for Biblical Studies is considered marginal, even though the Persians ruled Israel for approximately 200 years following the triumphant march of Cyrus the Great who, unique among gentiles, was hailed by a Jewish prophet as ‘the Lord’s Anointed’ (*Isaiah* 45: 1). Their rule was, however, generally exercised at a distance and in that period the Jews in Jerusalem were more concerned with internal affairs than with international intellectual developments and many scholars have felt that the parallels were rather general.²

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1. *The Question of Religious Influence: the case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, 2 (1985), pp. 202-35.
 2. I wish to express my deep gratitude to my mentor in New Testament Studies, the Revd Prof. C.F. Evans for the tremendous stimulation and encouragement given throughout my student days in debates on this subject. I also gratefully

The most recent rejection of the theory of influence is by Yamauchi (1990).³ He does refer, quite extensively, to twentieth century studies of the question but his conclusions do not carry the subject forward, in large part because he refers to studies in his footnotes but does not engage in a fundamental debate with the arguments in his text. Essentially he quotes Boyce and then uses a 'scissors and paste' approach quoting older rejections (Zaehner, König, Charles, Eichrodt) and some more recent ones (Hanson 1975; Barr 1985). But he himself essentially rehearses old arguments, particularly the points that the Zoroastrian parallels appear in the ninth century CE texts (twice in three pages, 462 and 464) and that there are differences between the respective concepts in the two forms of the beliefs, e.g. of the resurrection (p. 461).

The former argument ignores the many studies of the diverse nature of the Iranian texts, many of which are but translations or summaries of ancient pre-Christian material committed to writing to provide instruction for the Zoroastrian faithful in the face of fierce Muslim oppression. The need became acute as the priests who had preserved the oral tradition were slain. Undoubtedly, some of the Pahlavi texts are 'modern' expositions, but others are compilations of ancient priestly lore and it is generally precisely these compilations which are cited in discussions of Zoroastrian influence.⁴ In

acknowledge the help of my colleague Dr G. Brooke. Neither, of course, are responsible for any failing in this article.

3. E.M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, Michigan, 1990, pp. 458-81.
4. See M. Boyce, Middle Persian Literature in B. Spuler (ed), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I, *Literatur*, 1968, pp. 31-76 a standard work, but one which Yamauchi fails to mention. There have been various studies of the Avestan form lying beneath Pahlavi passages, for example G. Widengren, *Zervanitische Texte aus dem 'Avesta' in der Pahlavi-überlieferung: eine Untersuchung zu Zātspram und Bundahišn in Festschrift für W. Eilers*, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 278-87. Whether one does or does not agree with Widengren's thesis about Zurvanism, the point about the Avestan original behind the Pahlavi material remains valid. The main Zoroastrian texts are *The Greater Bundahišn*, sections of the *Dēnkard* (a composite text consisting of both contemporary exposition and summaries of ancient material. It is in the latter where the parallels occur); the *Jāmāsp Nāmāg*, *Zātspram*, *Zand-ī Vohūman Yasn*. On the antiquity of the relevant material see also M. Boyce, *On the Antiquity of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic*, BSOAS, 47 (1984), pp. 57-75; A. Hultgård, *Das Judentum in der*

addition, Yamauchi fails to give adequate consideration to the fact the relevant Zoroastrian teachings occur not just in one but in several texts, each of which displays the character of being a later compilation of translations and summaries of the lost Avestan material (estimates based on these later summaries suggest that only one quarter of the original Avesta has survived the ravages of continual persecutions). It is not simply that proponents of the theory of influence are pointing to an isolated text of uncertain character and dating. Yamauchi simply ignores the fact that some at least of the ideas referred to can be seen to go back to the time of the prophet Zoroaster himself (c 1,200 BCE), and other key ones are quoted in Greek and Latin texts. Further, Yamauchi fails to allow for the convincing way in which it has been shown (notably by Shaked)⁵ that the apocalyptic details in the Zoroastrian tradition are part of a coherent logical structure in Zoroastrianism, and thus appear to be both fundamental and necessary to its original nature, whereas in Judaism and Christianity they appear to be illogical details and not therefore part of its doctrinal foundation (e.g. the idea of two judgements). Although acknowledging that Shaked accepts the theory of Zoroastrian influence, the only piece of writing Yamauchi quotes from Shaked is where the latter acknowledges that the question of dating Zoroastrian sources has to be addressed. It is a very selective and one-sided use of a scholar's works. It is true that there is something of a problem in dating the Zoroastrian sources and associated doctrines, but the question has been addressed by Iranists. Yamauchi's account greatly oversimplifies the issues, ignores the counter

hellenistisch-römischen Zeit und die iranische Religion - ein religionsgeschichtliches Problem, in H. Temporini & W. Haase (eds), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II, 19, 1, 1979, pp. 512-90; A Hultgård, *Forms and Origins of Iranian Apocalypticism* in D. Hellholm (Ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen, 1983, pp. 387-411; T. Olsson, *The Apocalyptic Activity: the case of the Jāmāsp Nāmāg* in Hellholm, pp. 21-49; S. Shaked, *Iranian Influence on Judaism: First Century B.C.E. to Second Century C.E.* in W.D. Davies & L. Finkelstein (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 1984, Vol. I, ch. 12.

5. S. Shaked, *The notions mēnōg and gētīg in the Pahlavi Texts and their Relation to Eschatology*, *Acta Orientalia* 33, 1971, pp. 57-70. Yamauchi does refer to this article in a footnote but fails completely to take account of the argument in his text.

arguments and tends to quote (rather than summarise) those which agree with him.

The second of Yamauchi's points is an argument long shown to be questionable.⁶ It presupposes that influence is a conscious process, an intellectual copying of ideas, in which concepts are transported intact from one belief to another, without any adaption of concepts or without any linking of them with what is already believed. The word 'influence' is an umbrella term indicating more than one possible process, for example, conscious imitation or a reaction against a belief system; or a reaction to a set of events; or a subtle process of subconscious stimulation to develop ideas already held in a particular way at a given moment. Yamauchi's argument that simply because there are differences between the way Jews and Zoroastrians understood certain beliefs, for example the nature of the resurrection or the fiery ordeal, does not of itself establish that there could not have been influence. All it shows is that there was not uncritical 'copying' of every detail of a belief, and few if any scholars have ever suggested such a process. One reason why, in my opinion, Yamauchi's argument lacks conviction is that he treats the texts and changing ideas in isolation from the historical environment. This is a theme which will be developed below.

The case for the theory of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism has recently been vigorously restated in what is perhaps its most comprehensive and magisterial form by Boyce 1991, pp. 361-436, with an important further section on Zoroastrian-Christian interaction, pp. 440-56.⁷ This is not her first publication on the subject. In 1982⁸ she had extended the arguments of what until then

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6. There have been several discussions of this theme. In chronological order they are: Hinnells, 'Zoroastrian Influence on the Judaeo-Christian Tradition,' *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* 45 (1976), pp. 1-23; Hultgård, 1979, pp. 52-22; Shaked, 1984, pp. 309; Barr, 1985, pp. 229 f. Again Yamauchi refers to the articles in footnotes but ignores the arguments in his text.
 7. *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. III (*Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule*) Leiden, 1991 written with F. Grenet.
 8. *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. II, Leiden, 1982, pp. 43-7, 189-95.

was probably the most widely respected, and quoted, study of the subject, by Winston.⁹ Both authors focused mainly on influence in the Achaemenid period. In this recent volume Boyce focuses more on the later period in Jewish history, i.e. the Seleucid and Roman periods. It is not simply the most exhaustive survey of the materials and of previous studies, it is also wide ranging in the historical setting. Thus, she includes a study of the Persian Sibyll (371-401) and the impact of Zoroastrian thought on later oracles, e.g. Hystaspes, a theme she pursued in 1987 in a lecture entitled 'Zoroastrianism: a shadowy but powerful presence in the Judaeo-Christian World' (published by the Dr Williams's Library). She then proceeds to give an extensive consideration of the arguments for influence on the book of *Daniel* and the intertestamental literature (401-36) setting them not only against the background of the Maccabean history but also that of Cappadocia, Pontus, Cilicia, Anatolia, Commagene, Syria and Egypt (chs. 8-10). There is not the scope in a short article to do justice to such a substantial scholarly analysis. The purpose of what follows is to indicate two themes which, in my opinion, merited further development. The first is the theme of Jewish and Christian doctrinal development in the first centuries before and after Christ and the second is to question the validity of her term 'shadowy' for the Zoroastrian presence in the world of Judaism and nascent Christianity.

The recent flurry of studies of Intertestamental and Apocryphal materials¹⁰ and the long-awaited publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls have considerably reinforced what was previously noted but is now much more fully appreciated, namely the extremely variegated nature of Jewish religion in the first centuries before and after Christ. Some authors who are doubtful about influence upon the Hebrew Bible are more open to the idea of influence upon Intertestamental

9. *The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran: a Review of the Evidence*, *History of Religions* 5 (1986), pp. 183-216.

10. A. Hultgård, *L'eschatologie des Testaments des Douze Patriarches*, Uppsala, 1977 and 1982; H.F.D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, Oxford, 1984; J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, London, 1983 (2 vols). See also Hellholm cited in n. 4 above. This bibliography and article deliberately avoids the extremely important but very specialised subject, of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

literature.¹¹ Perhaps the clearest detailed parallels are with the *Parables of Enoch* (*Enoch*, 37-71) generally dated about the time of Jesus. There is doubt about whether they are Christian or Jewish productions, or Jewish texts with some Christian interpolations.¹² But whatever the date or provenance, what they do show is that the parallels with Zoroastrian traditions are not simply vague and general, but also at times quite precise and that these parallels are in a body of literature associated with the sort of theology which finds expression in parts of the New Testament. Some authors in the past have been too ready to assume that because a New Testament idea can be paralleled in the Intertestamental literature it can, therefore, be shown to have been part of Judaism and consequently not an example of 'foreign' influence on the Christian tradition. Such a logic is fundamentally flawed because it assumes too monolithic a structure for the Jewish tradition(s) from which Christianity emerged. It is worth indicating just how precise some of the parallels are. Thus, in I *Enoch* 41:1 and 43:1 the seer views all the secrets of heaven and how the deeds of men are weighed in the balances at the judgement, a theme which goes back in Iranian apocalyptic to the time of Zoroaster himself. In I *Enoch* 51:1 the resurrection is not only from the graves in the earth but also from Sheol, just as in Zoroastrian tradition the resurrection is not only from the grave but also from heaven and hell. In 56:7 the theme of 'a man not knowing his neighbour, or his brother, nor a son his father or his mother' (E.T. by Knibb, in Sparks, 236) reads very much like Zoroastrian apocalyptic where evil in its death throes seeks to destroy the natural order of the cosmos and of human society (*Zand-ī Vohūman Yasn* 4: 15, a text which Yamauchi would dismiss as late but which probably represents a reliable commentary on a lost Avestan, i.e. pre-Christian, text). I *Enoch* 67:13 seems to imply that the fires of judgement may seem either like healing waters or burning fire, a theme central to ancient Iranian apocalyptic. Further detailed parallels have been drawn by Widengren with II *Enoch* (10:1; 24:2; 30:10; 48:5; 65:1) - the last

11. Yamauchi, with extreme caution, p. 463; Barr, p. 229; D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 1964, p. 258. More substantial treatments are in Boyce, 1991 and Hultgård, 1977. An interesting and perhaps neglected article is G. Widengren, *Iran and Israel in Parthian Times with Special Regard to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, *Temenos* 2 (1966), pp. 139-77. Much of the following paragraph is drawn from that article. See also Winston, pp. 192 ff.

12. Sparks 1984, pp. 173 ff.

four being parallels to the central Zoroastrian tradition that the visible (*gētīg*) world emerged from the spiritual (*mēnōg*) world and not in opposition to it. Again there is debate over whether the text is Jewish or Christian, or an amalgamation, and over the date (Sparks, 321-28). But here also, the point is not so much the date and provenance but the illustration of a range of apocalyptic and cosmological ideas represented in the variegated Judaeo-Christian traditions from the first century BCE to the first Century CE, and how closely paralleled some of the details with Zoroastrian tradition are. However, the argument may perhaps be carried one stage further and into the New Testament.

The general trend of New Testament scholarship has commonly been to emphasise the continuity of beliefs between the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible. A question which perhaps needs more attention is from what perspective did New Testament writers view the Hebrew Bible, and what corpus of literature did they see as constituting such a 'Bible'? Without wishing to deny the thesis that there was a degree of doctrinal continuity between what emerged as the formal canons of the two religions, what, in my opinion, has not been adequately recognised is the degree of discontinuity that there is. The obvious illustration of this point is the theme of demonology which dominates sections of the New Testament. Thus, the first half of the Gospel of *Mark* has as a crucial theme the conviction that Jesus' mission is centrally concerned with expelling demons from the world (1:27, 32, 34; 3:11, 15; 5:2-20; 6:7, 13; 7:25-30; 8:33; 9:15-29). It is only when, in the structure of the Gospel, Jesus turns his face back to Jerusalem to begin his progress towards the cross, that demonology diminishes as a central theme. It may be argued that for Markan Christology a crucial idea is expressed in 3:22-27, that Jesus is the one who enters the house of the strong man, Satan, binds him and 'plunders' his demon-dominated house. Similarly, in *Luke* 9:1-12 the primary emphasis of the mission given to the disciples by Jesus is expressed in terms of demonology: 'And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases ...'. The same emphasis appears in the parallel passage in *Matthew* 10:1 (see also 7:22), as does the idea that sickness is demonically caused (4:24; 8:16 & 28 ff.; 9:34; 17:14-18; 10:8). It should be noted that from a Zoroastrian perspective the identification of unclean spirits with demons is theologically correct, as is the link between them and illness, and so also is *Luke's* reference to a group of seven evil spirits (11:26, cfr. *Matthew* 12:45), an absolutely precise parallel to the ancient Zoroastrian tradition of seven evil spirits as countering the seven divine beings or *Ameša*

Spentas.

The idea of demons is not entirely absent from the Hebrew Bible, thus *Psalms* 91:5-6 refers to the demon of plague, but where demons appear then they do so as odd survivals of ancient Near Eastern demonology but they do not play a part in the central theological themes of what came to be seen as the Hebrew canon. They are, however, an important element in much extra-Biblical thought, notably the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, notably *Reuben* 2-3; *Zebulun* 9:8 and *Judah* 13:3, which refer to the seven spirits of error set over against the seven spirits of man, the former including ideas which could easily be interpreted as Zoroastrian, namely those of fornication, insatiate desire, fighting, arrogance, lying and unrighteousness.¹³ The significance of *Testaments* is difficult to interpret since, once more, there is a dispute between scholars over their provenance, be they Jewish, Christian or a mixture.¹⁴ Yet again, for present purposes the provenance is not necessarily the point, what is important is that they illustrate the diversity of demonological beliefs which existed at the time of the formulation of the New Testament and how different these were from the beliefs expressed in the books which came to be recognised as the canonical Jewish scriptures.¹⁵

This element of theological discontinuity between the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible is linked with a development in the image of a devil, from the figure of Satan in *Job* who is a heavenly accuser, testing Job to ensure that he worships God for the right reason and not for gain. He plays the same role in the other passages in which he appears in the Hebrew Bible (*Zechariah* 3:1; I

13. See Shaked, *Qumran and Iran: further Considerations*, Israel Oriental Studies 2 (1972), 437-39.

14. See R.H. Charles, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, London, 1908; M. de Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Leiden, 1975 and the discussion in Sparks, 502-12, also Hultgård 1977 and 1982 cited in n. 10 above.

15. On the development of demonology see E. Langton, *Good and Evil Spirits*, London, 1942; and his *Essentials of Demonology*, London, 1949; Russell, ch. 9; on the differences between the demonology of the New Testament from the Hebrew Bible see J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, London, 1971, 92-127 and R. Leivestad, *Christ the Conqueror*, Oslo, 1954.

Chronicles 21:1). In the New Testament there is a fully developed concept of a devil in hell deploying his demons and inflicting torment on those damned to hell, a place of darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth (*Matthew* 5:29; 8:12; 13:41 & 45; 22:13, or eternal punishment *Matthew* 24:46). Indeed it could be reasonably argued that much of the doctrine, especially in the Gospels, would not be intelligible without a belief in a devil, e.g. the temptations of Jesus in *Matthew* 3, *Mark*, 1:12f and *Luke* 4:1-13 (see also *Matthew* 12:24-28; 16:23; 25:41). Again, the parallels with Zoroastrianism are precise, both in the concept of the role of the devil and the imagery of hell. Here also the Zoroastrian tradition unquestionably goes back well into pre-Christian times.

The subject of eschatology is an extremely complex one, and not one that can be at all adequately entered into in a short article. It is complex because the roots of the network of beliefs can be clearly seen to be part of the very early strata of Jewish faith. What is obvious, however, is that in the first and second centuries BCE, and in the following century, there were dramatic developments in that set of beliefs, essentially the emphasis became far more cosmological. One essential factor in these developments is that once the concept of a devil and demons became part of the tradition then it is inevitable that the work of the Messiah/Saviour/Son of Man would have to be changed. The religious 'armoury' of the earthly Davidic Messiah was not appropriate to defeating a cosmological force of evil. The *New Schürer* (II. pp. 488-54)¹⁶ provides an overview of those very diverse developments. New Testament scholars have generally tended to focus on those parts of the Gospels and Epistles which can be seen to be consistent with the material which came to form part of the canonical Jewish scripture. But there are parts of the New Testament which stand closer to the variegated strands of the Intertestamental literature. Various passages in the Epistles present their own problems, e.g. the use of earlier hymns in the *Epistle to the Philippians* and the different interpretations of other cosmological passages in the Epistles (e.g. whether one might posit an 'incipient' form of Gnostic soteriology). This short article can only point to parallels in a restricted body of New Testament material, mostly the Synoptic Gospels.

16. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black (Eds.), Edinburgh, 1979 (hereafter *New Schürer*).

Within the Gospels it is, perhaps, *Matthew* who most emphasises the eschatological dimension. Thus, in chapters 24-25 he incorporates an expanded version of *Mark* 13, plus material from the source he shared with *Luke* (generally labelled Q, though the existence of such a single source is itself a debated matter) plus three parables of judgement. The following line of argument must be stated cautiously because it includes some unproven, if plausible, hypotheses. It is widely thought that *Matthew* was written in Antioch.¹⁷ It may not be coincidental that that city was a known centre where Zoroastrian traders and travellers formed a community.¹⁸ Clearly, the main focus of *Matthew*'s evangelism was the Jewish community, evidenced for example by his repeated use of 'proof texts', i.e. references asserting that an event happened in order to fulfil the words of the prophets. But in view of the variegated nature of Judaism at that time (indeed one may question whether it is at all appropriate to refer to a single 'ism' in that period) it is not implausible that the Jews to whom *Matthew* addressed his writings were people influenced by the eschatology of their Zoroastrian fellows in that city. In support of this line of thought is the passage on the visit of the Magi (2:1-12) to the infant Jesus. Later legend turned them into three kings but *Matthew* actually uses the correct term for Zoroastrian priests, *magoi*. This passage has caused much debate, not all of it judicious.¹⁹ It is alone among *Matthew*'s birth narratives in not being linked to a 'proof text' - the reference to a ruler coming from Bethlehem in Judah is not linked to the story of the magi. What I am tentatively suggesting is that *Matthew* was seeking not only to present Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish hopes, but also as the fulfilment of the hopes of Zoroastrians living in his neighbourhood, which implies that he knew of the

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17. A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, London, 1949, XXVIII-XXX (who suggests simply Syria, not specifically Antioch - which was originally B. Streeter's argument); F.C. Grant, *Matthew*, in *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, III, Nashville, 1962, 312; A.W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Cambridge, 1963, 4; W.G. Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, London, 1966, 84.
18. G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton, 1961, 126.
19. This is not the place for a full discussion of the material, see Boyce, 1991, 448-56 which has an extensive bibliography.

Zoroastrian expectation of the birth of a saviour.²⁰ Further, I am tentatively suggesting that his soteriology, specifically the eschatological dimension, could plausibly be understood as being written for Jews whose eschatological beliefs had developed somewhat along Zoroastrian lines, given that there was such a community in the city where scholars tend to think that Gospel was written.

A different passage in the New Testament which clearly, in my opinion, owes its ultimate origins to Iran is *Revelation* 20:1-3, 7-8:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while... And when the thousand years were ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth...

Wikenhauser and Farrer²¹ argue that the structure of ch. 20 is based on the pattern of events in *Ezekiel* 35-48. That is (in my opinion) difficult to gainsay. But what this and other Biblical parallels fail to supply is a parallel to the idea of the temporary binding of the devil in the form of a serpent for a thousand years, his release and renewed assault on the creation.²² Precisely such a myth does occur in Iranian texts where the dragon, Azī Dahāk, is said

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20. See Hinnells, *Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New Testament*, *Numen* 16 (1969), 161-85.
21. *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde*, Bd. 40, 1932; *Revelation of St John the divine*, Oxford, 1964, respectively. See also R. Halver, *Der Mythos im Letzten Buch der Bibel*, Hamburg, 1964.
22. For example *Isaiah*, 24:21f; R.H. Charles, *International Critical Commentary on Revelation*, Edinburgh, II, 141; *Daniel* 2:44; 4:3; A. Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, 90; *Tobit*. 8:3, Farrer, 204. J.W. Bailey seeks to explain the ideas of a 'zwischen reich' as an attempt to combine different hopes for the future of Israel (*JBL* 53, 1934, 170-87) but leaves the imagery unexplained.

to have been bound by the ancient hero Frēdūn (Avestan Thraetaona) since slaying him would have released multitudes of evil creatures such as frogs and scorpions (evil and ugly animals or reptiles are thought in Zoroastrianism to be the manifestations of the deadly and foul nature of evil). He does, however, break free from his mountain prison as the renovation, or eschaton, approaches as part of the general pattern of the final death throes of evil seeking to destroy the good creation and then he will consume one-third of mankind. R.H. Charles did note the parallels but dismissed them on the grounds that the Iranian texts date from the ninth century.²³ He failed completely to appreciate the nature of these texts as compilations of early materials, that these passages in particular appear to be collections of very ancient myths and that the theme is alluded to in a number of such texts, not merely one.²⁴ There are numerous details relating to demonology and the concept of hell in the book of *Revelation* which recall Zoroastrian imagery, not least 26:13 where from the evil dragon, beast and false prophet come forth foul spirits like frogs.²⁵ It is too simplistic to argue as F.C. Porter does and say that the author of *Revelation* incorporated details from his sources without understanding.²⁶ If one strong theme has emerged from modern Biblical scholarship it is that the New Testament writers in general structured their works and their thoughts with care and purpose. This

23. *Revelation*, II, 142.

24. *Dēnkard* IX. 21, 8-10; IX. 15, 2; VIII. 13, 9; VII. 10, 10; *Zātsparam* IV. 2; *Zand-ī Vohūman Yasn*, IX. 15; *Dādistān-ī Dēnīg*, LXV. 5.

25. 9:1-11, the bottomless pit giving a column of smoke (it was with smoke that Ahriman is thought to have defiled the pure creation of fire at the beginning of creation in Zoroastrian cosmology), note also 14:11 and 17:8. The symbolism of the scorpion in 9:3, 5, 10; 11:7 (also of the serpent, 9:19; dragon 12:3, 7; 13:2) is very similar to Zoroastrian teaching, as are the ideas of the seven spirits of God (5:5); the woes of the 'end' being such that men long in vain to die (7:6); the reference to the second death and judgement (20:14; 21:8). Several scholars have suggested that Mithra may have been one influential factor in the imagery of the rider on the white horse with a bow in 6:2, even though it is clear that another central factor was *Zechariah* 1 & 6, see Leivestad, 213 and authors discussed by Charles, 156, specifically his criticisms of Gunkel (not all of which are convincing).

26. Commentary on *Revelation* in C. Gore (ed.), *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, London, 1929², 262.

is as true of the author of *Revelation* as of any. What I am suggesting is that in his theology the writer utilised not only Jewish traditions but also elements of the demonology common in the area, to which he was writing, and which Boyce has shown included a substantial presence of Zoroastrianism. He was, thereby, seeking to show Jesus as the conqueror of the forces of evil which both Jews and non-Jews believed to be powerfully present. This article can, obviously, make no pretence at being a complete study of the various dimensions of the subject of Zoroastrian influence on Jewish and Christian texts. What it has sought to do is to highlight the plausibility of the theory of Zoroastrian influence specifically on Christian demonology (and the influence on some Intertestamental texts if they are not Christian). But it is not sufficient merely to accept that there was influence on beliefs in demons, for this is a crucial theological issue with many ramifications not only for the concept of the powers of evil that the saviour must overcome, but even for the concept of God himself and for the understanding of life in the world. The expansion of demonology cannot be separated from the theme of the changed cosmological dimension of eschatology which it was noted above occurred in the first centuries BCE and CE. There is one aspect of the debate which requires further comment, and one which, in my opinion, is gravely lacking from almost all studies of the question, namely the historical background against which influence has to be seen as working. For the thesis of influence to be convincing then, I believe, it has to be shown that that precise form of influence was both possible and likely in the given historical circumstances. A comparison of texts is not, on its own, enough.

Studies of Biblical history are generally extraordinarily weak on the Intertestamental period. Even books which focus largely on Intertestamental thought sometimes neglect the history of the period, so, for example, the widely used, and respected, work of Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, lacks a historical section. Obviously, that is not true of all such studies and the great exception has to be the monumental work of Schürer - both old and new editions. Boyce's recent volume pays great attention to the history of Zoroastrians in Asia Minor and beyond as noted above but what is still needed is an extensive study of the contact between Jews and Zoroastrians throughout the diaspora.²⁷ For, in addition to the areas

27. A full bibliography is impossible here. What is important from the purely Jewish perspective may not be helpful in the study of Jewish-Parthian contacts. The most explicitly relevant studies are G. Widengren, *Quelques*

covered by Boyce, Jews and Zoroastrians met in the first centuries BCE and CE in Iran, in Adiabene, Armenia and not only in Syria in general (which she considers) but even in Jerusalem itself. What Boyce's work does show, beyond doubt, is that the Zoroastrian tradition was widely spread, and powerfully represented in Asia Minor at the time when *Revelation* was written, and clearly the author of this work written to the seven churches of Asia Minor was acquainted with the area. In short, the Zoroastrian tradition was in the right place at the right time to have been a source of influence on that author. But there are other and even closer Jewish-Zoroastrian links which merit discussion.

It is, in my opinion, difficult to exaggerate the turbulence of Jewish history in the Intertestamental period. In the second century BCE there was the reasonably widely discussed Maccabean revolt against Seleucid rule. The persecution of Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes was something of a watershed not only in history, but also, I would suggest, in theological development: a time when Jews were persecuted not simply for being Jews, but for being good Jews. The traditional theology of suffering, whereby God punished his people for their misdeeds, did not tally with their experience. The point which merits emphasis is that a development was needed in the theology to explain how and why the righteous suffer precisely for being righteous, and how can the wicked Jew flourish for being non-Jewish as the philhellenes of the community did under Hellenistic rule? The idea of an afterlife, of postmortem reward and punishment, of evil demonic forces assaulting the righteous, must surely have been convincing for many in their struggles. Boyce discusses the historical situation of the second century, but although she brings her study of the literature into the first century she omits what, in my opinion, are some crucial historical events, namely the Jewish-Parthian contacts in the first century. There is a logic in her omission, for Volume IV of her *History of Zoroastrianism* is intended to deal with the Parthian period, but given the time when much of the literature she writes about comes down into the first century it is worth highlighting certain facets of that later historical period.

rapport entre juifs et iraniens à l'époque des Parthes, *Vetus Testamentum*, Suppl. 4 (1957), 197-241 (also his *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthische Zeit*, Cologne, 1960, though much is controversial, not least ch. 8 on the birth legends); J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, Vol. 1, Leiden, 1969² and for a general overview see the *New Schürer* III. (i) 31; J.J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem, Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 1983.

Neusner (1969²) has shown the undoubtedly close contacts between Israel and Parthia in the first century (contacts which may be surmised, but cannot be proved, to have existed in the second century BCE). What is not sufficiently stressed in many books is the Roman maltreatment of the Jews in the first century BCE.²⁸

In 63 BCE Pompey captured Jerusalem during his military campaign in the east of the Empire. He was given free access to the city by one of the two warring Jewish parties, the followers of Hyrcanus, but the opposing side, the followers of Aristobulus, resisted and a bloody spell of street fighting took place before the temple mount was captured and Pompey desecrated the temple by entering the Holy of Holies. How the pro-Roman party viewed this desecration is not known, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that those commonly referred to as 'the nationalists', and the religious leaders, were outraged. It is speculation, but not wild speculation, to suggest that some of these nationalists and religious leaders in the maelstrom of Jewish society of the period may have looked eastwards to the Iranian rulers for a new Cyrus, for a new Messiah, to avenge this heathen outrage. Indeed, there are indications that among the wider religious public there was a pro-Parthian party. This is best evidenced in a series of events in the period 55-38 BCE.²⁹

28. Some of the main studies are (in chronological order): H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Röm in der antiken Welt*, Berlin 1938; F.-M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, 2 vols, 1952; M. Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*, London, 1973 (esp. chs 2-4); E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden, 1976; E. Loftus, *The anti-Roman Revolts of the Jews and Galileans*, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 68 (1977), 78 ff. For a general overview and account of the primary sources see *New Schürer*, I. 238 ff. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, New York, 1955, 433, links the existence of a pro-Parthian group with the increase in apocalyptic.

29. The main primary sources are Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*; Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, I. 818; *Antiquities* XIV (quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the Loeb editions). For secondary sources, in addition to the those in n. 28 above, see: G. Rawlinson, *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, London 1873; N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago, 1938, 78-95; W.W. Tarn in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 1971, IX, 604-12.

In 54 BCE Crassus, consul of Rome with responsibility for Syria (Pompey ruled in the West), began a campaign against the Parthians. He wintered his forces in Syria where, Plutarch relates, 'he spent his time more like a usurer than a general', levying taxes, forces and pillaging local temples, including that in Jerusalem. There he took the gold even Pompey had left, despite having given the priestly guardian of the treasures his word that on payment of a ransom of a beam of gold he would leave the other treasures; he in fact plundered the whole temple. Josephus stresses what a vast sum this was because of the donations of Jews from around the diaspora. The campaign of Crassus was not widely popular in Rome, as the Parthians seem to have realised, sending an embassy to find out whether it was a short-term raid or formal war. The Parthian ambassadors, incensed at their treatment, reported to the Parthian monarch who sent his army to confront Crassus near Carrhea in Mesopotamia. The Roman forces outnumbered the Parthians four to one, but were decisively beaten by them. Crassus himself was decapitated and the head sent to the Parthian king in triumph. The texts do not relate what the popular Jewish reaction to these events was but it may be reasonable to suppose that Crassus was hated for his treatment of the temple and its treasure and that his devastating defeat, and own death, at the hands of a much smaller army only months after his sacrilege was seen as the judgement of God administered at the hands of the Parthians.

Following this triumph over the Roman forces there was widespread anticipation of a Parthian march westwards, so that Caesar undertook extensive preparations to anticipate the assault, but was murdered before battle took place. The Parthian invasion did not come until 40 BCE.³⁰ They divided their forces in Syria, one portion marching westwards into Anatolia, the other, under Pacorus, marched south through Syria where, according to Josephus (*Wars* I. 249) various cities, except Tyre, opened their gates to him. Pacorus marched on Jerusalem, having been paid by the Hasmonean, Antigonus, to overthrow Herod, and reestablish the Hasmonean dynasty. Josephus relates that 'Jews flocked to Mattathias Antigonus in large numbers and volunteered for the invasion' (*Wars* I. 250). The forces marched on Jerusalem where Herod

30. In addition to Josephus there is a brief account of the events in Dio's *Roman History* XLVIII. 26, see also Abel, Vol. 1, pp. 334-46; Debevoise, ch. 5 (99 for the popular support for the Parthians in Anatolia); Smallwood, pp. 51-59; *New Schürer*, I, 14.

and his brother Phasaël barricaded themselves in the palace, but those opposed to Herod 'the populace that was in league against the brothers', as Josephus expressed it, burned down the garrison where the brothers' forces were housed. The battle between the opposing factions in the city was intense. The Parthians, meanwhile, camped outside the city until the feast of Pentecost awaiting the aid of the pilgrims (*Wars* I. 253; *Antiquities* XIV. 13. 4). Pacorus was, in due course, admitted to the city and took Phasaël away, but Herod refused to go with them and eventually escaped to Masada with many of his family and possessions. An indication of the Jewish antagonism for Herod was that, as Josephus put it, 'He found in his flight the Jews even more troublesome than the Parthians, for they perpetually harassed him' (*Wars* I. 265). Once the Parthians captured Jerusalem then, according to Josephus, they pillaged the city, put Antigonus on the throne, rendered Herod's nominee for the high priesthood unfit for his office (by cutting off his ears, and the high priest was required to be without blemish), but then left Antigonus to rule. Journeying via Egypt, Herod eventually made his way to Rome and appealed to Anthony and Caesar. They supported Herod's cause before the Senate on the grounds that Antigonus was a promoter of sedition and an enemy of Rome, having accepted the crown from a Parthian. (In *Antiquities* XIV. 14 Josephus adds that Herod also paid Anthony a large sum of money for the return of the crown.) The Senate then unanimously endorsed Herod, who went with Anthony and Caesar to offer sacrifice on the Capitol. The Parthian interlude was but a short one. They were defeated in 38 and Herod recaptured Jerusalem in 37, butchering many of the inhabitants, men women and children, and his soldiers looted the city until eventually order was restored. Antigonus was executed by the Romans - the first time they had so dealt with such a king - in conformity with the known wishes of Herod.

The significance of these events is not easy to assess. The first question is, of course, the reliability of Josephus. His account may be biased by two contrasting factors. On the one hand he was a Hasmonean and therefore potentially biased in favour of Antigonus. On the other hand, he was in the paid employ of the Romans (Vespasian, Titus and Domitian) when he wrote and may therefore be expected to have an interest in providing as acceptable an account to his Roman masters as possible.³¹ The balance would seem to

31. For bibliographical references, particularly on his reliability, see *New Schürer* I, 43-63 with two important additional references in the later Vol. III. 1. 545f.

indicate that his allusions to the unpopularity of Herod among many Jews should be taken seriously. He was an Idumean, a 'half-Jew', who owed his positions to the Romans and it seems most unlikely that confirmation of that position on the Jewish throne by offering sacrifices on the Capitol in Rome would endear him to the religious Jews. His actions earlier in his rise to power would have alienated this section of the Jewish population. In 47-46 BCE he was governor in Galilee, under the authority of his father Antipater. He executed one whom Josephus calls a 'brigand' (*Wars* I. 204), Ezekias and his followers. It may be that Ezekias was, as Josephus implies, merely a robber, or perhaps a guerrilla leader against the Romans (so Smallwood, p. 44 plausibly argues). Whatever his status, Hyrcanus the king was outraged at the display of power by Herod and summoned him to appear before the Sanhedrin. But instead of doing so in the customary black of the accused he did so in royal purple and with a bodyguard. Their indignation was aroused, but Hyrcanus was ordered by the Governor of Syria to acquit him, nevertheless Herod was advised to leave the city. In his anger he marched with an army against Jerusalem with the intention of deposing Hyrcanus, but desisted on the entreaties of his father and brother.

The point behind these events in the present context is the unpopularity such acts would cause among traditional or religious Jews - one who marched against their holy city, one who tried to depose the Jewish King, who was not a full Jew and received his throne in the manner described, in Rome. This picture explains the occasional hints in Josephus that there was an anti-Herod and anti-Roman party in Jerusalem who were sympathetic to the Parthians, or who welcomed their invasion, as ridding them of the alien rule, just as Cyrus had before them. Such hints can be seen in a number of events: possibly the work of Ezekias; the way in which cities in the region opened their gates to Pacorus as he marched towards Jerusalem; the reference to numerous Jews flocking to support Antigonus and volunteer for the invasion; the reference to the factions in Jerusalem including the parties opposed to Herod and Phasaël; the Parthian delay while camping outside Jerusalem awaiting the help of the pilgrims at Pentecost and the way the Jews are said to have chased Herod as he fled Jerusalem for Masada. Taken together these pointers suggest a widespread popular and religious Jewish support for the Parthian invasion.

Obviously this one sequence of events from 54-37 BCE does not alone supply an adequate historical background for the theories of Zoroastrian influence on Judaism and Christianity. It does not account for the much earlier instances of

influence seen in canonical Jewish scripture, especially in *Daniel* (the later and, from this point of view, the most relevant chapters being dated c. 165 BCE). Nor is it inherently plausible that such a relatively short period of time would, on its own, affect a religion in such a diverse fashion as has been indicated. But if this sequence of events is viewed in the wider perspective, as it has to be, then it can be seen as one important link, and a neglected link, in a longer and substantial chain of connections between Zoroastrian Iran and Israel: the extended period of Iranian rule in Israel from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE; an elaborate network of diaspora contacts in Iran itself (as Neusner has shown), in the Fertile Crescent (Adiabene, Armenia, Syria as Widengren has shown) and in Anatolia (especially Lydia, Commagene, Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia but also more widely as Boyce has shown). The precise significance of the period 57-38 BCE is that both the timing and the nature of the contacts are such that they would be likely to stimulate, yet further, thoughts of the conflict with the powers of evil and to raise hopes for a saviour who would come to triumph over the demonic forces. In the decades immediately prior to the birth of Jesus Zoroastrianism was not a distant or shadowy presence, but was then the world's most powerful religion, a religion which had a long record of support for Israel, which was found in many parts of the regions where Jews travelled, and which indeed was brought to the streets of Jerusalem in 40 BCE and which was seen to exact (divine?) vengeance on one who had dared to violate the Holy of Holies and steal the temple treasure, and whose forces had forced the Roman Idumean puppet to flee. Momigliano has shown how in Hellenism Iran became thought of as the land of eastern wisdom, mystery and learning.³² Beck has shown that although the Zoroastrian Pseudepigrapha may not be Zoroastrian they nevertheless indicate how Iranian authority was invoked for religious teachings.³³ It was because of this potent image that the Roman cult of Mithras (to which subject Prof. Bianchi has contributed so much) claimed its teachings were derived from the Persian Zoroaster.³⁴ The point is, then, that the image of Iran and of Zoroastrianism was immensely powerful, as was its physical presence, at the very time that there was a surge in Jewish and Christian demonological thought. The combination in time and

32. *Alien Wisdom: the Limits of Hellenization*, Cambridge, 1975, ch. 6.

33. *Thus Spake not Zarathustra: Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha of the Greco-Roman World*, in Boyce and Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. 3, 491-565.

34. Porphyry, *De Antro Nympharum*, 6.

location of this powerful, visible presence, of the widespread image of Iran as a source of religious knowledge and the close doctrinal parallels between Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian teachings can hardly be dismissed as coincidental.³⁵

35. The Parthian invasion of Jerusalem was related to the question of influence as long ago as 1894 by M. J. Darmesteter, *Les Parthes à Jérusalem*, *Journal Asiatique*, 1894, 43-54, but that was as part of his argument for Jewish influence on Zoroastrianism, an argument which has not found favour and which, given the status of the two regimes, and the arguments for the antiquity of the Zoroastrian beliefs advanced above, is entirely without conviction. Of course, a short article cannot cover every point and one that is omitted here has been the nature of Parthian religion. It seems to me, however, that there can be little doubt but that Zoroastrianism was the religion of the Iranians, as argued by Boyce, *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices*, London, 1979, ch. 6. Older studies which emphasised their hellenism were, in my opinion, overly impressed by the excavations of hellenistic cities. Studies of the minstrel tradition and of the interaction between Parthia and other countries, e.g. Armenia and the Kusāna kingdom, show that whatever may have been the western orientation of some localities the general tradition was Zoroastrian.

Section C
Parsi History



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5 Introduction

Chapters 6-8 were originally delivered as the Government Research Fellowship Lectures at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay. There have been a number of studies of the early history of Bombay since the publication of these lectures. One of the areas of study has been British trade in Surat in the seventeenth century,¹ although little has been done on the Parsi role there. There have been two valuable studies of a leading Parsi family from Surat, Rustam Maneck Seth, a major broker who had sufficient influence to gain access to the Muslim court in Delhi for British traders. The first of these studies was a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia written by David L. White,² which makes good use of western sources in particular (East India Company material for example); the later study by Eduljee is stronger on the Indian sources, though the latter appears not to have known of White's thesis.³ White's work corrects some of the work undertaken much earlier by Sir J. J. Modi.⁴

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1. In chronological order of appearance: V. Chavda, *A Select Bibliography of Gujarat, its history and culture 1600 – 1857*, Ahmedabad, 1972; O.P. Singh, *Surat and its trade in the second half of the 17th century*, Delhi, 1977; B. G. Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, London, 1979; A. Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat 1700-1750*, Wiesbaden, 1994.
 2. *Parsis as Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth Century Western India: the Rustum Manock Family and the Parsi Community of Bombay*, University Microfilms International, 1979.
 3. H. E. Eduljee, 'Rustam Maneck and His Sons, Brokers of Surat,' *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, (JCOI) 60, 1995, pp. 1-90.
 4. See especially 'Rustom Manock (1635-1721 AC). The Broker of the English East India Company (1699AC) and the Persian Qisseh (History) of Rustam Manock: a study', in Modi's *Asiatic Papers*, IV, 1929, pp. 101-320.

Perhaps the biggest single development in the history of western India in the seventeenth century is the increased use of Portuguese sources,⁵ but thus far the only use made of these in Parsi studies is a 1930s publication on Rustom Maneck (used by White and Eduljee). Similarly neglected thus far in Parsi studies, White apart, are the annals of the East India Company. There are, therefore, vast areas for future research. A useful volume on private trade, an area where Parsis were important as middlemen, was published by Watson.⁶ Dossal has produced an interesting volume on the planning of Bombay city in the mid-nineteenth century. Although it is not directly on Parsis, it is of relevance because much of the planning, finance, health, docks and railways were concerns in which Parsis were involved.⁷ A biography has been written of a leading Parsi banker, Pochkhanawala.⁸ More popular works on early Bombay, each of which includes some material on the Parsis, are by Gillian Tyndall,⁹ and two recent large coffee table books (in appearance) but which include some useful material, much visual, of the early period, including sites of Parsi interest.¹⁰

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5. M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: the response to the Portuguese in the sixteenth century*, Berkeley, 1976; C. R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the mid-seventeenth century*, Bombay, 1980; Pearson, *Coastal Western India: studies from the Portuguese records*, Delhi, 1981; Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Cambridge History of India, I.i, 1987; S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, London, 1993.
 6. I. B. Watson, *Foundation for Empire, English private trade in India 1659-1760*, Delhi, 1980.
 7. M. Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Cities: the planning of Bombay city 1845-1875*, Bombay, 1991.
 8. N. J. Nanporia, *Pochkhanawala the banker*, Bombay, 1981.
 9. Tindall, *City of Gold: the biography of Bombay*, London, 1982.
 10. S. Dwivedi and R. Mehrotra, *Bombay, the Cities within*, Bombay, 1995; P. Rohatgi, P. Godrej and R. Mehrotra, *Bombay*, Bombay 1997.

There have been three important publications on the subject of the western travellers in the region. The first two, Guha¹¹ and Ball,¹² are publications of individual travellers' accounts: Ovington in Guha vol. I, Thevenot and Careri in Guha vol. II; Tavernier in Ball. Firby's book is an extensive and critical assessment of almost forty seventeenth and eighteenth century European travellers' perceptions of Zoroastrians both in Iran and India.¹³ This was originally submitted as a postgraduate thesis at Manchester University and provides valuable historical insights. There is no obvious area for further research in the area so ably covered by Firby.

The subject of Parsis and western education has hardly been addressed since the publication of this ch. 8. Two useful nineteenth century publications mentioned in ch. 9, Menant and Murzban, have been reprinted, but as reprints they do not add to knowledge already available.¹⁴ Ramanna has published a synthesis of the biography of the first Parsi woman to go to school, Dosabai Jessawalla, a biography used in ch. 8. (*JCOI*, 61, 1997, pp. 1-16) There are two or three individuals currently working on the Revd. John Wilson, but nothing has thus far emerged in print.

The main publication on social change in Bombay at the turn of the nineteenth twentieth centuries is the proceedings of a Bombay seminar organised by Professor Nawaz Mody, with chapters on Parsi social and political reformers (including the hitherto neglected Madame Cama) and Parsi contribution to diverse branches of the arts.¹⁵ There have been two studies of major Parsi

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11. J. P. Guha, *India in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols., Delhi, 1976.
 12. V. Ball, *Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's Travels in India*, edited by W. Crooke, Delhi, 1977.
 13. *European Travellers and their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Berlin, 1988.
 14. D. Menant, *Les Parsis*, Paris 1898, repr. Osnabruck, 1975 (ch. 7 on education); M. M. Murzban, *The Parsis*, Bombay, 1917, repr. Bombay, 1995. Vol. III, ch. 7 is on education.
 15. N. B. Mody (ed.), *The Parsis in Western India: 1818-1920*, Bombay, 1998.

industries, the Tatas¹⁶ and the Godrej industries,¹⁷ and one of a major Trust.¹⁸ There have been relatively few biographies written, but an interesting exception to that is the memoirs of the scion of the Marker family in Quetta.¹⁹ Kekobad A. Marker was a major figure in the politics of Sind in the first half of the nineteenth century, a man deeply concerned for his co-religionists in Iran, among whom he engaged in much philanthropy. Several books have been produced on the subject of political change, and the Parsi place in that. The literature on the growth of the Indian National Congress is far too vast to be comprehensively covered in this short introduction, so only those books which relate to Parsi affairs will be referred to, scholars interested in other aspects of these political movements will inevitably see major gaps in the following references. Jones' work on socio-religious movements is an important work, but the material on the Parsis (pp.145-50) is small.²⁰ Chandra's work on the Independence movement has useful material on the Parsis, but the three major authors from a Parsi historian's perspective are Dobbin, Mehrotra²¹ and Masselos,²² each of whom pay particular attention to Bombay, and hence the Parsis.

16. R. M. Lala, *The Creation of Wealth*, Bombay, 1981.

17. B. K. Karanjia, *Godrej: a hundred years 1897-1997*, Delhi, 1997 (2 vols).

18. R. M. Lala, *The Heartbeat of a Trust: fifty years of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust*, Bombay, 1984 (2 vols).

19. K. A. Marker, *A Petal from the Rose*, Karachi, 1984.

20. K. W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge History of India, III.i, 1989. He writes about the Rahnumai Mazdyasnan Sabha.

21. *Urban Leadership in Western India: politics and communities in Bombay City 1840-1885*, Oxford, 1972. See also S.R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition*, Delhi, 1979.

22. J. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: public institutions and urban politics in the nineteenth century*, Bombay, 1974; Masselos, *Indian Nationalism*, London, 1986.

There have been a number of publications on Parsi politicians, two on Pherozechah Mehta,²³ several on Dadabhai Naoroji.²⁴ Bhowndegree was the focus of a joint study Hinnells and Ralph at the centennial anniversary of his election as an MP.²⁵ But the Parsi M.P. to have most written of him in recent times is the Labour, then Communist, M.P. Saklatvala.²⁶ The main ones are very different. Squires and Wadsworth are political biographies, Sehri Saklatvala is a very personal account of her father. Saklatvala, like Bhowndegree, has fared badly at the hands of historians, especially within the Parsi community. Bhowndegree has been dismissed as overly compliant with the British government, and Saklatvala was caricatured as a hypocrite, attacking capitalism while living on Tata money (he was a member of the family and had worked for the firm). The various studies have shown these caricatures to be false – and the stories became neatly interwoven as the Tory and the

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23. S. R. Bakshi, *Pherozechah Mehta: socio-political ideology*, Delhi, 1991 and N. B. Mody (ed.) *Pherozechah Mehta: maker of modern India*, Bombay, 1997.
24. Of particular importance is R. P. Patwardhan, *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence* Vol. II parts 1 & 2, Bombay 1977. Unfortunately these volumes are letters to Naoroji, the vol. I on letters from Naoroji has not been published. Around 1992, the centennial anniversary of his election to Parliament, saw the publication of several works in his honour, e.g. Z. Gifford, *Dadabhai Naoroji: Britain's first Asian M.P.*, London 1992; *Dipanjali* (magazine of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman), Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Issue, Delhi, 1992; F. Vajifdar, *The Twist in the Rope: a study of the Patriot Dadabhai Naoroji*, London, 1992 and later O. Ralph, *Naoroji: the first Asian M.P.*, Antigua, 1997. There is also a study of Naoroji in parliament, and as leader of the London Zoroastrian community, in J. R. Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, Oxford, 1996.
25. J. R. Hinnells and O. Ralph, *Bhowndegree: Member of Parliament: 1895-1906*, London, 1995. This text was subsequently amended, in parts corrected, and elaborated by Hinnells in *JCOI* and is included below.
26. In chronological order these are: C. Hancock, 'The Life and Works of Shapurji Saklatvala', *JCOI*, 1990, 1-82; M. Squires, *Saklatvala: a political biography*, London, 1990; Sehri Saklatvala, *The Fifth Commandment*, Salford, 1992; Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, 1996, and M. Wadsworth, *Comrade Sak: Shapurji Saklatvala MP: a political biography*, London, 1998.

Communist MPs at the end of their lives established friendly relations after years of dispute.

There have been further studies of the more modern period, but that takes us beyond the scope of the chapters in these collected works and will be the subject of future publications.²⁷

27. The High Priest Dastur Dr K.M. JamaspAsa and I are working on a *History of the Parsis in British India*, and I hope in the next year to bring out a study of the Parsis in the diaspora in the twentieth century.

6 Anglo-Parsi Commercial Relations in Bombay Prior to 1847

The first known British person to visit India was a Jesuit priest, Thomas Stephens, who was at a college in Goa in 1579. His reports back to Britain brought the first British traders to India. The advantages of Bombay as a commercial base for western India were soon apparent: it formed a natural harbour and as an island it was free from the political tensions of the mainland. The first British attempt to acquire Bombay from its then rulers, the Portuguese, was made in 1626. Money and invasion proved ineffective, but marriage overcame all obstacles. In the mid-seventeenth century the Portuguese were faced with both economic problems and Dutch aggression in western India. So in exchange for the promise of military assistance Bombay passed into British hands as part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza in her marriage to Charles II in 1662. Despite these moves to possess the island, there was in Britain little general interest in Bombay, and even less knowledge of it. The Earl of Clarendon, the then Lord Chancellor, referred to: 'the island of Bombay with the towns and castles therein which are within a very little distance of Brazil.'¹ The Portuguese Viceroy in Bombay, Antonio de Mello de Castro, was more perceptive in his assessment of the island. He placed every obstacle in the way of British occupation short of 'flagrant disobedience of direct royal commands. He declared to his king: 'India will be lost the same day in which the English nation is settled in Bombay.'² Bombay did become

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1. Quoted in M. D. David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708*, Bombay, 1973, p. 39 and J. Douglas, *Bombay and Western India*, London, 1893 from Clayton's *Personal Memoirs*, London, 1859, vol 2, p. 189. David's *History* provides a reliable and thoroughly documented account of the early years of British presence in Bombay.
 2. David, p. 66.

crucial to British interests in India, but not without many problems and much heart searching.

We are still too close in time to the period of British rule in India to offer a truly objective assessment of its merits and demerits. But Anglo-Indian relations were different in Bombay from those in any other Presidency or Province. One problem that British rule frequently caused was the breakdown of traditions and laws, the disruption of family and social ties. Although this did happen in Bombay, both cause and effect were different. Elsewhere, the British arrived, introduced laws and shattered custom by imposing their ways from above on to a community with more or less regard for local opinions.³ Bombay, on the other hand, was almost created by the British. The Portuguese had not fundamentally changed its character of a group of unhealthy, marshy islands inhabited only by a few fishermen. Here the British, over a period of time, created conditions which various Indian groups then *chose* to migrate into. The social ties were still broken, but by choice not imposition. Indeed, one of the early attractions of the island to Indians was this very breaking of ties. On the mainland there was, especially under the Portuguese, little religious freedom. The Portuguese came to India for souls and spices, the British came only for trade and their policy was one of strict religious neutrality, a policy decreed by the King in person. From a hundred years after accession there is, from the Parsi point of view, a particularly interesting example of the East India Company's firm stand on this matter. On 29th February, 1792 the following proclamation was issued from Bombay Castle:

Whereas it has been represented to Government by the caste of Parsees that a European inhabitant of the island, unobservant of that decency which enlightened people shew to the religious ceremonies of the Natives of India, had lately entered one of the repositories for their dead, to the great distress, inconvenience and expense of the said Caste; the Acting President in Council has thought fit to reprimand the person alluded to for his improper conduct; and in order to mark in the strongest manner his discountenance of such unwarrantable proceedings, and to deter others from the commission of like indignities in future, he hereby causes it to be signified, that whoever shall obtrude themselves on the temples, Tombs or Government, will be suspended from the Honourable Company's service, if in their employ, or if free

3. On the breaking of traditions in India see M. Edwardes, *A History of India*, London, 1961, pp. 214, 222, 224f, 257ff.

merchants, mariners, or others be adjudged to have forfeited their licences and will be sent to Europe.

By order of the Acting President in Council

WILLIAM PAGE, Secretary.⁴

This threat of dishonourable dismissal and return to Europe was a big one. The motivation behind the Company's policy may have been simply to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for the good of trade, but for minorities like the Parsis it was an attractive feature of British rule.

There were at least two other features which attracted settlers to the island. The island offered both 'the promise and practice of impartial justice.... a rare thing in the surrounding regions.'⁵ In addition, the early Governors offered economic incentives, such as loans, trading rights and even five year protection from liability for previously contracted debts.

How many Parsis were attracted by these incentives is not known. There were individual Parsis on the island prior to British rule. For example, Dorabji Nanabhai was employed by the Portuguese as a tax collector, and Kharshedji Pochaji Panday was a supplier for the building of the fortifications.⁶ In January of 1671, Streyntsham Master commented:

Here is also some Parsees, but they are lately come since the English had the island, and are most of them weavers and have not yet any place to do their Devotion in or to Bury their Dead.⁷

Three years later Fryer reported that on Malabar Hill 'a top of all is a Parsy

4. Douglas, p. 147n.

5. David, p. 444.

6. David, p. 433. D. F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, London, 1884, II, pp. 49ff. B.B. Patel, *The Parsee Patells of Bombay*, Bombay, 1937, pp. 3, 5, 8, 13.

7. David, p. 434.

Tomb lately reared.⁸ The date of the arrival of Parsis in Bombay can therefore be put somewhere in the early 1670s.

Although some Parsis migrated to Bombay, along with other communities, there was no sudden rush to the island and certainly no dramatic rise in Bombay's fortunes. Indeed, the problems were so great that there were moves, notably by Cornwallis, to have Bombay reduced from the level of a Presidency to that of a Factory. In a letter to Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, dated 4th November, 1788, he asked what use was the parade of governor and council and a large establishment of merchants and factors, supported by all and more than the surplus revenues of Benares and Bihar when they did little more than load one ship a year and collect an insignificant revenue. Dundas at first supported Bombay, but in 1790 he confessed:

It is really matter of great moment to get rid of the immense load of expense which attains the Bombay establishment.⁹

Even as late as 1804 establishment costs for the island were three times greater than revenue. For comparison, the revenue of Bengal was thirteen times greater than that of the Bombay Presidency.¹⁰

Why did the attempts to attract trade fail and what was it that changed the island's fortunes? Fundamentally, the problem was the insecurity of British rule in the area. Bombay did not become British in character as soon as it passed under their official control. It was only in 1719 that Portuguese currency and language were dropped as the official means of business. Even in the 1720s, after sixty years of supposed British control, the ruling

8. *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 1698, p. 67, quoted in R. B. Paymaster, *Early History of the Parsees in India*, Bombay, 1954, pp. 48f.
9. P. Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1786-1806*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 46-49 at p. 49.
10. Ryland's English Manuscripts 694/32 in the Ryland's University Library, Manchester. The Bombay revenues for 1804 were Rs. 63, 60, 436 and charges were Rs. 181, 42, 405. The revenue in 1804/5 for Bengal was Rs. 9, 34, 26, 412, for Madras Rs. 1, 22, 42, 852.

community was small and conscious of its isolation in the midst of Portuguese settlements,¹¹ settlements which were not passive in their attitude to foreign rule.

On 13th May 1720, Portuguese priests were removed from the city for stirring up trouble among the Catholics, a discontented group because of the official policy of religious neutrality. The Portuguese were replaced by an Italian Bishop and some Carmelite priests who swore

that they will not directly or indirectly teach, preach, or practice anything contrary to the interest or dignity of the crown.¹²

The British did not become the dominant economic power in the region until the 1730s.¹³

But it was not only the Portuguese who retarded British fortunes in Bombay. Political troubles on the mainland with the Sidi, and later with the Maratha powers, engaged resources both of money and energy throughout the eighteenth century. At sea, piracy was a constant threat to the trade which was the very basis of Bombay's existence, a threat not removed until as late as 1819.¹⁴

But even if the British in Bombay had been able to ignore these threats on land and sea, they would still have been faced with the island's own problems. The climate proved disastrous for the westerner's constitution. It was said that two monsoons were the British person's life on the island, and only one in twenty British infants born there survived. Life in Bombay was such that seven governors died in the first thirty years. The strange diet, the lack of kindred society and the two year wait for replies to letters home drove most to drink and

11. H. Furber, *Bombay Presidency in the mid-eighteenth century*, London, 1965, p. 2.

12. G. W. Forrest, *Selections from the Letters, Despatches and other State Papers preserved in the Bombay Secretariat*, Bombay, 1887, p. xxxv.

13. Furber, pp. 44-46.

14. *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Bombay 1909 (repr 1978) vol. 2, pp. 96ff. and p. 137 on piracy.

thereby hastened their death yet further with alcoholism. Bombay was the least popular of the Presidencies among Company servants, with the inevitable result that it became the dumping ground for its least able employees.¹⁵ In short, the eighteenth century was a time when Britain was struggling to establish herself in Bombay. It was not, as far as the East India Company were concerned, a time of financial success.

What of the Parsis in eighteenth century Bombay? A historians judgement of what is important, all too often, is based on what people in history have themselves judged to be worthy of recording. The nineteenth century Parsis were highly literate and very self conscious, with the result that they left behind detailed records of their achievements. The eighteenth century Parsis may have been conscious of their identity in a cosmopolitan city, but they were not highly literate and have not therefore left such a record of their work. It is, therefore, easy to assume that the community's greatest achievements were in the nineteenth century. One of the main themes of this lecture will be that this may be an easy assumption, but it is not necessarily the right one. Another assumption has to be questioned before we can proceed to consider the economic rise of the Parsis. It is convenient to divide time into centuries and refer to eighteenth and nineteenth century Bombay. But the mere change of numerals from 1799 to 1800 did not, of itself, affect life on the island. Indeed, there is no one date at which you can say '*there* is a clear decisive break.' Three factors converge to make 1847 a reasonable and convenient division. First, other communities in Bombay were, by then, challenging Parsi economic power. Second, 1847-50 was a period of economic decline when a number of Parsis lost their fortunes. Third, it was a time of increasing Parsi educational activity when the nature of the community's role and influence in the affairs of the city began to change and that change will be the subject of the third lecture. So we turn to the rise of the Parsis in Bombay up to 1847.

The period from their arrival reported by Streynsham Master until 1736 is almost opaque to the historian's gaze. One piece of light is shed by the report in 1716 from Captain Alexander Hamilton, the Commander of the Bombay marine. Of the Parsis he said:

15. David, p. 405; Douglas, pp. 51-55; Nightingale, p. 18; Furber, p. 3; *Gazetteer*, pp. 111, 114.

They are very industrious and diligent in their vocation, and are bred to Trades and manuring Ground. They are good Carpenters or Shipbuilders, exquisite in the weaver's trade and Embroidery They work well in Ivory and Agate, and are excellent Cabinet-makers. They distil strong waters, but they do that clandestinely, because that Trade is prohibited by the Government they live under, yet some of them get a good livelihood by it.¹⁶

The implication of this passage is that the Parsis had not, by 1716, assumed the mercantile role in which they later came to power, but they were already in one concern they were to dominate for 150 years-shipbuilding.

In 1736 Lowji Wadia came from Surat to Bombay. This important event is noted in all Parsi histories, but its significance, perhaps, has not always been understood, a point which will arise later. The British had sought to develop the port and dockyard facilities of Bombay from the earliest times of their settlement. On 10th January, 1736 the Council wrote to the Surat Factors that they wanted a good Master Carpenter. 'We are told that there is one in Surat named Lowjee. If he will come hither he shall have all fitting encouragement.'¹⁷Lowji did go and he stayed on to build Bombay dockyard into western Indias main yard. He and his descendants ran the dockyard until 1885, producing ships whose quality was so renowned they were exported in parts to be built in Britain to pacify British workers who feared the loss of their jobs because of the competition.¹⁸ The Wadias, particularly Pestonji Bomanji, in company with other Parsis, notably the Readymoneys, Camas and a little later Jamsetji Jijibhoy developed trade with China and Burma and with East Africa in the nineteenth century. The Parsis were careful never to appear as competitors with the British. While the East India Company dominated trade between Europe and India, the Parsis turned their attentions to the East. When they traded with the British it was in the role of suppliers either to the forces or fleet, or as middle men with other communities in India who adapted more slowly to contact with the West. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Parsi entrepreneurship was very evident. In an unpublished letter, dated 17th

16. *A New Account of the East Indies*, London, 1727, pp. 161f.

17. Ruttonjee Ardeshir Wadia, *The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Master Builders*, repr. Bombay, 1972, p. 126.

18. Wadia, pp. 182ff, 232.

December, 1789 W. G. Farmer wrote:

You will see that the company seems going on very well, and as to Trade it is astonishing - besides all we have, ships are building as fast as they can at Bombay, Surat, Damaun, Cochin - how it will turn out if the Company think seriously of engrossing the Trade I do not know - they easily may and I do not see why the Company might not pick up twenty Lacks of profit yearly instead of leaving them to a crew of Parsees - in whose welfare the State has no Interest and who on every occasion have plucked the Company without mercy - the objection on the part of the Company seems the want of Capital.¹⁹

But this disparaging attitude to the Parsis was not the typical British attitude. Five years later, in 1794, Lieutenant Moore wrote at some length about them. He is worth quoting, *in extenso*, because he refers in the eighteenth century to so many of the community's characteristics which are associated with their later affluence and status. His interesting account has not so far received the attention it deserves. He wrote:

The Parsees.... are the principal native inhabitants of the island of Bombay, in regard to wealth and numbers: not only the most valuable estates, but a very considerable part of the shipping of the port belongs to them...

We have observed them as the favourites of fortune; let us add, they are deservedly so, for we find them doing very extensive acts of charity and benevolence.

In the Bombay Herald of the 4th October, 1790, we read the following paragraph: 'We are happy in the opportunity of pointing out the liberality of Soorabjee Muncherjee, whose conduct does honour to humanity: during the present scarcity of provisions, he daily feeds upwards of two thousand people, of different castes, at his own expense.' Other public instances might be given.

19. Ryland's English Manuscripts, 686/1465. This favourable opinion of trade in Bombay does not invalidate the picture given earlier of the bankruptcy of the island. All judgements are relative. Farmer's estimate of future potential for the island does not nullify the hard trading figures quoted in note 10 above. By the end of the eighteenth century conditions in Bombay were improving, but from a very perilous to an insolvent one!

Some of them also have poor Europeans on their pension list, to whom are given a weekly allowance, and food and clothing. To their private charity and benevolence, they add all the public show and expense necessary to give dignity to their riches. Some of them have two or three country houses, furnished in all the extravagance of European taste; with elegant and extensive gardens, where European gentlemen are frequently invited, and where they are always welcome to entertain their own private parties, and retire to enjoy the rural pleasures of the country free from the noise and bustle of a busy, dirty town. We have seen Parsee merchants give balls, suppers, and entertainments to the whole settlement; and some of them ride in English chariots, such as noblemen in England need not be ashamed to own, drawn by beautiful animals that every nobleman cannot equal in his stud. The Parsees have been often known to behave to English gentlemen, respecting pecuniary concerns, in a manner highly liberal; and although instances might be given to the contrary, where individuals, elated by their riches, have forgotten the respect due to English gentlemen, still they are but instances, and are not more reprobated by any than themselves.

A Parsee beggar was never known; and their women, who are fair as Europeans, are proverbially chaste; so that a harlot is as rare as a beggar. Upon the whole they are a very handsome race of people.²⁰

This account draws attention to a number of Parsi features worthy of note - ownership of land, control of shipping, charity, elegant European-style living, social mixing with the British, the concern for the poor and their high moral standards. In Moore's account there is an element of the British arrogance of his day when he refers to 'the respect due to English gentlemen', yet this only serves to highlight what was the highest compliment that Moore, being a man of his time, could pay - the favourable comparison between the Parsis and the British. Studies of Parsi history have rightly stressed how highly Parsis respected the British. What ought also to be emphasised is the high regard of the British for the Parsis. The fact that the regard was mutual was probably a major factor in the growth of Parsi wealth and power. This feature of Anglo-Parsi relations will recur in succeeding lectures and indeed in the very next traveller's account of the Parsis, written in 1804 by George, Viscount Valencia. He wrote:

20. *A Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little's Detachment*, pp. 379-83. Paymaster, *Early History*, p. 57 incorrectly attributes this work to Captain Little.

They are a very rich, active and loyal body of men, greatly increasing the prosperity of the settlement by their residence in it. There is not an European house of trade in which one of them has not a share, and generally indeed it is the Parsee that produces the largest part of the capital.... I consider them as a most valuable body of subjects, and am convinced that, unless from mismanagement, they will ever continue so, and form an important barrier against the more powerful castes of India.

He mentions another British habit the Parsis shared. Describing an evening spent at the house of Ardisher Dady, he declares:

The wines are excellent, but when I adjourned to their table, I was not a little astonished to find liqueurs placed opposite each Parsee, which they drank in glasses as freely as wine, and which, though they sat late, seemed to have no effect on them.

After echoing Moore's accolade of Parsi morals, charity and commenting on their English, their intelligence, that 'they are a handsome race', and their conciliatory manners, Viscount Valencia concludes: 'I confess that I infinitely prefer them to any race of people in the East subject to British control.'²¹

The beneficial economic effects of such Anglo-Parsi relations was commented on by Sir James Mackintosh in 1808:

The Parsees are a small remnant of one of the mightiest nations of the ancient world, who flying from persecutions into India, were for many ages lost in obscurity and poverty, till at length they met a just government under which they speedily rose to be one of the most opulent mercantile bodies in Asia. In this point of view I consider their prosperity with some national pride. I view their wealth as a monument of our justice, and I think we may honestly boast that the richest inhabitants of this settlement are not of the governing nation.²²

Maria Graham, writing about her visit to Bombay in 1809, reiterates most of the points made by Moore and Valencia, regarding commerce, houses, carriages

21. *Voyages and travels to India, Ceylon*, London, 1809, vol. 2, p. 187.

22. *Bombay Courier*, 20th August, 1808, quoted in *Parsi Prakash* ed. R. B. Paymaster, I, p. 886.

and the fact they 'drink a great deal of wine, particularly Madeira'. What is interesting in her account is the story of her visit to the house of Pestonji Bomanji Wadia, the grandson of Lowji Wadia. She expresses a typically feminine ecstasy at the jewels worn by the family:

The women were fair and handsome, with pleasing manners; they were loaded with ornaments, particularly the largest and finest pearls I ever saw. Pestonji's grandson, a child of seven years old, with his little wife, two years younger, appeared with strings of pearls as large as hazel nuts, besides the 5 or 6 long rows of the size of peas and beautifully regular, given to them on their marriage, which happened a few months ago.

She goes on to add a further detail on the growth of Parsi economic power - the ownership of land.

The Parsees are the chief landholders in Bombay. Almost all the houses and gardens inhabited by the Europeans are their property, and Pestonji told me that he received not less than £15,000 a year in rents, and that his brother received nearly as much.²³

Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the Parsis were major landowners and foremost economic figures in Bombay. At the turn of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries they owned more firms in the city than did any other community, including Hindus and Europeans (Parsis 18, Hindus 15, Europeans 9, in 1805). In addition, they owned in 1795-6 more than half the tonnage of European captained Indian ships touching the port of Bombay (9,588 out of 17,284 tons) - all this despite the fact they still numbered only about 10,000 in the island.²⁴

23. *Journal of a Residence in India*, Edinburgh, 1812, pp. 42-45. On the Parsi ownership of land in Surat, see J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surratt in 1689*, p.219; Hamilton, p. 161 and Bishop Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through India, 1824-25*, London, 1828, vol ii, p.175.

24. A Guha, 'Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850', *Economics and Political Weekly*, August, 1970, p. M107-115 at 109 and his 'The Comprador role of Parsi Seths', Nov. 28 1970, pp. 1933-36. The estimate of the Parsi population of Bombay is that in the *Transactions of the Literacy Society of Bombay*, vol I, pp. xxvii, xxxvi. Table 1 illustrates the considerable Parsi involvement in ship owning.

It is commonly said that the Parsis were dependent on the British for their wealth. Despite the wealth and importance of individual Parsis, such as Rustom Maneck Seth, in the pre-British period there is some truth in this assertion in that British rule created the conditions in which Parsis flourished. But what this brief survey shows, and is worth stressing, is that whereas the British were far from making their fortunes at the end of the eighteenth century in Bombay, and were still seeking to establish the security of the island, the Parsis had already by that time assumed the position of the major economic power in the growing city.

It was from this power base that they went on to enjoy such a major role in the trade and wealth of the mid-nineteenth century, and notably in the opium trade where Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoj was one of three in a syndicate controlling affairs; the textile trade where they were pioneers; and in the flotation of banks which facilitated trade. These justly famous Parsi achievements are well documented and require no further comment.²⁵ They were the three areas where the greatest individual fortunes were made, yet more Parsis acquired wealth not from these pursuits but as middlemen in trade between the British and Indians. What transformed the trade of the island in the nineteenth century was the opening up of the country to private traders by the Charter Act of 1813, which abolished the monopoly of the East India Company. Traders did not pour in immediately, because of the initial problems faced by a British person seeking his fortune in what was, for him, such a strange land. But the import and export figures for the port of Bombay show a larger percentage increase in the 1820s and 30s than they do even in the traditional boom years of the opening of the Suez canal, or the introduction of railways which opened up the hinterland, or even than the early years of the textile industry. The only exception is the percentage growth of exports during the American war (see ch.8 Table 2). The traders who brought this upsurge in the 1820s and 30s had knowledge neither of the language nor of local conditions. Milburn in his two tomes of detailed trading figures and directions on local customs and peoples published in 1813 and used as a guide by businessmen who followed, wrote about Bombay:

The Parsees rank next to the Europeans. They are active, industrious, clever

25. See, for example, Karaka, *History*, II, ch. 6; E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, Munich, 1974, 2.1.4 and 2.2.4; P. Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, New Delhi, 1977, ch. 7.

and possess considerable local knowledge. Many of them are very opulent, and each of the European houses of agency has one of the principal Parsee merchants concerned with it in most of their foreign speculations. They have become the brokers and banians of the Europeans. The factors belonging to these different houses resident in China, Bengal are generally Parsees, and the correspondence is carried on in the country language, so that the British merchant knows no more than they [the Parsis] communicate to him.²⁶

Because of these qualities noted by Milburn, almost all the private trade entering Bombay up to the 1840s passed through Parsi hands.²⁷ So when the Bombay Chamber of Commerce was started in 1836 all ten of the Indian members were Parsis.²⁸

In his study of the Parsis, Kulke notes two important reasons why they were so successful. First, their lack of caste restrictions, which enabled them to mix more freely with Europeans, and which gave them greater flexibility in work, than other communities. Second, their traditional values of hard work, honesty and integrity. He also comments on their ready acceptance of Western education, but this refers to the period from after 1847 which is the subject of the following chapter.²⁹ There is some truth in what Kulke states, but not, perhaps the whole truth. Caste restricted Hindus from some professions, such as leather working, but not from others, such as banking, in which they had long been engaged. The social restrictions of caste, such as the prohibition of interdining and intermixing, retarded Hindu progress far more than they did that of the Parsis, because the latter were quick to leave behind what was for them a foreign custom. There are perhaps two other factors which should be added to those given by Kulke. First, the nature of the work they undertook. From the time of Lowji Wadia they were concerned with shipping and international

26. *Oriental Commerce*, London, 1813, vol i, p. 124.

27. Stated by C. Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India, politics and communities in Bombay city 1840-1885*, Oxford, 1972, p. 3. Though her reference to Karaka, II, p. 254 does not justify her point it is probably fairly accurate.

28. See R.J.F. Sullivan, *One Hundred Years of Bombay*, Bombay, 1937, p. 10 for the list of founding members.

29. *Op. cit.* pp. 128-30.

trade whether it was opium, the export of cotton, or the supplying of goods to the British. It was through overseas business that fortunes were to be made, not in the internal trade traditionally dominated by Hindus or Muslims, nor in agriculture, which Parsis were quick to leave behind. This is the point of the earlier comment that the importance of Lowji Wadia had been noted but not his significance. The significance of the Wadias (and later the Readymoneys, and Camas) was that in the early eighteenth century they orientated their community towards that aspect of Bombay trade which was eventually to make both the island and the Parsis wealthy-international markets.³⁰ Second, the Parsis were able to establish particularly good relations with the British. A major theme of this lecture has been that it was not only the Parsis who respected the British but the British also respected the Parsis because in them they saw, in a strange and foreign land, people who shared similar morals, principles, and even a physical similarity. The next two lectures will consider two areas in which there was a *particular* sense of affinity religion and education.

Another point made early in the lecture is worth taking up again, the distinctiveness of Anglo-Indian relations in Bombay. Whether or not British rule was for the long term good or ill of India, one of its faults was the way in which Indians were excluded from high office in their own country far more, for example, than they had been under the Mughals. Sir Thomas Munro wrote in 1817:

There is perhaps no example of any conquest in which the natives have been so completely excluded from all share of the Government of their country as in British India.³¹

In Bombay, despite the justified and forceful protestations of Dadabhai Naoroji and others, Indians were more involved in the government of the city and Presidency than anywhere else in the country, including Calcutta.³² The Mutiny in 1857 largely passed by Bombay, not only because of speedy action against

30. Ashok V. Desai, 'The origins of Parsi Enterprise', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1968, V, pp. 307-17 at 314f.

31. Quoted Edwardes, p. 258.

32. A.K. Bagchi, *Private Investment in India*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 170, 174, 235.

activists, but also because there was not widespread sympathy for it in the city.³³ The main reason was the one already noted: almost all citizens of Bombay had elected to move to Bombay and had chosen to live under the conditions prevailing there, whereas in other areas in India British rule had been imposed on a settled community. Because Bombay was practically a British creation, their sovereignty over the island was more secure and could thereby be somewhat more tolerant. All communities benefited from this, especially the Parsis. The great example was, of course, Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, almost the caricature of Parsi dreams in the first half of the nineteenth century. His power was based on immense wealth, a wealth earned and not inherited, beginning with the collection of empty bottles as a child, boosted beyond any earlier dreams by the opium trade, supplying government contracts, and the flotation of banks. His dinner parties were attended by the highest government officials, and his coach, a copy of Queen Victoria's, was the envy of all. His charitable works stood out even in a community famous for its charity. His influence upon the Governors of Bombay, particularly Elphinstone, was considerable. It has indeed been suggested that the distinctive nature of Anglo-Indian relations in Bombay was due, in part, to the Parsis, who provided a 'social cushioning' between rulers and ruled.³⁴ Sir J. J., the first Indian Knight and Baronet, is important in Parsi history not simply because of his wealth and charities but because he was the living example of what practically every Parsi wanted to be. He was the Parsi spirit of the early nineteenth century writ very large.³⁵ Yet in him can be seen clearly the point made earlier - there are few, if any, sharp dividing lines in history, because Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy lived beyond 1847 - the boundary of this lecture - and himself experienced some of the problems created

33. Jagadish M. Surlacar, *1857 in Maharashtra*, PhD thesis (unpublished) Bombay, 1964, ch. 8.

34. Prof. D.N. Marshall in a personal letter dated 6th April, 1977.

35. J. R. P. Mody, *Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, The First Indian Knight and Baronet (1783-1859)*, Bombay, 1959. On royalty visiting his home see *Parsi Prakash*, I, pp. 268, 277, 287, 352, 353, 411, 517. On his carriage see H. Moses, *Sketches of India; with notes on the seasons, scenery and society of Bombay, Elephanta, and Salsette*, London, 1850. For a list of his charities see *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution, Centenary Volume*, Bombay, 1950, Appendix 'B', pp. 143-154. On his influence on Elphinstone see Dobbin, p. 24.

by the changing, political and economic climate of the second half of the nineteenth century. What those problems and changes were will be the subject of the third lecture. But first it will be instructive to consider in a little more depth one reason why there was such a sense of affinity in typical Anglo - Parsi relations, what was for that time the unusual degree of British sympathy for a non-Christian religion. The second lecture will therefore consider British interest in Parsi religion up to 1843, an under-rated factor in the study of Anglo-Parsi relations and an interesting subject in its own right.

7 British Accounts of Parsi Religion, 1619-1843

This lecture is not intended as a *forschungsbericht*, in the sense of an account of scholarly studies of the Parsis, but it is rather a study of the reports of travellers, traders and officials in the period covered by the first lecture. Scholarly studies will be considered only in so far as they were influential on the British travellers. These reports are interesting for three reasons. First, they reveal something of the fundamental British attitude towards the Parsi community, thereby helping to explain why Anglo-Parsi relations were, on the whole, so good. Second, the early travellers' reports were used by, and influential upon, some of the early scholars, notably Thomas Hyde. Third, it is not generally appreciated just how early some of the reports are. The earliest two, those of Terry and Lord, were based on visits to Surat only twenty years after the writing of the *Qissah-i Sanjan* and three predate the arrival of the British in Bombay.

Early travellers' reports are referred to by most Parsi historians. The author to make the greatest use of them is R. B. Paymaster *The Early History of the Parsis* (Bombay, 1954). Because of the size and scope of his work the quotations are necessarily brief. He also includes quotations from other European travellers, notably Dutch and Portuguese sources. The restrictions imposed here by the theme of the lectures as a whole, permits more extensive quotations from the sources selected than in other publications, thereby making little-known accounts more widely available than they have been.

Before considering individual authors it is essential to consider the religious background of the early British travellers in India. The earliest, Terry, Lord and Herbert, were Christian priests. Those who followed, if not themselves devout Christians, were nevertheless influenced by that religion. Unless something of the Christian background is understood then the points behind

their accounts are often lost. Seventeenth century European Christianity did not have a positive attitude to other religions. The Biblical attitude to them is, generally, that they are false and are based on the worship of idols. Alexandrian and Eastern Christianity had developed a more open attitude, but in Europe the only non-Christian religions encountered were Judaism and Islam.

The prevalent attitude to Judaism was that it was spiritually dead after the coming of Christ, for whose death the Jews were commonly held responsible. Islam had been the object of holy war in the Crusades. Europeans generally were not, therefore, conditioned to view other religions sympathetically. As far as Hinduism (and Buddhism which was rarely distinguished) was concerned they tended to split it into two, the popular form which was despised and ridiculed, and the philosophical which, especially in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was more respected. The overall judgement tended to be based on the popular aspect and what good features were noted were explained either as a remnant of the original religion from which the religions had deviated after the dispersal of the human race (following the Biblical tradition concerning Babel) or as due to the influence of Judaism or Christianity.¹

There was an additional factor in the case of some of the early British travellers, because they were Protestants. After the Christian Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Protestants had been brought up with certain fundamental convictions. The first was the importance of a belief in one God. The Catholic reverence for angels and saints, the Virgin Mary in particular, was in their eyes a potentially blasphemous detraction from the worship of God. The willingness of Hindus to worship many gods, whether or not they were considered as aspects of The One, and female imagery in particular, must have seemed to many as the epitome of that which they had opposed in the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant Church of the period

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1. In chronological order of their subject matter see: E. J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: a history*, London, 1975, pp. 1-26; D. Pailin, 'Some eighteenth century attitudes, to other Religions', *Religion*, I, ii, 1971, pp. 83-108; P. J. Marshall (Ed.) *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1970; G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India, 1784-1858*, Oxford, 1961; E. J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, Uppsala, 1965, pp. 23-72; J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, repr. Delhi, 1967, pp. 1-16. There is a conspectus in F. Wilhelm and H. G. Rawlinson, 'India and the modern West', in A. L. Basham (ed.), *A Cultural History of India*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 470-478.

was also generally opposed to the use of religious statues or images on any lavish scale. Such articles were considered evidence of 'popish idolatry' and were often pillaged. Such a background did not prepare the travellers theologically for the luxuriant artistic tradition of Hindu temples. Christians of all denominations, Catholic or Protestant, were convinced that at the heart of 'true religion' was a high ethical code. One of the first criteria, therefore, by which seventeenth and eighteenth century European commentators judged Hinduism, or Zoroastrianism, was its morals and ethics.

In the second half of the eighteenth century there was an intellectual interest in Hinduism, both in Britain and Europe. Voltaire and a number of French authors attempted to use Hinduism to refute Christianity. This was not a common approach in Britain where most sympathetic accounts of Indian religion were produced by Deists who looked for the essence of what they considered 'rational' religion, one based on monotheism with a belief in the immortality of the soul and an acceptable (to them) moral code. This they found in their accounts of philosophical Hinduism. Sir William Jones was considered by his contemporaries, and many who came after him, to be an outstanding example of the scholar who united faith and reason. He was perhaps the only one who attempted to understand Hinduism as it was understood by Hindus. Otherwise,

All of them wrote with contemporary European controversies and their own religious preoccupations very much in mind. As Europeans have always tended to do, they created Hinduism in their own image. Halhed perhaps apart, they believed that certain basic truths and certain moral principles were common to all religions, although present in their most refined form in Protestant Christianity. Their study of Hinduism confirmed their beliefs, and Hindus emerged from their work as adhering to something akin to undogmatic Protestantism.²

These different elements in the background of early travellers' reports of religion in India affected the accounts given of the Parsis. It was easier to see Zoroastrianism as being in harmony with the beliefs and principles of the British and their current theological concerns than it was those of Hinduism,

2. Marshall, p. 43, see especially Pailin on this aspect of eighteenth-century accounts.

especially in the latter's popular form. As a result each traveller tended to comment on the same features of Parsi religion, their monotheism, their lack of idols, their high moral standards and their attitude to fire. The Iranian origin of the community and dokhmas were also often commented on, but on these subjects their statements are rather repetitive so references to them will be omitted in what follows, except where something new or interesting is added. The main theme of the lecture will be those features of Parsi religion which most interested British travellers.

It must also be pointed out that it was not only the travellers' reports that were biased, their sources were not always reliable either. Parsis' knowledge of their own religion was not then what it is in the 1970s. The reports make it clear that it was the life of the prophet and the stories of his miracles, not philosophy, which was the focus of popular religion. Yet despite these qualifications, there is much in the various accounts that does credit to the interest of the observer and to the faith of the observed.

The earliest account is that of the Revd. Edward Terry, chaplain in the service of the East India Company 1616-19, and who visited Surat in the company of the diplomat, Sir Thomas Roe.³ Terry commented on the way in which the Parsis kept themselves apart from other communities, by never eating or drinking with them, yet avoided giving offence to Hindus and Muslims by abstaining from beef and pork. He commended the Parsis for their diligent agricultural labour because he saw in this a fulfilment of the injunctions in *Genesis*. He was particularly interested in their belief in God and the Evil One, for whom he used the Biblical name, Lucifer.

They believe that there is but one God, who made all things, and hath a sovereign power over all. They talk much of Lucifer, and of other evil spirits, but they say, that those, and all Devils besides, are kept so under and in awe by two good angels that have power over them, as that they cannot hurt or do the least mischief, without their leave or licence.⁴

3. For a brief biography of Terry see *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB). His account has been overlooked by several historians, for example none of the accounts in note 1 refer to him.

4. *A Voyage to East India & c*, London, 1625 repr. 1655, p. 336f.

Terry then proceeded to give an account of the Amesha Spentas as the heavenly beings who have charge over the different creations, earth, waters, plants and man, though he gets both the number and names wrong. Zarathushtra, he stated, brought the sacred fire from heaven and so Parsis reverence anything that resembles the fire, for example the sun:

That living and sensible creature, which they first behold every morning... is to them, as they say, a remembrancer all the day after, to draw up their thoughts in thanksgiving unto almighty God, who hath made such good creatures for man's use of service.⁵

After referring to the perpetually burning fires in the temples, and the respect in which dasturs and priests are held, Terry gave a lengthy account of Parsi ethics, listing six precepts:

which their lawgiver hath left unto them for the direction of their lives.

As first, to have shame and fear ever present with them which will restrain and keep them from committing of many evils.

Secondly, when they undertake anything, seriously to consider whether it be good, or bad, commanded or forbidden them.

Thirdly, to keep their hearts and eyes from coveting anything that is another's and their hands from hurting any.

Fourthly, to have care always to speak the truth.

Fifthly, to be known only in their own businesses, and not to enquire into, and to busy themselves in other men's matters.

All of which are good moral precepts; but they have another which mars and spoils all the rest, and that is upon the greatest penalties they can be threatened withall.

Sixthly, not to entertain or believe any other law besides that which was

5. Op.cit. p. 339.

delivered unto them by their law-giver.⁶

Terry commented on how the Parsis took only one wife who was chosen with priestly guidance. His account of a dokhma is factual and unemotive but he nevertheless finds it unethical because men's and women's bodies are laid in the same tower, where, he says, 'they mix promiscuously together',⁷ an example of the puritanical spirit which characterised Protestant theology of Terry's day and was one of the factors which prevented a sympathetic understanding of so much Hindu art. Indeed, Terry's report is a good example of the positive British response to Parsi religion focussing on the features where it stood in marked contrast to the traveller's perception of popular Hinduism, the distinctiveness of the community, the stress on one God, the interesting comment that Parsis consider the sun a 'remembrancer' of God and not as an object of worship in itself. The account of ethics was obviously, and explicitly, sympathetic, objecting only to the fact they follow their own lawgiver, Zarathushtra, rather than Christ. Terry appears to have been looking for religious beliefs similar to his own and he believed he had found them among the Parsis.

The second report was that of the Revd. Henry Lord, a contemporary of Terry, but whose account, *The Religion of the Persees*, was published in 1630 and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Referring to his earlier account of the Banians, Lord stated that he brought the Parsi 'to the same Barre, to be arraigned upon like Guilt'. His conclusion has a similar tone:

Such in Summe (worthy Reader) is the Religion which this sect of the *Persees* professe, I leave it to the censure of them that read, what to think of it.⁸

6. Op.cit. p. 34.f.

7. Op.cit. p. 344.

8. *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies, The Religion of the Persees*, London, 1630, p. 52. It is probable that there is some dependence between Lord and Terry. Both refer to a Parsi belief in two good angels having power over the devils, Terry p. 339 (quoted above), and Lord p. 8 states '*Sertan and Afud* to whom God had given strength and power were made guardians of Lucifer, and the evil spirits. . .'. As they were contemporaries at Surat it is not necessary to conclude either had seen the work of the other.

Yet his account is far from being as biased as those words suggest.

All remarks about Lord must be prefaced by the comment that some, at least, of his sources (or his understanding of them) were not very good. He stated that Zarathushtra's parents came from China where the prophet spent his early life, before they all fled to Iran to escape persecution. His account is also expressed in more Christian terms than was Terry's. This is particularly noticeable in his accounts of God as creator, the sequence of creation, and of Ahriman as a fallen angel. He divided Zoroastrian revelation into three; first, judicial astrology for telling the future, which was given to the magi; second, the knowledge of nature, the causes and cures of illnesses, which was given to physicians; the third section was given to the priests because it was concerned with religion. Moral rules he also divides into three, with ascending degrees of stringency for behdin, herbads and dasturs. The standards he outlines are high, with a strict balance between personal morals and the spiritual life. Of the dastur, he reports:

(his) house (must) bee neere adjoining to the Church, where hee must keepe and make his abiding, continuing in Prayer and abstinence, not ostentating himselfe to publike view, but living recluse and retired from the world, as a man wholly dedicate to God.

He also added that the dastur must 'stand in feare of nobody but God'.⁹

There are two further features of Lord's account which are worthy of particular note, one historical, the other doctrinal. Lord, writing only a few years after the author of the *Qissah-i-Sanjan*, provides some details which that text does not. Because of the unreliable element in his sources, mentioned earlier, these details should, perhaps, be ignored. Or it may be that details which were then current were overlooked by the author of the *Qissah* and included by Lord. Whereas the *Qissah* offers no indication of the number of settlers, Lord states that there were seven boatloads of emigres from Iran, five of which stayed at Suwali, one moved to Surat where its passengers were killed in a local war and

9. Ch 7.

the seventh moved on to Cambay.¹⁰

The doctrinal interest is in his account of the Parsi attitude to fire, which he stated was brought by Zarathushtra from heaven. Despite some of the errors in his account, and the Christian interpretations, his attempt to understand the Parsi attitude to fire is noteworthy for a seventeenth century European. He wrote:

That for as much as fire was delivered to Zertoost their Lawgiver from God Almighty, who pronounced it to bee his vertue and his excellencie, and that there was a lawe delivered for the worshippe of this fire, confirmed by so many Miracles, that therefore they should hold it holy, reverence and worshippe it as a part of God, who is of the same substance, and that they should love all things, that resemble it, or were like unto it, as the Sunne and Moone which proceeded from it, and are Gods ...¹¹

With what may have been the popular Parsi attitude to fire at that time it is not altogether surprising that Lord stated they worshipped fire, but he does show some understanding of the theological relationship of fire to God.

Because of the Parsi enquiries in Iran which resulted in the *Rivayats*, some writers have suggested the Indian community was at that time rather ignorant of, or lax in, its faith. Perhaps the Parsis felt the need for guidance from their co-religionists on specific details relating largely to ritual matters, but these early British travellers' reports, written prior to the last thirteen *Rivayats*, indicate that the Parsi belief in Almighty God the creator was widespread and that the high ethical code for which the community is justly famous were noticeable; in other words, the spirit of the religion was truly alive.

The third report which predates British possession of Bombay we can regrettably pass by. It was written by Thomas Herbert who visited Surat in 1626, but he did little more than précis Lord's account of the dokhmas.¹² The

10. Op.cit. p. 3f.

11. Op.cit. ch 8.

12. *A Discription of the Persian Monarchy Now beinge the Orientall Indyes and Other parts of the Greater Asia and Africa*, London, 1677.

same is true of the next writer, Ogilby in 1670, who displays a minimal interest in Parsi religion, commenting only on how free and undisturbed the community was, how Parsis kept themselves apart in purity and would not undertake work which involved disrespect to the fire.¹³

The fifth British traveller to comment on the Parsis is full of interest, Streyntsham Master in 1672. He was one of the East India Company's servants who went to Bombay to receive the island from the king's officers. His uncle was George Oxinden, who later became Governor of Bombay. What makes Master's report particularly interesting is that one of his sources was President Aungier, one of the few able and honest rulers of Bombay in the earliest years of British rule. Master commented that Aungier 'hath been somewhat Curious in his Enquiry into the Religion of the Parsees'. He went on:

They have a great Reverence for Fire, and many of them will not put it out, but let it extinguish for want of matter, they worship and acknowledge one God Almighty and noe Images or Representations. But only the sun they doe adore, and they give this Reason for it; that God Almighty told them by their first Prophett that they should worship only one thing beside Himselfe and that thing should be that which was most like unto Him. Now they say there is noe one thing in the world soe much like unto God as the Sun, for it hath its light and heat in itselfe, which it disperseth and infuseth into all parts and Creatures in the world, soe that it gives them life and light: therefore they say they worship it.

The typical European interest in monotheism and the Protestant abhorrence of idols is evident in the comments on 'one God Almighty and noe Images or Representations'. Master then quoted the opinion of Aungier on the Parsi theology of world history:

they had it from the Hebrews, it differing not much from MOSES. They say according to these Propheys the World will last many hundreds of years longer, but that their Kingdom and Country will be restored to them, and all

13. *Atlas V*, 1670, pp. 218f. quoted by M. M. Murzban, *The Parsis in India*, Bombay, 1917, 1, p. 66 and Paymaster, pp. 45f. Unfortunately, I have been unable to consult the original work. The judgement regarding dependence on Lord is based on the reference to seven boats bringing the exiles.

Nations shall be of their Religion ere the world be ended.¹⁴

Contrary to what Master (and Aungier) stated, it was in fact Judaism that was dependent on Zoroastrianism for these teachings,¹⁵ but the passage is, nevertheless, interesting for two reasons. Aungier was the first person, from the West at least, to draw attention to the parallels between the two religions. Second, the seventeenth century European Christian could not admit the presence of truth in another religion unless it was seen as derived from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, thus with his religious background Master considered he was bestowing a compliment on the Parsis in describing their faith as similar, or indebted, to the Biblical teaching. Of course, in those early days the British were somewhat more hesitant and less arrogant than in the nineteenth century and therefore less inclined to be critical but that qualification does not detract from the positive attitude expressed in these quotations. It would, however, be wrong to imply that the attitude of all reports was the same. James Fryer visited Bombay in 1673. But despite the usefulness of his report for dating the first dokhma there, he showed little interest in the community, and less respect for them. He referred summarily to what he termed their worship of the sun, the dokhmas and concluded: 'They are somewhat Whiter, and, I think, Nasteer than the *Gentues*'.¹⁶

James Ovington visited Surat in 1689. Despite his sometimes garbled account of Parsi beliefs he provides one of the most often quoted passages from travellers' reports on Parsi religion. He misunderstood the religious significance of the cockerel, attributing it to the idea that it was a cock's crow which guided the Parsi exiles from Iran to land in India. His account of the sacred nature of fire includes a fable about Abraham and fire which may come

14. Quoted under 'Miscellaneous Papers' in *The Diary of W. Hedges*, edited by Col. Henry Yule, vol. 2, being vol. 75 of the Hakluyt Society publications, London, 1888, pp. cccv-cccv.

15. See Hinnells, 'Zoroastrian influence on the Judaeo-Christian tradition', *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, 1976, 45, pp. 1-23.

16. *A New Account of E. India and Persia*, London, 1698, pp. 294f.

from a little-known collection of syncretistic Jewish literature.¹⁷ The famous passage from his account is the following:

They own and Adore one Supreme Being, to whom, as he is the Original of all things, they dedicate the first Day of every Month, in a solemn observance of his Worship. And enjoin, besides these, some others for the Celebration of Publick Prayers... They shew a firm Affection to all of their own Sentiments in Religion, assist the Poor, and are very ready to provide for the Sustenance and Comfort of such as want it. Their universal Kindness, either in imploying such as are Needy and able to work, or bestowing a seasonable bounteous Charity to such as are Infirm and Miserable; leave no Man destitute of Relief, nore suffer a Beggar in all their Tribe.¹⁸

It is evident from this passage, and his reference elsewhere to their industriousness, that Ovington respected the Parsis because he considered there was some degree of kinship between his own ideals and those of the Parsis. Captain Hamilton who came after Ovington (in 1716), and used his account, considered the resemblance extended not just to religion, but also to appearance, except that the Parsis undertook so much ritual washing they made themselves paler than the British!

They never marry into foreign Families, which makes them retain their native fair Complexion, little inferior to us *Europeans*, only their often Washing and Anointing, which is a Part of the Exercises of Religion, takes away the beautiful fresh Ruddiness that adorns ours.¹⁹

Although the theme of this lecture is the accounts of Parsi religion written by the British *in India*, it is necessary to make a short trip west to Britain, because of the work of the Oxford Professor, Thomas Hyde. In 1700 he published his book, *De vetere religione Persarum*, which was the first scholarly attempt to give a systematic account of Zoroastrianism. Hyde presented Zarathushtra as the preceptor of Pythagoras, as foretelling the coming of Christ, and his religion

17. For a selection of this material see J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les Mages Hellenises*, Paris, 1938, vol. 2, Texts, B35b; B. 41.

18. *A Voyage to Surratt in the Year 1689*, ed. H. G. Rawlinson, London, 1929, p. 2.

19. *A New Account of the East Indies*, London, 1727, pp. 160f.

as indebted to Judaism. For the seventeenth century British mentality there could hardly have been a better pedigree! It has, indeed, been said of Hyde that he was himself half a believer in Zoroastrianism.²⁰ His account was based largely on Greek and Roman sources, travellers' reports and isolated manuscripts at Oxford. It is to his credit that he was the first to draw attention to the teaching on Zurvān, but his main importance in the present context is his influence on British observers of the Parsis.

The first traveller to be so influenced was John Henry Grose in 1750. Grose made a serious effort not only to observe, but also to understand. In addition he attempted to distinguish between the original teaching of the prophet and later thought and practice. His account is almost an apologia for the Parsis, possibly idealising their religion at times. But that makes it all the more interesting for the present theme. It therefore merits lengthy quotation. Grose stated that:

the two cardinal points on which his (Zarathustra's) religion entirely turns (are) The belief of one supreme God, and of the Sun or element of fire being his first minister throughout all his works, as well as the symbol and eternal monitor of purity. The rest of his tenets were only subordinate to, or emanations from them.²¹

Of the first of these tenets, the belief in one supreme God, Grose gave this exposition:

As to God, the followers of Zoroaster, agreeably to his doctrine, are so penetrated with his immensity, and consequently omni-presence of power, that they esteem it a kind of impiety, or at least a sign of narrowness of conception to erect temples to him, as conveying an idea of locality or confinement of the deity between four walls that shocks and indignates them. Thence that celebrated saying of theirs, "that there can be no temple, worthy of the Majesty of God, except the whole universe, and the heart of an honest man". But of all their opinions that which they hold the most sacred is, That God is the sole necessary self-existent Being from all eternity, supreme and author of all

20. So William Erskine, *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, II, 1820, p. 319 see also J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 10f.

21. *A Voyage to the East Indies*, London, 1750, vol. 1, p. 340.

Good.

So Grose went on to explain: Evil is entirely subservient, and even instrumental to the infinitely greater Good intended by it. He stated that Parsis believe when evil is seen in the long term perspective it is seen ultimately to issue in a known superior good.

... allowing no Evil actually to exist in nature, any other than an imaginary, partial, temporary one, bearing no sort of proportion to real infinite and eternal Goodness, and therefore not incompatible with it. This phantom of evil then, such as it appears in the actual state of nature, they figuratively impersonate in the eastern manner, and give it the name of Harryman, whence the Greek word Arimanius, as the good Principle or that of Light, they term Oroozm, or Orosmales, by which they also often understand God.²²

On Parsis and fire Grose has even more to say.

As to fire, they place the spring-head of it that globe of fire the sun, by them called Mythras, or Mihir, to which they pay the highest reverence, in gratitude for the manifold benefits flowing from its ministerial omniscience. But they are so far from confounding the subordination of the servant with the majesty of its Creator and Master, that they not only attribute no sort of sense or reasoning to the sun or fire, in any of its operations, but consider it as a purely passive blind instrument, directed and governed by the immediate impressions on it of the will of God: but they do not even give that luminary, all glorious as it is, more than the second rank amongst his works, reserving the first for that stupendous production of divine power, the mind of man.²³

Grose knew of the Zoroastrian doctrine of fire, or heat, as the creative principle and as the essence of man's soul, also that Zoroastrians, unlike Christians, 'do not speak of hell fire'. He concluded that Zarathushtra 'drew those sublime notions about fire' from his profound knowledge of mathematics and natural philosophy.²⁴ Although there were some sympathetic British studies

22. Op.cit. p. 346. This passage is an example of Hyde's influence on Grose. See also p. 337.

23. Op.cit. pp. 341ff., 350f., 352.

24. p. 339.

of Hinduism in the second half of the eighteenth century it would be difficult to find one which displays as much understanding and respect, as that displayed by Grose for the Parsis, but it is noticeable that what he respected most, was that which he considered similar to his own western ideals.

One visit to Britain has already been made in this lecture, another is now necessary. In 1771 Anquetil du Perron published the Zoroastrian manuscripts he had collected during his difficult and courageous travels in Gujarat. German scholars accepted the authenticity of the manuscripts, but at first British scholars did not. The attack on Anquetil was led by the distinguished Orientalist, Sir William Jones. He rejected Anquetil's manuscript of the *Avesta* as a ridiculous forgery and described the Frenchman's publication as five hundred pages of puerile details, with a style that was harsh, base, often turgid, rarely keeping to the subject and never agreeable. Anquetil, he said, had insulted the judgement of the public and he concluded his attack with comments that would, in the 1970s in Britain, land him in court!²⁵ One suspects that part of Jones' motivation was his offence at Anquetil's behaviour. Anquetil was not overmodest, and he had committed what in British eyes was an unforgivable sin, he dared to criticise Oxford colleges and London society!²⁶

Jones' rejection of the manuscripts was followed by John Richardson who concluded:

M. Anquetil has made no discovery which can stamp his publications with the least authority. He brings evidence of no antiquity; and we are only disgusted with the frivolous superstition and never ending ceremonies of the modern Worshippers of Fire.²⁷

Not all British commentators, therefore, followed the general pattern of expressing respect for the Parsi religion, but then Richardson had never met a Parsi!

25. Op.cit. Lettre à Monsieur A*** du P***. See his *Collected Works*, ed. Lord Teignmouth, London, 1807, vol. 6, pp. 403-43 at pp. 413-17.

26. See J. J. Modi, *Anquetil du Perron and Dastur Darab*, Bombay, 1916, pp. 60-66.

27. *Dictionary, Persian, Arabic and English, with a dissertation on the languages, literature and manners of Eastern Nations*, New Edn. 1806, p. vi.

Although Sir William Jones rejected the authenticity of Anquetil's manuscripts, he did accept, give publicity and temporary authority to the *Dabistan* and the *Desatīr* as genuine works which, in his opinion: 'dissipate the cloud, and cast a gleam of light on the primeval history of Iran and of the human race, of which I had long despaired'.²⁸ He so filled others with excitement at the discovery of these works (brought to scholarly attention by Mulla Feroze) that the Governor, Duncan, sought to keep their existence secret in order that he might present them to the king 'as the most valuable tribute which he could bring from the East'.²⁹ The *Dabistan* and the *Desatīr* were, of course, the forgeries which Jones had wrongly said Anquetil's manuscripts were.

British accounts of religion in India changed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A major factor in the change was the influence of the Evangelicals. They believed that because other religions failed to confront man with his total depravity and the necessity of Christ for salvation, they should be rejected outright. Although there was this increased religious opposition to interest in Indian religions, there was also among other travellers an increasing materialism, and disinterest in any form of religion. Whereas Lieutenant Moore in 1794 gave an informative account of the Parsis' worldly position, the soldier said little on their spiritual concerns. His brief reference to religion gives a rather idealised picture of their worship, based possibly on Grose.

... they do not think temples, as places of worship, at all necessary, merely as such: they pray in the open air, and make their protestations to the sun, as the grandest emblem in nature of the Deity, whose temple is the universe, and the all-pervading element of fire his only symbol.³⁰

The best thing that George' Viscount Valencia (1809) could find to say of Parsi religion was that it did not get in the way of what he considered

28. With Discourse 'On the Persians', Collected Works, vol. 6, p. 110.

29. See J. J. Modi, *A Glimpse into the Work of the BBRAS during the last 100 years, from a Parsee point of view*, Bombay, 1905, pp. 21-3.

30. *A Narrative of the Operations of Capt. Little's Detachment*, London, 1794. p. 384.

important matters:

Their religion is tolerant, and, as far as it throws no impediment in the way of public service, must be considered politically as a good one.³¹

There was a third reason for this tailing off of reports on Parsi religion - many Parsis were losing interest in their own traditions. Maria Graham confined her remarks mainly to social chit-chat but her sources were not always inspiring either. She commented on the Naojote which 'since their intercourse with European they persist in calling this ceremony christening'.³² The sort of Parsis who met Moore, Valencia and Graham appear, in general, to have been those who had obtained positions of wealth and power. As they climbed the social ladder many left behind their traditional religion. Even in some high priestly circles there was what might be described as a loss of self-confidence among Parsis in their own beliefs, an attempt to explain away some of their traditions and to present their faith in a manner acceptable to the British. On Sunday, 26th August, 1810, no less a person than Dastur Mulla Feroze took Sir James Mackintosh into an agiary and explained his beliefs to Sir James. Before quoting the report of the visit, one detail must be explained. In the Church of England every priest is supposed to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Faith. Thus when an Englishman refers to 'the Thirty-nine Articles' of any religion he is referring to that religion's official teaching. The account of the visit is this:

In the evening we went to an "*Aighiaree*" or fire temple it is a very plain building, with nothing of that peculiarity which religious edifices generally have. In a hall or large room in front, we were received by Mullan Perose, the Parsee priest, who was educated fourteen years in Persia, and is not without information and agreeable manners. He showed his usual anxiety not to be suspected of believing any part of his Thirty-nine Articles. He repeated what he said last year that he was of the *pheilosuf lok* or *philosophical* people. Through the bars of a window in the wall, we saw the *holy of holies*.³³

31. *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon*, 1809, vol. 2, p. 189.

32. *Journal of a Residence in India*, Edinburgh, 1812.

33. Quoted in R. B. Paymaster, *A Biography of Mulla Ferooze Bin Mulla Kaus Jalal*, Bombay, 1931, p. 29 (Gujarati).

Whether Sir James' respect for the Parsis was based mainly on his respect for his source, Mulla Feroze, or to wider contacts is not clear, but respect he obviously had for the great historical tradition of the Parsis, their abhorrence of idols and, unusually for a non Parsi, even an element of understanding for the idea of dokhmas as opposed to burials.

....They have preserved the activity of their minds and the vigour of their bodies during a residence of a thousand years in India.

Here we see the immutable character of an Asiatic race. The remains of those Persians who three and twenty centuries ago, in the armies of Xerxes, destroyed the Temples of Idols, who were among the most ancient monotheists and iconoclasts of the world, still preserve their abhorrence of Idolatry, and shew it with peculiar force against those Idolotrous symbols which, though they are to be found from the mountains of Thibet to the Appenines, are always peculiarly abhorrent from the moral sentiments of man unperverted and undegraded by superstition.

Feelings of a very similar nature led the ancient Persians to that peculiar mode of burial above ground which is still practised by their descendants in this country; and it must be acknowledged that no sentiment can be more natural than the desire of insulating such repositories of the dead, of guarding them by a sort of sacred solitude from outrage from the eye of frigid curiosity, and perhaps from the abhorrence of adverse sects.

For nearly as the feelings which produce this mode of disposing of the dead approach to those which lead to the common practice of interment, there is perhaps none at which our habitual sentiments are more apt to revolt. But if our own mode of burial were a new practice, to be examined for the first time, it is not without circumstances abhorrent to the feelings, which might make it seem to be an obscure and gloomy imprisonment of the sacred remains of the dead.³⁴

Mulla Feroze was a source of information for many British travellers, not only Mrs. Graham and Sir James Mackintosh, but also Sir William Ouseley (1813). He explicitly stated his dependence on:

the intelligent and modest FIRUZ, chief *Destur* or priest of the *Parsis* and generally styled *Mula*.... For some *Zend* and *Pahlavi* volumes.... I was indebted

34. *Bombay Courier*, August 20th, 1808.

to another ingenious Parsi, named Edelji. Of all their nation established in this place, he and FIRUZ were regarded as the most learned, it was said indeed, that they alone could read or explain those manuscripts.

Sir William's respect for the Parsis is equally explicit:

But though they have adopted much from those whose country affords them protection against Mohammedan persecution, they still retain the religion of their Persian ancestors: whether with all its original purity, I shall not here inquire; yet certainly with so much of its excellence, as in a most remarkable degree influences their moral conduct. Every report that we have heard on the spot, confirmed what different travellers have related concerning the active industry, hospitality, general philanthropy and benevolence of the *Parsis*; and tended to exalt that favourable impression which I had already formed of their religion; as one not only recommending, but actually producing virtuous habits; rendering the men who profess it honest, and the women chaste.³⁵

Like Terry, however, he considered dokhmas immoral because men and women were cast 'promiscuously into the pit'. Sir William Ouseley was not an ordinary traveller. His scholarly ability enabled him to see the falsity of Jones' and Richardson's arguments against Anquetil du Perron. His own interest was primarily in Iran, but his comment on the ancient Persian attitude to fire is relevant to theme of this lecture:

I shall here express my firm belief that the first Persian altars blazed in honour of God alone; as likewise, that the present disciples of ZERATUSHT or ZARDEHESHT (Zoroaster), both in India and the mother country, Iran, or Persia; have no other object when they render to fire a semblance of veneration.³⁶

Perhaps the last trader/traveller whose comments on Parsi religion are of interest are those of James Forbes who devoted a chapter of his *Oriental Memoirs* (1814) to the Parsis. He stated baldly 'The Parsees are all worshippers of fire' but then qualified his statement:

35. *Travels in the East More Particularly Persia*, 1813, pp. 98-101.

36. *Op.cit.* p. 108.

The vulgar and illiterate worship this sacred flame, as also the sun, moon and stars without regard to the invisible creator; but the learned and judicious adore only the Almighty Fountain of Light, the author and disposer of all things, under the symbol of fire.³⁷

Thus, in general, early travellers and scholars alike found in Parsi religion something for which they had an immediate positive response, something with an immense history, a faith they could understand and a moral code they respected. The respect was based on what was seen to be the 'fruits' of the religion. So J. A. Pope, the first British person to dedicate a book to a Parsi, wrote in 1816.

Of the motives that led to this translation little need be said, but that it was not mere curiosity, but a strong desire to be more intimately acquainted with the principles of a morality I admired, and of the daily exercise of benevolence that sprang from these principles.³⁸

The theme of the lecture thus far is brought to a rounded conclusion by the writings of Sir William Erskine in 1818.

He embodied the features both of scholar and traveller. As a scholar he rejected the theories of Sir William Jones on the *Desat̄r* and *Dabistan*, commenting that despite his enormous respect for the distinguished Orientalist, 'the history of letters seems scarcely to afford an instance of a more perverted judgement on historical evidence'. Erskine drew attention to the late date of the Avestan alphabet and offered a balanced account of the teaching in the Pahlavi texts. He also lived in Bombay and was therefore able to give a first-hand account of the Parsis which it was not then customary for a literary scholar to possess. His account deals with both the material and the spiritual condition of the community, expressing almost all the various points of view quoted in these first two lectures. The following passages from Erskine are numbered, both in order to stress their selective nature, and for reference purposes.

- (i) No religion on earth, that of the Jews excepted, has continued from such remote times as that of the Parsis with so little apparent change of doctrine or ritual

37. *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 80.

38. *The Ardai Viraf Nameh*, London, 1816, p. v.

- (ii) in spite of this multiplication of superior beings, and though in the liturgy of the Parsis all of these [Amshaspands and guardian spirits] are occasionally addressed, they are never worshipped as deities, but only as the media through which praise is conveyed to the Supreme Being, to whom all adoration is finally addressed... . Light is regarded as the best and noblest symbol of the Supreme, who is without form... .
- (iii) They have no temples considered as the residence of God or of his superior beings, nor any images or paintings of Ohrmazd or his angels. The *atesh-kadehs*, or fire mansions, are merely edifices for guarding the holy fire undefiled and unextinguished.
- (iv) The Parsi is one of the few religions that have no fasts. God delights in the happiness of his creatures; and it is even meritorious to use the best meat and drink, the best clothes, and the best accommodations of every kind that are attainable.
- (v) They are perhaps the most active part of the population of the island, and in the midst of the deep coloured and effeminate Hindus and Mussalmans, they still retain the fair complexion, the hardy constitution, and stubborn activity of northern climates.
- (vi) [religion] seems to have very little influence of any kind except of a social and political nature, arising from the connexion of caste. Their religion, if we may judge from their practice, has but little connexion with morals at all. It is a religion of ceremonies and prayers.
- (vii) They are bold, active, enterprising intelligent, persevering in the pursuit of wealth, and successful in it. Many of their merchants have accumulated large fortunes by their superior talents and address. On the other hand where they have power they are tyrannical, and are regardless of the feelings and rights of others, they put no value on truth, and among themselves are not the less valued for lying or falsehood, which they regard as very worldly wisdom.

Hence they exhibit no shame when detected in fraud or deceit; it is only the fate of war. They are, however, no niggards of their wealth, which they habitually spend lavishly in ministering to their fancies, their vices, and especially their voluptuousness; and sometimes generously in assisting each other.

- (viii) [At country parties] unlike the other natives of India, they generally

imitate the Europeans in the disposition of their table, and in their whole arrangements. They are apt, however, to drink more deeply than our manners permit.

- (ix) They are said formally to have been eminent for their charity, which of late has not been conspicuous... .
- (x) The Parsis are, however, the most improveable caste in India. Religion and customs supposed to be connected with religion are the great obstacles to the improvement of the Orientals, whether Mussalmans or Hindus. From such restraints the Parsis are remarkably free, they are in every respect much like Europeans than any other class of natives in Southern Asia; and being less restrained by ancient and acknowledged law are more prepared to adopt any change of which they see the benefit. They do not attend to learning of any kind, but, take them all in all, they are probably the most vigorous, the most active and intelligent class of natives in all India.³⁹

Erskine's derogatory comments on Parsi integrity (vii) may be due to bias (as in the case of Farmer, in the first lecture, but it may also be that commercial success had undermined some of the traditional Parsi virtues, certainly that is the implication of passage (ix). Perhaps one of the unsung virtues of the first Sir Jamsetj Jijibhoy, was that he brought the community back to many of its own ideals. Erskine's comments on the lack of religion among the Parsis (vi) may have been due to his looking for the wrong manifestation of religion and not appreciating the religious significance of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, or to an accurate observation of a trend already noticed, the leaving behind of traditional beliefs as Parsis began to climb the ladder of economic power. In this detail Erskine stands in marked contrast to other reporters. But despite these qualifications the main emphasis of Erskine's account is the respect he felt for a religion of great antiquity (i), his appreciation of the worship of one God without equal (ii), which rejects images (iii) and was, therefore, akin to the faith of the British. The Parsi freedom

39. 'On the Sacred Books and Religion of the Parsis,' *Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society*, II, 1820, pp. 295-341, W. Hamilton, *The East-India Gazetteer*, London, 1828, vol. 1, pp. 607-610, the first edition published in 1815, has an account practically identical in wording.

from religious restrictions (x), their appearance (v) and customs (viii) all reinforced the sense of the familiar.

The nineteenth century witnessed various changes in British accounts of Indian religion. On the one hand there was the rise of Evangelical influence and the scathing missionary reports, on the other there was the increasing materialism of some commentators and their sources. In addition, there was a proliferation of scholarly studies. As a result, there was a considerable change in the overall perspective in which Parsis were viewed. This changed perspective makes a natural break in the present subject. But there is an important bridge between this lecture and the next, the Revd John Wilson. He was the first missionary to turn his efforts primarily to the Parsis, following his arrival in Bombay in 1829.⁴⁰ His knowledge of Zoroastrianism was gained from the reports of travellers outlined in this lecture, especially the work of Anquetil du Perron, also from Greek and Roman sources, then later in his ministry he studied Avesta and Pahlavi. There were four phases to his missionary attack on the community. In 1831 he wrote a series of articles in the *Oriental Christian Spectator* and the *Samachar*, the intention of which was to provoke the Parsis to engage in a public debate about their religion. He also opened a number of mission schools, deliberately located in the Fort area near Parsi homes to attract the youth of the community and so to use education as a vehicle for conveying Christian teaching. In 1839 two of his Parsi pupils were baptised into the Christian Church. The third phase of his attack was the publication in 1843 of his book, *The Parsi Religion as contained in the Zand-Avasta and propounded and defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, unfolded, refuted and contrasted with Christianity*. The fourth phase of his work, perhaps suprisingly in view of the bitter Parsi hostility of the 1830s and 1840s, was one of mutual respect and a degree of harmony between missionary and some Parsi leaders, especially in the field of education.⁴¹ But what is important in the present context is not the last phase of Wilson's work, or even the content of his writings,⁴² so much as the effect of his work and study. The community

40. G. Smith, *The Life of John Wilson, D D, F R S*, London 1879.

41. He was, for example, examiner at the Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoj schools, see the *Reports* of the Parsi Benevolent Institution for 1861, p. 35 and 1862, p. 45.

42. Wilson's objections can be divided into two main areas. First, the objections raised by Evangelicals against all Indian religions, that they do not confront

was in an uproar over the conversions. No less a man than Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy tried to bribe the boys back into the fold. Both converts and missionary went for some days in fear for their lives, such was the intensity of community feeling.⁴³ After the initial fury subsided, a number of Parsi leaders realised that the torrent of speeches and articles against Wilson really failed to answer his charges because the authors were unable to counter his translations and exegesis of Avestan and Pahlavi texts. What was also realised was that schooling was a potent force not only for good, but also for ill: it was not only a stepping stone to power or wealth, it was also something which could affect, and undermine, religion. The result was a very determined educational drive within the community, both in the schools and in the madressas. Hence the link between the last British account of Parsi religion to be considered here, and the subject of the next lecture, Parsis and British education.

man with his natural state of sin and therefore the necessity for salvation through, and only through, Christ. Second, Wilson advanced arguments specifically against Zoroastrianism, that they worshipped Zurvān, an amoral god; there was no proof Zoroaster had worked miracles and he denied that the *Avesta* had been revealed by God. Wilson did not refer to the *Gāthās*.

43. One of the converts was eventually ordained an Anglican priest, and wrote his autobiography, Revd Dhanjibhai Naoroji *From Zoroaster to Christ*, Edinburgh, 1909, for these incidents see pp. 43-55.



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8 Parsis and British Education, 1820-1880

Various factors combined in the mid-nineteenth century to weaken the hold of Bombay Parsis on their main power base-wealth. The first was the increased competition from other Indian races or castes who were adapting to the changed economic and political situation under British rule. The loss of the opium trade was the outstanding example of this decline in economic control. The second factor was the improvement in communications, both between Britain and India and within India itself, in particular through the introduction of the telegraph and railway systems. They opened up the interior to the British thus weakening the Parsi position as middlemen in trade. The third factor was the financial troubles of Bombay in 1847-50 which removed the wealth of a number of Parsi families. Although these troubles were not as great as those of the share mania some fifteen years later, they did, coupled with the other two factors, effect a substantial change in some Parsi fortunes. The point behind all these factors is loss of wealth meant loss of total power, because money more than anything else, more even than their social adaptability, had been the basis of Parsi influence.¹

There were, however, other changes taking place in Bombay society in the mid-nineteenth century. One of these was the opening of a gulf of suspicion between the British and Indians after the Mutiny of 1857. The flames of

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1. On the increased competition see Dobbin, pp. 15f. On the growth of the telegraph and railways see *Gazetteer Bombay*, vol. 95, pp. 381ff. and 347ff. respectively. On the financial troubles see A. Guha, 'Parsi Seths as Entrepreneurs, 1750-1850', *Economic and Political Weekly*, August, 1970, P.M. 115. Although the troubles were real ones, it is possible to exaggerate them. As the pages of *The Parsi Prakash* illustrate, there were new Parsi business, men and shipowners in the 1850s. As table 3 illustrates, the emphasis moved from ship and shop owning to directors of banks and industrial projects as the decade progressed.

suspicion on both sides were fanned by the cruelty of each. Although the Mutiny largely passed by Bombay, the island was not immune to the mood of India. Where there had been a need for middlemen in trade, there arose a need for a mediating and soothing influence in politics, as the British withdrew into the shell of their own political power, and into their social clubs.² With the Mutiny came the end of the East India Company and the direct rule of India by the throne in the person of the Viceroy, and by Parliament in the person of the Secretary of State. In theory, at least, business concerns were no longer the sole British interest in India. In the newly created Legislative Council came the first opportunities under British rule for Indians to participate in the government of their own country. In the Councils of the land and the Committees of the Presidencies, aristocratic Indians, princes and land owners, were given positions of power, albeit limited powers. They had proved to be breakwaters against the Mutineers; their reward was now given and their future co-operation ensured. In the Presidency of Bombay they were courted, but in Bombay city, the creation of the British, there was no such established group. There it was not the royal, but the merchant princes who were given a share in Imperial rule. There was also a need for a new class, those who were educated in western ways, above all in western law, who could share the mantle of power. It may have been but a shadowy share of that mantle, but towards the end of the nineteenth century political power was possible in some degree for those educated to assume it.³

2. For a readable account of the effects of the Mutiny see M. Edwardes, *A History of India*, London, 1961 parts 5 and 6; P. Spear, *A History of India*, repr. Harmondsworth, 1965, chs. 11 and 12. Both books include a bibliography on the subject.

3. See G. Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism, Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1880-1916*, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 1-8.

In Bombay the Parsis were pioneers in the use of this new power base.⁴ Most studies of the Parsis comment on the fact they were among the leading consumers of British education in Bombay, but it is surprising that no attempt has so far been made to write a history of their place in the growth of western education in the city. This lecture is an offering on that subject covering the critical growth period of 1820-1880.

The change from 'British' to 'western' in the previous sentence was significant. The Portuguese were the first to bring western education to this part of India. They opened an orphanage for destitute native children in Salsette in 1526, then in 1556 a similar orphanage near Thana. There the boys were taught Portuguese, Latin, agriculture, and other industrial arts. By the end of the sixteenth century the Jesuits and Franciscans had a number of parochial elementary schools around Bombay.⁵ The first British school in Bombay was opened in 1718 by the Revd. Richard Cobbe, but its aim was limited---to educate the Poor European Children 'in the Christian religion according to the use of the Church of England'.⁶ The first attempt to provide western education for the Indians of Bombay was made by the Missionary Societies. Again the first move was not British, but that of the American Marathi Mission which arrived in Bombay in 1812 and opened a Hindu boys' school two years later. By 1820 the mission had twenty-one primary schools with over a thousand pupils. In the same year the Church Missionary Society

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4. On the history of education in Bombay see K. S. Vakil, 'Education in Bombay city (1804-1929)', *JBBRAS*, vi, 1930, pp. 301-312; B. N. Vaidya, *History of Primary Education in the Province of Bombay*, Bombay, 1947. Both depend on *Gazetteer Bombay*, vol. III, chapter xi., which in turn depends on the work in n.5 below. For the situation in Calcutta, which tended to be ten or fifteen years ahead of Bombay in educational development, see H. Sharp (ed.) *Selections from Education Records*, Part 1, 1781-1839, Calcutta 1920.
 5. See *Appendix to the Education Commission Report 1*, Bombay, vol.1, Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Calcutta, 1884, pp. 1f. (Hereafter *Appendix*).
 6. See *Gazetteer Bombay*, vol III, chapter 11 pp. 96f., David, *History of Bombay*, pp. 96f., refers to the natives of Bombay requesting a schoolmaster for English as early as 1668. The outcome is not reported.

arrived and others soon followed.⁷

1820 saw the birth of what was to be a far more important educational development in the city. The 'Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Government of Bombay' (later more conveniently known as the 'Bombay Education Society') had been founded in 1815. The Society's original concern was to rescue half-caste children, the offspring of soldiers and other Europeans, 'from that profligacy and heathenism to which their wretched circumstances exposed them'.⁸ Rule 52 of the Society indicated what sort of education it was they were to receive:

The children shall be taught Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and such other branches of Education as may hereafter appear necessary, and particularly they shall be instructed in the principles of the Protestant religion according to the Church of England and in conformity with the system practised by Dr. Bell.⁹

The thinking behind the formation of the Society was outlined in a sermon by Archdeacon Barnes on Sunday, January 14th, 1816:

Religious knowledge is best security for civil obedience, and those who are taught to *fear God*, are the most likely to *honour the king*, and *love the brotherhood*.¹⁰

Although the school was primarily for the illegitimate offspring of Europeans, some Indian children also attended. The Annual Report of 1819 (p. 22) states:

By far the greater part of the native children in these schools are Parsees; and

7. See Vakil, pp. 304f., Vaidya, pp. 8f., *Gazetteer*, pp. 102f.

8. Bombay Education Society Reports I, p. 4 and Report for 1818 rule 50.

9. 3rd Annual Report, 1818, p. 3. The religious position of the Society is also indicated by the books it used, including Watts Divine Songs for Children. See, *The Works of the Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts D. D.*, selected by Dr. Jennings and Reverend Dr. Dodridge in 1853, vol. IV, London, 1810, ch. 12, and the example of a hymn quoted by Pailin on p. 102 of the article cited in note 1 of *lecture 2*.

10. *1st Report*, p. 10.

the Society is much indebted to Mulla Firuz, the learned editor of the *Desatir*, who has taken considerable pains in explaining to his country-men the views of the Society, and encouraging them to send their children to the school.

In 1820 the Society established a sub-committee 'the Native School and School Book Committee', with representatives from the Hindu, Muslim and Parsi communities, the principal object of which was to increase the number of schools and:

*To prepare books in the native languages, which without any reference to religious matters, should tend to improve the morals, enlarge the understanding and promote general and useful knowledge.*¹¹

It is with the formation of this sub-committee that the critical growth period of education in Bombay city can be said to start. The motivation and scope of the sub-committee was so different from that of the parent body that Archdeacon Barnes wrote privately to the Society's President, the Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone:

I am not sure that anything is gained by making the Native School and School Book Committee so connected with the Education Society for though the object is different and kept distinct, yet the natives may confound these schools for them with ours for Christian education. If this be the case, it may be better....to separate them and make two societies.¹²

In 1822 they did separate to become two distinct societies, although a number of people were on the Managing Committee of both and Mountstuart Elphinstone was President of each. But it was the Native School and School-Book Society (after 1827 renamed the Bombay Native Education Society, BNES) which was the most influential in the city, and which is the most important for the present theme. Of the original eleven Indian subscribers, four were Parsis who between them contributed half the funds. The four Parsis on the Managing Committee were Jamsetji Jijibhoy, Mulla Feroze, Framji

11. *Sixth Annual Report*, p. 23.

12. Quoted by K. Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817-1830*, Oxford, 1957, p. 260.

Cowasji Banaji and Hormusji Dhunjibhoy.¹³

The BNES was the major educational body in Bombay from 1822-1840. Its most celebrated school was the Central School, renamed the Elphinstone School by Sir John Malcolm in 1828.¹⁴ The Society was the prime mover in the foundation of the Elphinstone professorships. Again Parsis were leading figures, constituting one-third of the subscribers and contributing over half the funds.¹⁵ The aim of these posts was to teach Indians the English language, the Arts, Science and Literature of Europe. The three Professorships were the nucleus of the Elphinstone College. The relationship between the College and the school was uncertain and relations in the early days were strained by personal rivalries, but their combination in the Elphinstone Institution provided Bombay with what has proved to be one of its foremost educational establishments.

The policy of the BNES was to go for quantity, not necessarily the quality, of schools. With the state of indigenous education at the time, the policy is perhaps intelligible. In order to assess the task before the Society, Elphinstone directed Company servants throughout the Presidency to submit reports to him on the state of schools within their areas. The only report to mention the Parsis is that from Surat written by Judge Henderson on September 30th, 1824. He stated that whereas one in four Hindus went to school, only one in six Parsis and one in ten Muslims did so. There were eleven Parsi schools in his area, but all were purely for Religious Education and were staffed by priests. For general education the Parsis went to the Hindu schools:

The Parsees generally send their children to the Hindoo schools, but as with them, education with the greater part is thrown aside immediately that the boy attains an age to be of any use by his labour; there is however amongst the Parsees comparatively a greater number that can write, though most

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13. *Bombay Native Education Society, First Annual Report and Bombay Education Society Sixth Annual Report*, pp. 56f., for the managing committee and the *Fourth Annual Report of the BNES*, p. 56 for the subscriptions.
 14. See A. L. Covernton, *A Short History of the Elphinstone High School, Bombay*, 1925, p. 7.
 15. *BNES Fourth Annual Report*, pp. 55-60.

unintelligibly, than amongst other classes.¹⁶

'School' is perhaps a grand name for these centres. None had their own building, there was usually only one teacher, generally a Brahmin, who was hired only for the period where there was thought to be a need. The school was open to all save the lowest castes, but it was usually only the higher castes who attended and that very erratically. Letters were drawn in the sand on trays because there were no books or paper. Lessons generally concentrated on the learning of tables up to a hundred, including fractions, so that financial business could be conducted rapidly in later life.

With such a large population spread over a vast area, the BNES, a voluntary body (though encouraged by Government), could not hope seriously to change matters. In 1840 a Board of Education was appointed to oversee policy in the Presidency. At first the policy of the BNES was continued, but it was changed by Erskine Perry (1843-52). He advocated the 'downward filtration' theory: concentrating efforts and resources on the most able in the expectation that the benefits of education would then filter down through society as far as it was advantageous for them to do so. He was a staunch advocate of education through the medium of English where possible, but not to the exclusion of the vernacular. He also developed vocational training with the opening of the Grant Medical College in 1845, with Engineering classes at the Elphinstone Institution and Poona, with Teacher Training classes and the establishment of a Professorship in Jurisprudence. Five years after Perry's departure the three Indian Universities (Calcutta, Madras and Bombay) were started. The Board of Education, although having a Director such as Perry, was composed of Honorary Members. In 1855 control of education passed from local to central Government and was run by full-time paid officials. Under the second Director for Bombay, E. I. Howard (1856-65), the number of Primary Schools in the city increased from 300 to 954, but this return to a policy of school growth did not involve a weakening in Higher Education. The first University matriculations were in 1859, the same year that Martin Haug was appointed Professor of Sanskrit at Poona. In 1863, Bühler took up a similar post at Elphinstone Institution. Towards the end of the period covered by this lecture,

16. The Reports are reproduced and introduced by R. V. Parulekar, *Survey of Indigenous Education in the Province of Bombay, 1820-30*, Bombay, 1951. The report of Henderson is on pp. 68f.

in 1870, control of education was returned to local Government, but this brief survey of general trends is sufficient background against which to consider the contribution of Parsis to education in the city up to 1880.¹⁷

Parsi involvement in the foundation and running of the BNES has already been noted. An indication of the continued involvement in that Society is given by the presentation of a Certificate of Merit and a purse of Rs. 3000 to Captain Jarvis on 1st May, 1830, in recognition of his fifteen years of service as Secretary to the Society. Fifteen of the twenty-three donors were Parsis.¹⁸ There are also examples of individual Parsis making their contribution to the progress of western education. On 1st March, 1831, an evening school was opened in the Fort for teaching English to Parsi boys, and a similar venture, the 'Nocturnal Society', was started on 1st April, 1834, to teach English and Engineering to Parsis.¹⁹ In 1832 the first Indian child to be sent to Britain for education left Bombay. The *Bombay Gazette* for 29th September included the following passage on the decision of the Parsi Sheth, Furdoonji Limji Panday:

The Government of Bombay duly appreciating the public spirit of Furdoonjee Sett, and desirous of encouraging wealthy natives to send their children to England for Education, has we understand, promised, at the request of that Gentleman, to write to the Court of Directors to beg they will give every assistance in their power to Furdoonjee Sett's friends in England towards the accomplishment of the objects he has in view in sending his son to that country.²⁰

An outstanding figure in the 1820s and 1830s who has not, perhaps, been given the honour due to him in accounts of Parsis involvement in education was Framji Cowasji Banaji. Although his charities were widespread they were concentrated in the areas of religion and education, as were his energies. He was a founder member of the BNES, elected Vice-President of the Indian Agricultural and Horticultural Society in 1830, a member of the Royal Asiatic

17. See note 4 above for a bibliography on the history of education in Bombay, for this period.

18. *Parsi Prakash*, vol. I, p. 226.

19. *Parsi Prakash* vol I, pp. 236 and 266 respectively.

20. *Parsi Prakash*, I, p. 253.

Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1837 and was a member of the Board of Education until 1851.²¹ He was not a scholar, but he was literate, and he could speak and write in English - which was not common for the Sheths of his day. Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, for example, was not educated in either fashion. With Jamsetji Jijibhoy and Jijibhoy Dadabhoy, Banaji opened The Parsi Benevolent School for teaching Avesta and Gujarati to poor Zoroastrians on 11th July, 1836.²² It was his unfulfilled ambition to open a Polytechnic and a School of Industry. Whereas Sir J. J.'s fortunes grew and permitted the fulfilment of his wishes, Banaji's sadly declined and prevented him from doing likewise. But his influence was not inconsiderable. At a meeting convened to raise a memorial to him, Professor Patton, in proposing the erection of the Framji Cowasji Institute for the use of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, commented:²³

This is not an ordinary occasion: it is the first time, as far as I am aware, that people of all classes have united in their desire to erect a testimonial to a native of this country.

The Parsi to do most in the furtherance of education was, of course, Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy. Prior to 1842 his charitable acts had ranged over many spheres, including, but not specifically, education.²⁴ If there had been any particular focus of his charity it was rather medicine. But he was as concerned as any, and more than most, at the conversion of two Parsis mentioned in the last lecture. Though not himself educated he was keen to encourage the younger generation to avail themselves of the advantages it provided. But the use of education for Christian missionary purposes, notably by Wilson, also made him very aware of the threat to the religion and identity of the community which accompanied those advantages. Thus three years after the

21. See Khosru Naowrosji Banaji, *Memoirs of the late Framji Cowasji Banaji*, Bombay, 1892.

22. Parsi Prakash, I, p. 294.

23. Report of the Framjee Cowasji Testimonial Meeting, p. 3 included in K. N. Banaji's book (n. 21 above) and incorporated in *Proceedings of Students Literary and Scientific Society*.

24. See the list of his charities referred to in n. 35 of the first lecture.

conversion of the two boys, and on the occasion of a public meeting to honour him following the conferral of a knighthood, he announced the founding of the Parsi Benevolent Institution, the major concern of which was to provide education for poor Parsis. On 17th June, 1842, in the words of the *Bombay Times*:

a very numerous party of European and Parsee Gentlemen assembled at the mansion of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, to witness the presentation of an Address to him by his kinsmen and his friends, accompanied by a testimonial, value Rs. 15,000.²⁵

In his speech of acceptance Sir J. J. referred to:

a scheme that I have long contemplated for relieving the distresses of the Parsee poor of Bombay, Surat and its neighbourhood. You know full well the state of misery in which many of our people are living, and hopeless ignorance, in which their children are permitted to grow up.

My object is to create a fund, the interest of which shall be applied towards relieving the indigent of our people and the education of their children, and I now propose to invest the sum of Rs. 3,00,000 in the Public Securities, and place it at the disposal of Trustees, who with the interest shall carry out the object I have mentioned.²⁶

He asked the East India Company, still theoretically holding final responsibility for Indian affairs, to act as trustees in order to ensure the proper use of the money to the desired end. He directed that 78% of the funds be used for Education, 9% to assist the marriages of poor priests and laymen's daughters, 9% for assisting the blind and lame, and 4% for the funeral rites of the poor.²⁷ Similar bequests were made for Surat, Broach and Navsari. It had been part of Sir J. J.'s intention that pupils at his schools should receive instruction in the Zoroastrian religion, obviously a move intended to counter the work of

25. Correspondence, Deed, Bye-Laws & c., relating to "Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's Parsee Benevolent Institution" established in Bombay 1849, Bombay, 1849, p. 1 (hereafter *Correspondence*).

26. *Correspondence*, p. 17.

27. *Correspondence*, p. 21.

such missionaries as Wilson. But the Court of Directors stated:

It would be inconsistent with the principles to which we invariably adhere that your Government should become Trustee for, or should take any part in, the support or management of an Institute for the religious instruction of any division of the Native Community. The education, therefore, at the proposed Institute must, if it is to receive any aid from your Government, be limited to secular objects, - the religious instruction of the pupils being left to their own priests or pastors.²⁸

In 1849 there were two hundred boys at Sir J. J. schools in Bombay and the following year two girls' schools were opened. At first the standards were not high. In his annual report for 1859-60 the Director of Public Instruction said of the PBI (p. 71):

This large and expensive school, to which Government contribute nearly Rs. 6,000, is under European superintendence, but is very severely commented on by the inspector. It could not bear comparison with the better class of Government schools; and certainly the specimens of answering shown to me must be pronounced highly discreditable.

The following year, however, after the appointment of Mr. Burgess as Principal, the Director was able to report an improvement in standards.²⁹ By 1864 the Institute had twenty-one schools with 3,049 pupils. It adhered to the wishes of its founder and concentrated on the education of the poor. The child of a wealthy family was asked to leave, if the place was wanted by one from a poor family.³⁰ But despite the considerable pioneering achievements of individual Parsis in the field of education, not all members of the community were anxious to acquire it for themselves or for their children. In 1866 the

28. Correspondence, p. 60. Wilson's and other missionaries' schools could undertake Religious Education because they were not dependent on Government assistance.

29. *Report of the Director of Public Instruction, 1860/61*, p. 26.

30. See J.H. Wadia, *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution Centenary Volume*, Bombay, 1950, Appendix, for a history, also *Report on the Education of Parsee Boys* published in 1920 by the Education Committee of the Parsi Panchayat, pp. 19-24.

Director of Public Instruction in Bombay reported that of all the important Parsi families only the grandson of Framji Nusserwanji Patel was at college.³¹ Nor were all the poor hammering at the school doors demanding entrance. In his annual report for 1861 the Principal of the PBI commented (p.26):

One of the great difficulties that have to be contended with in such schools is the propensity of the parents to keep their children at home on the most frivolous excuses: not only are they detained on account of the illness of other members of their families, but very frequently, if there is a burial in the neighbourhood, if any of their relatives are going to a marriage or a garden feast, or the like, - they are required to go there also rather than attend the school.

He was of the opinion that the parents 'value the loss as nothing because they have nothing to pay for instruction'. He estimated that most pupils went to school for approximately only nineteen months and in that time they attended only about 390 days. In 1862 he began imposing a fine on absentees and thought (p. 39) that it had a good effect. But in 1863 he feared the trade boom in the city was taking away both pupil and teacher from the classroom. Sadly he commented 'Parents seem to think they are conferring a favour by sending their girls' at all.³² One beneficial effect of the trade boom was that there were more individuals with money to invest in schools. The pages of the *Parsi*

31. Quoted in Dobbin, p 34.

32. *Report*, 1863, pp. 38f., 41f. See also *Report* for 1864, p.22. In the Report for 1862, p. 38 the Principal quoted Mr. Coke, the Education Inspector: 'It is very much to be regretted that a greater number of the poorer order of Parsis have not more literary ambition, for opportunities of rising in the world are provided for them at this Institution which poor Hindus would grasp at if only they could have the same good fortune. I attribute the deficiency of well educated boys produced at the Parsi Benevolent Institution more to the apathy of the people themselves than to the system of teaching. Mr. Burgess and his assistants are most dilligent at their work, and anxious for the success of the Institute, but the pupils themselves are irregular in attendance, careless about their own advancement and make it a favour to learn.'

Prakash relating to 1864 list seven schools opened by Parsis in that one year.³³

The pages for succeeding years do not record how many had to be closed with the collapse of the market, but that event did at least remove the temptation of a business career for many, so more pupils remained at their desks.

Although it is necessary to insert the above qualification on Parsi enthusiasm for education, it is nevertheless a fact that of all communities in Bombay the Parsis were the most active in that field. In these differing responses can be seen something of the division of Parsi society and of the two halves of the nineteenth century. Those who did not take to education tended to be those whose wealth was based on trade and who, therefore, saw little advantage to be gained from schooling. Despite all his contributions to education some of Sir J. J.'s own descendants are in this category. The very poor, also, were unable to pursue Higher Education. But at least the schooling they received gave them greater job mobility than their contemporaries of other races, and so, by their standards, more wealth. The families to make most use of the educational opportunities were the middle class, whose hopes of economic advance in trade were slight because of the greater competition from other communities and the stranglehold of the established families.

A study of the figures of pupils at various educational institutions in Bombay between 1860 and 1880 produces some interesting facts. In 1860 Parsis occupied approximately 40% of places at all educational establishments from

33. On 1st January the Cama Female school was opened in Scotland (*Parsi Prakash* II, p. 87) and on the same day C. J. Readymoney opened an English school in Gandevi (p. 86). On 19th May Nusserwanji Maneckji Petit donated Rs. 25,000 for the erection of a school in Iran in memory of his father (p. 116). On 1st June Sorabji Rustomji Master opened a school in the Fort for teaching Gujarati and English (p. 118) and on the same day an Anglo-vernacular school was opened at Mahim under Cursetji Ferdunji Parakh (p. 118). On 1st July Pestonji and Bomanji Framji Cama opened an English school for Parsi boys near Gowalia Tank (p. 121). On September 23rd Rustomji was honoured by the king of Portugal for building an English school at Damaun (near Udwada) with a Portuguese name (p. 125). In the succeeding years there were two opened in 1866 (pp. 192, 206), one in 1867 (p. 235), one in 1868 (p. 241), one in 1869 (p. 292), three in 1871 (pp. 369, 371, 382), two in 1872 (pp. 388, 392), two in 1874 (pp. 466, 495).

Colleges to Primary Schools. In 1880 they occupied only 20% of places (except at college level where they still represented 35% of the student body). But the decline is in percentage terms only. In those twenty years Parsi student numbers increased by 109%, the big difference is in the increase of Muslims and especially Hindus, at school.³⁴ These figures illustrate the point that Parsis tended to be several years ahead of other communities in Bombay in adapting to changing situations. In the first twenty years of matriculation examinations following the founding of Bombay University, Parsis averaged 21 % of the passes, a proportion far in excess of their 6% proportion of the city's population.³⁵ The first year of matriculation, however, presented the community with problems. Not one Parsi passed. In his annual report for 1859-60 the Director of Education (Mr. Howard) commented on the reasons for this failure. It was a rule that no candidate was allowed to pass who had made three bad spelling or grammatical errors. Parsi Gujarati was so different from Hindu Gujarati that the examiners failed all Parsi candidates. The Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, spoke on behalf of the Parsis:

What the examiners had really to decide was whether the candidates had that general degree of proficiency in their own language which would enable them to profit by the teachings of the University. To reject an intelligent Parsi because he did not write and speak Gujarathi like a Hindu, would be, as if Sir Walter Raleigh were refused admission to Oriel because he spoke broad Devonshire, which he did to the day of his execution.³⁶

After matriculating, the college the Parsis clearly preferred was Elphinstone. In 1854 (prior to the introduction of matriculation) they had represented 40% of that college's students, a proportion they maintained even in 1882. At St. Xavier's in the latter year they constituted 43% of the student body. These were the two main Parsi choices. Of Parsis entering Higher Education in 1882, 30% chose St. Xavier's and 44% Elphinstone.³⁷ Some of the most famous names of recent Parsi history attended the latter, including S. S.

34. See table 4.

35. See table 5.

36. *Appendix*, p. 22.

37. See table 6.

Bengali, K. R. Cama, Naoroji Ferdunji, D. F. Karaka, Pherozeshah Mehta, J. J. Modi, Dadabhoy Naoroji and J. N. Tata.

But it is not only its leaders which makes a community great, it is its total population. Using the term 'educated' in the sense of 'having attended school', then in 1882, 60% of the Parsis of Bombay may be considered educated, compared with only 18% of the Hindu population.³⁸ The result of this was that Parsis had a higher literacy rate than any other community from the first year for which such figures are available, 1881. In that year 26% of Parsis were recorded as illiterate, compared with 73% of the Hindus.³⁹

Although a number of wealthy Parsis in the mid-nineteenth century were not themselves educated, they nevertheless sponsored Higher Education. Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy is again an outstanding name. He founded the J. J. Hospital in 1845 alongside the Grant Medical College so that students could undertake practical work in the hospital.⁴⁰ It was formally incorporated as a teaching hospital in the 1870s. In 1857 Sir J. J. founded a School of Art and Industrial Design which, despite early accommodation problems, soon flourished.⁴¹ This model was followed by Cursetji Ferdunji Parakh in 1863 with the founding of the Ferdoonji Sohrabji Parakh School of Art and Industry.⁴² In 1864 Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy (second baronet) donated Rs. 1,00,000 to the Deccan College in Poona 'for the diffusion of Science and Knowledge'.⁴³ Another important sponsor in this field was Sir C. J. Readymoney with his donation of an Engineering College at Poona in 1865, buildings for Elphinstone College and

38. See table 7.

39. See table 8.

40. See Reports of the Grant Medical College, 1846/7, p. 17 and 1847/8 p. 61 on medical students working in the Sir J.J. Hospital.

41. See *The Story of the Sir J.J. School of Art*, Bombay, 1957. *The Report of the DPI for 1859/60* (p. 84) refers to the cramped accommodation and the need for more European instructors but in the 1860/1 Report (p. 27) the School was said to be flourishing.

42. *Parsi Prakash*, II, p.77.

43. *Parsi Prakash*, II, p.128.

Bombay University in 1864, 1866, and 1874, the Grant Medical College in 1868 and 1869 and St. Xavier's in 1869.⁴⁴ In 1878 the Behramji Jijibhoy Medical college was founded in Poona.⁴⁵ Added to these contributions were donations to Libraries (such as the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society), translation funds, prizes and scholarships.⁴⁶

Some Parsis may have donated to charities in the hope of purchasing knighthoods, but it would be unjustly cynical to attribute this motive to most. Jamsetji Jijibhoy was making munificent contributions to many causes years before there was any prospect of such distinctions being conferred on Indians. The tradition of charity is an old one among the Parsis and was commented on by the earliest British travellers to India as the first lecture showed. Education was an obvious area for charitable acts, because of the high value Zoroastrians have always placed on learning. This traditional esteem of learning was perhaps *the* reason why Parsis were so actively involved in the pursuit and furtherance of British education in Bombay city during the early growth period. But it was not the only reason. As Judge Henderson's report on the Parsis of Surat in 1824 indicated (above), Parsis were not always noticeable for their education. British education offered two related advantages. It opened up possibilities of economic and social advancement. It also made the possessor more like the British. The latter was, of course, one reason why it was

44. *Parsi Prakash*, II, p. 111, 162, 181, 242, 277, 283, 483 respectively.

45. *Parsi Prakash*, II, p. 654.

46. There were so many donations in this field that all cannot be listed here. Examples are a donation of Rs. 5,000 by C.J. Readymoney to BBRAS on 2nd February, 1863, (*Parsi Prakash*, II p. 54) and a further Rs. 5,000 the following year (*Parsi Prakash* II, p. 122). In 1864 Cursetji Rustomji Parakh gave Rs. 1,500 to the Bombay Geographical Society for books (*Parsi Prakash* II, p. 100). In that year also Parsis donated 57% of funds for a library of Sanskrit literature - compared with 41% donated by Hindus (*Parsi Prakash* II, p. 94). An example of a translation fund is the one instituted to honour Jamestji Jijibhoy when a knighthood was conferred to him (*Correspondence*, pp. 3-6). Examples of donations to scholarships are the donations of Framji Cowasji Banaji's donations to the Clare scholarship at Elphinstone in 1835, and to the Reed Scholarship in 1848 (see K.N. Banaji, *Memoirs*, ch. 7).

introduced into India.⁴⁷ Most, though not all, Parsis in the second half of the nineteenth century wanted to be more like the British. It would be facile to describe this desire simply to enlightened self interest. Even if it was that, the cause lay deeper. As the early British travellers were attracted to what they felt was the familiar in Parsi religion, so also many Parsis were attracted to the British because there they saw, in some measure, kindred values and ideals. Perhaps the sphere in which this was most evident was education. By their pursuit and patronage of British education the Parsis were doubtless aware of the material advantages it offered. But they were also conscious of pursuing an ideal their whole tradition had taught them was a worthy end in itself. An obvious example of this conviction was Dadabhoy Naoroji who in 1852 was the first Indian to be appointed a Professor at Elphinstone College.

Although the Parsi achievements in the field of education which have been noted thus far are real ones, what was perhaps the greatest has still to be mentioned, that of female education. Again, the missionaries had been the pioneers. The first girls school in India was founded in 1819 by the Calcutta

47. See Ballhatchet, ch. 10. One particular way in which some individuals intended that British education should make India more British was in the subversion of traditional religious beliefs. An early campaigner in this field was Charles Grant (1746-1823), as an Evangelical MP and Chairman of the East India Company he was an influential figure. In a paper laid before the House of Commons on 16th August, 1797, entitled 'Observations on the State Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain' he stated: 'The true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied, it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us... We proceed then to observe, that it is perfectly in the power of this country, by degrees, to impart to the Hindoos our language; afterwards through that medium, to make them acquainted with our easy literary compositions, upon a variety of subjects; and let not the idea hastily excite division, *progressively* with the simple elements of our arts, our philosophy and religion. These acquisitions would silently undermine, and at length subvert, the fabric of error.' (Sharp, *Selections*, pp. 81-6).

School Society.⁴⁸ The first in Bombay was founded by the American Mission Society in 1824, followed by the Church Missionary Society in 1826 and by Dr and Mrs Wilson's six girls schools founded in 1829-30. There was considerable Indian opposition and respectable families would not send their daughters to the schools, which were therefore attended almost wholly by orphans. An interesting account of the opposition and problems faced by the first Parsi girl known to have attended school was written by Dosibai Cowasji Jassawalla in 1842. The main influence on Dosibai was her mother, a woman of great individuality. She was the first Parsi woman to go to court to contest a will and separate from her husband because of the dispute. As a result she was thrown out of home by her own relatives. She shocked the community by having friends from other castes and religions, including an English school mistress, Miss Ward. It was to her school that the young Dosibai was sent. The fact she had to pass through the British area of the city unescorted daily provoked outraged comments in the orthodox papers *Jam-e Jamshed* and the *Chabouk* and the threat of excommunication from the Panchayat. Dosibai gave a different assessment of some of the pioneers in female education from that of most commentators. Of Bengali and Karaka she wrote, 'their connection with the movement is but of recent date: those very individuals do not appear to have given a sound education to the women of their own families'.⁴⁹ What some respected figures did, Jamsetji Jijibhoy for example, was to have their daughters educated in the privacy of their own homes, thus avoiding the scandal raised by Dosibai's mother.

It was the Students' Literary and Scientific Society which gave the first real impetus to female education in Bombay. In 1849 the students resolved that the time for discussion was past and they themselves should start the work. Unpaid student volunteers took classes in private houses from 7.00 till 10.00 in the morning. One of the leading figures in this movement was Dadabhoy Naoroji, both as secretary of the Society and as chairman of the group which ran the four Parsi schools. In the second year of their activity these enterprising

48. See J. A. Richey, *Selections from Education Records*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 37.

49. *The Story of my Life*, Bombay, 1911, p. 47.

students were saved from a financial crisis by the Cama family.⁵⁰ In the same year, 1850, Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy opened the Fort Girls' School. In 1857 the Parsi Girls' School Association was formed to take over the schools for Parsis run by the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. One of the leading figures of the Association was Sohrabji Shapurji Bengali. He was instrumental in the establishment of six girls' schools both as advisor and subscriber, beginning with one at Khetwadi in 1859 funded by Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, and culminating in his providing two-thirds of the funds for the Bai Bhikhaiji Shapurji Bengali school (named after his mother) in 1885.⁵¹

All the girls' schools so far mentioned provided education in the vernacular. The first school in Bombay to provide girls with education in English was founded by the Parsi judge Maneckji Cursetji Shroff, the uncle of Dosibai Jassawalla, in 1860.⁵² The school was started in his own home with his daughters as teachers in an effort to overcome parental opposition to girls being taught by men. The pupils were drawn from any race, but strictly limited to the most 'respectable' families. In the founder's words they were to be given 'The blessing of an English education upon sound moral principles'. Although the education was 'to be secular and not religious of any kind or creed' nevertheless:

The common principles of morality, which constitute the bases of every religion are to be inculcated. The pupils are to be taught, to believe in, fear and revere,

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50. See R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji, The Grand Old Man of India*, London, 1939, pp. 44-47; Karaka, I, pp. 302-323; and the lives of Naoroji Fardoonji and S. S. Bengali in Natesan (publisher), *Famous Parsis*, Madras, 1930, pp. 31-44 and 81-102 respectively.
51. See N. S. Bengallee, *The Life of Sorabjee Shaporjee Bengallee*, Bombay, no date, pp. 18-20.
52. He was both patronising and scornful in his attitude to the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. He wrote: 'The Juvenile ardour, in the cause of Female Education, is very commendable in youth... The instruction they propose to impart is to be in the vernacular, not *English Language*... The time these students intend to devote to the schools appears to be much limited.' (*Correspondence on Female Education Between the Late Hon. J. E. D. Bethune, Calcutta and Manockjee Cursetjee Esq., Bombay*, letter dated October 12th, 1849). Sir J. J. also disliked the Society, Dobbin, p. 56.

the one true God, to perform the several duties they owe to that Deity, their Government, their country, their Parents, their neighbours and themselves, so that they become diligent pupils, loyal subjects, dutiful children, accomplished wives and mothers.⁵³

Although the school was attended by members of different races most were Parsis: 62% of the school's first supporters were Parsi: they contributed 47% of the funds⁵⁴ and provided eleven of the first nineteen pupils.⁵⁵ The school faced many problems in its early days. Examiners' reports were not enthusiastic⁵⁶ and money was so short that prizes were awarded but not given.⁵⁷ Capital had to be used to survive because the interest on the sum invested, together with fees, was inadequate.⁵⁸ In 1870 Cursetji Maneckji organised a bazaar to raise funds for the school. His appeals to royalty yielded gifts from six royal families and he achieved the amazing coup of having the bazaar opened by the Duke of Edinburgh, on 17th March, 1870. The bazaar raised Rs. 27,975, which did not solve the school's financial problem of itself, but it did give the school considerable social prestige. Further donations from the founder and the purchasing of premises in 1881 eventually secured funds to ensure the school's continuity.⁵⁹

Determined advocate of female education though he was, Cursetji was not unaware of the problems faced by educated women. He was the first to take his daughter to Europe and present her at court, but he lamented to Bethune, the educational pioneer in Calcutta, that she had had to give up many of her

53. *Reports on the Alexandra Native Girls English Institution*, 1863, p. 4.

54. *Report*, 1863, p. 10.

55. *Report*, 1865, p. 11.

56. *Report*, 1865-6, p. 8.

57. *Report*, 1866-7, p. 5.

58. *Report*, 1866-7, p. 9.

59. On the bazaar see *Report* for 1871, p. 5 on the royalty who donated, p. 7 on the finances.

educational interests when she was married.⁶⁰ Here lay a general problem. In the 1860s educated girls had their appetites whetted by schooling and were then frustrated by the complete absence of any opportunity to use that education because of social pressures, even if child marriage had not already prevented them from pursuing it very far. It was because of the social implications and pressures that Government did not establish a single girls' school in Bombay until 1873. This makes the achievement of the PBI all the more remarkable, for in 1875 it had an equal number of boys and girls in its schools. As the Governor remarked in his address on Prize Day:

This is one of the institutions - perhaps I might say absolutely the only institution - in all India, which does as much for female education as for the education of boys. Would that similar circumstances were observable in our other educational institutions.⁶¹

The 1881 Census reported that whereas 3% of Hindu women were educated, 33% of Parsi women were, the highest percentage of any Indian community's womenfolk.⁶²

Thus in sixty years, from 1820 to 1880, the Parsis were transformed from their position of educational insignificance as pupils at Hindu schools, to the majority community in Higher Education and pioneers in different branches of education. But it was not only their position which was transformed, so also was the community itself. There are three obvious ways in which it was affected by the change.

First, the community's power base was altered. At the start of the eighteenth

60. Letter dated 4th April 1850.

61. February 8th, 1878, *Report of the Schools of the Sir J. J. Parsi Benevolent Institution*, 1875-7, p. 20. The Governor might have reflected on Government's achievements. From 1871-81, the number of girls at school increased from 8,507 to 17,612 (plus 2,745 at boys' schools), an increase of 139%. Investment increased from Rs. 5,984 to Rs. 18,916, that is by 216%, in the same period. But even in 1881 Government was still spending 44 times the amount of money on boys than on girls. *Appendix*, pp. 43, 53.

62. See table 8.

century Parsi powers was based on wealth, at the end of the century they shared in the work of the rulers. The most obvious examples were those at what was then the pinnacle of power: Naoroji, Bhowndagree and Saklatvala who were M P s at Westminster, and Pherozechah Mehta who was in the Councils of the Viceroy. The Bombay Association was also important in this context. It transformed Bombay from a political backwater into a major political base. It had a predominance of Parsis membership and an even higher proportion of its funds came from the Parsis.⁶³ The Indian National Congress, until Tilak and his followers took control, was another major area of influence for the educated class, led by the Parsis. But in assessing the power which came to the community through education the less obvious but perhaps equally influential work of the legal profession should not be forgotten. Here, as in medicine, journalism, the textile and steel industries, there was a need for a new class of men, those with a British education. Such leading positions in Bombay society were occupied very largely by Parsis at the close of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ Education thus enabled the Parsis to adapt to the changing situation and provided them with a more broadly based power. It may well be argued that it was the stagnation of Parsi education at the end of the century which was a major factor in the community's gradual eclipse from its eminent position in Bombay.

The second effect of education was more internal. The changes which occurred within the community could not take place without causing problems and tensions within. As well as a generation gap, there developed also a gap between the educated and uneducated, a struggle for power between the old merchant princes and the new intelligentsia, fought out mainly, but not exclusively, in the Bombay Association, the press and even in some religious

63. 65% of contributors were Parsis and they donated 73% of the funds. Of the eleven proposals at the first meeting eight were made by Parsis. See the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Bombay Association*, 26th August, 1852, pp. 6, 23-25.

64. See Kulke, 2.1.4-2.2.4; Dobbin, *Passim*; J. Masselos, *Liberal Consciousness, leadership and political organization in Bombay and Poona, 1867-1895*, Ph.D. thesis (unpublished) Bombay, 1975. The last draws out the role of education and the press in the changes in Western India, especially Bombay. On Parsis and journalism see J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, 'Historical Survey of Bombay Journalism,' *Jam-e-Jamshed Centenary Volume*, Bombay, 1932, pp. 272-286.

divisions.⁶⁵

The third effect of British education on the Parsis might be described as the personal effect. In his celebrated Minute on education, dated February 2nd, 1835, Macauley had set out what he saw as the main immediate objects of providing British education in India. He accepted that with the limited resources available it was impossible:

to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class of people who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.⁶⁶

Had Macauley witnessed the effects of education on the Parsis he may well have considered his objectives fulfilled. Obviously many, if not most, Parsis in Bombay remained but little affected by the impact of Western learning. The educated classes and the leaders were, however, deeply affected. When Sanskrit was introduced into the curriculum of Bombay University it was thought that the Parsis should have a language for them also, and so the University introduced one - Latin, because their 'sympathies are generally European rather than Oriental'.⁶⁷ It was only later, especially under the influence of K. R. Cama, that Avesta and Pahlavi were introduced.⁶⁸ Even then many of the new intelligentsia chose Latin. Pherozechah Mehta, for example, despite his forthright, and effective, criticism of the details of British rule, was himself very anglicised, with his smoking, use of cosmetics, his attempt to reproduce London society in Bombay with the founding of the Ripon Club in 1885, and the fact that wherever he went he took not Zoroastrian literature, but Thackeray, Dickens and a tattered Christian Bible.

65. Kulke, 2.2.2; Dobbin, pp. 60-64, 247; the conflicting views were represented in the Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha, the concern of the young intelligentsia, and the Raherastnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha, that of the orthodox and established. See Masselos, pp. 102-8.

66. *Appendix*, p. 22.

67. *Appendix*, p. 22.

68. See J. J. Modi, *K. R. Cama*, Bombay, 1932, chs. 8-10.

Mehta's biographer searches hard, and frankly unconvincingly, to find any really Parsi ventures in his life.⁶⁹ There was a danger that the tide of education might tear the ship of Parsi identity from the mooring of its historic character. Mehta remained truer to his race, and to India, than some Parsis who became intoxicated with British life and manners, as they understood them. Such extremists were the object of cartoonists' mirth in the *Hindi Punch*,⁷⁰ but they were not without some influence.

A columnist in the *Parsi Magazine* declared:

The closer union of the Europeans and Parsis is the finest thing that can happen to our race. It will mean the *lifting up* of a people who are lying *low*, though possessing all the qualities of European race. It will make our men more of men than they are at present and will make our women better women. The complete Europeanization of the Parsis is now a mere matter of time.⁷¹

In this extreme Parsi point of view can be seen the fulfilment of some extremist British intentions in the introduction of Western education in India. Although Parsis were generally pro-British, it would be false to imply that the *Parsi* columnist expressed the majority community view. If Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy was the ideal to which most Parsis aspired in the first half of the nineteenth century, then perhaps the model for most in the second half of the century was Dadabhoy

69. Homi P. Mody, *Sir Pherozezshah Mehta, a political biography*, repr. London, 1963. On his founding of the Ripon Club see D. Menant, *Les Parsis*, repr. Osnabrück, 1975, p. 330.

70. Started on 1st January, 1854 'to show such people in caricature who did not carry out their duties properly so that if they are laughed at their successors may learn from them and will desist from doing wrong' (*Parsi Prakash*, I, p. 627). Parsis frequently depicted as not carrying out their duties properly were the young middle class who were very westernised, see, for example, *Pickings from Hindi Punch*, July, 1903, 'The Parsi girl of the period', p. 9; Nov. 1903, p. 207 on middle class ambition of marrying a westerner (similarly Dec., 1903, p. 257); March 1904, p. 440, Parsi men smoking at the races (similarly May 1904, p. 503).

71. *The Parsi*, August 1905, p.324. Westernisation was also evident in the various sporting activities pursued by the Parsis at the end of the century, see H. D. Darukhanawala, *Parsis and Sports*, Bombay, 1959.

Naoroji - learned, wise, influential at home and abroad, sympathetic to, but critical of, Britain, slowly and somewhat reluctantly concluding that in Independence lay the proper aim of India. Whereas education made some extremists become more British than the British, it identified others, like Dadabhoy Naoroji, more with the land of their birth.⁷² Elphinstone, the pioneer of education in Bombay, had described education as the British Government's 'highroad back to Europe'⁷³ and so it proved to be, for it stimulated the will and developed the capacity for self-government. In their pioneering role in education the Parsis gave an impetus towards independence which has not always been appreciated. Hopefully this lecture will make some small contribution to that appreciation.

72. Despite his British tastes, Mehta stated: 'To my mind, a Parsi is a better and truer Parsi, as a Mohamedan, or a Hindu, is a better and truer Mohamedan or Hindu, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognises the fraternity of all the native communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common government.' (Mody, p. 140).

73. Quoted Ballhatchet, p. 250.

TABLE II
Bombay Exports and Imports 1801-1901 (Decadal variations)

Year	Value of Exports	Decadal variation	Value of Imports	Decadal variation
	Rs.			
1801-2	80,70,947		72,31,977	(+4%)
1810-11	79,35,121	(-2%)	75,29,123	(+46%)
1820-1	155,25,954	(+96%)	109,58,459	(+115%)
1830-1	250,86,803	(+62%)	235,85,495	(+30%)
1840-1	453,08,533	(+73%)	305,62,522	(+49%)
1850-1	571,33,869	(+31%)	454,57,643	(+99%)
1860-1	1547,78,067	(+171%)	902,59,067	(+31%)
1870-1	2325,12,800	(+50%)	1183,18,320	(+68%)
1880-1	2439,61,726	(+5%)	1991,77,014	(+41%)
1890-1	3439,73,054	(+41%)	2817,08,769	(-3%)
1900-1	2477,55,265	(-28%)	2742,61,281	

Figures based on *Bombay Gazetteer*, 95, pp. 514-21

TABLE III
New Parsi Businessmen in Bombay 1848-60

Year	PP. I Page no	Businessmen	Wine shop keepers	Ship owners	Auctioneers	Directors of Banks	Directors of mechanical engineering concerns	Insurance Companies
1848	499	23	27				4	
1849	517	6	2	1			2	
1850	538	7	9	5	1	2	1	
1851	558	8				3		
1852	588	14				2		
1853	610	6	9			1		
1854	627							
1855	653		5					
1856	696		3					
1857	721	6				1	2	2
1858	748	2		4		6	10	3
1859	776					3	7	
1860	807						1	

Figures drawn from *Parsi Prakash* (PP) vol. I

TABLE IV
Student Numbers in Bombay 1860 and 1880

	1860						1880						Parsi % of the total								
	M		F		Total	Parsi % of the total	Muslims		Christians		Others			Total	Parsi % of the total						
	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	M	F				M	F				
Colleges	82	-	3	-	66	-	27	-	178	37	330	-	6	-	228	-	91	-	655	34.8	
High Schools	239	-	15	-	615	-	32	-	} 2606	46	1455	-	70	-	768	-	32	-	} 11551	16.7	
Middle Schools	214	-	19	-	585	-	42	-			1596	4	164	5	1029	127	1083	-			
Primary Schools	478	-	66	-	59	485	-	5	-	49.8	2813	1010	185	8	716	904	42	180	100	5958	27.22
Special Schools	76	-	26	-	16	-	20	-	138	11.6	185	-	70	-	50	-	50	-	355	14	

Figures drawn from the *Bombay Gazetteer*, 97, p. 159

TABLE V

Passes of the Matriculation Examination of Bombay University 1859-1880

	Christians	Hindus	Muslims	Parsis	Others	Europeans
1859-60	-	34	-	2	-	-
1860-61	1	19	-	19	-	-
1861-62	2	17	-	8	2	1
1862-63	4	40	2	10	-	-
1863-64	-	42	2	12	-	-
1864-65	2	86	1	19	-	1
1865-66	-	90	2	18	1	-
1866-67	2	69	4	18	-	-
1867-68	7	118	3	31	4	-
1868-69	15	182	1	47	5	-
1869-70	15	95	1	29	2	-
Decadel Total	61	896	18	234	16	2
% of Total	5	73	1.5	19.1	1.3	0.1

1870-71	13	104	2	21	2	-
1871-72	25	163	2	36	1	-
1872-73	37	263	2	72	5	-
1873-74	30	251	1	73	-	-
1874-75	9	160	3	71	8	11
1875-76	14	292	3	111	1	13
1876-77	12	134	2	49	-	6
1877-78	9	153	4	40	1	10
1878-79	9	154	2	76	7	13
1879-80	11	317	1	96	-	11
1880-81	14	288	10	106	1	10
Decadel Total	221	3071	48	964	40	76
% of Total	5	69.5	1.1	21.8	0.9	1.7

Figures drawn from *Appendix* pp.21-49

TABLE VI
College Student Population by Communities in 1882 in Gujarat

	Hindus	Muslims	Parsis	Christians	Others	Total
Elphinstone	127	6	47	1		181
Deccan	114		7			121
Free General Assembly's Institution	42		16	4	2	64
St Xavier's	33	1	32	9		75
Gujarat College, Ahmedabad	8		1			9
Rajaran College, Kothapur	25					25
TOTAL	349	7	103	14	2	475

Figures Based on *Appendix*, p. 136 (i.e. Parsis 21.7% of total Gujarat student population and 31% of student body at Bombay's two leading institutions).

TABLE VII
Percentage of Communities Educated, Bombay Presidency, 1882

	Hindus	Muslims	Parsis	Christians	Jains
Bombay Island	% 17.6	% 19	% 60	% 47	% 54
Sind	15.7	1.4	65	65	38
North Division	7	9	46	49	38
North East Division	3.8	3.4	54	46	30
Central Division	4.1	8.7	42		28
Southern Division	5.2	3.7	57	12.2	7.6

Figures based on *Appendix*, p.66

TABLE VIII
Standard of Education by Community, Bombay 1881 (Figures indicate percentage of community)

	Pupils attending School		Already Educated		Illiterate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
	Jains	9.39	1.30	62.93	3.80	27.68
Hindus	6.11	1.26	20.62	2.71	73.27	96.03
Muslims	7.00	2.05	21.11	3.96	71.81	93.99
Buddhists	1.95	0.00	48.05	0.00	50.00	100.00
Christains	11.07	12.27	41.86	24.25	47.07	63.48
Parsis	23.00	12.90	50.87	32.52	26.13	54.58
Jews	17.24	10.36	40.65	16.60	42.11	73.04

Figures from 1891 census



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9 Social Change and Religious Transformation Among Bombay Parsis in the Early 20th Century*

The Parsis settled in India in A D 936. They came as what we might term 'the pilgrim fathers' of their Zoroastrian faith, seeking a new land of religious freedom away from the oppressions inflicted by their Muslim conquerors in their Iranian homeland. Indian tolerance and hospitality has permitted this Zoroastrian community to survive in India for over 1,000 years. The caste system has been an important factor in the preservation of religious tradition and communal identity because it has made inter-marriage and social mixing extremely rare.

Under British rule in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries a large proportion of the community enjoyed the fruits of commercial success, shared in the benefits of a Western education, and relished the taste of real political influence. To acquire fame and fortune, Parsis moved in increasing numbers from the agricultural life of the villages to the growing commercial capital of India, Bombay. So the Parsis experienced a substantial change in their place in society - from that of an insignificant, exiled rural caste, into

* It is with pleasure that I record my great indebtedness to my friend and collaborator, Dastur Dr. K.M. JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Bahram and Secretary of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay, for all his guidance and especially for his translations of the *Parsi Prakash*. I also wish to record my thanks to my postgraduate students, notably C. Lucy Mitchell, Nora Firby, and Hilary Langstaff, whose work and questions have provided much stimulation. The research for this paper and my

an important force in late nineteenth century West Indian urban society. The purpose of this paper is not to document the causes, or the progress, of that change, but is rather to look at how the changes affected the religion of the Parsis in the early twentieth century. I will focus on the years 1900-1918 because after the first world war the position of the British in India was never the same again, and with the social and political changes, there came new orientations and emphasis in Parsi belief. Although no study of Parsi religion in this period has previously been undertaken, I believe it is an important era in Parsi history. Further, the issues it raises are in a large part those of this congress, namely Parsi tradition in contact with Western culture and the consequent change.

In order to understand the religious changes among the Parsis in our period it is essential to appreciate just how much their conditions had changed. According to the 1901 census there were 46,231 Parsis in Bombay, this represented practically half (49.08%) the Parsi population of India, but they contributed only about 6% of the Bombay population. Yet they were a powerful group. In the textile industry, at the turn of the century they owned one-third of the mills and provided about half the millmanagers.¹ The Indian steel industry was founded by the Parsi Tata family in 1912 and various Parsi families were the major shareholders and managers of the main Bombay banks.² The result was that in a 1903 survey they held a foremost position in the High Income Groups in Bombay out of all proportion to their minority status.³ Their economic success was visible for all to see through their charitable acts. In the previous fifty years, from 1850 to 1900, Parsis built 64

attendance at the I. A. H. R Congress in Winnipeg, 1980 were made possible by grants from Manchester University and the British Academy, to whom I offer sincere thanks.

1. E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India* (Munich: 1974), 123-26.
2. *Ibid.*, 122, and R.S. Rungta, *Rise of Business Corporations in India 1851-1900* (Cambridge: 1970), 23, 26, 28, 57.
3. Rungta, *Rise*, 58.

new fire temples.⁴ Only recently, in 1897, they had built a new Atash Bahram, 'Cathedral' Fire Temple, in Bombay. This was an enormous undertaking, the consecration ceremony alone taking a year. In the thirteen years 1899-1912, Parsis built thirteen hospitals or dispensaries.⁵ In the early years of the twentieth century there were several outstanding Parsi charitable bequests. In 1900-1901 the Petit family gave away six million Rupees in public charities.⁶ In 1905 Tata left three million Rupees to found a scientific research institute,⁷ and in 1909 the Wadia trust was founded with nearly nine million Rupees to help the poor and needy of all communities in any country.⁸ The point is that Parsi wealth was both considerable and visible.

One important change to notice in Parsi society was in education. Before the 1820s the Parsi level of education was as low as that of the rest of the population in Western India. Literacy was practically non-existent. In the

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4. K.N. Seervai and B.B. Patel, 'Gujarat Parsis,' *Bombay Gazetteer* 9/2 (1899), 247-51.
 5. May 5th, 1899, N.J. Wadia Andheri Charitable Dispensary opened; January 6, 1900, foundation stone laid of Naoroji Eye hospital, Ahmedabad; February 23, 1900, a charitable dispensary opened near Surat; January 15th, 1902, Dr. Masina Hospital, Bombay, opened; September 19th, 1904, money given to Nadir E. Dinshaw Dispensary in Karachi; March 5th, 1906, Parsi Fever Hospital, Bombay, opened; June 4th, 1906, Sir Jehangir Cowasji J. Jehangir donated Rs 30,000 to start an ophthalmic hospital (renovated with a further donation January 10th, 1910); June 5th, 1906, Charitable Dispensary at Santa Cruz opened; April 1st, 1908, Dr J.N. Bahdurjee started the 'Poor Man's Eye Clinic' in Bombay; December 23rd, 1911, foundation stone laid of Parsi Maternity Hospital; March 27th, 1912, opening of B.D. Petit Parsi General Hospital, Bombay; June 26th, 1912, opening of N.W. Wadia Hospital; May 1st, 1912, the Masina Hospital moved to larger premises; June 9th, 1912, the Parsi General Hospital opened in Navsari. The above information was obtained from the entries under the relevant dates in the *Parsi Prakash*, B.B. Patel (ed.), Bombay.
 6. See the entries in the *Parsi Prakash* for September 2nd, 1900 (vol. 3, 705f), and May 5th, 1901 (vol. 4, 22ff.).
 7. *Parsi Prakash* for March 6th, 1905 (vol. 4, p.6).
 8. R.P. Masani, *N.M. Wadia and his Foundation* (Bombay: 1961) ch.14.

1840s and 1850s Parsis were educational pioneers in that they built more schools and attended them more regularly in proportion to their numbers, than any other Indian community did. In the second half of the nineteenth century they dominated the centres of Higher Education in Bombay.⁹ The result was that the general level of education throughout the community by 1900 was very high. The 1901 census, for example, recorded a literacy rate of 87.38%, which was a considerably higher rate than obtained among the Bombay General Public even in the 1970s. A striking feature of Parsi education was its availability for women. In 1901 63% of Parsi females were literate. This high educational attainment was an important factor behind the business success of the community and behind its political influence, which was considerable at the turn of the century.

I suppose the year in which most Parsis probably felt at their most important was 1905-1906. Various Parsi giants strutted the political stage. Dadabhoy Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, and the first Indian ever to be elected a Member of Parliament at Westminster, was perhaps at his peak as a figure of national importance. He was the only person who could hold together the moderate and radical wings of the Indian National Congress at the Calcutta meeting.¹⁰ Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, popularly known as the uncrowned king of Bombay, and recently knighted, was at his most dominating height on the political scene of the city and thereby of Western India.¹¹ Until 1906 Sir Muncherji Bhowndree served as Member of Parliament at Westminster - the second Indian and the second Parsi to do so. Bhowndree was not particularly popular in India. He was so pro-British he was nicknamed 'Bow-and-agree'. But that did not change the fact that here was another Parsi concerned with national, indeed international, politics.¹² Throughout the whole of our period

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9. J.R. Hinnells, 'Parsis and British Education', *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* 46 (1978), 42-64.
 10. For a biography of Naoroji, see R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: 1939).
 11. For a biography of Mehta, see H. Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta: A political Biography* (reprinted, Bombay: 1963).
 12. The only biographical account of Bhowndree is contained in Natesan (publishers, no author/editor named), *Famous Parsis* (Madras: 1930), 475-88.

of 1900-1918, Sir Dinshah Wacha was the organisational heart of the Bombay Presidency Association and for most of the time was Secretary to the Indian National Congress, and one of the leading moderates.¹³ There were of course other major figures, such as J.N. Tata the industrialist,¹⁴ but these few illustrate the enormous influence exercised by this small Bombay community. The year 1907 saw an obvious downturn in Parsi prestige, but the effects of this decline on religious beliefs are a topic I will defer until later in the paper.

The point now is that by 1906 the tiny Parsi community, refugees from oppression, the once isolated and insignificant caste, had become wealthy and powerful not only in regional but also in national and international terms. The ordinary Parsis knew of, and took intense pride in, the work of their leaders, as well as sharing in the increased affluence and educational achievements of the community in Bombay. Of course things were different for Parsis still living in the villages of Gujarat, but they are not the subject of this paper. How did this change in conditions affect the religion of the urbanised Parsis in Bombay?

To understand the religious changes of the early twentieth century, it is essential first to comment on some nineteenth-century developments in the field of Parsi religion. The first is the work of the Revd J. Wilson, the Christian missionary with unquestionably the greatest influence on Parsis.¹⁵

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13. Again, the only biography is Natesan (publisher), *Famous Parsis*, 283-329.
 14. See F. Harris, *Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata: a Chronicle of His Life* (2nd ed., Bombay: 1958).
 15. See G. Smith, *The Life of John Wilson, D.D., F.R.S.* (London: 1879); for an autobiography of one of his converts, see Dhanjibhai Nauroji, *From Zoroaster to Christ* (Edinburgh: 1909). Two other missionaries who wrote about Parsis are H.G. Briggs, *The Parsis; or modern Zerdusthians* (Bombay: 1852) and Dr Murray Mitchell, 'A lecture on the Parsis and the Zend Avesta', *Proceedings of the Bethune Society* (Calcutta: April 21, 1870), which he elaborated in his *The Greatest Religions of India* (Edinburgh: 1905). Mitchell was not without respect for what he considered to be Zoroastrian monotheism (1905:142). He commented that 'Undoubtedly the purest of the Gentile creeds is Zoroastrianism; it stands nearer to Revealed truth than any other. It seems only

He began his work in Bombay in 1829. He resolved to focus his attention on the Parsis because of their influence in the city. In 1835 he opened a boys' school near the main Parsi area of Bombay, hoping to attract their youth. He was not disappointed. In 1839 he baptised his first two converts. There was such a fierce outcry among the Parsis that he obtained few more. In 1843 he published, in Bombay, a book entitled *The Parsi Religion as contained in the Zand Avesta and propounded and defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, unfolded, refuted and contrasted with Christianity*. This book was influential not because it converted the Parsis, but because of the nature of its attack on Zoroastrianism, the form of which largely conditioned the nature of educated Parsi reaction.

First, Wilson attacked Zoroastrian teaching on good and evil as two Ultimate Principles. This belief, he declared, was 'both monstrous and unreasonable, robbing God of essential glory and peculiarity'. Second, Parsi religion, he said, was a polytheistic nature worship. Third, he attacked the Zoroastrian scriptures, specifically the priestly law code, the *Vendidad*, which he declared was 'in style and in substance destitute of all claims to be considered a revelation from God, but that it is from beginning to end most singularly despicable as a human composition'. It was, he said, a monument to the errors of the human mind.¹⁶ It is worth noting at this point that Wilson did not read the portion of the *Avesta* or Zoroastrian scriptures which contains Zoroaster's own words, because that was in Gathic, which Wilson did not know. There were other features of Zoroastrianism Wilson attacked. For example, he condemned the religion because it did not teach that man wallowed in sin, without which realisation, he said, man would not repent and realise his need

natural, then, that it should be the first of existing Gentile systems to merge in Christianity' (1905:168). The theme that Zoroastrianism prepared Parsis for Christianity was developed by the scholar J.H. Moulton who during his stay in Bombay in 1916 spoke of himself as a Christian missionary to the Parsis. See his *The Teaching of Zarathushtra* (eight lectures and addresses delivered to Parsis in Bombay; Bombay:1916), esp. p.3, and *The Treasure of the Magi* (London:1917), esp. ch. 8 in part 2. Unlike Mitchell, Moulton did have a definite influence on the Parsi community, but as this was felt at the end of and here, even though his visit and lectures took place during the period covered later than the period covered by this paper his arguments are not examined.

16. Op.cit. 397.

for Christ.¹⁷ But this had little influence on the Parsis, because Zoroastrians simply cannot understand or accept the Christian emphasis on sin. The points of his attack which did leave their marks were his dismissal of Zoroastrianism as dualistic and polytheistic and his questioning of the Avesta. Wilson's attack went home because no Parsis had the linguistic ability to refute his account of the texts. Avestan was a dead language used for recitation, but not really understood. After the initial furore, the Parsis began to respond unobtrusively. Time forbids discussion of all the moves, but some have to be noted. The first was the 'Religious Reform Association', founded in 1851, only eight years after Wilson's book was published. Its first secretary was Dadabhoy Naoroji. The aims of the Society were to purge contemporary Zoroastrianism of ceremonies and beliefs which made it appear ridiculous in the eyes of the Western educated. The principal calls for reform of practices were for the use of the vernacular in prayers and the eradication of Hindu social and religious accretions.¹⁸

The foremost figure of nineteenth century Parsi religious history was K.R. Cama. On his way back from a business visit to Britain in 1859 he stayed in Paris and Erlangen to study history of religions, Avestan and Pahlavi under some of the leading Iranists of the day in order first to educate himself and then his community so that they could repel missionary attacks. On his return to Bombay in 1861 he started classes in his own house. In 1864 he began 'the Society for researches into the Zoroastrian religion'. Through this society, lectures and publications, Cama was a leading figure in the move to educate Parsis. He was instrumental in the establishment of three colleges for the training of Parsi priests, the emphasis of each being on linguistic work. In 1904 he founded a society to spread the teaching of Zoroastrianism in Parsi schools, so that all children in the community might be educated in their faith.¹⁹

17. *Ibid.*, 377-79.

18. See Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 48-50. Naoroji's own assessment of the reform movement was given in a paper read before the Liverpool Philomathic Society, March 13th, 1861 and published that year, entitled 'The Manners and Customs of the Parsees'.

19. Two biographies have been written of Cama: S.M. Edwardes, *Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, 1831-1909* (Oxford: 1923), and J.J. Modi, *K.R. Cama*

Another aspect of this programme of Parsi religious education was the work of European scholars. Between 1880 and 1887 the three-volumed translation of the Avesta in *The Sacred Books of the East* series appeared (as well as five volumes of Pahlavi texts between 1880 and 1897) and these were available in Bombay. This made the Zoroastrian scriptures accessible to all Parsis with a Western education. Important French and German works were translated into English by some of the learned priests so that these also were available to that educated stratum of Parsi society.²⁰ The assumption was that the provision of sound translations and scholarly accounts of Zoroastrian history would support the faith of the community. So in 1900 an increasing amount of learned material was available for Parsis in English. Material was available in Gujarati also. A major scholarly work was Kanga's *Avesta Dictionary* (1900), and a number of translations of Middle Persian texts were made. Particular interest appears to have been paid in the early twentieth century to translations of the Ancient Iranian epic, the *Shah Name*. A five-volumed history of ancient Iran was published between 1906 and 1912 by J.P. Kapadia. Further important Parsi scholarly studies will be considered later, but at this point the focus must be primarily on the impetus for change which came through the contact between cultures and for this subject literature in English is of primary importance.²¹

Some writers were interested not only in the provision of texts but also in how they were to be interpreted. The foremost impetus for change in the

(Bombay: 1932).

20. One of the earliest such translations was by (the layman) K.R. Cama, who translated *The Religion and Customs of the Persians and other Iranians as described by the Grecian and Roman authors*, from the German of Adolf Rapp in 1876. In 1879 Cama also translated works of Spiegel and Rhode and in 1883 the work of A. Kohut. Another leading translator was the high priest Darab Peshotan Sanjana. In 1885-86 he translated Geiger's two volume *Civilisation of the Eastern Iranians*, and in 1884 and 1897 he translated further works by Geiger. Also in 1897 he translated the work of F. Windischmann, *References in Ancient Writings to Zoroaster and his Doctrines*. In the 1890s M.P. Madan translated the work of de Harlez.
21. A survey of manuscripts and work in Gujarati is in J.C. Katrak, 'Gujarati Literature on Iranology', *Acta Iranica*, 1 (1974), 360-78.

sphere of doctrine came from a German - Martin Haug. In 1859 he was appointed Superintendent of Sanskrit Studies in the Government College of Poona. In 1860 he completed the first Western scholarly translation of Zoroaster's hymns, the *Gāthās*. In 1861 he lectured to the Parsis in Bombay. The essence of his paper was that Zoroaster had taught a pure ethical monotheism. It was only the prophet's later followers who introduced a dualism, he said, and it was they who reintroduced the old pagan polytheism. Zoroaster, Haug declared, had propounded a theological monotheism and a philosophical dualism - that the one God encompassed the opposites of good and evil in himself. Haug, therefore, urged the Parsis to return to the pure teaching of their prophet as represented in the *Gāthās*, and the *Gāthās* alone. They should reject most of their scriptures because they incorporated later corruptions of the faith. What is more, Haug taught, there is no evidence in the *Gāthās* for the many rituals that Wilson and Parsi reformers attacked. Haug's view were expanded in a book published in 1862 entitled *Essays on the Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis*. This was a very far cry from Wilson's publication some nineteen years earlier, for here Haug was presenting Zoroastrianism as a religion worthy of respect by the West. The westernised Parsis obviously welcomed the change of emphasis. Some were so impressed they wanted to make him a director of one of the Parsi priestly colleges.

But not all Western authors who inspired doctrinal reform among the Parsis were linguists or scholars. Judging by the frequency with which Parsis quote him, one of the most influential Western writers was Samuel Laing. He was a politician, Minister of Finance in India, and business man who wrote three books for the semi-scientific reader, discussing the sort of religious questions that arose from late nineteenth-century science. In 1887 he published, in London, a book entitled *A Modern Zoroastrian*. His general theme was that recent scientific work showed that behind all aspects of life lay a dualism. In science it can be seen in the positive and negative of electricity or the poles of a magnet. True religion, he said, should reflect this dualism inherent in existence. In his discussion of Zoroastrianism he said his aim was:

To show that in its fundamental ideas and essential spirit [Zoroastrianism] approximates wonderfully to those of the most advanced modern thought, and gives the outline of a creed which goes further than any other to meet the practical wants of the present day and to reconcile the conflict between faith and science (p.198).

He described Zoroastrianism as a monotheism because he said Zoroaster taught that God comprehends within himself both principles of good and evil as a necessary law of existence (p.204). He concluded that Zoroastrianism was ‘the most complete and comprehensive code of morals to be found in any system of religion’ (p.206).

Just as it was important to see what Wilson’s criticisms of Zoroastrianism were in order to understand the Parsi response, so now it is important to note what qualities Western authors praised in Zoroastrianism. These were: the abstract nature of Zoroaster's ethical monotheism, his lack of interest in rituals, and the consistency of Zoroastrianism and modern science. Whether these Western writers were correct in their assessment of Zoroastrianism is in this context irrelevant.

So at the start of the twentieth century the Parsi community in Bombay was, as a whole, reasonably wealthy, powerful, influential and well educated in Western terms. The educated were conscious of Western attitudes to them and their religion, both in the form of missionary attacks and scholarly interpretations.²² It is important to note that not all the scholarly work on Zoroastrianism was done by Westerners. A number of Parsis made substantial contributions. Dasturs Sanjana and JamaspAsa, and D.M. Madan undertook important editorial work on editions of Middle Persian texts. In the confines of this particular paper these contributions are not so central because these works were not read or understood by the Parsi public at large. D.F. Karaka’s two-volumed *History of the Parsis* (1884), though published in London and intended primarily for the Western reader, appears to have been quite widely read by Parsis. M.M. Murzban in his 1917 publication, *The Parsis in India*, not only provided a translation of Menant's 1898 French work but also expanded her work quite considerably with the needs of his own community

22. An excellent example of this knowledge is the book of J.J. Motivala and B.N. Sahiar, *Enlightened Non Zoroastrians on Mazdayasnism, The Excellent Religion* (Bombay: 1897-99), which collects favourable comments by Westerners (e.g., Haug and Lang) as well as by ancient authors.

in mind.²³ Perhaps the Parsi lecturer and scholar whose work was most widely known in Bombay during our period was J.J. Modi. Although he had produced little in the way of books by the end of the period, he was a prolific producer of articles on ancient Iranian and Parsi subjects as well as broader folklore and anthropological topics. He was honoured by Swedish, French, German, Hungarian and British institutions. He also wrote on religion as a priest, mainly in Gujarati, but also in English.²⁴ Modi apart, most Parsi historians of the early twentieth century were concerned with Parsi history. Foremost amongst them was B.B. Patel and his successor R.B. Paymaster, compilers of the *Parsi Prakash* (vol.2 appeared in the middle of our period, 1910). This multi-volumed work collects newspaper entries from earliest times to the present and provides the basic tool for any Parsi historian. Less prolific, but with high scholarly standards, was S.H. Hodivala, noted for his studies of early Parsi history.²⁵ The significance of the work of these Parsis for this paper is that Western historical methods of scholarship had been absorbed by various Parsi scholars whose work was known and respected by the public at large, providing them with learned accounts both of their ancient religion and community history. The contact between the traditions of Bombay Parsis and Western scholarship was real, deep and widespread. The question now is what changes did it effect in religious beliefs in the early twentieth century?

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23. M. Menant, *Les Parsis: histoire des communautés zoroastriennes de l'Inde*, (Paris: 1898). Three chapters of this were translated into English by Miss Ratanbai A. Vakil in 1902.
 24. There is a short biography of Modi in Natesan (publisher), *Famous Parsis*, 454-74. His two English publications of this nature which were written during our period are, *The Religious System of the Parsis* (2nd ed., 1903), expanded from his paper to the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago; *A Catechism of the Zoroastrian Religion* (Bombay: 1911). Between 1902 and 1919 he published six volumes of lectures and sermons on Zoroastrianism in Gujarati. Modi was probably more orthodox than most scholarly Parsis of the period, which was probably why he was appointed secretary of the Panchayet, and is shown in his opposition to the admission of converts in the court case discussed below.
 25. A collection of his papers delivered during the period covered by this paper was published as *Studies in Parsi History* (Bombay: 1920).

It was perhaps inevitable that one problem was a serious identity crisis in the community. As the calls for Indian independence grew, and especially as the militants such as Tilak gained influence, so the Parsis were forced to consider which side of the growing divide they stood on. The educated leaders such as Naoroji and Mehta, although often considered pro-British, in fact identified themselves first and foremost with India. Naoroji, for example, affirmed in 1893: 'Whether I am a Hindu, a Muhammadan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian'.²⁶ Madame Cama, the daughter-in-law of K.R. Cama, identified herself so strongly with India and the rising Hindu militancy that after 1902 she lived in exile in France working with leading revolutionaries.²⁷

But she was far from typical. Most Parsis who had received a Western education, and that meant most Parsis in Bombay, were pro-British. This is understandable in that any small community, especially one having a vivid memory of persecution, which is then given the scope to flourish as Parsis were, will naturally hold a favourable attitude to the ruling power. These Western leanings were expressed in various ways, through social customs like dress and hobbies,²⁸ and in diverse publications. A good example of the latter

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26. *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji* (published by G.A. Natesan & Co., no editor or date given), 59, from his Presidential address to the 1893 Lahore meeting of the Indian National Congress. In a similar vein Mehta, in his presidential speech at the 1890 Congress, declared, 'To my mind, a Parsi is a better and truer Parsi, as a Mahomedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mahomedan or Hindu, the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth'. (in J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, *Some Unpublished and Later Speeches and Writings of the Hon. Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta* (Bombay: 1918), 315n).
27. B.R. Chowdhury, *Madame Cama: A Short Life Sketch* (Delhi: 1977).
28. The literature on this is quite large. The Parsi involvement in the very English game of cricket was considerable. In 1886 Parsis organised the first Indian team to tour England. They were so good at the game one English observer, C.A. Kincaid, concluded it must be because Alexander the Great's invasion of Iran had infused Greek blood into the veins of the Parsis' ancestors, just as he believed there was Greek blood in English veins! ('The Parsis and Hellenic Influence', *The Parsi*, (March, 1905) 90-94.) There have been two histories of Parsi cricket, M.K. Patel, *History of Parsi Cricket* (Bombay: 1892), and M.E. Pavri, *Parsi Cricket* (Bombay: 1901). A later publication, H.D.

is *The Parsi* which began in 1905 as a glossy magazine, somewhat in the style of *The Illustrated London News*. It constantly exhorted Parsis to disassociate themselves from Indian traditions and identify themselves with the West. Just one quotation must serve to illustrate the tone:

The closer union of Europeans and Parsis is the finest thing that can happen to our race. It will mean the *lifting up* of a people who are lying low, though possessing all the qualities of a European race. It will make our men more of men than they are at present and will make our women better women. The complete Europeanization of the Parsis is now a mere matter of time.²⁹

With such a divide running through the community as far as self-identity was concerned, we might expect similarly deep divides over religious issues. I can find no clear example of Hindu influence in the beliefs of Parsi writers between 1900 and 1918;³⁰ the divide is rather in terms of the orthodox and the reformists, or as the orthodox called them, the 'Protestant Party'. This label is not without significance, because most of the Westerners who influenced reforming Parsis were Protestants.

Perhaps the foremost example of a reformist was M.N. Dhalla. He was born into a poor priestly family in 1875 in Bombay but early on moved to Karachi where he grew up as a strict orthodox. In 1901 he moved back to Bombay to study and progressed so well that the community, led by K.R. Cama, raised the funds for Dhalla to go to Columbia University, New York, in 1905. There

Darukhanawala, *Parsis and Sports* (Bombay: 1935), gives an account of Parsis involved in a number of Western sports during the period relevant to this paper (e.g., pp. 16f., 64, 67, 135, 145, 147, 201, 218f., 221, 225, 286, 367, 397, 408f., 413) covering body building, running, tennis, horse riding, badminton, caricature an evident westernised trend among Parsis in the early twentieth century.

29. *The Parsi* (August, 1905), 324.

30. This is not to deny Hindu influence on the Parsis. Influence is evident in the marriage ceremony, and ideas of caste clearly affected Parsis. But unlike the period of the inter-war years and later, Parsis do not appear to have been influenced by such Hindu teachings as rebirth (except through the mediation of Theosophy) or the avatar in the period 1900-1918.

he studied under the Iranian specialist, Professor A. V. W. Jackson, first for an M.A., then a Ph.D. Dhalla also attended courses in a whole range of subjects, history of religions, anthropology, sociology, as well as pursuing his textual studies. His tutor, Jackson, was a staunch Protestant and he exercised considerable influence on him. Dhalla returned to India in 1908 a transformed person, as he himself said:

My 3 years and 9 months of scientific and critical study at Columbia University ... eradicated religious misconceptions that had gathered in my mind due to my blinded mental vision, traditional beliefs and upbringing. As the clouds of superstition dispersed, the mist of mental darkness was rent assunder. I was free of the religion of fear that was the belief of infant humanity and turned towards the pure religion of love, the religion as preached by the prophets and uncorrupted by their fanatical followers. Now that I have been enlightened by scientific study, and now that I have come to know and gain so much, I no longer adhered to my old ideas. My thinking, my outlook, my ideals and my philosophy of life changed. The purpose and meaning of life changed - everything changed. I was now eager to become the thinker of new thoughts, the student of new ideas and the propagator of new concepts. In 1905 I had set foot on American soil as an orthodox. Now in 1909 I was leaving the shores of the New World as a reformist.³¹

On his return to India Dhalla was appointed high priest of the Parsis in Karachi. There and in Bombay he was an influential figure through his speeches, writings and a series of annual Zoroastrian conferences he started in 1910. Essentially what he did was to press as a priestly reformer from within the community the sort of doctrinal reform which had been expounded by the outsider Haug. Dhalla stressed the ideas of ethical monotheism, called for the simplification of rituals and for prayers in the vernacular. He denied the traditional Zoroastrian doctrine of a 'devil', Ahriman, saying that evil was a tendency within man. His concern was to preserve the monotheism of the prophet against charges of dualism.³² Through the medium of the annual conferences Dhalla campaigned vigorously for a better-educated priesthood,

31. *Dastur Dhalla: An Autobiography* (E.T. Gool and Behram S.H.J. Rustomji, Karachi: 1975), 156-58.

32. Most of Dhalla's writing during our period were in Gujarati, but an important English work was his *Zoroastrian Theology* (New York: 1914).

and by that he meant educated according to Western standards. This presupposition lay behind the work of various reformists, that a Western education was an important component in a priestly life of holiness. Priests not so trained were regarded as ignorant by many of the intelligentsia.

Dhalla was a kindly person who did not press his reforms with the acrimony characteristic of many. He was also very devout and did not press his learning and logic as far as some of his contemporaries. D.M. Madan, for example, in publications in 1909 and 1916 argued from the educational principle that knowledge gained for oneself is better than knowledge imposed from above to the religious conclusion that revelation is not conducive to real religious insight. He presented Zoroastrianism not as a religion of devotion, but rather as a logical philosophy. He wrote:

[Zoroaster's] philosophy and religion is purely a human conception, and claims but one merit - the greatest merit that could possibly be claimed for any system of philosophy or religion, its entire and uncompromising consistency with human reason, and the entire absence in it of all dogmatic assertions, or claims to arbitrary authority.³³

33. *Study of the Gathas* (Bombay: 1916) 5; see also his *Revelation Considered as a Source of Religious Knowledge with Special Reference to Zoroastrianism* (1909). A similar theme is developed by S.D. Bharucha, *A Brief Sketch of the Zoroastrian Religion and Customs* (2nd ed., 1903), 13. An earlier rationalising and abrasive reformer was B.J. Billimoria, *A Warning Word to Parsees* (Bombay: 1900, in 2 parts).

Other Parsis, following Laing, were eager to show how Zoroastrianism was entirely consistent with modern science; probably the most common theme was that the purity laws of the ancient faith were in harmony with scientific teachings on hygiene.³⁴

For such writers as these, Western education reinforced the traditional Zoroastrian link between religion and knowledge. The reformists were convinced that true religion must be in complete harmony with modern learning. There was no place for 'faith in the unknown'. The educated reformist Parsi of the early twentieth century had immense faith in human reason in general and the potential of his own religion in particular. Several writers compared their rational religion favourably with that of ancient Greece, or Israel, or the modern West, and found there was little difference. Some also quoted the views of L.H. Mills and others that Zoroastrian teachings influenced Judaeo-Christian belief and so presented the religion of the Parsis as the fountain source of the great religions.³⁵

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34. This was the theme of the K.R. Kama Prize essay, (1900; published 1906) by S.E. Dubash, *The Zoroastrian Sanitary Code*, which attempts to interpret the Vendidad (the text attacked by Wilson) in the light of contemporary medical knowledge. It is a theme emphasised by S.A. Kapadia, *The Teaching of Zoroaster and the Philosophy of the Parsi Religion* (London: 1905) 33f., in a book written to give a good impression of his religion to the West. M. Pithawalla, *Steps to Prophet Zoroaster* (Poona: 1915) 174f., develops the same argument. He also argues that Darwin's theory of evolution supports Zoroastrian teaching on the progress of the world towards the renovation. Other examples are J.J. Modi, *Religious System of the Parsis* (2nd ed., Bombay: 1903), 41 (at theme he elaborated in his later works); and A.S.N. Wadia, *The Message of Zoroaster* (London: 1912), 93f., who is clearly dependent on Laing (see p.88).
35. Perhaps the foremost interpreter of Zoroastrian for the West was P.A. Wadia 'The Philosophy of the Gathas', *East and West*, (January 1903), 121-32, and July, 1904). See also his *An Inquiry into the Principles of Modern Theosophy* (Bombay: 1904). A similar tendency to view Zoroastrianism in terms of Western Philosophies is in J.C. Coyajee, *The Spirit of the Gathas* (Bombay: 1903). Authors from this period who emphasise Zoroastrianism as a universal religion include R.H. Mistry, *Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism* (Bombay: 1906), 57, 64ff.; and Pithawalla, *Steps to Prophet Zoroaster*, 68, 103f. In a book published just after the end of our period Pithawalla argued that the best hope for a reconstructed postwar Germany was Zoroastrian ideals. As far as I can trace,

The westernised reformists represented only one religious trend among the Parsis in the early twentieth century. Theosophy was also a powerful influence. Madame Blawatsky and Col. Olcott moved from New York to Bombay in 1879 and the Blawatsky lodge was founded. Parsis were dominant in the history of the lodge from its inception to the end of our period. Over these 36 years they held the post of President for one-third of the time, the post of secretary for two-thirds and treasurer for three-quarters of the time. All the librarians were Parsis, something like three-quarters of listed publications from Blawatsky lodge were written by Parsis.³⁶ Theosophists had an appreciable influence upon the Parsi community at large. On February 14th, 1882 Col. Olcott delivered a lecture at Bombay Town Hall addressed to the Parsis entitled 'The Spirit of the Zoroastrian Religion', which was published that year. He urged Parsis to preserve their ancient prayers and rites and not to dismiss half their scriptures, as Western linguists such as Haug argued, because, he said, none of these scholars has named the true key to Zoroastrian doctrine. The key he said lay not in the dry bones of words, nor in modern physical science, but rather 'occult science is the vindicator of Zoroastrianism, and there is none other'.

Theosophy obviously attracted those alienated by the reformist calls for the abandonment of half the scriptures and drastic changes in the age-old rites. The orthodox, the established community leaders and the Theosophists came together to oppose change. Because the reformists have been linked with Western education it does not follow that their theosophical opponents were associated with the uneducated. Far from it, Theosophy attracted anyone, not least the educated, who feared the loss of everything in the religion that they

little attention was paid to the new American Mazdaznan cult which claimed Zoroastrian heritage. It was started by Dr. Otoman ZarAdusht Ha'nish; see his *Mazdaznan Health and Breath Culture* (U.S.A. edition, 1902; published in Britain in 1913). When 'Mother Gloria' visited the Parsis in the 1930s the community was outraged - this they did not see as Zoroastrianism for West! Parsis have often argued for Zoroaster's date as early as 4,000 or 6,000 B.C. thereby making him archetypal prophet (see from this period V. Dinshaw, *The Date and Country of Zoroaster* (Hyderabad: 1912), but this is not necessarily, nor even normally nowadays, used to argue for the universality of his religion.

36. K.J.B. Wadia, *Fifty years of Theosophy in Bombay* (Madras: 1931). The figures are derived from the lists of office bearers in ch. 14.

held dear. It is interesting to note that although one religious educator I have referred to, namely Dhalla, was a vigorous opponent of Theosophy,³⁷ another, namely K.R. Cama, in later life became a member of the Theosophical Society. Although Theosophists argued science was blind to spiritual phenomena, and therefore not a guide, nevertheless they also stressed there was nothing in science which conflicted with their teachings. Theosophy could be followed by anyone, they declared. So the Parsi barrister, and the main spokesman for the orthodox, J. Vimadlal, wrote a series of articles in the journal *East and West* in 1904 in which he outlined the doctrinal basis of Theosophy in a manner he believed he could commend to the educated both in India and in the West. What he, and others, were attempting to do was to meet the apparently conflicting moods of the time - the anti-Western backlash provoked by the extreme reformists and yet the overpowering impression which Western science and learning had on India at the turn of the century.³⁸

One problem Theosophists had in attracting Parsis was that no matter how Olcott and others reaffirmed their regard for Zoroastrianism, Theosophy remained a movement clearly outside the community and therefore potentially a divisive force. In 1907 a movement started which might loosely be called a 'Zoroastrianised Theosophy'. Its followers call it Ilm-i Kshnoom, the Path of Knowledge. The founder was Behramshah Shroff. He claimed that at the age of 17 he had left home and met a wandering group of Muslims who were really secret Zoroastrians. They led him to the homeland of a secret race of giants in the mountains of Iran, in a land known as Firdo, or heaven. There

37. *The Journal of the Iranian Association* was started in April, 1912, edited by P.A. Wadia, with the declared aim 'To expose and counteract the effects of such teachings of Theosophists and others as tend: (a) to corrupt the religion of Zarathushtra by adding elements foreign to it, and (b) to bring about the degeneration of a progressive and virile community like the Parsis, and make them a body of superstitious and unpractical visionaries'. The *Journal* was an active supporter of Dhalla, who also attacked the Theosophists; see his *Theology*, ch. 45.

38. Vimadlal's articles are on pp. 69-78, 154-60, 261-68. An active writer who sought to demonstrate the compatibility of Theosophy, Zoroastrianism, and modern science was N.F. Bilimoria, *Zoroastrian Ceremonies* (Bombay: 1986). See also his *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy* (Bombay: 1898).

Zoroastrian treasures and teachings are preserved. Everyone lives in a paradisaical state in caves with streams of nectar flowing past. After staying for three years Shroff returned home to Surat where he remained silent for 30 years before beginning his teaching mission in 1907.³⁹ His doctrine encompassed a number of traditional theosophical ideas - an impersonal God, different planes of being, vegetarianism and reincarnation.

The feature to which I want to draw attention now is the image of Iran it displays. In the first place Shroff is replacing the Theosophists' allegiance to the Masters of remote Tibet, with adherence to Zoroastrian giants and religious treasures in the Parsi homeland.⁴⁰ Second, it reflects the subtle

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39. For the account of Shroff's life see N.F. Mama, *A Mazdaznan Mystic* (Bombay: 1944). The first Khshnoomic book in English was a 'review' of Dhalla's *Zoroastrian Theology*: P.S. Masani, *Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern* (Bombay: 1917).
40. The source of the idea of an Iranian cave of treasures is unknown, I suspect Shroff took it from Col. Olcott. In his 1881 lecture, and subsequently, he urged Parsis to form a research society, comparable to the Christian 'Palestine Exploration Fund'. To search for treasure in Iran in his diary entry for February 19, 1891 (*Old Diary Leaves*, 5:438f.) Olcott wrote that the Master 'Illarion is here en route for Tibet' who '...happily unknown by the public and even the majority of our members, who had but recently gone over the ground in Armenia, where the ancient Parsis lived'. He told H.P.B. [Madame Blavatsky] that '... in a certain large mountain cave, effectually closed against all intruders and vandals, and, like the many other of the same kind scattered throughout the world, constantly watched over and guarded by the Masters of Wisdom, the whole body of valuable Zoroastrian literature is stored up against the proper time for its restoration to mankind'. Ilm-i Khsnoom occupies a place among twentieth-century Parsis somewhat akin to the circle interested in the *Dabistān* and *Desatir* some hundred years earlier (see Dhalla, *Theology* ch.36). Indeed there may be a direct lineage. Nineteenth-century travellers refer to secret caves in Armenia which were linked with Mithraism, then understood as a form of Zoroastrianism. See, e.g., Sir Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia & c & c during... 1817, 1818, 1819 & 1820*, 2 vols. (London: 1821) 1:495-97. (I am indebted to one of my research students, Miss Nora Firby, for this reference. Could it be that these travellers heard of the oral tradition which lies behind the Armenian Mher legend (see J.A. Boyle, 'Mher in the Carved Rock', *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, I, ii (1976) 107-118). Was

change in the Parsi image of Iran. In the nineteenth century it was typically perceived as the land where the Good Religion was oppressed. By the early twentieth century it was being emphasised more as the homeland of the religion. In part this was due to the increasing knowledge flowing from scholarly studies. It was also due to the changing political scenes in Iran and India.

The ruling Qajar dynasty in Iran began to ease conditions for Zoroastrians⁴¹ and at the same time the Parsi fortunes appeared to decline in India. Earlier I said 1906 was probably the time when most Parsis felt most powerful and secure. But in 1907 a series of events seemed to undermine that position. It was in that year Naoroji retired from public life; then the rise of the Hindu militants at the 1907 Congress in Surat appeared threatening. It was in 1907 that for the first time for many years there was no Parsi MP at Westminster, because Bhowndree was not re-elected for a third term. In the same year a caucus tried to remove Mehta from power in Bombay. To many it must have seemed the security of the community was suddenly threatened. In fact, of course, it was not so sudden. The seeds of decline had set in earlier. Despite the appearance of 1905 a few lone voices had already been raising questions whether the Parsis were as secure as they thought. What if militant Hinduism should arouse the innumerable people of India to turn on the Parsis with a violence like that of the Muslim Arabs in seventh century Iran? So the calls began for Parsis to move on from India to seek yet another land of religious freedom. This time, so the appeal went, they should not settle in someone else's country but rather create their own nation to be called Parsistan, with their own army, so that they might remain secure for ever. The most popular destination was in the mountain fringes of Iran, in what is now Afghanistan. If tiny Japan could withstand the mighty Russians in the 1904 war, then, it was argued, the Parsis could stand alone with their great traditions behind them. The earliest appeal of this nature that I can find was made by a Parsi from Quetta, Khan Bahadur Patel in 1905.

this oral tradition passed on through travellers to the circle associated with the *Destair* and *Dabistān*, thence to Theosophists and Kshnoomists?

41. See M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: 1979), ch. 13. Conditions began to ease in the late nineteenth century because of the work of the Parsi, Maneckji, Limji Hataria; see Boyce in the *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (Bombay: 1969), 19-31.

Even previous to the advent of the British, they [the Parsis] were not *considered natives of India*, and if the British were to leave India, should this ever come to pass, they will still be looked upon as aliens. It is therefore wise and politic for the Parsis to prepare for themselves a haven of refuge ... by founding a colony. The example of Japan should serve as an incentive to the Parsis ... if the community some day loses the influence and position hitherto accorded it their fate will be no better than that of the Pariahs in India and the Gabars in their fatherland [Persia].⁴²

The formation of the Muslim league in 1906 stimulated this call which excited increasing comment for decades to come.

This description of the different Parsi religious movements must not be left without an account of the orthodox. Just as books on Hinduism are in danger of focussing wholly on the literate tip of the iceberg and forgetting the mass submerged out of sight, so a similar error can be made in Parsi studies. Few of the orthodox wrote books. An outstanding exception was the High Priest Rustomji Edulji Sanjana. In a book published in 1906 he affirmed the revealed nature of *all* Zoroastrian scriptures, the spiritual value of the rituals introduced by the prophet and the traditional Zoroastrian teaching on the resurrection of the body. He is, incidentally, the last Parsi I can find to emphasise this belief.

But even Sanjana, orthodox though he was, denied a belief in a devil, arguing that evil was man's own corrupt thought.⁴³

42. Reprinted in *The Parsi* (February 1905), 208-10. *The Parsi* then became something of a forum for such appeals and discussions. On the impact of Japan's victory on India as a whole, see J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (reprinted, Delhi: 1967), 360.

43. *Zarathustra and Zarathustrianism in the Avesta* (Leipzig: 1906). The reason for the German publication was Sanjana's international travels, which included not only Britain and the United States (where he met the President), but also Germany.

But typically orthodox literary activity was in the form of pamphlets or newspaper articles, generally in Gujarati, opposing changes.⁴⁴ The strength of orthodoxy was felt most in the faithful observance of religious practices and the groundswell of public opinion. Nowhere was this more strongly felt than on the biggest single issue in early twentieth century Parsis religious discussion - whether the community should accept converts, a debate that led to a court case and which enshrines many of the issues I have outlined.

In 1903 R.D. Tata, son of the leading Parsi industrialist, married a French woman, Suzanne Briere, in Paris. On January 8th in Bombay she underwent the Zoroastrian initiation ceremony and then had a Parsi wedding. This was the first known case of a complete outsider, as opposed to the child of a mixed marriage, undergoing initiation. The community was in uproar.⁴⁵ The fear was that if non-Parsis were converted into the community, and were legally recognised as Parsis, the charitable Trust Funds would soon be exhausted. The Parsis, no doubt, had in mind that the mass of Indian converts to Christianity in the 1870s came not from the wealthy classes but from the poor and the outcastes. Such a phenomenon would obviously swamp a tiny minority like the Parsis.

A committee was appointed to report on whether conversion was acceptable in Zoroastrianism. After much intrigue, as well as debate, the members decided that it was doctrinally proper, but said nothing on its practicability. The report was to have been submitted to a public meeting, but a powerful

44. The main newspaper associated with orthodox opinion was, an is, *Jam i Jamshid*. The leading orthodox individuals were M.H. Cama, 'Mansukh' (Muncherji Cawasji Langdana), B.F. Billimoria, B.K.M. Dordi, J.J. Vimadalal, Dastur K.E. Pavri, and later Mr. Justice Davar. An illustration of the form of orthodox reactions is the letter of the Parsi Panchayat signed by two dasturs and 309 priests from Bombay and throughout Gujarat protesting at the title of Dhalla's conference as the 'Zoroastrian' conference. They argued that it was organised by reformists and was not, therefore, typical of the religion (*Parsi Prakash* 5:17). Their point was that published proceedings should not be taken as representing majority opinion.

45. The debate and lawsuit were reported in all Parsi newspapers and journals and even in *The Times* of London. The following account is conflated from diverse newspapers and from *Parsi Prakash*.

lobby prevented this. The traditional governing body of the community, the Parsi Panchayet, decreed that only Parsi Zoroastrians, and not converts, could benefit from the Trusts or buildings under their control - an important point being that the buildings included Fire Temples. This decision was supported by a public meeting on April 16th with a resolution in these words: 'In the interests of the community and looking to the religious and social condition of the Parsi community, it will be incorrect to convert people from other religions, as such a move would be damaging to the community and shatter its ancestry and unity'.⁴⁶ The meeting confirmed the Panchayet's decision regarding the Trusts and recommended that any priest performing the initiation of a non-Zoroastrian should be boycotted.

These directives, it resolved, should be implemented in all Parsi communities, not just Bombay. The so-called Protestant party delivered a solicitor's letter questioning the right of the Panchayet to make such a decision about the Trust funds, and indeed questioning the very validity of the appointment of the members of the Panchayet. And so legal battle was joined.

Judgment was given by two judges in Suit no. 689 of 1906. The senior judge was the Hon. Mr Justice Davar. He was a known orthodox Parsi,⁴⁷ and was one of those who had blocked the report, saying there were no religious objections to conversion, from going to a public meeting. The second judge was the Hon. Mr Justice Beaman, a Theosophist and hardly likely, I would have thought, to be neutral in his attitude to the Reformists. The Suit was in two parts. In the first the Judges found that the Panchayet was not properly constituted, but the existing Trustees were re-appointed by the Court until a proper system of election was established.

It was the second part of the Suit, on whether a non-Parsi could by conversion become eligible for the Trust Funds, i.e. enter a Temple, which is significant for the historian of Parsi religion. At the outset Mr Justice Davar stressed that as Mrs Tata, the offended party, was not in court, judgment could not be binding on her, or on others who came afterwards, a point which was

46. *Parsi Prakash* 4:14.

47. For example, he had the Panchayet's decision to purchase copies of Dhalla's *Theology* reversed because it did not represent 'typical' Parsi beliefs.

later raised to question the whole of Davar's subsequent judgment.⁴⁸ But as far as I can see this was never pressed; perhaps the community had no heart for tearing itself apart again. Mr Justice Davar concluded that the Trusts had to be for Parsis by birth alone, because if there were no restrictions: 'The ruin of the community would be accomplished in as many days as it had taken generations to attain that position of prominence which the Parsis of India have now achieved' (p. 82 of the Judgment). He went on to condemn one of the witnesses who argued for conversion for giving 'blind and erratic evidence' because he saw no objection to low castes like sweepers and Dubras being allowed entry to the community (p.83). The basis of Davar's judgment therefore appears to have been not an application of the law, but what he considered to be best for the community. He ruled that the term Parsi was limited to the descendants of the original emigrants, through the line of the father, and to later Zoroastrian emigrés from Iran (p.116).

Mr Justice Beaman stated that he had at first been inclined to disagree, but finally he concurred with the decision of, but not the reasons for, Davar's judgment. He argued that as the Trust Funds had been established by founders who viewed their community as a caste, this is how the law must decree they should continue to function. A convert to the religion of Zoroastrianism could not therefore be entitled to the Trusts for the Parsis (pp.112-15).

The judgment in this case has been followed ever since by Parsis everywhere. In 1914 in Rangoon there was an outcry when a priest initiated the offspring of a Parsi woman married to a non-Parsi. Mr Justice Davar took an active part in the orthodox campaign and the priest duly made a public apology regretting his act.⁴⁹ In recent years there has been a similar controversy over an initiation performed by a Parsi priest in the States. But these are the exceptions which prove the rule laid down in the 1906 judgment.

The two sides in this conversion controversy reflect the divide in the Bombay

48. See *Journal of the Iranian Association* 3/5 (1914), 167-74.

49. The *Journal of the Iranian Association* played an active part, pleading the cause of Bella. G.K. Nariman, the distinguished Parsi historian, was a leading campaigner against Bella. The case is reported in *Parsi Prakash* 5:10 (1914).

Parsi community at the start of the century. The Reformist, or Protestant, party was confident in its religion as one with universal appeal and relevance. They were keen to launch their faith as a proselytising religion like most great religions of the day. The orthodox, joined by Theosophists and Kshnoomists, were concerned to preserve the practices and racial characteristics of the community, believing this to be the only way to ensure the continuation of their religious and cultural heritage. The recommendations of the public meetings suggest that whatever may be the *appearance* of Parsi attitudes displayed by the plethora of published pamphlets, the majority of Parsis were, at heart, conservative. The court ruling determined that, on what was the biggest issue of the day, caste status rather than westernisation remained the most powerful characteristic of the community.

It is tempting in conclusion to draw parallels between Parsi religious changes and those in contemporary Hinduism. The obvious analogy would be the Parsi reformists and the Brahma Samaj. What is interesting is that despite the reputation of the Parsis as both westernized and quick to adapt, the reforming process among them began much later than the foundation of the Brahma Samaj. In part this may be due to the fact that the home of the Samaj, Calcutta, was more exposed to Western education at an earlier date than Bombay was. But I believe another and vital factor was that although Parsis were, at this time, socially very adaptable, in their religion they were more conservative. The reason was, and is, that Zoroastrianism functions as a binding force to preserve the identity of this microscopic community. Although the Parsis were in contact with Western traditions, and experienced considerable social change, a counterbalancing force in their religion was their consciousness of being a tiny minority in a tolerant but nevertheless alien culture. This consciousness was reinforced by the strong community memory of the oppression in Iran. The analogy with the Brahma Samaj would therefore be superficial. A parallel with Judaism might be more appropriate in that both have experienced exodus, exile and persecution. For both races religion functions as a cohesive force. Parsi contacts with Western traditions in general, and scholarship in particular, brought substantial change, indeed transformation, in the realm of doctrine, but it brought little or no change in the realm of religious practices. In discussions over such issues as the nature and origin of evil, reason could prevail, but where issues impinged upon religious or racial identity then cherished custom had authority over scholarship, however much the latter may be respected.

It would, however, be wrong to leave the Parsis in Bombay in the period 1900-1918 with the impression that all of them were actually religious. One of the most common themes of writers of all persuasions, of columnists and cartoonists, was the decline of religion within the community. Wealth and westernisation brought the comforts of affluence, the threat of materialism. Gambling, drinking, the theatre and the racecourse were the foremost concerns of the educated middle classes if we are to judge from the pages of some of the popular press.⁵⁰ How true this picture is, it is difficult to say at this distance. Certainly, the urbane Parsi of Bombay in the early twentieth century had lost most of his connections with the agricultural roots of his religion. The seven great festivals, the gahāmbars, for example, which were based on the pastoral life and the seasons, were not celebrated in the traditional festive manner, for their significance was lost. Perhaps the greatest change that contact with Western traditions brought was not the Protestant party, but an apathy towards religion. In the early years of this century we may see the symptoms of what many Parsi religious leaders consider to be the plague of the community -religious indifference. Indifference, that is, until the Parsi identity and heritage appears threatened, for example by the conversion of an alien. In Parsi eyes, that is the time of greatest danger; when traditions are in such contact as this, then drastic change is threatened. At such times there is no indifference.

50. *The Hindi Punch* is the most obvious, and humorous, example.

Section D
Zoroastrianism and the Parsis



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10 Introduction

As the chapters on modern Zoroastrian thought have been written more recently than the chapters in previous sections there are fewer recent works to take note of. Nevertheless, there have been a number of publications.

Karachi Parsis, although declining in number,¹ have produced several books. Two of the respected elders have published their collected writings, Ervad G. Sidhwa² and F. K. Dadachanji.³ They represent a largely traditional perspective but both were influenced by their late teacher, Dastur Dhalla. Meherbanoo Kekobad Marker, a member of the distinguished Marker family, wrote a book dedicated to her grandchildren relating the religious history and ideals she thought they should know and live by.⁴ Other community publications include an English translation of the Gujarati book by F. C. Davar,⁵ but this is not as strictly orthodox and traditional as one might have expected from someone writing in Gujarati in Ahmedabad. Of a totally different nature is the lavishly produced, and historically helpful, *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples*.⁶ But as the title suggests, it is a collection of information, not a theological exposition of the religion.

There have been a number of studies of the religion by outsiders. Several of

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1. See the *Zarathushtrian Census of Pakistan*, produced by the ladies' group the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal in 1995.
 2. *Discourses on Zoroastrianism*, Karachi, 1985.
 3. *Speeches and Writings on Zoroastrian Religion, Culture and Civilization*, Karachi, 1995.
 4. *Religion and History of the Parsees*, Karachi, 1997.
 5. *The Vision of Zarathushtra*, translated by B. I. Taraporewala, Bombay, 1997.
 6. M. J. Giara, Mumbai, 1998.

the writings of the High Priest, Dastur F. M. Kotwal, many written jointly with the American academic, J. W. Boyd, are referred to in the ch.13 on 'War and Medicine in Zoroastrianism'. Using some of the knowledge gained from his work with Kotwal, Boyd has produced a book in collaboration with an American philosopher of art. Using the concepts and theories of aesthetics, they 'seek to explain ritual's power and function as a means of acquiring knowledge'.⁷ Another attempt to integrate western academic thought in the field of religious studies and the study of Zoroastrian ritual is written by then PhD student at Harvard (now a Professor at Indiana University), Jamsheed K. Choksy, writing on purity and pollution.⁸ A reasonably well-illustrated book focusing on rituals was produced by S. Hartman,⁹ but the understanding of the ritual contained in that work is not profound and reproduces uncritically the views of different informants. Indeed, the subject of Parsi ritual still lacks a substantive and authoritative study.

A totally different approach to the community is found in the work of the American anthropologist, Tanya Luhrman.¹⁰ This has been the subject of considerable criticism and hostility within the community, and of stern academic reviews. Luhrman studies the popular community image of what constitutes 'a good Parsi' and emphasises the not uncommon view in the community that Parsi men have lost their dynamism and innovative nature that once made the community so powerful. She focuses on the image of many young Parsi men as workshy and effeminate. Unfortunately, her work neglects the counter trend in the community to emphasise the continued success of the community in independent India, and the pride in the achievements of great industries (e.g. Tata and Godrej), in their artists as evidenced in the columns of the most widespread of the Parsi magazines (*Parsiana*) and in their continued charity and diverse contributions to India.

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7. R. G. Williams and James W. Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: aesthetic theory and Zoroastrian ritual*, South Carolina, 1993.
 8. *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: triumph over evil*, Austin, 1989.
 9. *Parsism: the religion of Zoroaster*, Leiden, 1980. The title alone indicates the minimal amount of fieldwork undertaken.
 10. *The Good Parsi: the fate of a Colonial elite in Postcolonial society*, Cambridge, Mass., 1996.

(See ch.13 on 'War and Medicine in Zoroastrianism'.)

I have produced three articles on the religion of the Parsis that are not included in this book. The earliest was on 'Parsis and religious pluralism',¹¹ but much of the substance of that article was taken up in the chapter on 'Contemporary Zoroastrian Philosophy' reproduced here (ch.12). Similarly, an article on 'Health and Suffering in Zoroastrianism'¹² overlaps, though does not repeat, ch.13 in this book. What is not reflected in any chapter in this volume is an article on the image of the religion reflected in Parsi novels.¹³ It was not included because since it was written there have been several more Parsi novels and a study of them by Nilufer Bharucha has appeared.¹⁴ My article noted that Parsis had produced seventeen novels in 25 years (nine between 1987 and 1993), three more have been written since then.¹⁵ It was omitted reluctantly because of the substantive point it made concerning an untapped source for the popular understanding of their religion by Parsis. The substantive point behind that article is 'Novels are, in many cultures, important art forms and provide a powerful medium for a profound message. Through the study of a novel one may gain an insight not only into a writer, but also the soul of the community which that writer reflects' (p. 384). In some ways the image of the religion they put forward is more representative of the Parsi public than many of the more 'theological' works discussed in ch.12. The conclusion to the article elaborates that belief:

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11. In H. G. Coward (ed.), *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism*, New York, 1987, pp. 195-233.
 12. In J. R. Hinnells & R. Porter (eds), *Religion, Health and Suffering*, Kegan Paul, 1999, pp. 1-22.
 13. In E. Sharma (ed.), *The Sum of Our Choices: essays in honour of Eric J. Sharpe*, McGill, 1996, pp. 384-407.
 14. 'The Parsi Voice in Recent Indian English Fiction: an assertion of ethnic identity'. In N. E. Bharucha & V. Sarang, *Indian English Fiction 1980-90: an assessment*, Delhi, pp. 73-88.
 15. Rohinton Mistry produced his third book in 1995, *A Fine Balance*, Toronto; then two new writers appeared: Armin Wandrewala, *The Turning*, Mumbai, 1996 and A. Vakil, *Beach Boy*, London 1997.

The perspectives [of the novels] are generally those of westernised middle class Parsis. It is in this section of the society, rather than in the *baags*, that extra-marital affairs occur, and where intermarriage is more of an issue. It would be a mistake to take the novels simply as an account of how Parsis want to be seen by the outside world, partly because they are not self-glorifying publicity materials – indeed they are sometimes hard on the community they love – but above all because of the Parsi self-mocking humour. But it is in a group's humour that one can often see something of the soul of its people, and that is true of these novels. Academic books typically deal with the theoretical ideals of the religion, or present a community in a rather sanitised form. These novels, for all that they caricature Parsis, do provide a window into the daily life of the majority, even though that vision is communicated through middle-class eyeglasses. In part, at least, they reflect an aspect of the Parsi quest for identity, both in the religious and secular worlds, within the Indian and Pakistani communities and beyond. The community is not depicted 'warts and all', for many of the typical Parsi failings are not highlighted: for example, the intensity and bitterness of their internal quarrels. But in conveying the laughter, grief, loves and fears of the Parsis, among whom the authors grew up, they give a better insight into the living community than many western scholarly works do. (pp.405f.)

A future study might also include consideration of the various audio-visual materials the community is producing, not least the videos. This raises the basic question of what are the appropriate materials to study for an understanding of a living religion? As stated in the opening of the article on Modern Zoroastrian Philosophy (ch. 12) I believe a religion is what it has become, and that we should include popular religious writing as well as that of the learned. Here I am arguing for including videos as well as novels. But also in my various writings, for example in 'War and Medicine' (ch. 13 in this volume), but particularly in 'Health and suffering' (see n.12), I have also included a study of the ancient doctrines evidenced in the scriptural texts, medieval works, and in the latter article the classical epic literature and ancient folklore. In 'War and Medicine' I argue that, just as I am influenced by Biblical and Christian thought, although I would no longer describe myself as a Christian, so also, Parsis are influenced by their ancient traditions even if subconsciously. My point is that our values, ideals, principles, are conditioned by our heritage, even if we no longer believe in it. This argument perhaps needs critical assessment, since many Parsis have not read the medieval literature that expounds the theology being discussed.

It is my contention that while there are, inevitably, diverse doctrinal approaches, and clearly theology has developed (in the case of the Parsis under Hindu and British influence for example) nevertheless one can see a reasonably coherent worldview in these varied sources. Some may want to question that contention. Some may also question my views on the value of novels for understanding a culture. But my argument is that to understand a living religion, one needs a 'holistic' approach, a blend of the ancient, the scriptural or classical, the modern writings of educated leaders, and the popular material.



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11 The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence: Parsi Charities in the 19th and 20th Centuries

1. Introduction ¹

Zoroastrianism has always stressed the religious duty of benevolence. In his vision of heaven, the righteous Viraz saw the souls of the liberal elevated above all other souls in splendour.² One text declares that ‘the greatest good work is liberality.’³ In Zoroastrian thought, unlike some other religions, there is no idea that there is anything evil in wealth, provided it is gained with

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1. The following abbreviations are used throughout the article (in order of use): P.P. for *The Parsi Prakash*, eds B.B. Patell and R.B. Paymaster, Bombay 1860 - in seven volumes; PP for Parsi Panchayet (BPP for the Bombay Parsi Panchayet); DiM for Dar-i-Mihr; Sir J.J. for Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, PBI for Parsi Benevolent Institution; PCA for Parsi Central Association; Ps for Parsis; Z'ians for Zoroastrians. The format of bibliographical references to the *Prakash* has to vary. Until 1901 each of the two volumes is paginated, sometimes consecutive years are successively paginated. If the reader wishes to follow up references given in this article the important guide is not the volume number, but the year and then page reference. The author wishes to express his sincere thanks to his wife, Marianne, for many hours of help with the filing of information collected and to Mrs. Jeanne Lockett for her help with typing. Further, in particular, to Manchester University for generously funding research visits to Bombay.
 2. *Ardā Virāz Nāmāg* 12:1-6 (H. JamaspAsa and M. Haug, Bombay and London, 1872, 160f.)
 3. *Mēnōg ī Khrad* 4:3 E.T.E.W. West, *Sacred Books of the East*, XXIV, 26; *Dīnkard* 3:41 J. de Menasce, *Le Troisième Livre du Dēnkard*, Paris, 1973, 53f.

honesty, and dispensed with charitable generosity.⁴

Indeed, if one practices many duties and meritorious deeds, but does not give anything to the poor, then it is said not to be possible for one's soul to be redeemed.⁵ 'The perfect desire' is said to be 'the desire to amass worldly goods as much as to further righteousness thereby.'⁶

European travellers to India have frequently commented on the magnificent liberality displayed by Parsis both towards members of their own community and to others. James Ovington in the 17th century commented:

... they shew a firm Affection to all of their own Sentiments in Religion, assist the Poor, and are very ready to provide for the Sustenance and Comfort of such as want it. Their universal Kindness, either in employing such as are Needy and able to work, or bestowing a seasonable bounteous Charity to such as are Infirm and Miserable, leave no Man destitute of Relief, nor suffer a Beggar in all their Tribe...⁷

Numerous other such accounts might be cited. A typical 19th century comment is that of Mrs Postans:

They are an enterprising and public spirited people, devoting their riches to worthy and beneficial purposes. To the most influential of this class, the Presidency (of Bombay) is indebted for its greatest improvements; and the liberality of the Parsee merchants is conspicuous, when public subscription is required for any object, tending to promote the comon good.⁸

4. *Mēnōg ī Khrad* 15:11.

5. *Pursišnihā Zoroastrian Catechism*, 44. E.T. by K.M. JamaspAsa and H. Humbach, Part 1, Wiesbaden, 1971, 67.

6. *Dīnkard* M.97,9-11 E.T. R.C. Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London, 1961, 279.

7. *A Voyage to Suratt in the year 1689*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson, London, 1929, p.218. Numerous other examples might be cited.

8. *Western India in 1838*, London, 1839, 111f.

It has not only been western travellers who have commented on Parsi charity, the host nation has also commented. So, for example, Gandhi in a speech at Rajkotwalla Baug in Karachi on 1 April 1931 said:

The Parsi community is such a marvel that it does not need the protection of anyone. It finds its way and protection by its wisdom, intelligence and ability. Their charities are so framed in the country that it has no parallel, that is their protection.⁹

Because Parsi charity has been so evident and widespread it has been argued that it is an important factor in the acceptance of the community in India. This is one reason given to explain why Parsis' economic success has not provoked the Asiatic equivalent of anti-Semitism. A common saying both among the Parsis and non-Parsis in Bombay is 'charity thy name is Parsi'. It is a part of the Parsi image often noted in the Press.¹⁰ Given this magnitude and importance of Parsi charity it is, perhaps, rather surprising that no systematic study of the subject has been undertaken. It does not form even the subject of a chapter in the general histories of the community. The reason for this silence is in fact not hard to see, it is the very vastness of the subject. There are accounts of the work of individuals¹¹ and of certain specific foundations¹² or institutions,

9. P.P. VII. 9.

10. See, for example, the cartoons in the *Hindi Punch*, March 1906, 25; September 1907, 81f.; March 1908, 25; September 1911, 76 and 81; September 1912, 83; September 1921, 74; August 1926, 71; September 1927, 70. *Voice of India*, 1 February 1888; *Indian Spectator* 7 September 1890; 22 February 1891; 1 March 1891; 8 March 1891. I am indebted to my ex-student D. Mellor for the reference to the last named sources.

11. J.R.P. Mody, *Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy*, Bombay, 1959, especially chs. 12-14, 17-23 and App. 3; J.C. Jehangir, *Life of Sir Cowasjee Jehanger Readymoney*, Bombay, 1890 esp. 8-72; R.P. Masani, *N.M. Wadia and His Foundation*, Bombay 1961 chs. 10, 14 and Appendix; F. Harris, *J.N. Tata: A Chronicle of His Life*, Bombay, 1958, especially ch. 12; A.N. Joshi, *Life and Times of Sir Hormusjee C. Dinshaw*, Bombay, 1939, especially ch. 11.

12. For example *Alexandra Girls Institution, Centenary Souvenir, 1863-1963*; B.D. Petit, *Parsee General Hospital Diamond Jubilee Year, 1972*; N.M. Kelkar, *Story of the Sir J.J. School of Art*, Bombay, 1957; H.B. Dhalla, 'The M.F.

notably the Sir Jamsetee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution,¹³ the Tata Charities¹⁴ and above all the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (see below). These represent but a tiny tip of the iceberg. In 1961 the BPP administered approximately one thousand foundations. A further problem for any study of Parsi charities is that many were not made public, but were simply private kindly acts. Numerous obituaries refer to the private charities of noted individuals. (See below Appendix M, numbers 2, 12, 23, 36, 44, 45, 100, 129, 131.) The first Parsi charity to present an annual report was the N.M. Wadia charities on 21 March 1914. Details earlier than that are extremely difficult to obtain.¹⁵ There was no legal registration of Parsi charities until 1935 and even later charity works of large proportions are not always well documented.¹⁶ Almost the only source of information available is the columns of the *Parsi Prakash*. This article has, as one of its main aims, a collection of the information from that multi-volumed Gujarati collection of newspapers and other reports relating to Parsis. These data are collected in Appendices A to M below. The text of the article is largely a commentary on those Appendices.

Cama Athornan Institute: 51 years of Service', in *151st Anniversary of the Installation of the Sacred Atash Bahram in Memory of Seth Dadabhai Naoshirvanji Modi at Surat*, ed. N.E. Turel, Surat (n.d. c. 1976), 118-24; *Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Bai Dhunmai & Cowasji Dadabhai dar-e Meher, Bangalore*, Bangalore, 1976; P.J. Schroff, 'A note on the History and the activities of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute', in *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume; The Virbaijeeite Centenary Volume*, ed. B.S.H.J. Rustomji, Karachi, 1959; *The Golden Jubilee Volume of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Inst.*, Bombay, 1941; V.K. Irani, *The Jamshedji Nusserwanji Petit Parsi Orphanage Golden Jubilee Memorial Volume (1888-1938)*, Bombay, 1939.

13. See *The Centenary Volume* edited by J.H. Wadia, Bombay, 1950.
14. R.M. Lala, *The Creation of Wealth*, Bombay, 1981, ch. 12 and Appendix C.
15. P.P. 21 March 1914, p. 6. The reports for the early years came out rather sporadically.
16. See S.F. Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, 1860-1960*, Bombay, 1982, ch. 14 regarding registration, P.P. 13 August 1938 (44) notes the Tata Trust had given Rs 2,463,815 in charity. 1933-37, details are unavailable.

It is a pleasure, as well as a duty, to express my thanks to Dastur JamaspAsa who has worked through these volumes with me and to two valued Parsi friends for their enormous help, Burjor Avari and Cyrus Mehta.

The *Prakash* is concerned primarily with public records; there is, therefore, relatively little coverage of one of the major foci of Parsi charitable donations, namely the funding of rites in temples and the sponsoring of feasts at the seasonal *gāhāmbār* festivals, although they are sometimes listed. In the Directory of Public Trusts registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act of 1950 there are some 935 listed Parsi charities. Twenty seven percent of their declared objects were concerned with the performance of religious ceremonies, a figure which gives some impression of the importance attached to these practices by many Parsis.¹⁷ It is, therefore, regrettable that it is impossible to document such charities. However, as many of the educated and younger generation of Parsis commonly criticise their ancestors, and the Trusts, for apportioning such a large proportion of funds to rituals there is merit in documenting the breadth of social, communal, national and international concerns which have benefited from Parsi charity. By focusing on charitable works visible to the public it is hoped that this article will show why Parsis have acquired the universal reputation they have. Not all the charities discussed below are Public Charities in the sense of benefiting the general public - the religious buildings, for example, do not. But they are visible to all and thereby contribute to the Parsi Public image.

A further cautionary note is necessary regarding the scope of this paper. It cannot be exhaustive even of the material in the *Prakash*. In the introduction to Volume VII of that work it was estimated that up to that point 3,342 obituaries had been included. Evidently, Appendix M listing important charitable donations referred to in obituaries is necessarily selective, as are the other Appendices. It is also clear that the *Prakash* itself is not absolutely complete. The manner in which information is recorded in the *Prakash* and

17. *Directory of Public Trusts*, Greater Bombay, Bombay Suburban District, Bombay 1954. Of the remaining objects: 14% of trusts were left open to the discretion of the trustees with such phrases as 'such charities for the benefit of the Parsi community as the trustees deem fit' or 'any charitable purpose of Parsi Zoroastrians'. 8% were devoted to medical work; 7% for religious buildings; 7% for housing and 14% for education.

elsewhere obviously governs the nature of any account of charitable work. The manner in which information is recorded varies over the years; for example from 1937 the *Prakash* begins a separate annual account of Parsi charitable buildings, making a fuller consideration possible after that date. In the annual report at the end of 1938 it notes that 248 Parsi Public Trusts were registered between 1938 and 1940 - details of the vast majority are unknown. The number of such Trusts does, however, underline the vastness of Parsi charitable activity. It is a Zoroastrian tradition that at the *uthamna* ceremony for the deceased, relatives announce some act of charity. There are many hundreds of these in the *Prakash* but they rarely indicate the precise object of the charity so that they have not been included in this study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this collection of material will provide a reasonably clear picture of Parsi charity, a facet of the religion and people which has impressed all who have come into contact with it and them. The period covered by the paper is necessarily flexible, depending on the availability of information. Parsis did have a tradition of charity from early times in India but it is only in the middle of the century where anything like a reasonable record began to be kept. The information is generally collected only up to 1938 because financial, social and other circumstances changed so drastically thereafter that separate treatment is necessary.

This study of Parsi charity is primarily concerned with financial donations, but it is worth noting that the gifts of time and labour are also a form of charity in which Parsis have excelled either as secretaries and chairmen of Trusts¹⁸ or as organisers of funds,¹⁹ funds which on occasions had no single magnificent

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18. R.F. Dabu (P.P. IV.259); Sir P.K. Sethna (P.P. VII.441); J.C.Cama (P.P.III.789); H.J. Appoo (P.P. 1908, 31). For the work of M.P. Khareghat see *Khareghat Memorial Volume*, edited by R.P. Masani, Bombay, 1953, 1, 1-27.
19. E.g. Ervard F.B. Gonda who organised the collection of Rs 55,000 for a new dispensary building at Udwarda or the staff who gave their time to organise classes for poor working Zoroastrians through the Parsi Central Association (P.P. 1913, 16). Another example is recorded in P.P. 1, 265 relating to 29 March 1834 where a European meeting organised to stop beggars was attended by more Parsis than by members of any other group. The work-skills of the less wealthy can be considered as great a charity as the largest donation. In this regard one might note the obituary of F. A. Guzdar (P.P. III, 681) who built a daxma at cost because of his religious feelings.

donation which provoked public reaction but which nevertheless represented a considerable act of charity. One such example was 'The Two Annas Fund' started in 1900 by Sir J. B. Petit and closed on 30 October 1909 (P.P. 48) which raised sufficient money to feed thousands daily in a time of famine and provided funds to dig wells.

2. Parsi charity and religious foundations

One of the chief objects of charity in the nineteenth century were temples. It is impossible to give any reasonable estimate of the number of temples before then. As written records were not generally kept the usual record was simply that on the foundation stone. When a temple was destroyed, by fire for example, a record was often not left from which the historian can note its existence. Fire temples, Dar-i Mihrs, were not as central to Zoroastrian worship as, for example, churches are to Christianity. Worship was often conducted in the home over the hearth fire, and Dar-i Mihrs were commonly pure buildings to which the priest took his own home fire for specific rites. Three factors led to the increased building of temples. First, the Iranian Zoroastrians in their correspondence urged the Parsis to follow their practice and build more temples.²⁰ Second, more temples were needed. As Parsi families became wealthy they began to employ servants, usually non-Parsis, persons who introduced impurity into the home, thereby making it unusable for many acts of worship. The temple as a place of purity became more generally necessary. The third factor in the growth of temples was that the community was wealthy enough to be able to build them. Finally, as trade led Parsis to settle in different parts of India, and beyond, the proliferating scattered communities increased the need for more pure centres of worship. For these reasons the 70 years 1830-1900 represent the main growth period of temple building as shown in Appendix A and Fig. 1.²¹ The rate at which Dar-i Mihrs

20. On the early fire temples see F. M. Kotwal, 'Some observations on the history of Parsi Dar-i Mihrs', *BSOAS*, XXXVII, 1974, 664-69.

21. These figures exclude charitable donations concerned with renovations or new buildings although they sometimes involve very considerable gifts. The new building for the Atash Bahram in Udwarda was given by Motlibai J. Wadia in 1894 at a cost of Rs 80,000. These figures were excluded because they are often available only for major temples such as those at Udwarda, Navsari, and therefore a representative picture is impossible. An approximate idea of this

were built has declined rapidly in the century. It would be easy to explain this as due to a decline of religious commitment, but that may not be the explanation. The fact is that the community had as many as it needed, indeed in some places too many so that temples have had to be closed and the sacred fire moved to another temple.

Funeral grounds, mostly in the form of 'Towers of Silence' (daxmas), are a further indicator of Parsi religious charities. But whereas Temples are commonly the gifts of individuals or families a greater proportion of daxmas were erected out of communal (Anjuman) subscriptions (See Appendix B and Fig. 2). In part this may be due to a popular belief that the gifting of a daxma was often followed by the donor's demise!

Key - Total Parsi Temples built
 ----- Figures for Bombay only

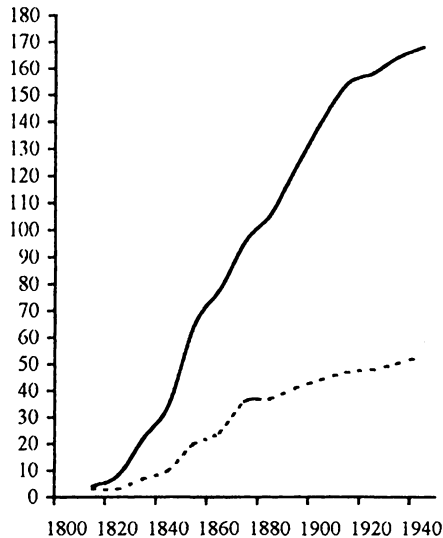


Fig. 1. Graph showing rate of building of Dar-i Mihrs and Atash Bahrams.

work is given in the final column of Appendix A.

Before 1780 most daxmas were funded by subscription, but between 1780 and 1886 roughly two-thirds were privately funded - an indication of the considerable personal wealth and religious commitment in the community. Subscription was again the usual source of funding after about 1886, especially in the dispersion outside traditional areas, i.e. other than in Bombay and Gujarat, areas where individual wealth was not then amassed in large proportions. In 'the dispersion' the community was often not large enough to have a daxma, in such cases a burial ground was used and these were commonly given by the authorities.²² As with temples the growth period was after 1820.

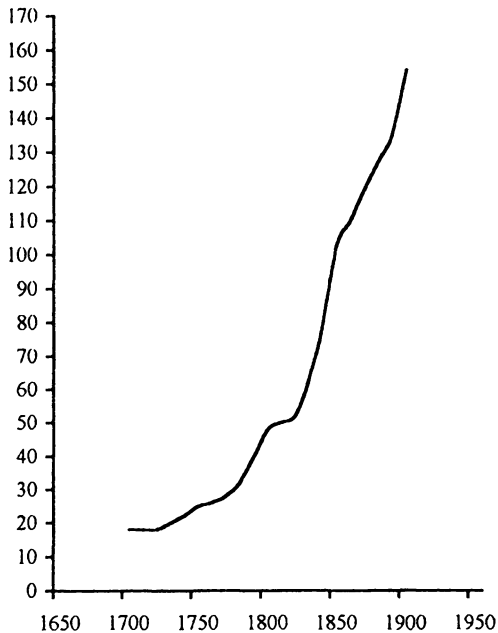


Fig. 2. Graph showing growth of Daxmas and Parsi burial grounds 1700-1905.

22. The figures for daxmas after 1905 are not supplied since the primary reliable source, Patel, does not go beyond then. However, very few daxmas have been built during the twentieth century. The figures list only the physical daxma, or plot of the burial ground. Space forbids the inclusion of the very numerous donations of associated buildings such as sagdis and bunglis; such donations are not fully covered by Patel though they do appear in the *Prakash*.

There are a number of types of buildings which could be described as religious-cum-social centres, dharmsalas ('rest homes') often built near places of pilgrimage or temples for the traveller to stay in and Baugs, public places where initiations, marriages, lectures or meetings might be held. Such places might be halls within a temple complex (e.g. the upper floor of the Anjuman Atash Bahram, Bombay) or open air 'courtyards', which have a temple, prayer room and place for washing attached (e.g. Albless Baug, Bombay, founded in 1868). The greatest period of activity in building dharmsalas was again from 1840 (Appendix C), though for baugs this came some 20 years later, because they were presumably seen as having less urgency (Appendix D and Fig. 3). Dharmsalas were practically all funded by private donations rather than by public subscription and were concentrated more in Bombay and Gujarat with few outside this traditional 'heartland' of the Parsis. Baugs are geographically more widespread.

Key - Dharmsalas
 — Baugs

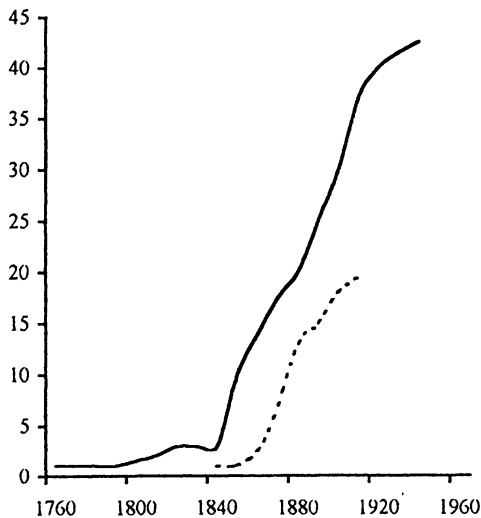


Fig. 3. Graph showing building of Dharmasalas and Baugs in India by decade.

The family most involved in the charitable building of temples was, unquestionably, the Wadias, who were concerned with 22 such projects. The Petits were involved in eight, the Adenwalas and Jijibhoys with five each and the Chinoys with four. No one family was so active in erecting daxmas. Six were concerned with two daxmas (M. N. Sett, M. K. Sethna, Readymoney, Nusserwanji, N. D. Modi, P. K. Modi, B. N. Mistri), only Sir J.J. was involved in three and V. and P. Meherji were concerned with four. The Petits were particularly active in the building of dharmshalas, erecting four, whereas J. J. funded three and the Wadias two. Sir J. J. was the only person to be involved in more than one baug. In short, Sir J. J., the Wadias and the Petits are the prominent names in charitable donations to Parsi religious buildings. What is, however, most striking is the large number of different families that were concerned with these donations; that is, charity was not a practice just of a few notable families but was rather displayed by many Parsis whose names are otherwise unknown. It was a feature of a broad spectrum of Parsi society.

3. Parsi secular charity to Parsis

The *Prakash* provides two sets of annual figures for Parsi charity:

- (i) The donations by individuals to the Panchayet (see Appendix E.ii)
- (ii) Total charities given by Parsis in the year, excluding donations to the Panchayet (see Appendix E.iii).

The figures for the Panchayet may, presumably, be taken as reliable because of the accounting system that institution then had. The history of the Panchayet²³ is generally divided into four periods: from its inception (c.1673) to approximately 1830 when it functioned as a paternalistic semi-official governing body overseeing the wellbeing and social morals of the community, powerful because it was respected.

From around 1830 its leaders became hereditary, not elected, and because it

23. For the early period the major work is J.J. Modi, *History of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet*, Bombay, 1930 (in Gujarati) 2 vols. In English there is S.P. Davar, *The History of the Parsi Panchayet of Bombay*, Bombay, 1949. For the modern period there is the invaluable work of S. F. Desai, quoted in n. 16 above.

was seen as operating for the interests of its friends the Panchayet lost much of its power and influence, reaching a particular low in 1845. When Sir J.J. founded his Parsi Benevolent Institution (PBI) in 1849 it was at least in part set up as a rival (or replacement) body. In 1851 the Board of Trustees of the two bodies were amalgamated: Sir J. J. had effectively taken over the Panchayet. The legality of this move was rejected in a 1906 law suit. In 1851 the Panchayet held 15 funds and a corpus of Rs. 190,000. In 1901 this had increased to Rs 4,400,000 which marks, after the rise and fall of the paternalistic rule, the third stage of the Panchayet's life as a charitable institution. At the turn of the century the Panchayet's role had become: (i) to administer the properties under its charge (e.g. daxmas) and the schools, not least those of the PBI; (ii) to represent the community's interests before Government, notably in the sphere of legal reform; (iii) the administration of estates or Trusts in its care, notably the giving of cash aids to the needy. From 1826 these were given for maintenance of the destitute and payment of funeral expenses. From 1891 Naujote expenses were covered; marriage costs from 1902; money for grain from 1906; for a 'change of air' (holidays) for the poor in 1910; rent in 1912 and education costs from 1915. Some idea of the growth in this aspect of the Panchayet's work can be gained from the following table of persons aided by the PP from 1871-1938:²⁴

<i>Decade</i>	<i>No. of Recipients</i>	<i>Decade</i>	<i>No. of Recipients</i>
1871-1880	76	1911-1920	843
1881-1890	441	1921-30	1871
1891-1900	767	1931-38	3733
1901-1910	706		

One difficulty in providing an account of donations to Panchayet funds is that the *Prakash* supplies the information in a different manner in various years. The size of recorded donations varies from Rs 500 to the Rs 600,000 given by P. M. Kaka in 1915 'for the benefit of the Parsi community'. Many funds are opened in the names of deceased relatives and no object is stated, but it is likely the use was left to the discretion of Panchayet Trustees. In some years specific projects dominate, for example in 1907 and succeeding years there were many and large donations to the fund of the Parsi General Hospital. The 'annual reports' relating to charity according to 'the Zoroastrian calendar' as it appears

24. Figures from P. A. Wadia, *Parsis 'ere the shadows thicken*, Bombay, 1949, 14.

in the *Prakash* suggests that from 1910 something of the order of 77 % of donations were to general funds (the disadvantaged of society), 13% was to religious buildings and 10 % were donations made at *uthamna* ceremonies in memory of the deceased. The community has, therefore, shown substantially greater concern for deprived persons than many of its vocal and critical members have suggested in the popular press. The general funds are almost all concerned with the poor, disabled, orphaned or widowed Parsis. The Bombay Panchayet received and administered funds from a number of smaller Parsi communities elsewhere (e.g. Valsad, Deviar, Mau, Nagpur, Ajmer, Mandir, Belgaum, Satara, Damaun, Solapur, and Hubli). Most of the funds, naturally, are concerned with communal matters, but there are occasions when Parsi contributions to non-Parsi concerns were collected or donated through the Panchayet, for example in 1916 Parsis donated Rs 104,000 to the Lady Hardinge Medical College at Delhi. Such 'outside' charities are only recorded from 1913 when the Wadia charity figures were included. The proportion of funds donated by women varies considerably, from being more than one third of donations in 1906 and 1910, to 2 % in 1915. There is no discernible pattern to their contributions. It was through the Panchayet that many donations were made for *gāhāmbār* feasts and rites in temples (for example it is in the 1916 annual report that N. B. Choksi is recorded as having donated Rs 26,000 for matchi ceremonies at the Navsari Atash Bahram).

Although there is some truth in the commonly projected image of a decline in Parsi wealth in the twentieth century, a glance at Appendix E (iii) will show that charitable donations through the Panchayet have been maintained at a high level up until the end of British India - and further study would show it continued beyond then.

But the Panchayet was not the only source from which such aid could be sought, as indicated by Appendix F and Appendix M which illustrate the enormous number of communal acts of charity 'for the poor.'²⁵ These charitable donations show a strong concern for the weaker members of Parsi society, with some eighteen donations to orphanages, thirteen for 'the poor', eight for widows, seven for victims of various disasters (cholera, riots, etc.)

25. Appendix M, numbers 1, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18, 24, 28, 31, 36, 39, 40, 44, 45, 48, 51, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 64, 66, 74, 76, 82, 83, 88, 95, 98, 113, 115, 116, 119, 129, 137, 138.

and three for the blind and disabled. In the 1920s and 30s there is an evident concern for those affected by rising unemployment - both for women and men. It is also important to note the significance of community centres (Gymkhanas, etc.) for a tiny racial minority seeking to preserve its cultural and social unit - hence the 21 donations to such centres. Given the nature of contemporary Indian society it is worth noting that approximately one fifth of donations are made by women - almost always to the underprivileged rather than to community centres.²⁶

Parsi charitable donations to education have been considerable. Appendix G may be summarised as indicating that in India financial support was given to some 128 schools (excluding those of the PBI), 24 libraries and to 54 further education and vocational centres. Education is very much a concern of the community in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and on a nationwide scale. The pioneer was Sir J. J. with the founding of the Parsi Benevolent Institution (PBI) in 1849. In his case the motive was in large measure the provision of a western education to enable Parsis to flourish without the impressionable young of the community having to attend the missionary schools where they might be lured into Christianity. His endowment of the PBI was announced on 31st May 1842 at a meeting to congratulate him on his knighthood. He spoke of

... a scheme that I have long contemplated for relieving the Parsee poor of Bombay, Surat, and its neighbourhood. You know full well the state of misery in which many of our people are living, and hopeless ignorance in which their children are permitted to grow up. My object is to create a Fund, the interest of which shall be applied towards relieving the indigent

26. The important figures of Appendix F are:

To orphanages: 3, 4, 10, 15, 32, 34, 37, 40, 44, 48, 49, 57, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 89.

To blind: disabled, poor: 1, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 31, 47, 52, 55, 60, 61, 77, 197.

To widows: 8, 9, 11, 14, 22, 26, 44, 91.

To disaster victims: 2, 20, 23, 54, 66, 81, 99.

To community centres: 16, 27, 28, 30, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 53, 58, 59, 62, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 79, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 93, 94, 98.

Donations from women: 4, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 29, 34, 35, 38, 40, 49, 57, 61, 75, 78, 83, 85, 89, 91.

of our people, and the education of our children, and I now propose to invest the sum of Rs. 3,00,000 in the Public Securities, and place it at the disposal of the Trustees.

In his letter of 14th February 1844 to the Governor of Bombay requesting the Government to become the Trustees he indicated that he intended 50% of the funds to be used for the poor in Bombay, Surat, Broach, Woodapore and Navsari. The remainder was for marriage and funeral costs of the poor and to help the blind and lame. Within 20 years the Institute ran 21 schools with 3,049 pupils.²⁷

Many of the later donations may be presumed to be by Parsis who were consciously following his example. It is noteworthy, given the nature of contemporary Indian society, how many before 1900 were girls' schools.²⁸ Almost all schools, beyond junior level, gave instruction in English and most of them were for Parsis, i.e. of a communal nature.²⁹ After about 1910 there is a growing emphasis on Science and Engineering.³⁰ The foremost name in that development, not surprisingly, is that of the Tatas (Appendix G, numbers 103, 114, 136, 208, 226) with C.J. Readymoney being the main Parsi donor to Bombay University (Appendix G, numbers 19, 29, 42, 43, 44, 54, 63, 124, 142). There is an obvious tendency for families to sponsor ventures in their home towns, for example the Tatas at Navsari (57, 86, 91, 136, 181) whereas

27. Quoted in *Correspondence, deed, and bye-Laws, relating to Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's Parsee benevolent institution*, Bombay (n.d.), 17-21 and see John R. Hinnells, 'Parsis and British Education', *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute*, Bombay, XLVI, 1978, 42-64.

28. Appendix G, numbers 10, 13, 20, 25, 45, 51, 55, 56, 58, 66, 75, 78, 92, 104, 107.

29. Appendix G, numbers 12, 117, 137, 140, 152, 175. Interestingly 174 is a Muslim school. See also Appendix K numbers 12, 13, 59 and Parsi charity to Iran below, pp. 282f. A change towards more technical education was recommended in *Report on the Education of Parsee Boys of the Education Committee Appointed by the Trustees of the Parsee Punchayet* which reported on 2 February 1917 and which was published in 1920.

30. Appendix G, numbers 9, 21, 22, 37, 62, 65, 94, 95, 101, 103, 108, 114, 119, 124, 136, 144, 185, 208, 210, 213, 215, 216, 218, 221, 222, 226, 227.

other families appear to have concentrated on particular types of projects, for example the Petit family's sponsorship of libraries at the end of the nineteenth century,³¹ (though they also made numerous contributions to other educational charities, including some six schools). The Wadias, both as individuals and their Trusts, are another important name in Educational charities.³² Once more it is interesting to notice the frequency with which women were donors.³³ Finally under education, it is evident from numerous obituaries that a great number of charitably minded Parsis, whatever their 'prime' interest (e.g. Medicine or 'the poor'), also considered Education to be an important focus for benevolence. Indeed from the mid-nineteenth century it evidently featured high on most Parsi lists of priorities.³⁴ There are two obvious reasons for this. In the first place, Education was the means whereby middle and lower class Parsis could improve their economic and social standing given the political developments in British India. Second, Education has always been a prized Zoroastrian ideal. The Parsis were, thereby, living up to their own religious and cultural traditions.

Medicine has been another major focus of Parsi charity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their work in this field is even greater than Appendix H suggests. Many such works are recorded in the *Prakash* in a form not easily reduced to tabular presentation. For example, on 8th January 1837 a Parsi, Framji Pestonji Patak, led a group of businessmen from various communities in China in the conversion of a 700-ton ship into a hospital for sailors (Vol. 1, p. 300). In itself this may not be a historically significant act, but its importance is that it is just one example of countless ways in which Parsis were seen by their contemporaries to be active leaders in medical charities. In the

31. Appendix G, numbers 59, 61, 64, 68, 69, 70, 76, 81, 93, 109, 130.

32. Appendix G, numbers 79, 89, 106, 108, 143, 144, 146, 148, 152, 156, 161, 182, 217, 218, 225.

33. Appendix G, numbers 76, 81, 84, 85, 93, 97, 104, 110, 115, 119, 144, 147, 153, 159, 168, 170, 206, 211, 212, 214.

34. See Appendix M, numbers 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 18, 28, 31, 32, 33, 37, 42, 55, 58, 65, 67, 68, 73, 75, 90, 91, 92, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 110, 111, 113, 117, 121, 124, 128, 132. See further Appendix J, numbers 19, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32.

'Zoroastrian Calendar', as it appears in *Prakash* from 1909, there are many references to donations from some of the major Trusts, notably but not exclusively the Wadias, to various medical projects. Where information is available in a suitable form it has mostly been included, but when some important detail is missing (dates, and especially the object of charity) it has been left out. Similarly omitted are countless examples of small donations, such as the gift of a bed to a hospital. On the principle of the widow's mite, such acts may be of even greater merit than some of the largest gifts of millionaires, but unless this article was to have been an extensive book in itself, such small gifts have had to be omitted. Despite all these qualifications, however, it is hoped that this collection of information will give a balanced picture, if not a complete one, of Parsi charity in the field of medicine.

The first major moves in this direction were taken at a relatively early date in comparison with the growth of medical facilities in Britain, and again it was Sir J. J. who was the pioneer. On 1st May 1839 he announced a gift of Rs 100,000 with which to start a hospital in Bombay. It was evidently a project of which he was deeply proud and heavily involved personally, as his private letters make plain. Writing to Captain W.B. Goodfellow on 20th May 1845 he said:

You will be very glad to hear that the Hospital is finished and will be ready for the reception of Patients in a few days. On the 15th instant the Gov. and a large company of visitors inspected the building and I need hardly tell you that much admiration was bestowed upon it, as reflecting great credit upon the taste and skill of the Engineer. The Building is universally admired but in order to give you a clear idea of what the Governor's opinion of it is, I send you a Bombay Paper with a full account of the meeting that was held in the Hospital a few days ago.³⁵

His motive for setting up such a hospital is explained in some earlier notes penned on 19th March 1838, commenting on how even the wealthy displayed a prejudice against English medicine and,

35. In the Collected Papers of Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy in the Bombay University Library, Vol. 354.3. The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. D.N. Marshall of the Bombay University Library for his help in gaining access to these papers, and for his never-failing kindness and wisdom.

still adhere to the Customs of their Fathers, and would rather become Cripples or diseased for life than submit to the proper remedies - I myself was formerly one of these and after experiencing very serious injuries from the employment of Native Doctors was at last induced to place myself and family under the charge of Dr. Wallace and how different has since been the result I can speak from experience.³⁶

His proposal was that he would contribute half towards the cost of the hospital if government would do the same. He wrote to C. Forbes on 29 March 1838 seeking his help to persuade the Court of Directors to start the hospital for

the care and preservation of life you can form no idea of the amount of misery caused by the quackery of Native Doctors, which would all cease were a native Dispensary and Hospital established on an extensive scale.³⁷

The 'extensive scale' he achieved was not just with his own project but also with the many Parsi who followed his example. Appendix H lists some of the main Parsi donations to medical work. That shows how the tiny Parsi community (6% of Bombay's population, totalling in 1911 only 100,096 in India) have contributed to 28 hospitals, 45 charitable dispensaries, 18 maternity homes or wards, 11 leper wards, 17 sanatoriums, 19 wards (mostly denoted for Parsis), 5 convalescent homes and 14 various types of hospital building. Many of these projects were sustained by countless donations from later charitably minded Parsis as illustrated by numerous obituaries in Appendix M.³⁸ Parsis also supported medical work outside India, particularly in London Hospitals (Appendix L, numbers 9, 11, 20, 24, 36, 55). The leading families in medical charities were the Jijibhoys (up to 1891), Camas (up to 1893) but most of all

36. J.J. Papers 358.2 pp. 52A.

37. *Op.cit.*, pp. 56-9. J.J. apparently felt the need to solicit help from many sources to persuade the Government to agree, see his letters to Alexander Colvin, Calcutta, 16 July 1838, pp. 149f.; 1st September 1838 to J. Forbes; 3rd September 1838 to R. Carnac; 4th September 1838 to Sir Charles Forbes; 5th September 1838 to the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Clare; 5th September 1838 to Mounstuart Elphinstone; 6th September 1838 to Hon. J. Romer.

38. Appendix M, numbers 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 40, 47, 50, 52, 57, 58, 60, 62, 66, 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 84, 87, 93, 101, 103, 104, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 118, 120, 121, 123, 126, 130, 135, 137.

the Petits (particularly up to 1909) and the Wadias (throughout the whole period studied). Since 1912 the Tatas have also been active in this field. Approximately one-fifth of donors were women although they do not appear to have given to any specific aspect of medicine (e.g. maternity wards) as might have been expected.³⁹ The building of dispensaries was a prominent feature of such charities until approximately 1910 but declined thereafter. Hospitals were funded throughout the period under review though from just before the first world war onwards more wards or buildings were donated - presumably because of the problem the enormous costs of building a hospital would impose on a community whose wealth was by then seen to be declining. However, as so many books emphasise the twentieth century economic decline of the community it is worth noting that approximately three-quarters of medical charitable donations were made in the twentieth century.

One form of Parsi charity which is characteristic of the twentieth century is housing. The first moves were made by M.K. Murzban in 1890 when he founded 'The Poor Zoroastrians Building Fund' (See Appendix I (i) and (ii) 1-11, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22). The Panchayet first showed interest in 1910 when, at the suggestion of Sir Cowasji Jehangir I, the initiative was taken which culminated in the building of Hughes Road Colony (later known as the Khareghat Colony, Appendix G (i) 6). A third important body in Parsi Housing Development was 'The Parsi Central Association' founded in 1919. The general aim of the PCA was to coordinate and represent Parsi views on topics of the day - mainly political. Its Council overlapped considerably with that of the Western India National Liberal Federation. At its Council meeting on 12th December 1919 it established a sub-committee of H.P. Mody, S.N.

39. Some of the main figures are:

Wadia medical charities: 7, 11, 20, 41, 57, 60, 61, 63, 64, 73, 75, 78, 80, 87, 92, 94, 107, 114, 117, 118, 119, 123, 126, 127, 129, 130, 140, 161, 170, 175, 195, 203, 204, 205, 209, 213.

Petit medical charities: 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 53, 58, 66, 71, 76, 85, 88, 98, 104, 122, 135, 200.

Women donors: 20, 37, 39, 43, 44, 45, 47, 58, 60, 63, 64, 73, 76, 78, 79, 85, 87, 91, 95, 102, 104, 107, 114, 131, 135, 139, 143, 144, 145, 153, 161, 166, 169, 175, 186, 188, 191, 193, 202, 207.

Medical charities specifically for women: 15, 22, 26, 29, 35, 41, 48, 79, 86, 96, 104, 124, 147, 148, 157, 167, 170, 171, 176, 187, 189, 200, 201, 204, 207.

Gazdar and M.E. Joshi concerned with housing - the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society Ltd. as it was registered on 29th May 1920.⁴⁰ Some of the leading Parsi figures of the day were involved, including Sir J.J., Sir Hormusji C. Dinshaw Adenwala, R.N. and N.N. Boyce, but the leading spirit was M.E. Joshi, after whom its first colony at Dadar was later named.⁴¹ It was an adventurous step in what the Association called 'co-partnership or Hire Purchase System'. In practice it seems that the Housing Committee generally functioned broadly independently from the main body of the PCA, reporting only on progress in Annual Reports or as the need arose.

With these three as pioneering groups, other Trusts and individuals followed (Appendix I (i) and (ii)). The leading families were, again, the Petits, the Wadia (Trusts) and, from 1929, the Tatas. Appendix I (ii) once more illustrates the important role that Parsi women have played in charitable work, providing one-fifth of the donations. By 1966 it was estimated that half of the Parsi population of Bombay lived in charitable housing.⁴² This is of considerable value to a race which now has 70 % of its population in a city which has (excluding the suburbs on the mainland) a density of population of 110,000 persons per square mile. Housing is, therefore, in short supply, which inevitably means high costs. But it is not only the Bombay community which has helped the poor and middle class in this way. The Karachi community has also been active and in fact established a Co-operative Housing Society on 24th December 1919, some six months before that set up by the PCA in Bombay (see also Appendix I (ii) 27, 28, 30, 33, 38, 41, 45). Housing projects were also undertaken in Surat (34, 37), Poona (29), Ahmedabad (39), Madras (13), and Sind (24). In fact this list is far from exhaustive, omitting, for example, the

40. Details from the Council Minute Book of that date, Agendum 3. I wish to record my sincere thanks to Mr. E.A. Sethna of the Bombay Presidency Association for helping me locate these files and allowing me to study them.

41. See *Mancherji Joshi Colony Directory*, 3rd edition, Bombay, 1981, pp. 89-93 and see the Council Minute Book for 23rd January 1920.

42. B. K. Boman-Behram, 'Pioneers of Housing in Bombay', an unpublished paper which is the source of information in Appendix I (i) to which acknowledgement is gladly made. A copy was kindly given to me by the author, then President of the Panchayet, on a visit to Bombay in 1981. That paper is also used in Desai, *op.cit.* ch. 17.

Cyrus Minwalla colony in Karachi. It is likely that here, as elsewhere, the *Prakash* has a more complete record relating to Bombay than to other centres.

4. The organisation of Parsi charities

This plethora of charity has not, however, produced all the ideal consequences which the donors presumably intended. If one characteristic feature of twentieth-century Parsi charity has been housing, another has been the attempt to organise the process of giving aid. The problem, essentially, has been that (at least in the view of many) the diverse funds were administered entirely separately, with practically no efforts to coordinate the work. This, it is said, has had two fundamentally adverse effects. First, applicants have approached a number of funds with the same request without informing the Trusts what they were receiving from elsewhere. This has led, it is argued, to the development of a beggar mentality, as people have 'shopped around' for as much as they can, becoming work-shy in the process.

Second, each fund has given relatively small doles because of the number of applicants, so that the cause of poverty has not been eradicated, making the applicants dependent on charity in the long term.

The first moves to coordinate the funds was on 4th February 1912 when the Parsi Association called a meeting at the PBI under the chairmanship of H.A. Wadia and a committee was established to collect information. Nothing further is heard of that venture until on 1st July 1919 a Parsi Charity Organisation committee was established and its annual reports were published in the *Journal of the Iranian Association (JIA)* whose editor, P.A. Wadia, was secretary of the committee. On the Executive Committee were representatives of the following funds: N.M. Wadia, Panchayet, Mama, Captain, F. & N.M. Cama charities, the Jarthoshee Mandal and the Zoroastrian Association (The J.Dadabhoys Trusts joined in 1922).

Financial help for the working of the Committee was given by the Sir Ratan Tata Trusts. Its voluntary workers investigated 100 applications in the first year and found that 'many' were not from needy families. The Committee exhorted the Petit Parsi Hospital, the Masina Hospital, Parukh Hospital and the Dr. Kerrawala's Hospital to present their accounts in a uniform manner - but

were ignored!⁴³ By 1924 the number of cases investigated rose to 690, with the recommendation for no help being given in 296 cases.⁴⁴ The reflections of the Committee, and their conclusion, were given in a paper by P. A. Wadia before the All India Social Workers Conference, Bombay, 1923.⁴⁵ As a result of the agitation the Panchayet resolved to keep a register of those applying and did so from 1930. The number of cooperating Trusts declined, however, because some saw the attempt to centralise administration, as undermining their position. The attempt to consolidate help to applicants on one fund sometimes posed problems with the terms of the Trust. In 1932 the Sir Ratan Tata Trusts commissioned a report from S.F. Markham. After a six-week study he produced a highly critical report:

I have spoken strongly of the Parsee Charitable Trusts - I wish I could write still more strongly - that my pen could be steeped in vitriol and my words burn themselves into the hearts of Trustees, for of all the evils that the community suffers from this indiscriminate beggar-producing 'charity' is the worst!⁴⁶

The Panchayet then asked their General Secretary, Dr Jal Bulsara, to spend a year studying the problem. His analysis of the problem and recommendations were published in 1935 under the title *Parsi charity relief and communal amelioration*. Bulsara repeated the criticisms of those who were work-shy and abusing the system. He equally criticised the charitable system for failing to give effective help' and the officials for

the mechanised mass treatment of distress and the almost entire absence of sympathetic remedial or constructive and preventive welfare work of any kind accompanying, substituting or supplementing the disbursement of relief in cash or kind. (p. 342)

In addition, Bulsara stressed just how much real suffering there was among the

43. JIA, IX, 5, August 1920, 101-14.

44. JIA, XII, 6. September 1924, 213-22.

45. JIA, XII, 10, January 1924, 311-19 and an article in JIA, XII, 7, October 1923, pp. 226 f.

46. Quoted by Desai, 132.

poor of the community. By 1933 there were 2,200 families on the Panchayet's roll. He pointed out (pp. 331f.) that some 8,000 of the community of 57,765 in Bombay were directly or indirectly affected by want, poverty, or destitution, and depended on charity in one form or another. The worldwide recession and the problems of unemployment further increased the problems of a community whose wealth was perceived to be on the decline. The main problems of the genuinely needy he identified as poor education, ill-health (among the applicants 'for every 100 children alive, 86.5 were dead', p. 334), housing and difficulty in finding work. He recommended that the Panchayet should start an Employment Bureau, an industrial home to provide work, small-scale manufacturing industries, an agricultural colony, medical inspection in schools, a planned educational structure, various Advisory bodies and an Investigation Department to hunt out abuse.

A conference of Trusts was called on 17th July 1935. As a result an Employment Bureau was started in 1935. In 1937 an Industrial Institute was started where men could receive wages not doles. A maternity clinic was opened and school medical examinations were started. Some ten Trusts had begun cooperating in 1934 for higher education in India but the coordination of charitable cash relief for the needy was hardly changed. What had been seen as one of the major problems remained. Any further developments were stopped by political events. The introduction of prohibition meant an enormous loss of revenue to the community. In areas of Gujarat as many as 50% of the working population had made their living from the production of toddy (the local 'brew'). With the outbreak of war efforts were redirected. By 1943 the Parsi community had sent Rs 800,000 in aid to the British Government and a further Rs 1,200,000 to such bodies as the Red Cross and for war gifts. In 1941 the threat of a Japanese invasion seemed real and efforts were redoubled. The focus of charitable work was now outside the community. What happened after the war is essentially outside the scope of this article. In brief, there were further Conferences of Trusts in 1945 and 1959. Various committees were formed and reformed with splendid titles and aims, but in effect relatively little was achieved by way of co-ordination and substantial reconstruction.⁴⁷ The investigative and consolidation work was taken over in 1946 by a 'Central Investigation Bureau' led by P. A. Wadia, who had been responsible for similar work with the Parsi Charity Organisation Committee earlier. Due to disputes

47. Desai, *op. cit.*, 131-44.

with the Trustees of certain charities this closed in 1949. An account of the Bureau's work, and its end, was given by Wadia in a book entitled *Parsis ere the shadows thicken* (Bombay, 1949). In short, despite many earnest efforts the Parsi community in Bombay has not produced an effective organisation with which to administer its charitable funds in such a way as to utilise those funds for maximum benefit. Some of the proposals may not have been practicable - could, for example, a bureau or industry operate effectively if it recruited exclusively from such a tiny racial community? Efforts with housing continue, but at least in the popular press and among the educated youth there is a strongly expressed sense of grievance that Trustees have not used the resources at their disposal effectively or imaginatively within the community.

5. Parsi charity to non-Parsis

The first, and obvious, 'external' object of Parsi charity was their co-religionists in Iran. In view of the comment above that charity can be rendered through labour at least as much as through cash it is proper to begin this section by referring to the work of Maneckji Limji Hataria, who spent much of his life labouring for the Iranian Zoroastrian community, and achieving much in his efforts to ease their condition.⁴⁸ In 1854 'The Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund' was started with M.N. Petit as president, the chief work of which was to campaign for the easing of taxes on Iranian Zoroastrians and which proved successful in 1881/2. The fund also supported a dispensary, daxma, Dar-i Mihr, jashans and various communal works (P.P. I, 654.57). The period of activity really started in 1912. In the nineteenth century, Parsi horizons were limited to India, Britain and some to trading posts throughout the British Empire. Iran was often characterised in popular literature as the land where the religion had been oppressed. After 1907, when the Indian National Congress became more militantly Hindu, and as nationalism was seen to involve widespread bloodshed in communal riots, so some Parsis began to turn increasingly to their Iranian fatherland. This coincided with an easing of conditions under the later years of Qajar rule and in the 1920s and 1930s with the emergence of the Pahlavi dynasty with its declared intention of preserving the rights of Zoroastrian as well as of other minority groups. As some Parsis began to fear for their fate in an independent India so their thoughts turned to

48. See M. Boyce, 'Manekji Limji Hataria in Iran', *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*, Bombay, 1969, 19-31.

the possibility of a return to Iran.⁴⁹

Such sentiments were presumably part of the reason for the twentieth century growth in charity to Iranian Zoroastrians. Schools, orphanages and temples have been the main expressions of charity. Perhaps the most important events in this regard were the founding in Bombay of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman on 19th December 1917 and of the Iran League on 10th September 1922. The primary object of the Anjuman, as declared in *The Memorandum of Association*, is:

... to advance and further the social, moral, physical and educational welfare of the Iranian Zoroastrians by all possible and appropriate ways and means, to improve the condition of the poor and needy Iranian Zoroastrians by giving them all sorts of help and thereby improving their status. (p.1)

The Anjuman acquired a number of immovable properties in Iran, and these indicate the nature of the sort of help given. They are: Allahabad Girls, School building (no date); Rahmatabad Khodaram Girls, School building (no date); P.D. Marker Orphanage (started 1924); P.O. Marker Girls, School Building (1929); Khairabad Girls' School (1935); Khoramshah Ardeshiri Girls' School (c, 1929); Morabad Girls' Rustomi School (1938); P.K. Irani Block (n.d.); Boman Zayeshgah Maternity Home (1936); Sir Ratan Tata Medical Hall (1919). The Anjuman helped in the finances (teachers' pay and building repairs) of five further schools and, according to its records, 'supervises' four others.⁵⁰ The Anjuman also subsidised a number of publications in Persian by

49. See J.R. Hinnells, 'Social change and religious transformation among Bombay Parsis in the early twentieth century', in P.Slater and D. Wiebe (Eds), *Traditions in Contact and Change*, Selected Proceedings of the XIVth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Canada, 1983, 105-6; and Ph.D. thesis of Hilary Langstaff, *The impact of Western education and political changes upon the religious teachings of Indian Parsis in the twentieth century*, Manchester, 1983, Section B. (Unpublished).

50. Other properties and schools listed in the Memorandum of Association are: Sir Ratan Tata and Bai Dinmai Desai Hospital; Mahyari Casemabad Girls' School; Nosratabad Girls' School; Jamshidi Rehma Kabad Girls' School; Shirin Boys' School, Morwaridi Girls' School; Rustomi Girls' School (Koochebiog); Shapoori Girls' School of Allahabad. Jehangir Industrial Block Land; Jamshed

Poure Davoud, for example a translation of the Gāthās, some of whose work was then translated into English by D.J. Irani. Dinshah Irani funded Poure Davoud's visit to Bombay and P.O. Marker gave financial help in the publishing.

The Iran League's founders included Sir Hormusji Cowasji Adenwala, Sir Homi Mehta, Dadachanji and J.J. Vimadalal. Its aims and objects were to strengthen the bonds between Parsis and Zoroastrians of Iran through cultural and commercial activities. An important part of the cultural activity was a bilingual publication, *Journal of the Iran League*, first published in 1928, through which it sought to increase knowledge of, and affection for, the homeland. The League did not undertake quite the charitable work of the Anjuman.

It might be thought that Parsis gave relatively little in charity to Iranian Zoroastrians in comparison with the donations made elsewhere in India (Appendix K) and even in Britain (Appendix L). In part this was because some Parsis, as Pherozechah Mehta and Dadabhoj Naoroji put it, thought of themselves as Indians first and Parsis second. This is the case with a number of the educated wealthy, i.e. the successful, and it was such groups who gave most in terms of charity. A second factor is that charity was generally given where its needs and effects might be seen. To many in British India, Muslim Iran seemed a world away. As Parsi families often gave to projects in their home villages or towns (e.g. Navsari and the Tatas as noted above) so those who gave to Iran were often those of relatively recent Iranian descent. The charities in Appendix J are noticeable for the absences - the major Trusts and leading charitable families such as the Jijibhoys, Camas, Petits, Wadias and Tatas made few if any donations. When they did it was for the sort of charity they supported in India, e.g. orphans and medicine. But their major donations were preserved for India.

In contrast with what had been observed with Iran the donations to non-Parsis in India are quite munificent (Appendix K) especially when viewed in conjunction with the medical charities (Appendix H) which were mostly for

Khodaram Baug; A.C. Irani Girls School; Mohseti Zonj Girls' School and some plots of vacant land. Except where otherwise stated all properties are in the vicinity of Yazd.

peoples of all communities. The immediately visible sufferings caused by such disasters as famine, fire or flood readily brought forth donations from many Parsis.⁵¹ The sufferers who could be *seen*, be they poor Europeans (8), impoverished stockbrokers (74, 86) or the orphans and destitute of other communities all met with generous help from Parsis.⁵² The visibility of charity sometimes seems to be an important factor- as with clock towers (21, 27) and Churches (5, 12, 68, 87, 116). In a few cases one cannot avoid the suspicion that what mattered was that the charity be seen by the British rulers, as with donations to a church for the English dead after the Afghan war (14), money for the Turf Club (26), a donation to the 'Europeans only' Bombay Gymkhana (35); Rs 10,000 to the Union Jack Club (184); Rs 10,000 for a temporary arch on the route of a royal procession (85); or Rs 300,000 to the Lady Lloyd Pavilion and Promenade (100). One donation and activity which in the eyes of many contemporaries was overtly done to please was the contribution of Rs 181,355 in 1921 (103) to the Prince of Wales Welcome Fund. On this occasion feelings reached such a point that some Parsis were attacked in riots. It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that some, at least, were done for the sake of status rather than out of a spirit of benevolence. Yet such instances are remarkably few and even such public charities as wells (2, 7, 38) or drinking fountains (2, 6, 24, 49, 53, 93) and especially waterworks (4, 10, 44, 48, 83) are, though very visible, also practical in a climate such as that of Bombay. The clearly visible (ostentatious?) are fewer in number than the private works done by countless Parsis. It might also be argued that the obvious public works were, in part, a cause of the very image of the community which helped the Parsis to flourish under British rule and which Gandhi commented was their best protection in independent India. It is, perhaps, worth noting that whereas Parsi women fairly consistently contribute approximately one-fifth of donations to communal charities, they contribute less than one tenth to those outside the community. Of these contributions most are for accommodation and other help for the poor (58, 80, 94, 98). The women did not take part in what might be termed the ostentatious charitable donations. Similarly, in the Obituaries listed in Appendix M the women whose charity is given outside the community gave

51. Appendix K, numbers 1, 9, 19, 32, 40, 41, 50, 52, 56, 60, 62, 67, 73, 90, 91, 111.

52. Appendix K, numbers 15, 16, 20, 25, 30, 33, 54, 58, 71, 80, 90, 97, 98, 102, 108, 118.

to the poor (28, 45, 122, 134), but there is a marked tendency to prefer communal donations, not least religious foundations (3, 10, 26, 40, 56, 77, 94, 96).

Turning finally to Parsi charitable work outside India, over half of these acts were carried out in Britain.⁵³ The other major focus was the fight to represent Indians in South Africa (39, 40, 48, 52, 56, 57, 58, 59) and is linked with the names of R.J. Ghorkhodu and the Tatas. H.N. Modi made a series of substantial donations in Hong Kong (38, 42, 43, 46, 49) and was, in due course, knighted. The main families associated with 'overseas' charities were Readymoney (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 28, 31), and the Camas (9, 10, 22, 25, 26, 30 - though mostly these were given by members of the family who settled in Britain). The Petits made a few such donations (23, 33, 36) as did the Wadias (20, 21, 35), but the main overseas donors were the Tatas (24, 45, 48, 51, 52, 53 including two major donations for Indians in Africa). It is noteworthy that donations in Britain were mostly made before the first world war, i.e. when British rule in India seemed at its most secure. In the political tensions during the interwar years, when Parsis feared for their safety in communalist riots, and at a time when they felt the British were ignoring the rights of a minority who had always been loyal, there were few donations sent to Britain. Once again there are few donations from women. The exceptions do not, however, invalidate the point. Mrs Petit (33) contributed to Oxford University for a professorship in Avestan and Pahlavi, i.e. to encourage the study of her religion and (54) Modi's widow made a donation in what was then the family home of Hong Kong. The tendency noted in connection with Appendix K for women's donations to be linked more to the community is, therefore, strongly reinforced by a study of the donations outside India.

Conclusion

It is interesting to begin by noting what Parsis did not contribute to: the *Prakash* lists few donations to political funds of bodies working for Indian independence. On 1st January 1921 S.R. Bomanji donated Rs 100,000 to the Bombay Home Rule League but on 2nd February 1937 in court he sought the return of his money, with interest, because the League had changed its aim to

53. Appendix L, numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 44, 45, 51, 53, 55.

Swaraj. The court directed he be given Rs 165,000 (Appendix K items 99 and 117). This political donation is, therefore, hardly an example of Parsi support for the nationalist cause. It is likely that other financial contributions were made to political funds (e.g. to support Dadabhoy Naoroji in his campaigns in Britain), but they appear to be few and the *Prakash* rarely records them.⁵⁴ The *Prakash*, sponsored by the Panchayet, provides a significant insight into how that body wished to record community history. The compilation of the records in the *Prakash* encompasses an enormous range of material - newspaper accounts of public events, obituaries, achievements, scandals, publications. Such volumes would only be produced by a community with a strong sense of history. Given the minority status of the Parsis in India it is understandable that they should seek to record their achievements. What they considered an achievement is an important question in assessing the value of the *Prakash*. The typical Parsi humour against themselves is shown in the evident relish with which some scandals are noted (which makes the *Prakash* a particularly entertaining source!). But equally a strong sense of pride in communal achievements is obvious in noting what may, to non-Parsis, seem trivial matters (e.g. the first person to fly in certain aircraft, the first Indian to obtain some relatively minor awards).

The number and nature of donations to British causes merits some comment.⁵⁵ In view of the vivid memory of harsh persecution faced by Zoroastrians in Muslim Iran, it is perfectly understandable that the Parsis should view so positively rulers who enabled them to flourish. Whatever the merits and demerits of British rule in India as a whole, seen from the perspective of most members of the tiny but wealthy and powerful Parsi community it was something of a 'golden era'. Donations to British causes have to be seen in this light, be they large donations to London hospitals or the Rs 1,940 contributed by Parsis for the gift of sweets to children 'on the happy and jubilant occasion of the life being saved of the Viceroy H.E. Lord Hardinge

54. Further donations to the Home Rule League are recorded in the Annual reports for 1917 from D.J. Tata (Rs 20,000), Bai H.F. Petit (Rs 20,000). In this work I have not been able to check the records for the 1930s as fully as is desirable, especially the Annual Reports. It seems likely that other such donations would be given during that period.

55. Appendix L, numbers 1, 2, 3, 15, 22, 25, 26, 30, 32, 34, 50.

from a bomb explosion.⁵⁶ Some of the donations may have been undiplomatic in terms of the contemporary Indian political climate, for example the Welcome Fund for the Prince of Wales in 1921, but the slightly cynical innuendos of some Western historians, and of some educated Parsi youth, regarding Parsi attitudes and charities are, in the opinion of this writer, unjust. They ignore the breadth, magnanimity, idealism and frequently the discreet nature of most acts of Parsi charity.

Despite the various limitations of the sources which have been commented on, it is possible to obtain a reasonable general perspective on Parsi public charities, and some trends can be noted. In the nineteenth century, religious buildings such as temples and daxmas proliferated, whereas housing has been the primary object of building funds in the twentieth century. Perhaps the overriding concern of this twentieth century charity has been community preservation. Educational and medical charities have flourished throughout both centuries. The nineteenth century witnessed not only a vast increase in Parsi wealth but also in the charitable donations concerned with the underprivileged - widows, orphans, the disabled and the poor. In the twentieth century the concern has been to organise charities, though it must be said that it is an aim which has met with limited success.

The causes to which charity has generally been given accord with traditional Zoroastrian values and priorities, the religion, the welfare of fellow men, health, education and the home. Given the importance attached to animals in Zoroastrianism it is, perhaps, slightly surprising that more was not donated to animal charities. The only family to make a number of large bequests for animals was the Petits between 1882 and 1896.⁵⁷ It is, however, in accord with

56. The Zoroastrian calendar for 1912.

57. 4th July 1892 (P.P. III, 410) D.M. Petit donated Rs 8,000 to a Petit hospital for animals; 21st September 1892 (P.P. III, 410), Dinbai, N.M. Petit donated Rs 7,000 to the above hospital; 10th January 1892 (P.P. III, 411), D.M. Petit donated Rs 25,000 to Calcutta hospital for animals; 5th April 1893 (P.P. III, 422) D.M. Petit donated Rs 5,000 to Bombay Pānjrāpole for fodder; 14th January 1895 (P.P. III, 516) D.M. Petit donated Rs 10,000 to Nasik Animal Hospital; 28th December 1896 (P.P. III, 607) D.M. Petit donated Rs 1,000 to protect cattle in Sholapur District; 4th June 1898 (P.P. III, 694) widow of J.N.

Zoroastrianism that priority should be given to mankind.

Different Parsi families are often linked with particular types of charity and at different periods. Foremost in charitable work in the mid 19th century were the Jijibhoys whose concerns were strikingly diverse - communal charities (e.g. five temples, three daxmas, and the many schools of the PBI); to all victims of disasters in India and sometimes overseas and notably to major projects for the welfare of Indians (such as Hospitals and Colleges). Sir J. J. was a considerable pioneer in various fields. But the main Jijibhoy charities are in the 19th century and largely the work of the early holders of the baronetcy when the family was at its wealthiest. In contrast Tata charities are mostly twentieth century acts and though they include communal concerns (F 46, 61, 67, 70, 80, 83 plus two daxmas and a fire temple), and donations to their family home of Navsari, they are particularly associated with Universities, Industrial and Scientific Research and Medicine.

In between these two examples, which stand at either end of the period, other leading families are the Camas who, apart from the London based D.P. Cama, gave mostly to communal charities (two fire temples, burial ground, priestly institute, housing, schools); the Readymoneys, most of whose donations were to large-scale public works (e.g. University buildings); and the Petits who, especially around the turn of the century, were prominent in both communal work (orphanages, four fire temples, housing) and inter-communal concerns, notably medicine. The family name to appear most frequently throughout the period under review in all types of charity is the Wadias who were concerned with some 22 temples, and 37 large medical projects; with such communal interests as housing, funds for poor, disabled or widowed Parsis, Parsi schools and gymkhanas, as well as with hospitals and victims of disasters overseas, with churches and institutes of Higher Education in India. But perhaps the

Wadia donated Rs 5,000 for animal water tank; 21st January 1908 (page 3) C.D. Patel donated proceeds of dramatic productions for cattle in Hyderabad; 18 March 1910 (84) M. Dhumbhoora gave Rs 3,000 to Bulsar Veterinary Institute; 29th November 1910 (100) N.M. Wadia Trustees allocate Rs 15,000 annually for domestic animal welfare; 1st June 1915 (85) M.D. Dhumbhoora donated Rs 5,322 to Animal hospital; 2nd March 1924 (147) R.C. Rasoya donated Rs 5,000 for animal dispensary, Navsari; 6th October 1933 (138) M.N. Mehta built Poona Veterinary Hospital; Annual Report, 1937 D. Petit built operation ward at Nasik Animal Hospital.

most impressive feature of the appendixes is the many hundreds of families involved in Parsi public charities. In 1901 and 1941 the Parsi population of India totalled 94,190 and 114,890 respectively. It is impossible to calculate accurately how many families that represents, but it is clear that a very high proportion of families were actively involved in public charities, especially in Bombay where the middle and upper class Parsis were mainly to be found. Many studies of Parsi history have concluded that in the sphere of politics it was not the community as a whole which was active, but rather distinguished individuals who were often isolated from their Parsi contemporaries. Evidently this was not so in charitable work where a broad spectrum of society, wealthy and not so wealthy, orthodox and liberal, shetias and intelligentsia, women as well as men were actively involved.

The ideals of the religion noted at the start of this paper have been implemented on a scale perhaps unequalled in any other community. Charity has mainly been given where the need is evident, close and visible, but it has been dispensed with generosity wherever a pressing need has been seen. In the seventeenth century Ovington commented on Parsi charity to 'all of their own Sentiments in Religion' ; in the 19th century Mrs. Postans referred to the liberality of Parsis to fellow communities in Bombay. It is hoped that the appendixes and text of this article illustrate the truth of both those statements and of the Bombay saying 'Charity thy name is Parsi' which was quoted above. Doubtless Parsis hope it will continue to be the protection Gandhi said. Despite the ostentatious nature of some acts, those who have enjoyed Parsi hospitality for themselves will have little doubt that idealism lies behind the bulk of Parsi charity. This article is dedicated to that idealism and to a great scholar who has herself practised quietly and generously that virtue.

Appendices can be obtained on www.ashgate.com and in the original publication.

12 Contemporary Zoroastrian Philosophy

A religion is what it has become. Historians too often describe what the religion was at a given period in past history which they think represents the 'real' religion. Theologians commonly depict an idealistic picture of the 'true' faith and describe all variations as heresies or the falling away from 'the valid' or 'core' teaching as lesser manifestations of the religion. The truth is, of course, that all religions change as they evolve and must do so if they are to continue to be meaningful to the practitioner in a changing world. Religious philosophies cannot remain uninfluenced by the environment in which they are practised. This chapter will examine the various influences upon, and forms of, Zoroastrian philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, specifically those within the Indian or Parsi community. This is a very literate community (with a literacy rate of 99 per cent for males and 97 per cent for females: Karkal 1984) and consequently produces countless books. This study cannot, therefore, be comprehensive; rather the aim has been to identify major themes and trends.

The history of Zoroastrianism is a long one, stretching from the end of the Stone Age on the inner Asian steppes through to the great Iranian Empire described in the previous chapters. But from that imperial stature it became the religion of an oppressed minority in Islamic Iran following the Arab invasion in the seventh century AD. There followed a millennium of pressure to convert to the new faith, of oppression and persecution. Zoroastrians were forced to retreat to the security of remote villages and the desert cities of Yazd and Kerman, in an inhospitable region where Muslims did not choose to live. The survival of Zoroastrianism for 1,300 years in such conditions is a great tribute to the determination, courage and commitment of its followers. At the end of the nineteenth century conditions began to ease slightly for them, although they still did not have equality before the law, were banned from the highest positions of state and were people who were thought to make unclean whatever they touched. Simple conversion to Islam could change all this and enable the

convert to inherit the whole of the family estate, whatever their position in the family. Conditions eased further under the Pahlavi regime (1925-79) (Boyce 1979). Under the Islamic Republic they have not faced the fierce persecution that has been experienced by the Baha'i, but living again under Muslim law they are restricted at work and treated unequally under Islamic law, and there is fear of what might happen at any time of social upheaval.

The setting for the faith and practice of Zoroastrians has undergone yet further dramatic changes. In the tenth century a small group of the faithful set out to find a new land of religious freedom and settled in north-west India, where they became known as 'the people from Pars' or the Parsis. The story of their journey is contained in 'The tale of Sanjan' or *The Qissa-i Sanjan* (Boyce 1984: 120-3). It relates that the travellers were guided in their journey by a wise astrologer-priest and that when they were at sea they were threatened by a great storm, but in answer to their prayers, and after they had vowed to build a great Fire Temple (an *Ātash Bahrām*) if they were safely delivered, the storm subsided and they landed safely in India. There the local prince gave them permission to settle providing they observed minimal restrictions (to speak the local language - Gujarati; to perform marriages at night as was the Indian practice; and, in the case of the men, not to carry weapons). The new settlers gave the prince a series of statements of their faith (*shlokas*) in which they stressed the common elements between their religion and Hinduism, for example respect for the cow and for purity laws. They were then given land on which to build a new temple. This, Parsis believe, characterises their experiences in Hindu India, namely a freedom to practise their religion untroubled, providing that they observe minimal conditions of good citizenship.

The Parsis lived in relative obscurity until the arrival of European traders in the seventeenth century. As the British developed Bombay as a base from which to expand their trade in western India the Parsis migrated there in relatively large numbers. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they rose to positions of considerable economic and political power in Bombay, the commercial capital of India to this day. First they prospered as builders and managers of the Bombay dockyard (the very reason for which Bombay was being developed), then they were pioneers as middlemen in the trade with China and East Africa. When western-style education became available in the 1820s, Parsis, consistent with their traditional respect for learning, seized the opportunity to a greater degree than did any other community. Thus in 1860 they occupied half of all the places in Bombay's educational system, although

they represented only 6 per cent of the population. The result was that they went on to flourish in the various spheres which required an education, such as medicine, law, engineering and technology. As Indians began to involve themselves in politics at the end of the nineteenth century so Parsis came to the fore, particularly at the turn of the century, notably Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915), often alluded to as the 'uncrowned king of Bombay'; Sir Dinshah Wacha (1844-1936), for many years the Secretary of the Indian National Congress; but above all Dadabhoy Naoroji, 'the Grand Old Man of India', the first Indian to be elected an MP at Westminster (1892-5). He was succeeded in the House of Commons by two more Parsis, Sir Muncherji Bhowmjee (1895-1906) and then from 1923 to 1929 Shapurji Saklatvala. In India, banking, insurance, the steel industry, airlines, social reform and science were all areas in which Parsis led the way (Kulke 1974; Hinnells 1978a). As Indian independence approached and the battles between Muslims and Hindus became increasingly violent, so Parsis began to fear for their safety as a vulnerable minority in what threatened to be two militantly religious nations, India and Pakistan. Some, therefore, migrated westwards. But the majority stayed. Both in India and in Pakistan they have in fact remained secure and held positions of political influence as well as achieving significant commercial success.

As a result of their economic and political enterprise the Parsis have migrated to many parts of the globe. There are formal Zoroastrian Associations in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, Kenya, France, England, America and Canada. Typically, these diaspora groups are composed mainly of young people, well educated, 'high flyers' in their careers (business, law, medicine, accountancy, engineering, the pharmaceutical industry). Since the fall of the Shah they have been joined by a number of Iranian Zoroastrians; again it has been mainly the well-educated and well-placed families, mostly from cosmopolitan Tehran, who have migrated. They have settled in Canada (especially Vancouver, but also Toronto) and America (mainly California and New York) (Hinnells 1994a+b;2000). Although the various communities typically have a low birth rate so that absolute numbers are declining (Karkal 1984), the dispersion means that Zoroastrianism is now practised in more countries around the world than at any other time in its history. These transformations in Parsi fortunes both in their homeland and in migration, first to a continent of greatly contrasting philosophies and from there to a global dispersion, are the background to an explosion of philosophical thought, a fragmentation and a rich diversification of interpretations of the tradition. Just as Christianity has assumed very different forms in the modern world, from American television evangelism to

the Eastern Orthodox churches, from the liberation movements in Latin America to Indianised or Africanised forms, all of which are very distinct from, say, the Church of England, so too has Zoroastrianism been diversified, though not to the same extent as Christianity.

ZOROASTRIANISM IN BRITISH INDIA

As in ancient times Zoroastrianism had evolved as it became the religion of three world empires, so too in the nineteenth century it grew to meet the new intellectual stimuli of life in the British Empire. Until the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1813, only Company officials and related traders were allowed entry into India. It was established Company policy not to 'interfere with the religion of the natives' in case any unrest should interrupt the smooth flow of business. Partly as a result of this, and partly because the majority of Parsis were then still living in rural Gujarat, Zoroastrian beliefs were subject to little external influence. Some Indian customs, such as the decoration of homes at the time of weddings, had been incorporated, but the basic world-view does not seem to have changed dramatically. There was some ignorance of detailed ritual practice which led to an exchange of 'messages' - the Indian Zoroastrians sent queries to the Iranian priests, who replied in a series of *Rivāyats* (or treatises) - but custom and practice changed little over the centuries (Paymaster 1954; Seervai and Patel 1899).

Until the arrival of western traders Parsis were mostly poor. Their lifestyle was not such that they could found priestly seminaries to facilitate a large body of professional theologians. There were, of course, some very learned priests, for example Neryosang Dhaval in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who laboured to produce editions and translations of texts (Boyce 1979:68ff.). But there are indications that the emphasis continued to be on the good formless God who created both the spiritual and material worlds, who was worshipped through the *kiblāh* of fire, on whose side men and women must undertake a daily battle with the forces of evil and impurity and who was to be worshipped through the daily prayers and the great festivals. The great life-cycle rites of birth, initiation, marriage and death reaffirmed for all in the community the conviction that God could be experienced in and through the world in which they lived. In view of the onslaught which Wilson waged on Zoroastrian teaching it is worth quoting the account he himself gives of the theology of the high priest Dastur Edalji Sanjana:

The one holy and glorious God, the Lord of the creation of both worlds, and the Creator of both worlds, I acknowledge thus. - He has no form, and no equal; and the creation and support of all things is from that Lord. And the lofty sky, and the earth, and light and fire, and air, and water, and the sun, and moon, and the stars, have all been created by him and are subject to him. And that glorious Master is almighty, and that Lord was the first of all, and there was nothing before him, and he is always, and will always remain. And he is very wise and just; and worthy of service, and praise... . God has no form or shape; and he is enveloped in holy, pure, brilliant, incomparable light. Wherefore, no one can see him... . We are able to inquire into that Lord by the light of the understanding, and through means of learning. We constantly observe his influence, and behold his marvelous wonders. This is equivalent to our seeing that Lord himself... . That God is present in every place, in heaven, earth, and the whole creation; and whithersoever thou dost cast thine eyes, there he is nigh and by no means far from thee.

(Wilson 1843:108ff.)

We Zoroastrians reckon fire, and the moon, and other glorious objects filled with splendour and light, centres of worship (*kiblāh*); and in their presence we stand upright and practise worship.

(Wilson 1843:198)

Clearly the doctrine and practice of devotion to the Good Lord and his Good Creation was part of the Gathic and Pahlavi teaching which was strong among Parsis long before any western influence.

With the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1813 missionaries were allowed into India as a result of evangelical lobbying of the British Parliament. The first missionary to turn his attention to the Parsis was the Revd John Wilson. He started his mission in 1829 and opened a school near to the main centre of the Parsi community because he was aware of the characteristic Parsi desire for education. He converted and baptised two Parsi youths, an event which caused a great uproar in the community. But from the perspective of philosophical development his major work was the publication of a book entitled *The Parsi Religion: as contained in the Zand-Avesta and propounded and defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, unfolded, refuted, and contrasted with Christianity*, which was published in Bombay in 1843. His onslaught on Zoroastrianism, through articles in the press, sermons and that book, came as a massive cultural shock to the Parsis. They had typically regarded themselves as the most westernised and 'civilised'

community in the subcontinent and were accustomed to westerners perceiving them to be such (Firby 1988). What compounded the Parsi distress was that because their priests had not had a westernstyle education they were unable to refute his attack. In one sense, many members of the community spent the following hundred years seeking to refute his charges. In order to understand some of the later developments it is first necessary to outline his arguments briefly. Wilson focused his writings on the liturgical text the *Vendidad* (a text concerned mainly with purity laws), the Greek and Roman accounts of Zoroastrianism he had studied in Classics and some Arabic works. The words of the prophet, as outlined by Boyce in ch. 1, and the more philosophical Zoroastrian texts, discussed by Williams in ch. 2, had not been identified as significantly distinct, readily available sources. On this basis he argued that Zoroastrianism was a dualism, because it propagated the belief in two gods (Ahura Mazdā and Angra Mainyu); that indeed it was polytheistic because of the worship of the Amesha Spentas; that Zoroastrians thereby robbed God of the honour and glory due to the creator; that the *Avesta* was 'a monument to human error'; that Zarathushtra was not the author of the whole *Avesta* and his religious authority cannot be great because he did not perform miracles. Because the Parsi leaders were not at that time well versed in western-style study of the ancient texts, their priests were not generally effective in their intellectual response to this onslaught. Henceforth Parsis were to have as a doctrinal priority the rejection of the charges of dualism and polytheism, and were concerned to validate the religious authority of their prophet and holy book.

Support for the Parsi cause so conceived came from two western scholars, Haug and Moulton (1917). Haug in lectures, articles and a book (1862) argued that only the *Gāthās* were the teaching of Zarathushtra. If the Parsis rejected the later 'priestly speculation' and returned to the pure teaching of the prophet, they would see that theirs was originally a monotheistic faith, in which evil was due to one of the twin spirits created by Ahura Mazdā, who stood above the divide of good and evil. Thus, he argued, they had a philosophical monotheism and an ethical dualism. The prophet, he maintained, did not propound a ritualistic superstitious religion, and they should abandon those parts of the religion which owed nothing to Zarathushtra. Coming after the onslaught of Wilson here was an exposition which meant that the community could believe that it truly had a philosophical system which was respectable in the eyes of modern, westernised people. Haug, like other commentators, also found much to praise in Zoroastrianism, for example its characteristic virtue of charity.

There was another path of western learning which stimulated Parsi thought, namely scientific discoveries connected with the positive and negative poles of magnetism and with electricity and the whole range of science concerned with unseen sound and light waves. It is difficult for readers at the end of the twentieth century to appreciate how exciting these discoveries were at first. One of the writers who applied them to Zoroastrian teachings, particularly ideas associated with the positive and negative forces in the world, was Samuel Laing, a finance minister in British India but also an author of several books in which he tried to apply 'modern' science to religion. One of these (1890) was specifically on Zoroastrianism. In it he argued that the polarity of the life-giving positive force of good and the negative destructive force of evil which Zoroastrians saw underlying all life (see Williams on 'dualism' in ch. 2 of original publication) was in fact a philosophical form of the latest scientific discovery, with its ideas of positive and negative forces and the polarity of matter in molecules and atoms. He also demonstrated how polarity could be seen in all forms of life in animals and plants and in the gender differences of the human species. Zoroastrianism he accordingly presented as the earliest religion to discover the truth about the duality inherent in the nature of existence.

Laing also argued (1890: ch.14) that the 'sweet reasonableness' of Zoroastrianism was manifest also in its forms of worship, quoting extensively from Andrew Carnegie's description of Parsis praying before the sacred creations of fire and waters on Bombay beach at sunset:

as the sun was sinking in the sea, and the slender silver thread of the crescent moon was faintly shining on the horizon, they congregated to perform their religious rites. Fire was there in its grandest form, the setting sun, and the water in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean outstretched before them. The earth was under their feet, and wafted across the sea the air came laden with the perfumes of 'Araby the blest'. Surely no time or place could be more fitly chosen than this for lifting up the soul to the realms beyond sense. I could not but participate with these worshippers in what was so grandly beautiful. There was no music save the solemn moan of the waves as they broke into foam on the beach. But where shall we find so mighty an organ, or so grand an anthem?

Zoroastrian purity laws Laing interpreted as sound ideas of hygiene, and fire as the ideal symbol of him who is pure undefiled light. Coming after the

Muslim taunts of fire worshippers and Wilson's attack on the doctrines, these arguments regarding Zoroastrianism and science, and also the stress on the poetic beauty of the religion, came to play a central part in future Zoroastrian expositions of the faith. The arguments that the purity laws which Wilson scoffed at were in accord with the modern practice of hygiene were something which gave intellectual self-respect to many Zoroastrians.

One of the earliest pioneers in Zoroastrian doctrinal reform was K.R. Cama (Hinnells 1983), who started classes for adults and encouraged the study of Avestan and Pahlavi so that the priests might be better equipped to withstand missionary onslaughts on the faithful. But the man whose philosophy was more influential was M.N. Dhalla (1875-1956). Dhalla was born into a poor priestly family and grew up as a staunch orthodox Zoroastrian in Karachi (Dhalla 1975). His lectures drew him to the attention of Cama, who arranged for the youth to study in Bombay. Then in 1905 he travelled to New York to study at Columbia University under the distinguished Iranist, and devout Protestant, A.V.W. Jackson. While in the States, Dhalla studied comparative religion. It is probably significant that he attended the lectures of Spencer, one of the pioneers in the theory of the evolution of religion from a crude animatism through animism to polytheism to henotheism and finally to the peak of the spiritual ladder, an ethical monotheism. It is worth quoting Dhalla's own account of his experience, for it articulates clearly how the western-educated Zoroastrian came to see his own personal religious development:

By reading books on anthropology and sociology I began to examine scientifically, questions relating to superstition, magic, customs, ceremonies, prayer, priesthood, society, marriage and other allied subjects. I studied their origins historically, and, for the very first time I began to see vividly how they have progressed from the primitive stage to their present condition. My three years and nine months of scientific and critical study at Columbia University...eradicating religious misconceptions that had gathered in my mind due to my blinded mental vision, traditional beliefs and up-bringing. As the clouds of superstition dispersed, the mist of mental darkness was rent asunder. I was free of the religion of fear that was the belief of infant humanity and turned towards the pure religion of love, the religion as preached by the prophets and uncorrupted by their fanatical followers. Now that I had been enlightened by scientific study, and now that I had come to know and gain so much, I no longer adhered to old ideas. My thinking, my outlook, my ideals and my philosophy of life changed. The purpose and meaning of life changed - everything changed. I was now eager to become the thinker of new thoughts,

the student of new ideas and the propagator of new concepts. In 1905 I had set foot on American soil as an orthodox. Now in 1909 I was leaving the shores of the New World as a Reformist.

(Dhalla 1975: 157ff.)

In a succession of books (notably in this context 1914 and 1938) Dhalla increasingly stressed that Zoroastrianism was the high point of the spiritual evolutionary ladder, in which the world's first ethical monotheism was revealed to Zarathushtra, but that his followers, who were not as spiritually exalted, could not live up to the ideals of the prophet and so reintroduced the ancient nature worship and polytheism of former times, and that thereafter Zoroastrianism became encrusted with superstitious and magical beliefs by the priesthood. It was only now, in the early twentieth century, that western scholarship had laid bare this historical corruption of the pure prophetic philosophy, and thereby the modern Zoroastrian could return to the original revealed message of the prophet. This is, of course, a perspective characteristic of Protestant Biblical scholarship of the day, with its quest for the historical Jesus separated from the later changes imposed by the church with its elaborate rituals and its priests who corrupted the pure, abstract, demythologised teaching of the founder.

Just how did Dhalla expound his religion under these influences? Consistently with contemporary liberal Protestant thought, Dhalla rejected the 'medieval mythology.' It is as much what he does *not* refer to as the new ideas he articulated which is significant for an appreciation of his religious philosophy. He did not refer, in his devotional works, to any of the mythology of creation, the concept of a personal evil being, Angra Mainyu, or the renovation of the universe. In particular, he ignored the cosmic myths of creation and eschatology and the dualism which lay behind them (as described in ch. 2 of the original book). This presented substantial theological problems for Zoroastrian teaching, since Angra Mainyu is seen in it as the source of death and all evil. That belief was no longer available to Dhalla. In some of his devotional writings (1942), therefore, he speaks of death as Ahura calling men back to himself. In explaining the death of children he taught that they were so good that they could not live upon earth but returned to their heavenly abode (Hinnells 1978). Hell he interprets as a state of mind. His presentation of the image of Zarathushtra is clearly influenced by that of Jesus, meditating in the wilderness.

Dhalla was referred to by his Zoroastrian opponents as 'the Protestant Dastur,' and in part at least one can see why. In his personal life Dhalla was a deeply devotional priest and he maintained throughout his life a commitment to the rituals, albeit somewhat modified (the traditional laws of purification, for example, were not stressed). Others who grew up at the same time, and some who were influenced by him, rejected the whole liturgical tradition, but in particular the preservation of prayers in the 'scriptural' but 'dead' language of the *Avesta*. Prayers, it was said, had to be understood if they were not to become 'mumbo jumbo.' The traditional idea, and one widely accepted in India, that prayers were holy *mantras*, words of power and spiritual force, was not acceptable, as it might have been had the foreign influence been a Roman Catholic rather than a Protestant Christian one. Similarly, the attitude to the authority of priests and the 'church' as the interpreter of 'holy writ' would almost certainly have been different. Undoubtedly, the devotional importance of complex liturgies as the medium through which the 'real' presence of the divine is encountered would have been more acceptable under such an influence. As it was, the 'Protestantised' reformers emphasized the abstract nature of worship of the spirit as described by Laing above. Of all western writers, Laing is probably the most frequently quoted by the reformists. The spirit of rationalism was so widespread that one writer, D. F. Madan (1909), argued that since in life we assume that knowledge gained for oneself is better than that imposed by an outsider, so revelation was an educationally and spiritually lower level of religion than that which had been thought through rationally. One result, therefore, of the onslaught of Wilson was the development of a westernised, specifically Protestant-type religious philosophy among the Parsis.

ZOROASTRIANISM AND THE OCCULT

It was inevitable that the westernising trend among Indian Zoroastrians at the turn of the century would provoke a conservative backlash. For many, what was termed 'the Protestant party' went much too far in rejecting respected traditions and cherished practices. There was, for example, a real sense of loss at the proposed abandonment of the Avestan prayers. Parsis were not alone among sections of the various Indian religious groups who felt that their religious heritage was being rashly dispensed with. Mythologies are powerful forms of religious teaching, and what was needed after the rejection of the

traditional myths was a new and powerful cosmology which related to the ideas of the day.

The answer for many educated groups in India at the turn of the century, including a number of Parsis, was the teaching of the Theosophical Society. This was started by Helena Blavatsky (1831-91) in New York in 1875 in conjunction with Henry Olcott. Her teaching was a mixture of Neoplatonism and Jewish and Indian mystical beliefs. She claimed that her authority was based on messages she received from Tibetan Masters, highly evolved human beings who had outgrown their need for bodies but remained on earth to help others (Barker 1991). She taught that the world is a many-tiered layering of spiritual and earthly reality which parallels the nature of the human self. The ultimate is not a deity but one's higher self, and the religious quest is to evolve into a state of spiritual perfection. Rebirth, *karma* and vegetarianism are essential steps on this path. The Society's base was moved from New York to Bombay in 1879, and there many Parsis became involved. The centre was transferred to Madras in 1907, and it came under the leadership of Annie Besant, who identified Theosophy strongly with the Home Rule League. At that point many Parsis drifted away from the Society. But during those twenty-eight years a number of Parsis had been deeply involved in the Society, holding between them at various times the posts of president, secretary, librarian and treasurer (Wadia 1931). There were also some noted Zoroastrian expositors of Theosophical belief (for example Vimadala 1904; Bilimoria n. d.; Sorabji 1922).

The interaction between the Parsis and the Theosophical Society was a two-way process. Many Parsis were influenced by Theosophical teaching. In a lecture in 1882 in Bombay Town Hall, before more than 700 Parsis, including some leading teachers, such as J. J. Modi and K. R. Cama, Olcott pressed the Zoroastrians to preserve their ancient rites because Zarathushtra and his ancient successors

have transmitted their thoughts to posterity under the safe cover of an external ritual. They have masked them under a symbolism and ceremonies, that guard their mighty secrets from the prying curiosity of the vulgar crowd, but hide nothing from those who deserve to know all.

Olcott proceeded to warn the Zoroastrians that western-educated scholars failed to see the profound truth which lay at the heart of Zoroastrian prayer and

practice. He said 'But I am to show you that your religion is in agreement with the most recent discoveries of modern science. . . . And I am to prove to you that your faith rests upon the rock of truth, the living rock of Occult Science'. He made several references to secret collections of teaching in Armenian or Iranian mountain caves (pp. 12, 14, 39 and 48).

Some of the facts given in the Secret Records ... are very interesting. They are to the effect that there exists a certain hollow rock of tablets in a gigantic cave bearing the name of the first Zarathust ... and that the tablets may yet be rescued some day.

The lecture was privately published and achieved a wide circulation.

After the Theosophical Society moved its headquarters to Madras and the Parsis became less involved, the religious needs which Theosophy had met did not disappear. In its place there developed a 'Zoroastrianised Theosophy.' The leader was Behramshah Naoroji Shroff (1858-1927) (Hinnells 1988). He was brought up in Surat, where he received only an elementary education in Gujarati. At the age of 18, the tradition relates, he left home and travelled north. He met a caravan of secret Zoroastrians and was taken by them to a hidden colony of Zoroastrian spiritual masters hidden in caves in Mount Demavend, near Tehran, apparently thus fulfilling the forecasts of Olcott. This is said to have been one of three such 'mazdaznian' (= worship of Mazdā) monasteries, one on the European-Russian border, one subterranean colony near the Caspian Sea and the one in Mount Demavend visited by Shroff. His later followers believe that only three persons have ever been allowed to enter these hidden monasteries: one was an Iranian astrologer, Rustom Nazoomie, about whom nothing is known; a second was Revd. Dr Otoman Zardusht, the prophet for America, whose Mazdaznian group still continues in Oregon, and the third was Shroff. Shroff entered 'Firdaus' (i.e. paradise) virtually illiterate, a hesitant speaker who stammered badly. He emerged a fiery orator claiming deep occult knowledge and a practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine, having been taught, he said, by the Grand Chief (Ustad Saheb). In Firdaus the hidden Zoroastrians dwell in a paradisaal state, amid streets of rockhewn caves with streams of nectar in an agricultural paradise where all is peace, prosperity and contentment. There, the spiritual and material treasures of ancient Iran are carefully preserved (Mama 1944; Tavariva 1971; Moos 1981 and 1983).

On Shroff's return to India he spent ten years (c. 1881-91) travelling around India learning from spiritual leaders of various religions, but he remained silent about his own experiences until 1907, when he began teaching first in Surat, then in Bombay under the auspices of the Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society (PVTS) and the Theosophical Lodge. He did not start any separate cult but delivered numerous lectures on Fire and related topics. He wrote ten pamphlets for circulation, and his teaching was set out in the monthly magazine of the PVTS, *Frashogard*. The movement he thus started is known as Ilm-i Khshnoom, 'the path of spiritual satisfaction.' Broadly, the teachings are very similar to Theosophy in the emphasis on the occult significance of Avestan prayers and their vibrations, on rebirth, on vegetarianism, on the distinct mystical 'aura' surrounding each person. What is distinctive is the attribution of spiritual authority not to Theosophy's Tibetan Masters, but to hidden Iranian Zoroastrian Masters who appeared to fulfil what Olcott had indicated, the preservation of hidden teachings in an Iranian cave. These developments also coincided with contemporary political trends. From the early part of the twentieth century religious tensions were increasing in India as Hindu fought Muslim, and contemporary with this was the easing of conditions for Zoroastrians in Iran (as discussed above). The result was a trend towards a yearning for ancient Iran and speculation among some about a return to the homeland.

There have been various developments of Shroff's teaching. The first publication in English was Masani's (1917). It began by defending the integrity of the whole *Avesta* as the word of Zarathushtra *pace* Dhalla. Zoroastrianism, he argued, 'is nothing but the Natural Law of Evolution or Unfoldment of Soul' (p. 37). On earth, he writes, there are different levels of souls according to their development, and 'the different religions are necessary for different souls in various stages of their spiritual and mental development ... the Zoroastrian religion ... can only be followed by the ... souls that have already reached the foremost stage of spiritual human progress' (p. 78). The great prayers of the religion, offered in purity by the necessarily advanced soul, have 'their great vibratory effects in removing and annihilating all the major evil forces in nature' (p. 84). The religious path is for the soul to unfold itself from the lower levels of physical matter and for it to develop its latent higher spiritual powers. This unfoldment takes many ages, or births. The esoteric teaching of Zoroastrianism leads to knowledge of all the laws of the universe (notably what he refers to as 'the laws of polarity and duality'), to an appreciation of the forces seen and unseen. The rituals, not least the purity

laws, help souls 'onward in their march in the unseen world' (p. 133). The understanding of science, especially the polarity of 'magnetism' and electricity outlined by Laing (see above), is used to explain how rituals work on unseen spiritual forces which the soul encounters as it progresses in the unseen world (p. 135). Part of the discipline required for the progress of the soul is the need to be vegetarian, otherwise the person swallows dead matter, which is against the moral order and thus inhibits the unfoldment of the soul (p. 208). The ideas of involution, enfoldment in matter and spiritual unfoldment strongly recall the teaching of Sri Aurobindo (Minor, 1989). Similarly, the emphasis on *mantras* whose efficacy depends on the holiness of the reciter's physical, mental, moral and spiritual constituents recalls much contemporary Indian thought. The traditional Zoroastrian philosophy of dualism is being recast in a form which 'speaks' to the Indian situation of the day, and in terms evoking contemporary science and therefore rational for the people of the time.

The Zoroastrian occult science has been developed by many authors since Masani, for example Chiniwalla (1942), who was a close personal friend and supporter of Shroff, and Tavaria (1971). In the 1980s there have been several widely popular interpreters of the Khshnoomic message. One (Dastoor 1984) presented what has become a fairly common Parsi conviction, that Zarathushtra was not an ordinary mortal: rather, Dastoor argued, he was a heavenly, or worshipful, being, a 'descent' from God. The idea that Zarathushtra was a *yazata*, a being worthy of worship (Hinnells 1985b:92-7) because he was chosen by God as the prophet to whom he revealed his message, was an old one. What is happening here is that this traditional teaching is being understood in the light of contemporary Indian philosophy, specifically the doctrine of the *avatara*. Another author who has written much is Adi Doctor (especially in the columns of the journal *Dharma Prakash* and whose writings are made available among American Zoroastrians by S. and F. Mehta in their newsletter, the *Mazdayasni Connection*). But perhaps the most prolific, and in some ways the most controversial, is Mrs Meher Master-Moos. She claims to have discovered trunks full of unpublished manuscripts written by Shroff. These she presents in English translation in a stream of books (for example 1981, 1984a) or in occasional collections of newsletters (for example 1984b). Common to all these writers is the emphasis on the occult knowledge which lies at the heart of true Zoroastrian teaching: the idea of a personal aura or magnetism which surrounds every individual, which is affected by actions and prayers and which can be characteristic of different races. For this Mrs Master-Moos places great emphasis on Kirlean photography, which shows the heat/energy output of a

person's body, what is for her, their aura. It is on this latter basis that many Khshnoomists argue against any conversion of non-Zoroastrians and that they consider it totally wrong for a non-Zoroastrian to enter a fire temple. Not only would they disturb and defile the aura of the temple, but they themselves would not be suitably protected by the appropriate aura from the spiritual power of the fire and could thereby suffer harm. In short, a different cosmology has replaced that put forward in the Middle Persian literature, one which harmonizes contemporary occult or mystical thought with the deeply revered traditional devotional life and the ancient conviction regarding the uniqueness of Zoroastrianism.

There has been only one attempt to build a temple specifically for Khshnoomic ideals, at the holy village of Udwada, where the fire which was consecrated soon after the arrival of the Parsis in India now burns. Essentially Ilm-i Khshnoom is an interpretation of modern Zoroastrianism, not a separate cult. Indeed many orthodox Zoroastrians accept part of the teaching, not least on the purity laws, without considering themselves followers of Behramshah Shroff. The astrology which appeared in the earlier forms of Zoroastrianism has been developed both by Khshnoomic and Theosophical writers.

There has been one well-known Zoroastrian writer in recent times who openly proclaimed himself a Theosophist, namely Dastur (a high priestly title) Khurshed S. Dabu. One part of his popularity was, undoubtedly, that he was evidently a profoundly sincere, truly good man, of an ascetic leaning which was consistent with the ideas of a holy man which many had in mid-twentieth-century India. His teachings on vegetarianism and rebirth and his symbolic interpretations of the Middle Persian myths provided many with a Zoroastrian philosophy they could accept in the light of current knowledge. Thus (in 1956:12) he interprets the creation story of the *Bundahišn* (see ch. 2 of original) to indicate that Angra Mainyu is 'the destructive and ephemeral principle in the Cosmos', who is permitted a limited time in which to fulfil his role; he 'does unpleasant work assigned to him, under the supreme authority of God.' He argues that all forces need opposites: 'In electricity and hydraulics there is a law: "The greater the resistance, the greater the pressure." Angra Mainyu is not, he argues, to be understood as a being, Satan, but as a negative force which has its temporary necessary role of opposition to the force of good. Although Zoroastrianism has not generally been an ascetic tradition, there were clear antecedents for such an interpretation. Another aspect of Dabu's person and teaching was his devotion to a personal God (not for him the Impersonal

Absolute of much Theosophical teaching). A number of his teachings were consistent with traditional Indian approaches to religion, not only the ideas of rebirth, asceticism and vegetarianism but also his ideal of celibacy for the truly religious life and his interpretation of prayers as *mantras* (1969:32ff.) which used ideas and language from ancient Indo-Iranian times. He stressed that because of the Indo-Iranian ancestry of both Zoroastrianism and Hinduism the two were 'cousins' (1969:36ff.). He has not been alone in offering a parallel between Zoroastrianism and Hinduism: indeed this is so much a theme of some Zoroastrian writing that it is worthy of a section on its own.

ZOROASTRIAN PHILOSOPHY IN A HINDU SETTING

It is not surprising that as the rule of the British in India was coming to an end, and even more so after Independence, the intellectual framework within which Zoroastrian philosophy functioned became that of Hinduism. Mention has already been made of the acquisition of some Hindu customs over the hundreds of years in which Zoroastrianism has coexisted with Hinduism. One obvious superficial example is the use of the red *kumkum* mark on the forehead on auspicious occasions. Perhaps the most fundamental impact has been that of caste on traditional Zoroastrian perspectives of the different classes in society (see ch. 3 of the original). There has been little or no trend towards internal sub-caste groups (though a potential for that may be seen in the division between layman and hereditary priest), but the Parsis have often been seen by others and by themselves as an endogamous caste group in Indian society. In the twentieth century the process of interaction has been at a more philosophical level than before.

There has been the occasional Hindu author who writes about Zoroastrianism, most notably Jatindra Mohan Chatterji; he has written eight books on Zoroastrianism, the most popular among Parsis being one written in 1967, the main thrust of which is to interpret the *Gāhās* in the light of the *Vedas and Upanisads*. The reverse process has been far more common: many Parsis have sought to expound their philosophy in terms of the dominant Indian philosophy. The central themes underlying most of these expositions are the understanding of the interaction between the world of the spirit and the world of matter, an attempt to interpret the ancient teachings on *mēnōg* and *gēīg*, and the interaction between divine and human nature, specifically the Gathic idea that

the world and mankind embody in some sense the divine world of the Amesha Spentas (see ch. 1 of original publication).

Some Parsi writers explicitly state their indebtedness to Hindu teachers, for example Wadia (1968) to Swami Virjananda and Jhabvala (n.d.), who quotes Aurobindo Ghose. It is not surprising that Parsis should turn to such teachers, partly because of their consciousness of the shared Indo-Iranian heritage, partly because of their perception of their history in India and partly because of the overwhelming presence of Hindu thought there. Increasingly in the twentieth century Zoroastrian writers have looked to Hindu ideas in order to elaborate their own beliefs. Thus, in 1926 Taraporewala used Hindu ideas of *purusa* and *prakṛti* to explain ideas on good and evil, and set forth his belief in the idea of *karma* and rebirth (1926:43 and 52).

There have been a number of writers on the periphery of the community who have written for a wider non-Parsi audience, for example Jal. K. Wadia (1968) and P. D. Mehta (1976). Wadia, for example, uses Hindu terms more than Zoroastrian ones in what he describes as his attempt to 'penetrate into the very depth of man' to understand the different 'Flows of Conscious Energy' constituted of consciousness (*Chit*) and energy (*Ānanda*). But the reader of his chapters on, for example, 'The Sanskaric elements' may be inclined to interpret his work as that of an Indian, not a Zoroastrian, writer. There has been little reaction to his book within the community. Both he (1973) and Mehta (1985) later wrote books with a more explicit Zoroastrian emphasis. Indeed the very purpose of Wadia (1973) was to explain the main Zoroastrian prayers in a 'meaningful' way for his readers. He writes on the subject of the Amesha Spenta, *Asha*, which it is the duty of every Zoroastrian to embody, that 'it is only on the light of Divinity penetrating through the veil of *Māyā* that man gets into a state of *Ashem*.' The use of the concept of the veil of *Māyā* or illusion is a very Hindu way of interpreting the Zoroastrian conception of evil blinding men to the good in creation. But it is not only a simple exchange of words from another language: something of the associated ideas comes with the vocabulary imported from outside Zoroastrianism. Thus Wadia, like a number of Indian Zoroastrians, believes in rebirth and so re-interprets the traditional explanation for the cause of suffering. Physical and worldly sufferings are traditionally in Zoroastrianism the assaults of evil, but Wadia interprets them as being the natural impurities of man and of the *karmas* which developed these impurities. Later he writes about the forces, what others may describe as the 'aura', in terms of the 'Shaktis' of Hinduism. In the concluding

chapter of the book he gives an exposition of the role of fire in Zoroastrian worship in which fire is referred to as 'a valuable gift' to 'the larger Aryan community' and explained in terms not only of the fire in the sanctuary but also the fire within man. He writes of a 'certain kind of Shakti which can awaken inner spiritual or Divine Fire within man' (Wadia 1973:29).

A speaker and writer whose Hindu-influenced teachings have been at once controversial and influential within the Zoroastrian community, not least the Zoroastrian communities outside India, is the high priest Dastur Framroze Bode (who died in 1989). His lectures in India and on visits to London and America were commonly well attended. The book which sets out most clearly his use of Hindu terms and ideas was published in 1978 and is a collection of essays and lectures. In an article reprinted from the *American Theosophist* in 1968, he writes on 'the Seamless Web of Consciousness.' The theme of his paper is in one sense very Zoroastrian, namely how to embody the divine forces (the Amesha Spentas) and reject evil, but the language and imagery is very much that of the Hindu environment in which he lived in Bombay. Thus on p. 98: 'Our present state of consciousness is the result of ignorance (*avidyā*), bewildered limited consciousness (*māyā*) and form-creating karmic activities (*samskāra*). All appearances are *māyā* when seen from the universality of consciousness.' He then turns to what he calls,

the coiled serpent-power, the *Kundalini Shakti*, in the unfoldment of consciousness. To awaken this 'sleeping power', control, raise, and unite it with its Master Consciousness at the summit, to merge the psychic energies of the body into the power of the soul is the goal of *Kundalini Yoga*. This union results in an ecstatic *Samadhi* in which the whole system is flooded with *Anand* and the individual consciousness becomes one with the Supreme Consciousness.

Although he thus uses Hindu terminology, and occasionally Buddhist phrases, he wishes to argue that such teachings are true to the deeper meaning of the words of Zarathushtra, whom he describes as 'the Founder of the Mystical Magian Brotherhood ... the Master Adept in the science of spiritual Self-Unfoldment, who mystically apprehended all the Divine Laws governing the Universe. He was a Ratu - Illustrious Master of Spiritual Wisdom' (Bode 1978:30).

It is not possible for a historian to see this as consistent with traditional

Zoroastrian teaching. It is also a philosophical system at complete variance with that expounded by Dhalla. It is, however, an attempt to interpret the meaning of life for people brought up in a Hindu environment where such ideas are not so much abstruse philosophy as the common assumptions (for example rebirth) of most religious people with whom Bode's followers met. The westernised, Protestantised Zoroastrianism 'does not speak to them in their situation.' From an external perspective it might be said that what Bode was doing was using contemporary language and idioms to convey the idea of the *Gāthās* that one should make the divine powers, the Amesha Spentas, indwell in oneself. What is worth emphasising is that the vocabulary and imagery used by these various authors was not simply accidental. What they were each trying to do in their own way was to make the Zoroastrian philosophy from another age and another culture powerful in the lives of the followers they knew.

There are countless small ways in which Indian Zoroastrians are affected by or follow Hindu teachings. At a personal level many practise *yoga*. Many visit the shrines of popular holy men, most of all the Babas (Sai Baba of Shirdi and Satya Sai Baba in particular). In Bombay, many will go to public lectures given by Indian religious teachers of various types. In one sense what is happening is that Parsis are being drawn into 'the new religious movements' of India. Academic studies of western new religious movements suggest that the membership is drawn mainly from the young to middle-aged, middle-class, urbanised, reasonably well-educated people who come from a religious background but are not finding satisfaction in the received wisdom of their tradition. Many such Parsis follow the equivalents of these 'new movements' in India. The common feature of those movements which Parsis tend to join is that they do not involve a rejection of the old religion in order to be converted to the new, unlike Christianity and Islam. Each of these new movements exhorts followers to see mystical truth in their own religion. Parsis do not, therefore, have to reject their community membership.

THE 'MIDDLE GROUND' AND MODERN ZOROASTRIAN PHILOSOPHY

Written expositions do not necessarily reflect the ideas of most Zoroastrians. Although Khshnoomic writing is fairly widely respected, relatively few would call themselves Khshnoomists. Although Bode's audiences were quite large,

not many followed his Hindu interpretations. No single author or even 'school' reflects the philosophy of the majority of Indian Zoroastrians. What follows is a subjective assessment of the sections of various writings which reflect the broad beliefs of most Zoroastrians.

One of the most 'traditional' writers in the twentieth century was Dastur Rustom Sanjana, a Bombay high priest. His two main books were written in 1906 and 1924 and were, therefore, contemporary with the work of Behramshah Shroff and with the early years of Dhalla's writing. He asserted (1924) the divine inspiration of the whole *Avesta*, not just of the *Gāthās*. He attacked agnosticism and scepticism and emphasised the link between religion and morals (1924:I). He attacked Theosophy for its belief in an impersonal God and in reincarnation (1924:51ff.). He was the last writer, until the 1980s, to assert belief in resurrection (1924:V). Salvation in a blessed hereafter is dependent upon observation of the purity laws, self-love, happiness and marriage but also upon a very strict moral code. What he is interesting for, and where he is characteristic of many writers who came after him, is in what he does not refer to. He does not allude to the mythology found in the Pahlavi literature regarding creation (though he does stress that Ahura Mazda is the good creator (1924:167ff.)) or to the renovation. In particular he does not expound the idea of Angra Mainyu as an independent evil being: rather he believes that 'Angramainyu denotes nothing but the evil spirit or thought of man' (1906:142). The doctrine of the twin spirits he interprets as 'the two principles of volition within man. Man has a dual mind, that is, a mind capable of presenting to itself everything in its opposite aspects, good and evil' (1924:210). In this he reflects a belief found in Dhalla. Both writers consequently struggle to find a logical explanation for the suffering of the innocent and the death of children. He acclaims Zarathushtra not only as the first but as the greatest prophet in the history or religion (1924:II).

Indeed, Zoroaster was the greatest spiritual force produced by our world. He was a colossal religious genius. He was the greatest Law-giver, the greatest Teacher, the greatest of prophets, the unique Prophet who revealed perfectly the Mind and Will of Ahura Mazda.

(1924:8)

The emphasis of the prophet's teaching, he declared, was that 'men should believe in one God, Ahura Mazda, and honour and glorify Him.' Zarathushtra also taught a doctrine of immortality and a code of ethics 'the fundamental

principles of which were universal charity and peace of mankind' (1924:93). 'The Religion of Zoroaster is superior to all other religions of the world in its intense sense of Righteousness (*Asha*) and its conviction of a Righteous Personal God' (1924:135). He then proceeds to argue that, unlike most religions, Zoroastrianism, while stressing the goodness of God, does not teach a crude anthropomorphism. His attack on Christianity was strong, presumably because he felt that Christian teachings were deflecting his co-religionists from their true path. In particular he attacks the Christian doctrine of salvation as 'the bargain of the believed and saved, which leaves little room for the individual to do,' and so he concludes that the Christian doctrine is for parasites (1924:297-9). One of the fundamental divides between many forms of Christian teaching and Zoroastrian doctrine is that the latter assumes that the sole basis on which an individual is sent to heaven or hell is the balance of good and evil thoughts, words and deeds. Sanjana was a priest, and his devotional emphasis was an important dimension of his teaching. Inner and outer purity, he argued, are interrelated. Nature, he said, never produces a tree without bark, or a fruit without a skin. Ceremonies and rites are the bark and skin of all inner purity. If one takes off the bark the result will be quick decay and corruption. 'The exterior is the index of the interior' (1924:302). For Sanjana external purity had to be balanced by inner (or moral) purity and a life of devotion.

There are several themes in Sanjana's writings that characterise much of popular Zoroastrian literature. The reverence for the prophet is an obvious one. One of the most widely read accounts of the life of the prophet, his miracles and stalwart fight for good in the face of evil onslaughts, as the ideal model for his followers to emulate, is in Rustomjee (1961), a story often seen as a parable or allegory for the difficulties individuals must follow in their daily lives (Hinnells 1985b:92-7). A characteristic feature of Sanjana and of other writers is to 'demythologize' the received tradition. Few 'ordinary' Zoroastrians know of the myths in the Pahlavi literature, as outlined by Williams in ch. 2, just as few westerners know or understand the doctrinal formulations of the various Councils of the church on the subject of the Trinity. Even the scholarly Parsi writers who do know them rarely expound them: rather they emphasise the religious and moral messages implied by the myths; they handle the tradition by demythologising. Perhaps the best of many examples is J. J. Modi in a catechism for children (1962). Modi was a widely respected Parsi scholar, indeed he was awarded a doctorate by Oxford University and knighted for his services to scholarship. He took care not to take sides in the public disputes

between 'orthodox' and 'reform' teachers, largely confining himself to historical and literary studies. His scholarly studies included Middle Persian literature, but in the widely used catechism he produced in 1911, none of the myths appear. He asserts simply (1962:6) that Ahura Mazdā 'has brought the whole Universe into existence. Whatever we see in this world has been created by Him. He is the Source of the existence of all.' Similarly he refers in general terms to a belief in an afterlife without any discussion of heaven or hell:

All who are born will one day die and will have another life hereafter. . . . After old age comes death. Sometime a person dies earlier without attaining to old age. All then go in the presence of their Creator in the invisible world. They live there. The body perishes but the soul lives on. . . . As, when we were born, we had our being from Ahura Mazdā, so, when we die, we shall go back to Him.

(1962: 11)

The extent to which Modi 'demythologises' the tradition is evident in the following extract from the question and answer style of the catechism:

Q. - What do you mean by 'Responsibility'?

A. - We shall be judged properly in the court of God, for all that we think, for all that we speak, for all that we do in this world.

Q. - What do you mean by saying that 'we shall be judged properly in the court of God'? Do you mean that we shall be judged after our death?

A. - No. We have learnt that God exists everywhere and at all times. So His court exists everywhere and at all times. We are therefore judged by him on all proper occasions. We shall be required for our deeds in this life or in the life hereafter.

(1962: 12)

His catechism does not provide any cosmological explanation for the place of fire in Zoroastrian worship. It is explained simply in the following terms:

We look to fire generally with reverential feelings, as the manifested form of the power of heat and light permeating this world and also as a symbol of the splendour and glory of the Creator. Then in the case of the Fire-temples, the religious ritual in its concentration adds some elements of moral thoughts and spiritual value. Hence it is, that we look to this consecrated fire with greater reverence.

(1962: 38)

Instead of explaining suffering as the weapon of an alien external force of evil

he says 'We should affirm our faith in God, and bear those sufferings with a confident hope, that those sufferings are a trial for us and that everything will be right in the end' (1962:40). In this catechism he says virtually nothing on ritual purity, but that topic is taken up in his larger, more scholarly work (1922) describing and explaining the various Parsi rituals. It was written mainly with a western audience in mind, which is why the purity laws are consistently explained as being important for reasons of hygiene and keeping at bay 'the germs of impurity' (1922:64,70). Keeping separate from what is impure is described as keeping away 'infection' (1922:49,71). Living writers who also present this abstract interpretation are Sidhwa (1985) and Shahzadi (1986).

One group of writings which requires comment is that produced by a number of the high priests, *dasturs*, in the last few years. Led first by Dastur H. D. K. Mirza, the three high priests living at the time of writing (in the early 1990s) have all produced scholarly works of reference, largely but not exclusively concerned with editions and translations of liturgical texts: Kotwal (1969a and b); JamaspAsa (1969; 1971; 1982). The former has also worked with an American academic, James Boyd, to try to explain rituals both in detail and with their theological significance (1977). Another recent publication to try and explain the thinking behind Zoroastrian rituals, this time by a layman, is Choksy (1989). Kotwal and Boyd have also collaborated on a translation of a nineteenth-century Gujarati catechism with a modern commentary by Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal (1982). Dastur Dr JamaspAsa has edited a substantial library of editions of Pahlavi texts. Dastur Dr Mirza has also been responsible for a historical survey of the religion (1974) and pamphlets (1980 and 1983) giving an overview of the historical position of the community. In one sense the works referred to in this paragraph do not belong in this chapter as they are textual and historical studies, but it is important to take note of how the priestly leaders have fulfilled their perceived role of the pursuit of scholarship and the obligation to disseminate this in publications. Some lay people have also been engaged in this work, notably B. T. Anklesaria (Boyce 1986) and T. R. Sethna (1975; 1976; 1977).

There is another strand of modern Zoroastrian literature which seeks to emphasise the rational, reasoning nature of Zoroastrianism, ignoring the myths and explaining away much of the ritual (Kapadia 1905; Wadia 1912; Masani 1938). With such a perspective there is relatively little cosmology or cosmogony, but rather Zoroastrianism is presented as an ethical monotheism,

an abstract moral philosophy, centred on the exhortation to practise good thoughts, good words and good deeds. What constituted ‘the good’ was largely left unsaid: instead there was a bland ethical code thought likely to attract the western reader, for whom these books were mostly written. But there are two publications from the 1980s which have sought to do more than present this greatly simplified non-mythological picture. One is Mistree (1982), the other Motafram (1984). Both seek to explain a more orthodox Zoroastrian perspective to co-religionists searching for spiritual guidance.

Mistree’s book is of particular importance because the author is a charismatic teacher who has had a significant impact on the community, not only in the Indian sub-continent but also on his ‘missions’ to his fellow-Zoroastrians who have migrated overseas to America, Australia, Britain and Canada. His teaching has proved popular in various sections of the community but particularly with the educated youth. Mistree studied at Oxford and later under Mary Boyce of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. In some circles he is bitterly criticised for what is seen as his input of western-influenced academic scholarship. His approach adheres closely to the *Gāthās* as expounded by Boyce in ch. 1 of the original publication, and similarly his views on the doctrines of good and evil are taken directly from the Pahlavi books described by Williams in ch. 2 above. His teaching is consistent with that of Boyce (1975) in his emphasis on the great continuity of the Zoroastrian tradition. Thus, the Pahlavi texts, in Mistree’s view, are not expositions of priestly corrupted superstitions, but are seen rather as invaluable guides to the heart of Zoroastrian spirituality, cosmology as well as ethics. At the same time that he believes in a separate force of evil he is also concerned to present Zoroastrianism as a monotheistic religion. It is because they think that he weakens the monotheistic emphasis with the teaching of dualism that some oppose him. Mistree thus expounds the view that God is not yet all powerful, but is rather ‘latently omnipotent’ (1982:28). He emphasises that this does not mean that Ahriman is equal to, or as powerful as, God.

It is empirically verifiable that the will of Ahura Mazdā continues to overwhelm the imperfections and inequalities in this world. The process of ‘creative evolution’ is an ongoing one, for it is within the cumulative power of man [the chosen soldier of God] to rid the world of disorder, poverty, misery, pain, suffering and eventually death. (1982:29)

He goes on to affirm the orthodox position: ‘In Zoroastrianism, an absolute

distinction is maintained between the origin of good and its antithesis, evil.' He then explains this in the following words:

In other words, the factor of separation results in the relative world in which existence mirrors its antithesis, non-existence. Non-existence on its own cannot exist; and that which cannot exist on its own cannot create, and that which cannot create knows not how to affirm, and that which cannot affirm is devoid of wisdom, and therefore is deemed to be the postulated nature of evil. Evil therefore clearly cannot come from God, as it is devoid of wisdom. Thus, there is a fundamental duality which absolves God from any taint of evil ... Evil in Zoroastrianism is not a reality in itself, but is an existential paradox experienced by man, through the imbalance reflected in the physical world. It is only in the relative world that the states of excess and deficiency are observable and discernible, thereby giving an apparent existence to evil which does not and, in fact, cannot stem from any other source. ... Evil only mirrors a denial of that which is existent and intrinsically good. Being parasitic, it does not and, in fact, cannot exist on its own. In other words, evil is *ex nihilo*; i.e. it arises from and out of nothing, and therefore has no real existence.

(Mistree 1982:29)

Whereas some authors who have studied, or been heavily influenced by, western thought have played down the importance of rituals, Mistree sees these as a vital part of spiritual practice and progress towards a mystical experience. Ritual he defines as

the medium through which a person is able to relate to the unseen spiritual world. It is through a ritual that an individual existentially experiences a link between the physical and spiritual worlds. A ritual also enables one to maintain a continuity of religious experience with the past.... Upon the proper enactment of a ritual, a qualitative appreciation of the goodness of God begins to emerge, which in turn generates an inexplicable harmony that momentarily brings the participant in contact with the divine centre - the source of all reality ! ... The priests will be able to generate the ritual power ... necessary to transpose the physical experience of the ritual into a spiritual reality, only if the recitation of the prayers is accompanied by the right intention balanced with a virtuous mind.

(Mistree 1982: 60)

Rituals he sees operating at three levels:

- i. the physical sensate world which is represented by the materials and implements (*alat*) used;

ii. the psychological world within which are involved the emotions, feelings and participation of the celebrant;

iii. the spiritual world within which the celebrant becomes aware of an intangible, experiential dimension of reality.

(Mistree 1982: 61)

Rituals, he explains, give joy and strength to the spiritual beings, and in the physical world 'increased purity, goodness, strength, peace and prosperity leading to the quicker destruction of Angra Mainyu'.

A more recent publication is Motafram (1984). This work consists of three books offering an 'Elementary', an 'Intermediate' and an 'Advanced Course.' They were commissioned and published by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, which is nowadays largely a body administering substantial charitable trust funds, but its status as a paternalistic body concerned to oversee the welfare and property of the community means that it is the nearest institution in the Indian sub-continent to a 'governing body' for Zoroastrians. These books do therefore have certain authority, although it may be doubted whether they have quite the widespread acceptance of (or provoke the strong adverse reaction against) Mistree's. Motafram's 'Elementary Course' presents a doctrinally 'bland' - picture of the religion. His starting point is the picture of Zarathushtra, whose life provides the role-model and moral lessons which his followers should emulate, for example to reform the religion from the ignorance and superstitious beliefs which had developed; to be determined and resolute in the face of strong opposition; to practise an unflinching pursuit of duty; to remain steadfast in the faith and to follow the noble ideals of the religion. Motafram then proceeds to draw out the theme of two worlds, the spiritual and the material, re-expressing the ideas of *mēnōg* and *gēīg* of the Pahlavi literature. Much, he argues, lies beyond the material world that we cannot see. 'We can see light rays, but the high frequency radiations as cosmic rays, gamma rays, X-rays, ultraviolet rays are not visible to the naked eye. Shall we say they do not exist?' (1984:9). From the example of these unseen vibrations and colours Motafram draws the conclusion that there is much in the spiritual world which we cannot see but with which man must be 'in tune.' There is a heavy emphasis (1984:13ff.) on the practice of good thoughts, words and deeds, and the consequences of such a practice, but the terms 'good' and 'evil' are not defined: only their destination is pointed out, to the best or the worst existence in the hereafter. Essentially he is returning to the traditional picture of heaven

and hell in contrast to the number of modern authors who have tried to explain these ideas away. He distinguishes between the purity of the body and that of the soul. The former is elucidated in terms of avoiding putrefaction, but the latter is said to be the more important and consists of keeping away from evil propensities like lust, anger, avarice, temptation, pride and jealousy. Although these 'definitions' of evil are consistent with modernising tendencies to make the religion more 'abstract' (or utilitarian), at this point the interpretation is consistent with the abstract dimensions of the ancient Iranian teachings as elucidated in ch. 1 above. Family and social duties are stressed and the characteristic Zoroastrian virtue of charity is heavily emphasised (1984:24ff.). However the Zoroastrian cosmology is interpreted, the practical moral philosophy has hardly changed over the centuries and continents. But it is interesting to note that some of the traditional mythology (for example the bridge of judgement) is included, and, remarkable among recent Zoroastrian writers, he states that resurrection is part of the Zoroastrian heritage (1984:42). It could be misleading to describe Mistree and Motafram as Zoroastrian 'fundamentalists' because that term has in the modern world taken on connotations of aggressive extremism, when used, for example, in connection with Christians, Jews and Muslims. But the term is appropriate in that they are both returning to what, from the historian's perspective, is the original or the fundamental (in the sense of 'foundational') tradition.

In Motafram's 'Intermediate Course', as well as referring to western philosophers and occasionally to Hindu teachers, he makes more reference to the traditional Middle Persian texts and myths than does any other author, except perhaps Mistree. One example of a Hindu idea that is taken over is the teaching on the saviours. These are part of traditional teaching in that the term is used of Zarathushtra and his three posthumous sons to be born in successive millennia as history approaches its climax, but Motafram's account is adapted to the idea of the *avatāra*. For example, he writes (1984:59):

Whenever evil reigns supreme on the face of the earth and the moral fabric of mankind in general disintegrates, the law of *Asha* comes into operation and the Supreme God with the intention of saving mankind from the intensity of the worsening situation, sends saviours, and benefactors.

The *Upanisads* and Swami Vivekananda are quoted in an exposition of the threefold path that the worshipper should follow, that of work, devotion and

knowledge (1984:86ff.). Introspection is presented as a necessary first step on the path to disciplining the mind:

Beginning should, however, be made by withdrawing the mind from sense objects for a while, and making it steady. Day by day, the mind will be trained to reflect upon itself, and will reveal its secrets, and a man will learn gradually to control, and skilfully manage the internal forces, and be in tune with the external ones which are the gross counter parts of the former.... One who calls himself a Raj Yogi proposes to do the same.

(1984: 65)

The theme of prayer and vibrations is pressed much further in this book (ch. 7): thus, he refers not only to the vibrations associated with the sacred prayers but also to the 'fact that the law of vibrations can be experienced in everyday life as each individual whose mental and soul vibrations are properly attuned exudes a kind of magnetic influence. He has an aura round his face as in the case of prophets' (1984:49). Motafram also expounds an idea accepted by many who follow an esoteric Zoroastrian teaching, namely that of the ethereal body: 'Surrounding our physical body there is an envelope of very subtle and tenuous material. This is the so-called ethereal body which is rendered impure by the impurities given off by the physical body and a man's aura is defiled' (1984 III:50). The *sudre*, or sacred shirt, he believes 'absorbs these impurities, it helps to keep the ethereal body clean. It also acts as a protection from the power of external evil forces' (1984 III: 51). Thus, on this level of teaching the sacred shirt and cord are seen not merely as symbols but also as spiritual, or occult, armour.

Motafram is but one example of a number of Parsis who thus offer a 'demythologised' ethical monotheism as the popular exposition of their religion but then give a more esoteric interpretation which blends together occult, Hindu and 'scientific' strands of thought at what is seen as a 'higher' level. Such teachers offer to 'spiritually developed' souls a new mythology, but it is one which continues to focus on the issue of the fundamentally opposed powers for good or ill, for life-giving and lifedenying, positive and negative forces. The various expositions of modern Zoroastrian philosophy wrestle in different ways with the challenge posed to them by Wilson with his accusations of dualism and polytheism. Despite the variety of teachings in the modern period there is in fact a common thread and a continuity of basic convictions, however different their presentations. In each form of Zoroastrian teaching there is a

fundamental assumption that unseen spiritual forces are interwoven with the material world so that the latter must be protected and respected. Parsis rarely accept the Hindu view of the material world as *māyā* or illusory. It is much more common for them to emphasize the teaching that man must care for the world because of the doctrines that the material world is God's creation and that the Amesha Spentas are represented by, or present in, the different creations. Hence, many now add, Zoroastrianism is in harmony with current ecological thinking.

ZOROASTRIAN PERCEPTIONS OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Implied in many of the differences between Zoroastrian writers are contrasting perceptions of religious authority. Thus for many westernised Zoroastrians there was an emphasis on the authority of western-style scholarship and reason; the Theosophists looked to the teaching of Blavatsky and Olcott; the Khshnoomists turned to Shroff and the esoteric teaching said to emanate from hidden Zoroastrian groups in Iran; for others a valid spiritual insight is found in the writings of Hindu holy men. It is possible to indicate in very general terms how these perceptions of authority have changed from one period to another. Langstaff (1983) demonstrated how twentieth-century Indian Zoroastrian philosophy can be seen to pass through three historical periods: (a) before the first world war, when western (Protestant) thought was dominant, though challenged by occult teachings; (b) the inter-war years, when western influences declined, the occult teachings remained but Hindu influences began to emerge, as did the calls to return to the Iranian homeland as conditions there eased and concurrently communal tensions erupted in India; (c) post-independence India, when western influences declined and Hindu influences increased. Again, the occult tradition continues through the period. Religion is not a static phenomenon; any religion, including Zoroastrianism, must change to some degree if it is to remain meaningful to its adherents who live under very different conditions in different intellectual 'environments' and with different 'peer-group pressures.' This is particularly so in the rapidly changing scene of twentieth-century India. Motafram also offers a different perspective on the various teachings, seeing them as different levels, each appropriate to the different spiritual development of individuals.

One reason for this variety of modern Indian Zoroastrian religious philosophies is that there is no widely recognised centre of religious authority which

determines what is 'the true faith'. For 'the Protestant Party,' authority rests simply in the *Gāthās*, the words of the prophet stripped of all later corruptions. This is true also for many Zoroastrians living in Islamic Iran (with its attitude to the authority of the written revealed word from God through the prophet). In the Hindu environment of India others emphasise more the authority of the priest as a man of spiritual power, whose words and acts, when recited with devotion and in purity, convey a spiritual force or power which results in the 'real' presence of the heavenly beings (Kotwal and Boyd 1977). For yet others, notably Mistree and Motafram, the Middle Persian texts are also sources of authority. For some the word of the various Hindu holy men, for others the scholarly conclusions of western academics, carry weight.

A focal point of debates on the locus of religious truth and experience tends to be the attitude to conversion. For some the belief that Zoroastrianism teaches a special religious truth means that the possibility of conversion from another religion to Zoroastrianism is possible, indeed desirable. The most prolific speaker and writer on this theme is Dr Ali Jafary (who himself comes from a Muslim background), who works as religious teacher in one of the Zoroastrian Associations in California (1976 and 1988). The issue of whether Zoroastrians should actually seek converts is discussed mainly among the diaspora groups in America. More widely discussed there, but also in Britain and Australia, is the question of whether the community should 'accept' the offspring or spouses in a mixed marriage where the partner agrees. Without such an acceptance many see the religion dying out as numbers diminish in India (Karkal 1984) and intermarriage increases. Among traditional Zoroastrians in the diaspora, but especially in the 'old countries' of India and Pakistan, there is widespread feeling, led by the high priests (notably K. M. JamaspAsa, F. M. Kotwal and H. D. K. Mirza - see Hinnells 1987), against the acceptance of anyone either of whose parents has married out of the religion. The arguments are, briefly, that a person is born into a particular religion because that is God's will and that to change religion is going against 'fate,' and because it results in a conflict between upbringing and the developed self, it is likely to lead to psychological damage (Antia 1985). This argument hinges upon the conviction that there is valid religious truth in all religions (Dhalla 1950), and that any individual should be religious in the tradition into which they are born. There is, therefore, the acceptance of the relative truth of any religion, since none contains a unique truth which alone is required for salvation. One further element in the argument is that proselytism has been the biggest single cause of oppression and persecution throughout human history, hence conversion is an

evil which should be consistently repudiated (Dadachanji, quoted in Hinnells 1987). Khshnoomists believe that Zoroastrianism has a special place because it is, in their teaching, the religion into which the souls are born of those who have reached their last birth before release from the round of rebirth (Masani 1917). For them, therefore, Zoroastrianism is not a possibility for ‘outsiders’ in this life, but is rather a state into which they will be born when their souls have progressed further on the spiritual path.

CONCLUSION

While Zoroastrians have wrestled with the challenges to their religious philosophy, with the idea of good and evil, with the interconnectedness of the spiritual and material worlds, what has remained constant is their moral philosophy. What in practice constitute the good thoughts, words and deeds have changed but little over millennia and continents. Foremost is the duty to care for the Good Creation, humanity, the physical and animal worlds. Truth and honesty, industry and learning, traditionally respected by Zoroastrians, are the very qualities which contributed to the Parsi rise to wealth and influence in British India. They are also characteristic of the Diaspora communities. The virtue they are probably best known for in India is charity. Indeed there is a saying ‘Charity, thy name is Parsi; Parsi thy name is Charity’, and Gandhi once commented that the best protection of the Parsis in the turbulent times of pre-independent India is their record of cosmopolitan charity (Hinnells 1985a). However Zoroastrians may philosophise, what they practise has remained constant. The moral philosophy and the daily practices have remained undimmed from the early times down to the present.

(Note: I wish to record my sincere thanks to my colleague Dr A. Williams for his constructive comments on an early draft of this chapter, though the responsibility for any errors remains wholly mine.)

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13 War and Medicine in Zoroastrianism

(The Dastur Kutar Memorial Lecture,
School of Oriental and African Studies,
London 1999)

My respect for the late Dastur Dr Sohrab Kutar has been expressed on several occasions, in lectures and in print. When I was invited to deliver the second Dastur Kutar Memorial Lecture at SOAS, a memorial facilitated by the World Zoroastrian Organisation, I accepted with alacrity for it is a privilege to honour such a good, indeed holy, man.¹ In reflecting on his life, it seemed appropriate to set his work in context – his life not only as a High Priest, but also as a doctor and for his role in the second world war II, when he was decorated by Field Marshal Montgomery for bravery. In doing this I believe we not only appreciate the qualities of one man, but also come to understand the interconnection of key Zoroastrian values not always appreciated by outsiders, indeed even within parts of the worldwide Zoroastrian community.

Dastur Kutar was the oldest of seven children and his father had two jobs (teacher and proof reader for the orthodox Parsi newspaper, the *Jam-i Jamshed*) to pay for his children's education. He also served as a priest (*mobed*) in the Poona agiary where his son was to work later. Dastur Kutar graduated from the Grant Medical College in Bombay in 1935, and went to work at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy hospital, an institution discussed below. During his studies, Dastur Kutar worked in vacations as a *mobed* in the Poona agiary, so combining his medical and his spiritual work. He came to Britain in

1. I am grateful to Shahpur F. Captain for a copy of a speech he gave at a function to honour Dastur and Mrs. Kutar in December, 1983.

1938 for further medical studies and began working as a General Practitioner. The outbreak of war in 1939 frustrated his ambition to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, but before he volunteered for military service in 1941 he had already passed Part I of the MRCP and the LRCP. He was sent to North Africa with the Eighth army and was deeply involved in the campaign there as a doctor, spending up to twenty hours a day treating the wounded. Field Marshal Montgomery awarded him the Star of Africa for his work. In 1943 he was transferred to Bombay with the Royal Medical Corps. In that year he and Dr (Mrs) Kutar married, having first met as medical students. Mrs Kutar had similarly faced great difficulties in her early life, losing her mother when she was three years old. Her grandmother and sister together made it possible for her to study and she graduated in medicine in 1939 and like her husband worked in the Sir J. J. Hospital. At the end of the war they returned to Britain and went into General Practice, starting a husband and wife practice in 1958. He was very active within the Zoroastrian Association in London, but declined an invitation in 1953 to join the committee, preferring to minister to the community spiritually. He and Mrs Kutar have given of their time, and of their money, to a far greater extent than most of the community realise. Dastur Kutar gave his religious services free to the community, including the lengthy and tiring annual muktad ceremonies. They have given funds both for the prayer room at Zoroastrian House, and for the study of Zoroastrianism. In 1964 he was formally recognised as a High Priest, as a Dastur, the only person outside the old countries of Iran and India to be so recognised by the priestly authorities in India. There had been some religious hesitation because his medical work necessarily brought him into contact with pollution, for example with the taking of samples for laboratory analysis and contact with death. The high priests in India were asked whether this barred him from the dasturship. Their judgement was that because in his work and in his person he was a man of the highest Zoroastrian ideals he was a fit person to be a dastur. There, as in Britain, he has always been spoken of with consistent admiration.

In this lecture I want to look at three sides of his life and work and place them within the Zoroastrian context, namely medicine, war and priesthood. As we shall see, medical care has been a pre-eminent concern of Zoroastrians, especially in the modern period. They have also been active in war. A question which occurs to me, perhaps simplistically, is how does one reconcile the medical ideals of saving life and involvement in war in Zoroastrian thought? After discussing these issues I will look finally at the role of the priesthood in Zoroastrian belief and practice. This article focuses on the Parsis, not out of

any disrespect to the Iranian Zoroastrians but for the practical reason that since the Revolution in 1979 I have been unable to visit Iran, and the Parsis have become my research focus.

Charity, or benevolent giving, is a prime Zoroastrian duty. One ancient text declares that if one practises many duties and meritorious deeds, but does not give anything to the poor, then it is not possible for one's soul to be redeemed.² In his vision of heaven, the righteous Viraz saw the souls of the benevolent elevated above all other souls in splendour.³ It is Zoroastrian tradition not to erect gravestones for the dead, but rather at the *uthumna* ceremony on the fourth day after death to announce a charity in the name of the deceased. Zoroastrians around the world are famed for being charitable also within their lifetimes. One of the main foci for such charity is medical work. Many bequests made by the Parsis in India are administered through the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. In their reports, sums of money both small and large are simply dedicated to 'poor and disabled Zoroastrians', or to the blind, lame and poor, or to the Parsi Relief of Distress Fund. In an earlier article I listed 213 specifically medical charities whose records I had been able to trace. That list included twenty-eight hospitals, forty-five charitable dispensaries, eighteen maternity homes or wards, eleven leper wards, seventeen sanatoriums, nineteen hospital wards, five convalescent homes and fourteen diverse types of hospital building.

The donors included not only the big families, notably the Jijibhoys and Camas in the nineteenth century, the Petits, Wadias and Tatas in the twentieth century, but also numerous little known individuals.⁴ In a separate article I have looked at the Zoroastrian doctrines concerning health and suffering.⁵ In the first part

2. *Mēnōg ī Khrad* 15.11.

3. *Ardā Virāz Nāmāg* 12: 1-6.

4. 'The flowering of Zoroastrian benevolence: Parsi charity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', in Bivar and Hinnells (eds), *Studies in Honour of Mary Boyce*, Leiden, 1985, pp. 261-326.

5. 'Health and suffering in Zoroastrianism', in J. Hinnells and R. Porter (eds), *Religion, Health and Suffering*, London, 1999, pp. 1-22.

of this paper I want to steer between these two articles, and look at the Parsi medical charitable work over the last hundred years.

The role model involved in charity work was Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy. Orphaned at an early age, he started life as a bottliwala, a collector of empty bottles. He made his fortune through the China trade, becoming a Director of the largest British firm in the region. The link with this firm involves an interesting story. Jijibhoy had collected goods to tranship to China when French pirates caught the boat he was sailing on. After taking all their possessions, the French put Jijibhoy and other passengers ashore in South Africa and left them to make their way back. One of the passengers was William Jardine and this seems to have been the start of a lifelong friendship and business relationship, for Jijibhoy became the only non-European Director of Jardine Mattheson & Co. which was Hong Kong's biggest firm, and under Chinese rule it still remains enormous.⁶

Jijibhoy's charitable concerns changed over the years. In broad terms, the poor and religious institutions (e.g. temples) were his early concerns, education became more central in his later years. But medicine was a long-standing interest and one of his most famous charities was the founding of the large Sir J.J. hospital in Bombay, the hospital where Dastur Kutar worked. In a letter dated 19th March, 1838, Jijibhoy commented on how even the wealthy in Bombay were prejudiced against English doctors, saying that they:

still adhere to the Customs of their Fathers, and would rather become cripples or diseased for life than submit to the proper remedies – I myself was formerly one of these and after expressing very serious injuries from the employment of Native Doctors was at last induced to place myself and family under the charge of Dr Wallace, and how different has since been the result I can speak from experience.⁷

Jijibhoy offered to donate Rs 150,000 if Government would match his

6. For an account of the work of Jijibhoy in China, see Hinnells, *The Modern Zoroastrian Diaspora*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, forthcoming.

7. Volume 358 of the Jamsetji Jijibhoy papers preserved in the Bombay University Library, pp. 52-4.

contribution. Although expressing sympathy with the proposal, the British were slow to agree and Jijibhoy undertook an intensive campaign. In a letter to John Forbes dated 29th March, 1838, Jijibhoy asked for guidance in persuading the Court of Directors to help start a hospital for ‘the care and preservation of life you can form no idea of the amount of misery caused by the quackery of Native Doctors, which would all cease were a Native Dispensary and Hospital established on an extensive scale.’⁸ Further letters were sent to Sir James Carnac, Bart; Sir Charles Forbes, the Hon’ Earl of Clare, Mounstuart Elphinstone and countless others over the succeeding months.⁹ The *Bombay Times* for 1st May, 1839, and 30th October, 1839, reported the establishment of a committee to look into the possibility of a Medical College and a Hospital, a committee which included the Chief Justice, Sir John Adrey, the Lord Bishop of Bombay and Jamsetji Jijibhoy among others. The foundation stone was eventually laid on 3rd January, 1843, and patients were admitted from 28th May, 1845. This was one year after his launch of the Parsi Benevolent Institution, to help the poor and needy of the community, but above all for schools. By 1864 it was running 21 schools, specifically for the children of poor families.¹⁰ By the 1990s the hospital has a capacity of 1,339 beds – although at any one time there may be 1,700 patients or more in the hospital, with people even on the floor. The Outpatients’ department deals with 2,000 patients per day, and as many as 33,000 routine operations per year. The hospital consists of 43 departments in its 82 buildings spread over 44 acres of land. This large teaching hospital has several departments of international repute; for example its AIDS care centre is recognised by the World Health Organisation.

Other Parsi charities have funded important developments in this huge complex. The Sir Cowasji Jehangir Ophthalmic Hospital was started in 1866; N.M. Wadia funded the Motlibai Hospital for obstetrics in 1891; Sir Dinshaw Maneckji Petit Hospital for gynaecology in 1892; the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital for children was started in 1928. The State of Maharashtra now runs the whole Sir J.J. Hospital, although its staff would wish to be independent and

8. *Op. cit.*, pp.58f.

9. *Op. cit.*, pp. 138-83.

10. Hinnells, ‘Parsis and the British’, *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, Bombay, 1978, pp. 49-51.

free of bureaucratic paperwork. But still the figure of the founder is remembered and revered. The Hindu neurosurgeon of the hospital, Dr D. A. Palande, related how 'The founder's statue represents an incarnation of God to the poor who are treated and cared for at this hospital. Even the workers here bow before the statue, first thing in the morning.'¹¹

Several Parsis followed Sir J. J.'s example in the founding of hospitals. Sir Dinshaw M. Petit first laid aside money for a Parsi hospital in 1892, but the idea then found no support. However his son, Bomanji, and grandson, Jehangir, revived the idea after the 1900 plague epidemic when countless people died because of the shortage of hospital beds. In 1907 the foundation stone was laid of the Bomanji D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, and the hospital was inaugurated five years later. It included a dispensary, convalescent home and accommodation for nurses. The land and buildings are vested in the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, but the hospital is run independently by its own board. Since almost all beds are free or subsidised, the running costs of the hospital have always presented problems. During each of the wars the government requisitioned the hospital, and the rent paid for these two periods helped fund the institution for years afterwards, but still the economic problems continued. In 1950 a new honorary secretary, Dr Homi Mehta, injected new vision and enthusiasm into the hospital and the community showed greater willingness to fund the hospital. Within the twenty years of Mehta's secretaryship twenty-one new departments were added, including for example a fertility clinic.¹² It is a hospital only for Parsis, with the concern that Parsis should not be a burden on the taxpayer or government. The Parsi press, particularly the *Jam-i Jamshed* (for which Dastur Kutar's father had worked) has publicised the cause. One regular, and popular, source of income has been The Parsi Medical Amateurs, a group of Parsi medical staff who regularly stage plays written by the Parsi humorist playwright, Dr Jehangir Wadia. Wadia had started writing parodies of the Parsis as early as 1917, and his plays were taken up by a team of Parsi doctors from 1969. With their typical Parsi humour,¹³ self-teasing, bawdy

11. *Parsiana*, September, 1994, pp. 22-27, Palande is quoted on p. 22.

12. See the *B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital Diamond Jubilee volume*, Bombay, 1972, pp. 1-7. See also *Parsiana*, November, 1987, pp. 16-21.

13. On Parsi humour see Hinnells, 'Novel religion: the presentation of religion in modern Parsi secular literature', in A. Sharma (ed.) *The Sum of our Choices*,

jokes, they have become almost an institution in Bombay Parsi community life, as well as an important source of revenue for the Parsee General Hospital and other medical causes.

But hospitals need major funding, and in 1995 the Hong Kong based Parsi family and charity, the Jokhis, gave a huge sum of money to build a new wing housing radiology, pathology, four operating theatres and a state of the art twelve-bed Intensive Care Unit. The project had been planned by the late Shapoorji Jokhi. Like Dastur Kutar, the late Mr Jokhi was a man of greatness whom it was a joy and privilege to meet in the course of my studies. He was imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Japanese during the second world war for supplying food and medicines to the British prisoners. While awaiting execution he had a vision in which he was told that he would be freed. On waking he vowed if that happened he would build a housing colony back in India in his hometown of Navsari. Before the date of his execution a new Camp Commandant was appointed who reviewed all the death sentences. He asked Mr Jokhi why he had supplied the food and medicine, to which he replied that it was part of his religion to help the needy, and that if the Commandant had been in need he would have helped him. The death sentence was commuted to long term-imprisonment, but Mr Jokhi was released shortly afterwards. He kept his vow and built a large colony in Navsari bearing the name of his wife. Once that was complete, he turned his charitable work to the Parsi General Hospital. Now it has been seen to be a focus for investment, other donations have followed. The Hong Kong Parsi Community which, although numbering under 200 persons, is so wealthy it distributes about a million pounds per year in charity, has also started investing in the Parsi General Hospital. The hospital seeks to cater particularly for the poor in the community. Only nine of its 284 beds cover their costs, 115 are either free or cost less than Rs 50 a day. People in these beds receive free treatment, medicines and food.¹⁴

A third Bombay hospital started by the Parsis is the Masina Hospital. This one, like the J.J. hospital, is for people of any religion or race. It was started by Dr H. M. Masina in 1902 on the first floor of his home. In 1913 it was moved to a site of seven acres. He and his wife built it up into a 150-bed hospital with its

Essays in Honour of E.J. Sharpe, Atlanta, 1996, pp. 384-407.

14. *Parsiana*, February-March, 1995, pp. 92-100.

own nursing college and a post-graduate medical college, recognised as such in 1924 by Bombay University. The records estimate that in the first 25 years of its existence the hospital treated 27,800 Parsi patients – something like one-third of the Bombay community's population. Of these, 20,000 were charitable patients, with 10,000 receiving totally free care. But hospital running costs are considerable. As facilities declined and were not replaced, and new technology could not be afforded, so the standing of the hospital declined, and the level of charitable support diminished. By 1947 it was treating only 70 patients at a time and an appeal was launched by the founder's son, Dr Ardeshir H. Masina. Seven new departments have opened since 1967, so the number of patients, operations – and donations – increased.¹⁵ The expansion has been continued in the 1990s, notably with the opening of the Noshir M. Irani Medical centre in 1997, for diabetes, plus a six-bed intensive care unit and two operating theatres for cardio-thoracic surgery. The hospital now also has a major Burns Unit, funded by the Kharas family, a pioneering neo-natal unit, and an HIV ward. Charitable donations mean that Parsis receive free treatment, but members of all races and religions receive heavily subsidised treatment.¹⁶

There have been Parsi hospitals, or Parsi donated wards, in a number of hospitals around India. A complete list would take too long to recite, but a sample will indicate how widespread throughout India Parsi medical charities are.

- Byramji Jijibhoy opened medical schools in Poona and Ahmedabad in 1878 and 1879 respectively.
- D.M. Petit donated land for a bacteriological laboratory in Poona in 1889.
- D.M. Petit gave a large donation for a Leper hospital in Calcutta in 1889.
- Dinbai N.M. Petit funded two leper wards in Poona and at Matunga in 1894.
- N.P Vakil funded an ophthalmic hospital in Ahmedabad in 1899.
- J. R. Billimoria funded a ward at Ridgway Hospital, Colombo in 1909.
- N. M. Wadia Charities made large donation to a Leper Asylum at Nasik, 1912.

15. This account is based on a typescript given to me in 1978 by the then Medical Superintendent, Col. G. S. Sidhwa.

16. *Parsiana*, June, 1997, pp. 20-25.

- R.F. Dabu opened Dabu Parsi hospital in Navsari in 1913.
- S.P. Shroff opened a charity hospital for eye patients in Delhi in 1918.
- Lady R. J. Tata funded the building of a convalescent home for army officers in Ootacamund in 1922.
- Maternity (T.S. Anklesaria) and T B wards (M.N. Mehta) were funded in Poona in 1924 and 1928.
- Tata family funded an outpatients' department in the Moore hospital in Nagpur in 1924.
- B. Ferdoonji built a Parsi ward at the Mission hospital in Jalna in 1935.
- A.R. Dalal built two wards at the Ajmer railway hospital in 1937.¹⁷
- Lady Tata opened a ward for Hindus in the hospital in Nargol in 1950.¹⁸
- Tatas funded a hospital in Jamshedpur in 1953.¹⁹

Needless to say, they also funded such work in their traditional centres in Gujarat such as Navsari, Udwada, and Surat.²⁰

Parsis have also funded hospitals and medical concerns outside India. Thus a Parsi social concern in Karachi has been medicine. This began in 1882 with the first Parsi charitable dispensary, followed by a second in 1887, and a third in 1903 all funded by Edulji Dinshaw. In 1908 Dr. Kasikhusroo D. Contractor started a maternity home at his own expense in a house next to his own. With funding arranged by Jamshed Mehta this grew over the years into the Parsi Maternity Home, a place not only of medical concern but also a religious foundation where the purity laws could be observed.²¹ The main focus of

17. For details of the above donations, see Hinnells 'The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence', pp. 312-4.

18. *Parsi Prakash* p.451 for 24th December, 1950.

19. *Parsi Prakash* p. 112 for 27th March, 1953.

20. For details see Hinnells 'The flowering...' pp.308-314. On Parsi hospitals, *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Vol 3, 1909, Bombay, pp.188-192, 210-211, 337-8, 342-4.

21. J. F. Punthakey, 1919, *The Karachi Zoroastrian Calendar*, Karachi, E.T. of the Gujarati by F.H. Punthakey, 1989, Karachi, pp. 308-14.

Karachi Parsi medical charity does not carry a Parsi name. The Lady Dufferin Hospital was opened in 1894 in honour of the Vicerene, but the single largest donor was Edulji Dinshaw. A ward was maintained in this hospital for Parsis, and Parsis continue to be substantial benefactors (often anonymously) to this, Karachi's largest hospital.²² In 1936 the Parsi General Hospital was opened in Karachi, named after Bomanshaw Minocher-Homji.

In Hong Kong also, Parsis have undertaken important charitable medical work. In 1948 Jehangir H. Ruttonjee funded the building of a TB sanatorium, with a final donation of \$1.3 million, in memory of his daughter, Tehmina, who had died of the disease. It became a major centre for treatment for people throughout South East Asia. The hospital was staffed with Catholic nuns from the Irish Colombian sisters until 1988. In 1956 Jehangir gave a substantial donation for a convalescent home for patients to recuperate after chemotherapy, in memory of his second daughter Freni, who died of cancer in 1953. In recognition of the family's history of support for medical causes, when the then Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, opened a new hospital in 1994, it was named the Ruttonjee hospital.²³

Some of the Parsi medical charities and relief work has been very farsighted. In 1822 the Parsis subscribed to famine relief in Ireland, and again in 1846 during the potato famine; in 1862 they donated funds for poor Lancashire Mill workers and members of the Cama family donated to several London hospitals from as early as 1863. Some of their charity has been innovative, so for example as early as 1890 P.H. Cama set up a fund to enable women to study medicine.²⁴

Perhaps as noteworthy as the donations to medical charities has been the number of Parsis who, like Dastur Kutar, have entered the medical profession. The first Parsi to graduate in medicine in Britain was Muncherji B. Kolah who received his FRCS in 1861. In 1873 D.N. Parekh was awarded a gold medal

22. Punthakey, *Karachi*, pp. 98-100.

23. *Parsiana*, October, 1994, pp. 24-26.

24. See Hinnells, *'The Flowering...'*, pp. 321-2.

for his medical studies at University College in London; Bahadurji and Khory became Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in the early 1870s.²⁵ Numerous pioneering doctors in India have been Parsis, especially in the field of orthopedics,²⁶ fertility treatment,²⁷ obstetrics,²⁸ pioneering rural health projects,²⁹ cancer,³⁰ cardiology,³¹ plastic surgery,³² ophthalmology,³³ and nursing, including the first two Indian women to join the Indian Medical Service in World War II.³⁴ Many of the Zoroastrians who have migrated to the West, like Dastur Kutar, have been medical practitioners. The 1997 Directory of Zoroastrians in Britain lists 157 individuals involved in medical and medical related professions, including seventy-six doctors and twenty-five nurses. That represents nearly 20% of the types of careers listed in the directory.³⁵ The Address list of American Zoroastrians specifies medical or medical related careers of 300 individuals, of whom 144 are doctors, thirty-four dentists and twenty-three nurses. This is a remarkable number in view of the difficulty of

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25. For details see Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, p. 82.
 26. On Dr Rustom Katrak, see *Parsiana*, October, 1988, pp. 35-40.
 27. On Dr Mehroo Hansotia, see *Parsiana*, October, 1987, pp. 39-40.
 28. On Dr Rustom Soonawala, see *Parsiana*, August, 1991, pp. 90-95.
 29. On Dr Banoo Coyaji, see *Parsiana*, August, 1993, pp. 82-4.
 30. On Dr Jal C. Paymaster see P. Nanavutty, *The Parsis*, 2nd ed. 1980, New Delhi, pp. 138f.
 31. On Dr Rustom J. Vakil, see Nanavutty, pp. 139f.
 32. On Dr Noshir H. Antia see Nanavutty, p. 140.
 33. On Dr Sorabji P. Shroff see Nanavutty, p. 141.
 34. On Captain Pheroza Davar and Captain Amy K. Jungalwalla see Nanavutty, p. 143.
 35. The next two main professions identified are engineering (78 individuals) and accountancy (66 individuals). There are only five military persons.

Indian-trained doctors obtaining recognition in America. Virtually all had to undergo further training after migration, a token of their dedication. The Zoroastrians have therefore carried their values with them into the diaspora.³⁶

Having looked at Parsi work in the medical field, it is time to turn to their role in war. Here their role has necessarily been less obvious in modern times; since they are such a small minority community, military activity on their own behalf is impossible. Further, Indians were given restricted opportunities to join the British forces at anything other than in the lowest ranks during the days of Empire. Yet they have been involved. Parsis commonly emphasise that they are loyal to the government of the country in which they live. They have, therefore, taken a role in the British army, and in both the Indian and Pakistan armies. Again, I should emphasise that the focus on the Parsis, does not imply a disregard for Iranian Zoroastrians, for some of them also served in the ranks during the Iran-Iraq war, but of course after the Revolution they are not allowed to take officer status.

The earliest record of Parsis joining the British forces is in the province of Sind, or modern Pakistan, in 1861. The Governor General of India acceded to a request from the Parsi leaders to be able to enrol in the European Volunteer Force, on the condition that they spoke English and wore the same uniform as others. Twelve are known to have joined, but the permission was soon withdrawn. In 1883 some Zoroastrians in Baluchistan were allowed to join, and one Dinshaw Khambatta received a commission. He was then transferred to Poona where he again campaigned to become a volunteer, and was successful in 1890. Finally, they were once more allowed to volunteer for the Sind Volunteer force, and 260 joined.³⁷ The motivation behind this campaign was presumably to be seen to be part of the British Empire under which the community flourished. This motive led an unknown number to volunteer for service in the First World War. A Memorial Column at Doongerwadi in Bombay lists forty-six Parsis who lost their life in the War. Six were Captains,

36. The American Zoroastrian magazine, *FEZANA*, in a special supplement to the Vol. VIII, No. 4, Winter 1995 issue on professionals in the community refers to four individuals in the military, a weapons systems Scientist, a specialist in naval weapons, and two women, a platoon leader in Combat Service Support and one in military intelligence. Special Issue, pp. 30-32.

37. Punthakey, *Karachi*, pp. 43f. and *Parsiana*, March, 1991, pp. 72f.

four Lieutenants, one sergeant and three medical doctors.³⁸ This figure may be an underestimate for the reliable *Parsi Prakash* records sixty-one Parsi deaths.³⁹ *A Parsi War Memorial Volume* identifies thirteen Parsi Lieutenants, 43 captains, five Majors and five Sub Assistant Surgeons who served in the IMS during the war.⁴⁰ There were prayer meetings at Zoroastrian centres around India, many joined the forces, and regular substantial financial donations were made by individuals, and by the Panchayat.⁴¹ Eleven Parsis received the King's Commission in 1942, including the first Indian couple to join the British forces, Dr Mrs M.R.C. Tarapore in the women's section of the Indian Medical Service, and her husband served as a Captain in the British army.⁴²

After Partition, Parsis joined both the Indian and Pakistani armed forces. A Parsi has held the office of each branch of the Indian armed forces: Air Chief Marshal Aspi Engineer, 1960; Field Marshal Sam H. F. J. Maneckshaw, 1969, and Jal Cursetji, Naval Chief of Staff, 1976-9.⁴³ There have been other leading military figures also, notably Air Marshal Minoos Engineer (brother of Aspi Engineer), who commanded an Indian Air Force Spitfire Squadron in Burma and in Japan for which he was awarded the DFC. After the World War he was involved in the Kashmir campaign, for which he was again decorated. During the war with China in 1962 he led the helicopter rescue of evacuees from a site above 16,000 feet, where helicopters have difficulty flying, and under Chinese

38. See Sohrab Katrak, *Who are the Parsis*, Karachi, 1958, pp. 294-6.

39. *Parsi Prakash*, vol. V, pp. 17-60, for 1914. Several Parsis produced books on the war: Miss D.S. Bastawala, *Amateur War Cartoons*, 1915; R.B. Paymaster, *Voice of the East on the Great War*; Jehangir R. Patel, *The World War*, 1921; F. J. Davar, *Cameos of the Great War*, 1922.

40. Published by E.R. Hirjibedin of the *Kaiser-i-Hind* newspaper in 1920.

41. *Parsi Prakash* for December 9, 1941.

42. *Parsi Prakash* for May 15, 1942.

43. See *Parsiana*, October, 1973, pp. 12-17, and *Parsiana*, January, 1999, pp. 32-4.

fire. In 1971 he planned the air attacks on Pakistan.⁴⁴ Another was Air Vice Marshal J.H.F. Maneckshaw, a pioneer in aviation medicine.⁴⁵ In September, 1990, the President of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Lt General Adi Sethna, organised a public wreath, laying ceremony on a day of remembrance and gratitude for Parsi military officers at the Teen Murti (War) Memorial in Delhi. The occasion was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the posthumous award of India's equivalent of the Victoria Cross, the Param Vir Chakra, to Lt Col Adi Tarapore for his bravery in leading the main armored thrust in the Sialkot sector during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. He refused to be evacuated when injured, and continued to lead the tank attack, taking out sixty enemy tanks until he was killed.⁴⁶ In his speech Sethna recounted thirty-five Parsi military leaders who had been decorated for bravery and achieved high office in the Indian forces, including Major General J.M. Cursetji, who was awarded the DSO in the Gallipoli campaign, Lt Gen. Jango Satarawalla, who was awarded the Military Cross and MBE. In the 1960s Air Marshal and Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Edul Dhatigara, led counter-insurgency operations in Nagaland. Another Parsi military hero referred to by Sethna was Major Jimmy Dorabjee, who with his Assam Rifles led the Dalai Lama in his escape to India from Tibet. During the Bangladesh campaign, organised by Field Marshal Maneckshaw, a Parsi, Khusro Rustamji, was Chief of the Border Security Force.⁴⁷ Two Parsis have also been decorated for their work against counter-insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, Col Ilavia and Lt Col Firoze Patel.⁴⁸

Parsis have also joined the Pakistan army, and two, Brigadier F. Glottal and Col Sarosh Irani, were decorated for bravery in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. This highlights the point made earlier, regarding the loyalty of the Parsis to the nation they are citizens of, for Parsis were fighting on both sides in the same war for their respective nations.

44. *Hamazor*, the Bulletin of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, August, 1994, p. 1.

45. See *Parsiana*, October, 1988, pp.32-4.

46. See *Parsiana*, March, 1991, pp. 66-70.

47. See *Parsiana*, March, 1991, pp.58-62.

48. See *Parsiana*, January, 1999, p. 35.

Interestingly, Dastur Kutar is not the only Zoroastrian high priest to have this threefold role of doctor, military man and high priest. Dastur Behram Jamasp, High Priest of Secunderbad, who died on 6th February, 1950, also studied medicine and surgery in Scotland and then served as a HouseMan in Manchester. He had seen active military service in World War I, before becoming High Priest in 1937. What is it in Zoroastrian thought which inspired this threefold role in these two holy men?

It is important to prefix this part of the paper with a comment on the prioritizing and interpretation of Zoroastrian religious literature. There are debates within the Zoroastrian community on which religious texts have authority, and which do not. For some, only the hymns of the prophet, the *Gāthās*, have absolute authority. This is a perspective shared by reforming groups among Parsis and especially among Iranian Zoroastrians in the diaspora.⁴⁹ The holy book, the *Avesta*, has religious authority for many Parsis, not so much because of its teachings, but because of the spiritual power of its words. They may perhaps be said to have mantric power.⁵⁰ Western academics commonly pay great attention to the texts written in Middle Persian, or Pahlavi, around the ninth century of the Common Era. These were literary defences of Zoroastrianism in the face of Islamic oppression. Many of them are translations or summaries of lost Avestan books; others are contemporary expositions of the faith. Some of the priestly authorities, not least the High Priests in India share this academic interest in the Avestan and Pahlavi literature, indeed some have spent their lives studying these texts notably Dasturs Mirza, JamaspAsa and Kotwal in the modern community.⁵¹ To Zoroastrians who prioritise only the

49. See, for example, Farhang Mehr, *The Zoroastrian Tradition*, Rockport, Mass., 1991. Some Parsis adopt the same position, notably the reforming 'Protestant' Dastur M. N. Dhalla, the first Zoroastrian to obtain a PhD in Zoroastrian Studies from a western university (New York), see, for example, his *History of Zoroastrianism*, Oxford, 1938.

50. See F. M. Kotwal and J. W. Boyd, 'The Zoroastrian *paragna* ritual', *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, II, I, pp. 37-44 and further below on the role of the priest.

51. Each of the Dasturs named has published several learned works in this area, so the following list is illustrative, not complete. Dastur Dr Mirza, *The Copenhagen Manuscripts K27*, Bombay, 1992; Dastur Dr K. M. JamaspAsa,

Gāthās, scholarly attention on the Pahlavi literature is focusing on the myths and superstitions of later priestly corruption. My own opinion is that the Pahlavi literature contains the classic form of the ancient doctrine. Even if the myths it relates, and doctrinal details they contain, are not part of the living faith of some, they encapsulate the heart of ancient Zoroastrianism. Just as many modern Jews or Christians do not believe literally in, say, the stories in *Genesis*, nevertheless those creation myths express, or emerge from, an understanding of the nature of existence and so remain useful sources for the understanding of Jewish or Christian beliefs. Some of the Pahlavi texts, though they are not canonical, are translations or interpretations of the canonical literature. I share the conviction of Mary Boyce, that there is a substantial degree of continuity of belief from the *Gāthās* to the *Younger Avesta* and on into the Pahlavi literature, a view shared by the dasturs in India and by some religious teachers there.⁵² Just as I personally no longer accept formal Christian or Biblical authority and teaching, I am nevertheless conditioned in my attitudes, ethics, values and principles by the view of existence encapsulated in the Biblical myths and imagery. So also, I believe, many Parsi attitudes to life and the world, many of their values, grow out of this body of literature, even though few have read much of it.

According to this body of Zoroastrian literature, the world in which we live is the good creation of the wholly good God, Ohrmazd. He created it perfect, immortal, without need and sinless. He formed the creation in two stages, first the unseen, immaterial, intangible, *mēnōg* world, and then the physical, tangible, material, or *gētīg*, world. The latter is the development or manifestation of the former, not its opposite.⁵³ Zoroastrians therefore speak of

Aogemadaēcā: a Zoroastrian Liturgy, Vienna, 1982; Dastur Dr F. M. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nā-Šāyest*, Copenhagen, 1969.

52. See, for example, her *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I, Leiden, 1975. For the views of a Parsi teacher, see K. Mistree, *Zoroastrianism: an ethnic perspective*, Bombay, 1982.
53. The two major articles on these notions are both written by Shaul Shaked and are published in his collected works, see 'The notion of *mēnōg* and *gētīg* in the Pahlavi texts' and 'Some notes on Ahreman, the Evil Spirit and his creation,' in *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, Variorum, Aldershot, 1995, essays II and III.

‘the Good Creation’, by which they refer as much to the material as to the spiritual world. Opposed to Ohrmazd is a wholly independent force of destruction, or evil, Ahriman, who is the source of all suffering, misery, disease and death. For Zoroastrians the world is the battleground between good and evil. History is the story of that battle, a story which Zoroastrians believe will ultimately result in the triumph of good, the purging of all evil from Ohrmazd’s good creation. They look forward to an eternal future where the material, *gāīg*, and the spiritual, *mēnōg*, where heaven and earth, will blend in perfect harmony. Within this theology, it is important to say something of the concept of the material world in general and the body in particular. Since the material world is the divine fulfilment of the spiritual, Zoroastrian teaching gives the physical world a sanctity, that it does not have in other religions. Indeed the Pahlavi texts declare that because this *gāīg* world is the divine creation, then evil cannot assume material form, but dwells only like a parasitic spiritual force in the world. Whereas in the Hellenistic world, and in much Asian thought, the divinely created spiritual self is imprisoned in an alien material world from which it should seek release, in Zoroastrianism, evil is a spiritual force trapped in what is for evil an alien good material universe. Because of this perception of the body and the world being God’s good creations, it follows that is a human religious duty to care for the body, as for the soul, and to care for the good material world around us.

Because both the material and the spiritual world are part of the divine creation, the health, the holiness, of one is seen as necessarily interwoven with the other. Consequently, in the pursuit of holiness, care in the material world goes alongside spiritual care. It is a religious duty to preserve the purity both of spirit and of the body. Before praying one should be cleansed in spirit by prayers and in the body by washing. Because the body is part of the divine creation, observing the laws of physical purity is part of the total religious life. Western commentators and reforming Zoroastrians tend to overlook the logic of having the physical purity laws in a religion which stresses that the body is as much part of the divine creation as the spirit.⁵⁴ Since these purity laws involve keeping the good creation separate from the corruption of evil, in the form of dead and decaying matter, so many Zoroastrians in modern times have

54. See, for example, J. H. Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi*, London, 1917; C. R. Pangborn, *Zoroastrianism: a beleaguered faith*, New Delhi, 1982.

argued that the ancient purity laws are also to be seen as sensible, practical hygienic rules.⁵⁵ Many also argue that this care for the material creation makes Zoroastrians the first environmentalists. The path of holiness in Zoroastrianism necessarily includes both the physical and the spiritual world. There is little in Zoroastrian history and theology of the ascetic quest involving bodily suppression, as there is in much Christian, Indian and other mysticism. This attitude to the physical body explains why the resurrection of the body after death was a central part of ancient Zoroastrianism. If the death of the body were the end of the story, that would have meant the end of the divine creation. But just as few liberal modern Christians tend to believe in the resurrection, so it is also not a prominent part of living Zoroastrian belief.

The logical consequence of these classical attitudes to the place of the body in the total divine creation, is that doctors are traditionally seen as fulfilling a holy mission in caring for what Ohrmazd created. Since our fellow human beings are also divine creations, and we are all fellow workers, or *hamkārs*, in the war of good and evil, then it is fundamental religious duty to care for others. Because they seek to counter the destructive assaults of evil evident in disease and suffering, the doctor is considered to be supporting the good creation in the war with Ahriman.

Equally, a person who does not care for their body is supporting the destructive and deathly work of the Destructive Spirit. A doctor, therefore, has to be seen to be in the forefront of the fight against evil, just as the priest is in the spiritual realm. But because it is a war, then the prophet himself taught that we should work for the good, but also inflict harm upon evil (*Ys.* 43:8; 47:4). Zoroastrianism does not have a doctrine of 'turning the other cheek'. There is an assumption that active opposition to evil is a religious duty. There can, therefore, be said in Zoroastrianism to be the concept of 'the just war.'⁵⁶ That is not a Zoroastrian phrase, but it well expresses Zoroastrian views. It would be entirely in accord with Zoroastrian values to affirm that allowing evil to

55. See, for example, J.J. Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay, 1922.

56. After writing this I came across the *Memorial Album* quoted above: 'Future generations of Parsis would no doubt like to know what their fathers did during the great war between the forces of the Good Spirit vs the Evil, of humanity vs. the devil (p.1).

flourish when one could stop it, is to take the side of Ahriman, and is therefore opposing the good. In ancient times, under the Achaemenids, Parthians and Sasanians, Zoroastrian armies subjugated what they saw as the forces of the Lie, of evil. The great fifth century BCE Achaemenid kings, Darius and Xerxes, in their inscriptions presented themselves as establishing the rule of good, of Order, of God, over the forces of evil, as fighting for Truth against the Lie. So, for example, in an inscription at Bisutun Darius declared:

For this reason Ahuramazda bore me aid, and the other gods who are, because I was not hostile, I was not a Lie follower, I was not a doer of wrong – neither I nor my family. According to righteousness I conducted myself.... The man who cooperated with my house, him I rewarded well; whoso did injury, him I punished well.... Thou who shalt be king hereafter, the man who shall be a Lie-follower or who shall be a doer of wrong – unto them do not be a friend, (but) punish them well.⁵⁷

It can, therefore, be seen that according to classic Zoroastrian values, in practicing medicine and in fighting a just war, Dastur Kutar was living out his Zoroastrian faith, just as he was in his priestly life.

There are three main historical factors in the emergence of the Zoroastrian concept of priesthood: the Indo-Iranian tradition, the religious experience of Zoroaster and the magi. The institution evolved further over the millennia both in Iran and among the Parsis in India. In the Indo-Iranian tradition priests are one of the three social classes, alongside warriors and husbandmen. The priesthood is not merely a human function in ancient Iranian thought, for several heavenly powers are depicted as priests, notably Ahura Mazdā and Haoma. In one passage Ahura Mazda's priestly role is placed alongside his role as a healer.⁵⁸

57. DB V, E.T. R. G. Kent, *Old Persian Grammar, Texts and Lexicon*, New Haven, 1953, p. 132.

58. On Ohrmazd, see *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, where Ahura Mazda declares: 'My name is the Healer. My name is the best Healer. My name is the Priest, my name is the most priest-like' (E.T. B. N. Dhabhar, Bombay, 1963, p. 173). In *Yašt* 3:6 and *Dānkard* III: 157 priests are said to be the best of healers and the most efficient of physicians. On Haoma, see M. Boyce, 'Haoma, priest of the

Haoma, similarly, is known as the great healer.⁵⁹ *Āthravan* is the more general term for the earthly priest, while the term *zaotar* is used for the priest who makes the offering. The priests undertook intense lengthy training in learning not only the ritual words in various ancient poetic forms, but also precise actions. Zoroaster describes himself as a *zaotar* (*Ys.* 30.6) and his seventeen hymns, the *Gāthās*, are replete with references to ‘hands outstretched in reverence’ (28.1; 29.5; 50.8); ‘prayerful words’ (33.4; 34.3; 50.9; 51. 22 & 22); to hymns and prayers to Ahura (30.1; 49.12; 53.2); songs of praise (33.8; 43.8; 52.22); ‘worshipping and praising you joyously’ (34.6); to invocation, veneration and worship (48.1; 50.10; 51.5; 52.22; 53.2). The formal literary structure of the *Gāthās* uses traditional Indo-Iranian conventions in a particularly sophisticated manner,⁶⁰ suggesting a high level of training facilitating the communication of an intense personal religious experience and message.⁶¹ As Mary Boyce has emphasised in various publications,⁶² this makes Zoroaster unique among the founders of the great religions in being a serving priest, a role which can be expected to have had a substantial influence on his interest in the formal and liturgical manifestations of his religious experience. The core of that experience was his visions of Ahura Mazda, his conviction that he personally had been set apart for his mission and had

sacrifice’, in M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch (eds), *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, London, 1970, pp.62-80.

59. Boyce, ‘Haoma’, p. 63.

60. Boyce, *History*, vol. I, pp. 5-12, 183-5.

61. See M. Schwartz, ‘Coded Sound Patterns, Acrostics, and Anagrams in Zoroaster’s Oral Poetry’, in R. Schmitt and P. Skjarvø (eds), *Studia Grammatica Iranica, Festschrift for Helmut Humbach*, Munich, 327-392; ‘The ties that bind: on the form and content of Zarathushtra’s mysticism,’ in F. Vajifdar (ed.), *New Approaches to the Interpretation of the Gathas, Proceedings of the first Gatha colloquium*, London, 1933, pp. 127-97. I owe these references to Dr Almut Hintze, but also appreciate the fascinating discussion with Prof. Schwartz in Berkeley when he was first working out his thoughts on this subject. See especially A. Hintze, ‘*Avestan literature*,’ forthcoming. I am deeply grateful to Dr Hintze for allowing me to see this chapter prior to publication and her comments on a draft of this paper.

62. E.g. *History*, vol. I, p. 7. Boyce, *History*, vol. I, pp. 5-12, 183-5.

communicated directly with Ahura (43.5; 44.11; 46.8; 50.5). This, as we shall see below, remains an important dimension of the traditional Parsi priestly role, albeit one neglected by western commentators.⁶³

In ancient times the priests served specific families, since the temple tradition was not part of this ancient culture. The *āthravan* tradition was part of the eastern Iranian culture. The magi appear to have been part of the western Iranian tradition. Whether they were a tribe, or whether magus was simply a general term for a priest, is a matter of discussion. The point is that they were the official clergy of western Iran when the Zoroastrian tradition moved to the west into Babylonia, Israel, Anatolia and beyond. It was therefore the magi who promulgated the religion generally, not least in official and courtly circles. In this way it is thought that Zoroastrianism took on many of the non-Zoroastrian beliefs and practices, for example an interest in divination. Their officiation at rites was part of the process of Zoroastrianism becoming the religion of the empire, carried through the Iranian diaspora by the magi, who followed armies, officials and businessmen. Where colonies of Persians settled, so there were magi and the religion of Zoroaster. Under the Achaemenids, temples and associated rituals were introduced so that a difference developed between the household and the temple priests. The priests at the larger and imperial temples became men of considerable power and wealth, a process which reached its pinnacle under Kartir in the Sasanian period.

The history of the priesthood during imperial Iranian history and down into the Muslim period need not detain us - fortunately, since the history of an institutional hierarchy, is extremely difficult to reconstruct.⁶⁴ Given that Dastur Kutar was a traditional Parsi priest, the central focus of this section of the paper should be the modern orthodox Parsi perception of the role of the priest.⁶⁵

63. See for example the work of Moulton and Pangborn cited in n. 54 above.

64. See for example the work of Kreyenbroek. 'The Dādestān ī Dēnīg on priests,' in *Indo Iranian Journal*, 30, 1987, pp. 185-208 and 'On the concept of spiritual authority in Zoroastrianism' in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 17, 1994, pp. 1-15. See also F.M. Kotwal, 'A Brief History of the Parsi Priesthood,' in S. Shaked & A. Netzer, *Irano-Judaica* II, Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 217-226.

65. For the ancient perceptions of the priest, his qualities and duties, see S. J. Bulsara, *A ̄rpatēstān and Nīrangastān, or the Code of the Holy Doctorship and*

This has been expounded in a number of publications by one of the current orthodox dasturs of Bombay, Dastur Dr Firoze Kotwal.⁶⁶ In a 1982 book he translated and commented upon a nineteenth century Dastur's exposition of the religion.

The Gujarati Dastur expands upon who can be called a dastur: 'a person who understands all matters of religion, who speaks the truth and promotes piety should be called a dastur.' On the qualities of a priest he wrote:

He is one who is pure of nature, manifests innate wisdom, is steadfast in the religion and always remembers God. He has the spiritual world in mind, is pure in thought, and is a truth seeker. He acts with prudence, he has a pure body, and speaks with a sweet tongue. He can recite the Avesta accurately and completely, and is one who knows ceremonies well and lives his life observing the rules of purity.⁶⁷

It can be said that the key duty of the priest is to maintain purity so that he can serve before the fire, and in the temple, and in order that his prayers can be effective. The purity has to be moral, spiritual and physical for reasons already discussed. This involves priests living disciplined lives, distancing themselves from impurity, either morally, for example through indebtedness which might lead them to dishonest action, or by not eating food cooked by a non-Zoroastrian, indeed for many not by a non-priest, who might not ensure the physical purity necessary for priestly duty. Commentators have all too often focused on the ritual purity laws, without recognising the equally strict moral requirements. Rarely have they recognised the spiritual purpose of these requirements, purposes which Kotwal elucidates in his 1977 and 1991

the Code of the Divine Service, Bombay, 1915 repr. New York, 1977. In the introduction, pp. xxix-xxxviii, Bulsara brings together authoritative sources on the subject outside the specific text he studied.

66. In particular in 'The Zoroastrian *paragnā*,' (see n. 50) pp. 44f; see also F. M. Kotwal and J. W. Boyd, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion*, California, 1982; also Kotwal and Boyd, *A Persian Offering: The Yasna, A Zoroastrian High: Liturgy*, *Studia Iranica* – Cahier 8, Paris, 1991, especially pp. 18-25. Also F. M. Kotwal and Ph. G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. I, *Studia Iranica* – Cahier 10, Paris, 1992.

67. Kotwal and Boyd, *Guide*, pp. 181, 187.

publications. Kotwal stresses the importance of the physical cleanliness, the righteousness of intent, devotion and liturgical attentiveness. He explains how this results in direct and immediate interaction of the *mēnōg* and *gēīg*, or spiritual and material worlds, bringing into the world - and into the liturgical setting - the very Spirit of God so that all may prosper. Through his devotion, attentiveness, discipline and concentration, the divine forces become present in the ritual and their presence brings benefit to the *gēīg* world. He writes:

[the pious priest] seeks throughout his life to develop a disciplined personality which keeps in constant contact with the *mēnōg* reality so that *aša* may always be with him and righteousness prevail in all his thoughts, words and actions. In this way he brings upon himself and the *gēīg* world the manifest bounteous and righteous Spirit of God. The true [priest], whose life is dedicated to the performance of these rituals, becomes an instrument of their effectiveness and the *x'arrah* [charisma] of the holy, that divine glory which nourishes life and progress and benefit to the world and mankind, shines from him. He like the ritual event of the *paragnā* itself [a section of the great *Yasna* ceremony] contributes through his daily ceremonial activities, to the increase, prosperity and salvation of the world.⁶⁸

The liturgical role of the priest is, therefore, to link the *gēīg*, with the *mēnōg* world. This includes the prayers. The conceptual meanings of the words recited are, for the traditional Parsi priest, of little or no liturgical significance.

...for the orthodox Zoroastrians Avestan *manthra* is a revealed language, the significance of which goes beyond any human's intellectual grasp. Avestan *manthra* is a sacred language which has a performative power that, together with the many other dimensions of the liturgy, helps the celebrant participate in the *mēnōg* reality deriving directly from the source of all being and intelligibility, the Lord of Wisdom Himself.

And so

For the most part the cognitive content of the Avestan language is at best only peripherally present in the priest's consciousness.... the priest surrenders himself to the speech act itself...⁶⁹

68. Kotwal and Boyd, '*paragnā*,' pp. 32f.

69. Kotwal and Boyd, *Persian Offering*, pp. 24f.

Zoroastrians, no less than many Christians, believe in the 'real presence' of God in their worship. As Kotwal explains it:

In performing the *paragnā* the righteous priest is thus bringing this physical *gētīg* realm into closer contact with the spiritual *mēnōg* realm, establishing a closer communion between them. The holy reality of Ohrmazd, his *amahraspands*, the *yazads* and other spiritual beings become a 'felt' presence for the worshipping Zoroastrian and the blessings, both material and spiritual, received from the ritual event contributes to the Zoroastrian goal of bringing increase, prosperity and ultimately salvation to the world.⁷⁰

We can, therefore, conclude that the doctor (and the benefactors who support medical work) and the warrior work for health and order (*aša*) in the material world, whereas the priest is concerned with both the material and the *mēnōg* world. He brings them into immediate contact, indeed he brings about their interpenetration. Derived from Indo Iranian-tradition, Zoroaster and his followers have viewed 'order', as both a divine principle, and as a divine Power, one of the seven Bounteous Immortals (*amahraspands*). In Zoroastrian thought, ancient and modern, order is the defining characteristic of the Good Creation, manifest in the cosmos, in harmonious social relations and within the good person. Chaos is a characteristic of Ahriman, manifest in the destructive forces within the world, society and the evil person.⁷¹ The roles of doctor, warrior and priest are all concerned to preserve or restore the order inherent in the Good Creation. The doctor is concerned with bodily order, the warrior with social order, the priest is concerned with spiritual order, but all are concerned to maintain order, *aša*, in creation. Relating this to the life and work of Dastur Kutar, as doctor and priest he was caring for the material world and seeking to realise the ideal state in which Zoroastrians believe the world was created. In his work in the army, he was waging the just war against the violence and chaos of evil. Throughout his life he was realising the ideal of the priesthood, being *tanumathra*, the embodiment of the divine word.

70. Kotwal and Boyd, '*paragnā*', p. 35.

71. Boyce, *History*, vol. I, pp. 199-212.

Section E
The Parsi Diaspora



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14 Introduction

As Bombay Parsis became wealthy and powerful so they began to engage in international trade and diaspora groups grew in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There have been virtually no studies of them, which from a Parsi perspective is regrettable since it was in large measure this trade which earned the funds from which charitable benefactions, temples etc. were donated. I started this study in the mid 1980s when invited to deliver the Ratanbai Katrak lectures at the University of Oxford. One volume has thus far emerged from those lectures specifically on the British community,¹ and a second volume is nearly complete. It is regrettable also for the wider field of Religious Studies because the study of diaspora groups is flourishing at the turn of the millennium,² and the Parsis have not been receiving the attention they deserve. Because Parsis have long been literate, their overseas communities are remarkably well documented so that one can study a longer trajectory of settlement with the Parsis than with many other groups. There is, in my opinion, a need for international collaboration. Thus far, most studies have tended to look only at, say, Hindus in Britain, or America, or Canada or Australia. But it is difficult to appreciate what is distinctive about, say, the American experience unless one undertakes comparison with other countries. My own fieldwork has taken me to several countries; in addition to India, to Pakistan, China, France, Germany, America, Canada, Australia. But few have the good fortune I have had. However, the comparison needs also to be between religious groups, between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc and between regional/ethnic groups etc. In my 1996 book I found that for the Parsis

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1. *Zoroastrians in Britain*, Oxford, 1996.
 2. A review of the literature would require an extensive chapter. One can only point to some trends. R. Cohen, *Global Diaspora: an introduction*, London 1997 is truly comparative and seeks to develop a typology of diasporas (victim, labour, trade and cultural diasporas). Unfortunately he does not refer to religion in his book. There are three journals associated with the subject: *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*; *Diaspora*; *International Migration Review*.

comparisons with the Jewish community are helpful. But it is impossible to undertake international fieldwork, and look at different religions. Against this background therefore, I organised an international workshop at SOAS in 1997. One volume has already appeared. That has chapters on Hindus, Sikhs and Indian Muslims in Britain, Canada and America, and has chapters on Parsis (ch. 18 in this book), Indian Christians and Asian New Religious Movements.³ A second volume, which is more issue based, is currently in press, looking in particular at questions of public policy and religion not only in the three countries named, but also including Australia.⁴

I have another personal interest in such studies. As noted in the General Introduction, my three Chairs have all been in Comparative Religion. It is a title which has lost favour in the twentieth century because of its associations with attempts to plot the evolution of religions, and in particular to compare in order to prove the superiority of Christianity, motives quite strong at the end of the nineteenth century. However, I cannot see why if comparative linguistics, comparative politics, comparative law are valid fields, one cannot have comparative studies of religion. The fact that what I would consider improper intentions and methods have been deployed in the past does not mean that the whole exercise is forever wrong. What matters are the motives behind the comparison, the goal being aimed at and the methods deployed. For me, the motive is to understand what is distinctive of a given belief, practice, group or religion. I do believe that he who studies one knows none; that the study of simply Hinduism, or Buddhism, or Zoroastrianism is not the study of religion. Through comparison one learns what is a common and what is a distinctive experience. Of course, in some contexts it is legitimate to specialise and study one religion, or one branch of it, but that is not the study of religion it is the study of Zoroastrianism, or of Islam etc. But the goal has to be an in-depth study, for a further serious problem with Comparative Religion as it was practised at the start of the twentieth century is that it was so general it was necessarily superficial. A further necessity, in my opinion, for the comparative study of religion is the proper method; one should compare what is comparable. I have little confidence in the comparison of whole systems or religions.

3. H. Coward, J. R. Hinnells and R.B. Williams, *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada and the United States*, New York, 2000.

4. J. R. Hinnells and W. Menski, *From Generation to Generation*, Macmillan.

Inevitably one must have a major specialism, but the study of different groups in one location, or of one religion in different locations, seems to me a promising way of pursuing Comparative Religion. Of course, comparative Religion can focus on ancient religions, for example in my case on Gnosticism and Mithraism in the Roman Empire, or Biblical and Zoroastrian eschatology. But the study of modern diaspora religions seems to me a new and exciting development in Comparative Religion.

It is in that context that the final four chapters are republished. There is an element of overlap between three of the articles for the reason given in the General Introduction, but there are significant differences of focus between them. Ch. 16 is primarily historical; ch. 17 is sociological, based on the results of an international survey questionnaire I conducted and ch. 18 is my latest article, a comparative study of Parsis in three countries. Whereas the previous chapters looked for general patterns, the last chapter sought to identify what is distinctive in each of the three countries studied. I hope to develop the themes of these three chapters in a book on the Global Parsi Diaspora now nearing completion for Oxford University Press. The chapter on Bhowndree (15) stands somewhat apart. The chapter is included partly to try and set the record straight on a man who has been much maligned as a politician.⁵ But also from Zoroastrian House records in London I have sought to understand Bhowndree as an early leader in the Parsi diaspora. Professor John Mcleod of the University of Louisville is engaged on a book-length study of Bhowndree which promises to become the definitive work on the subject. Basically, he supports the 're-establishment' of Bhowndree, but questions some details of my study, for example the significance of the 1896-7 visit to India.

5. I wish to record my thanks to my collaborator in the first publication, Omar Ralph.



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15 Muncherji Bhownagree: Politician and Zoroastrian¹

The first three Asian MPs at Westminster, Naoroji, Bhownagree and Saklatvala were all Parsis, a remarkable record for such a microscopic community. Parsis were prominent in Indian politics from the middle of the nineteenth century, not only in the Indian National Congress, but also in its forerunners, the Bombay Association and the Bombay Presidency Association (Kulke 1974). Parsi influence was due in part to the wealth of several community leaders, such as Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, but even more to the extraordinarily high level of education common throughout the community in Bombay (Hinnells 1978a). Parsis were also pioneers throughout the nineteenth century in travelling to Britain for Higher Education, for Engineering, Medicine and especially Law (Hinnells 1995). Another factor in Parsi success was that as a tiny minority they were seen in some ways as marginal by the big communities, such as the Hindus and the Muslims, and so they were not seen as a threat (Kulke 1974). Consequently, just as Parsis had been middlemen and brokers in trade, so also in politics they often took the middle ground, respected by most of the contending parties. What is also important is that they were not seen as a community to be identified with any

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1. I wish to record my thanks and indebtedness to various people, above all my former student, Ms Candida Monk, for what she taught me about Bhownagree during her postgraduate studies comparing the work of Bhownagree and Naoroji. Also to Malcolm Deboo for his help with the files at Zoroastrian House in London, and his comments on an earlier draft, and to Omar Ralph with whom I collaborated happily on a booklet on Bhownagree to mark the centenary of Bhownagree's election to parliament: Hinnells and Ralph, *Bhownagree: Member of Parliament: 1895-1906*, London, 1995. I further wish to record my thanks to successive leaders and committees of the Zoroastrian Association for granting me unrestricted access to community files for the last twenty years.

one wing of political opinion, either in India or in Britain. So the three MPs represented different parties: Liberal, Conservative, Labour and Communist.

Seen from one perspective, the election of Naoroji was the greatest surprise, because he was the first, but from another point of view, Bhowndegree's election was an even greater surprise because he did not have Naoroji's record as a prominent politician, nor the high level of support from such leaders as ex-Viceroy (Masani). It was also remarkable that he succeeded as a Conservative, at his first attempt, in a constituency with a strong Liberal tradition with a well-established Liberal MP.

But Bhowndegree has not fared well at the hands of historians. The standard account of Parsis in British India is Kulke 1974 who refers only to the negative impact of Bhowndegree. He describes Bhowndegree as 'an unconditional advocate of Britain's imperialist politics' (p.225), states that Naoroji would have preferred not to see Bhowndegree in Parliament (p.224), and gives an account of the opposition Bhowndegree faced on his tour of India in 1896. Kulke concludes his account with a quotation from an Indian newspaper, the *Gujarati*, expressing 'unfeigned satisfaction' at Bhowndegree's loss of his parliamentary seat in 1905 (p.228). Similarly, in my book I dismissed Bhowndegree in little more than a sentence, quoting the MPs' Indian critics mocking when I wrote: '[Bhowndegree's] distaste for the Indian National Movement and unquestioning support for British rule in India brought him the nickname "Bow-and-agree", the displeasure of Dadabhai and the hostility of Pherozeshah Mehta'. It has not only been outsiders who have played down Bhowndegree's importance. He is ignored in almost all books on Indian politics, save for a brief discussion in Visram 1986. What is particularly surprising is his eclipse from Parsi publications. Even Katrak 1958 and Nanavutty 1977, which garner all the accounts they can of even moderately successful Parsis, omit Sir Muncherji Bhowndegree MP. There appears to be a community wish to be distanced from someone who has the image of having been disloyal to India. This fiftieth anniversary of Indian Independence, and a little over a hundred years since Bhowndegree's election, is an appropriate time to stand back and ask whether outside historians and Parsis alike have been just to Bhowndegree.

It will be helpful to start with a brief biography. He was born on 15th April, 1851, the son of a successful merchant and agent of the State of Bhavnagar. He studied at the prestigious Elphinstone College in Bombay and won a prize

for his dissertation on the constitution of the East India Company, which was later published. After a short spell as a sub-editor of the newspaper, the *Bombay Statesman*, he succeeded his father in Bhavnagar in 1872, but his literary activity did not cease, for in 1877 he published a Gujarati translation of Queen Victoria's *Leaves From the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*. This and his dissertation subject illustrate his early pro-British orientation, which was not uncommon for the western-educated elite of Parsi, indeed of wider Indian, society. In 1881 Bhownagree was made a Fellow of Bombay University and a JP. 1882 was a turning point in his life. He travelled to London to study Law and was called to the Bar. He lectured to the Society of Arts and was the first Asian to be elected to its Council. Although he chaired several meetings of the East India Association he never gave a lecture to this body, started by Naoroji in order to influence British political opinion. In 1886 Bhownagree was one of the Commissioners of the Colonial Exhibition held at South Kensington and was made a Companion of the Indian Empire (CIE) for that work, and for his involvement in the Imperial, later Commonwealth, Institute. In short, Bhownagree was socially respectable, but not politically active, in his first spell in Britain.

In 1887 Bhownagree returned to India, at the invitation of the Maharajah of Bhavnagar, to draw up what was quite a radical and reforming State constitution, which despite royal support encountered a lot of opposition from established and influential sections of society, including a court action which was eventually settled in Bhownagree's favour. The new constitution then became a model for other reforming States. His family recall that the grateful Maharajah gifted him and his descendants ownership rights of a few villages for his efforts. Although he accepted the gift out of a desire not to be ungracious to the Maharajah, he willed that the villages be returned to the state of Bhavnagar after the first generation of his descendants because he did not believe that anyone had the right to own people, or land on a hereditary principle. The villages are, therefore, no longer in family ownership. While he was in India, Bhownagree was associated with a few other reforming causes, notably in support of female education. He served on the Board of the first English Girls' Academy and produced a report on female education in India for the Society of Arts, for which he received their silver medal. In addition, he campaigned to improve the lot of Hindu childhood widows and gave evidence to the Public Service Commission in favour of more natives in the Indian administration. Basically, although he did not attain a high public profile at this time, he was quietly active in liberal reforming work.

In 1888 his sister died and it is clear that he was deeply affected by this. In his letters he speaks of himself being depressed as a result of this bereavement and he gave several charitable benefactions in her name: one for female education, one for a nurses' home and funds for a corridor in the new Imperial Institute in Kensington, a benefaction still recognised with the Bhowmagree gallery in the new building. Three years later he returned to England and settled in London permanently, making only a few short visits to India. His wife did not join him in Britain, it is said because she did not like the climate. They had two sons and a daughter but one son died at a young age and his daughter did not settle permanently in England. He therefore appears to have been a lonely man.

Four years after his return to London, he was elected an MP. In a letter to George Birdwood seeking a constituency, Bhowmagree presented himself to Conservative Party leaders as able to correct the public image of India as solidly Liberal. He had hinted publicly that might seek a parliamentary seat when he chaired a banquet in honour of Naoroji's election, and in his toast said he trusted

that the day was not far distant, when their friends of the Conservative Party would find an Indian of their way of thinking and choose him as their representative. (*Manchester Guardian*, 25th July, 1892)

Naoroji appears not to have opposed Bhowmagree's candidature and wrote to Wacha in India to try and persuade the Indian press to halt their attacks on Bhowmagree. Simon Digby, an ally both of Naoroji and of the INC, supported Bhowmagree in the columns of the *Bombay Gazette*.

Wacha will appear at several points in this paper and he merits a brief introductory comment. He, also, was a Parsi and worked as Secretary of the Indian National Congress (INC) from its inception until its take-over by the so-called radicals in 1907. Like many 'moderates', Wacha then joined the Western Indian Liberal Federation and served as its Secretary for many years. Wacha was, therefore, a powerful political administrator, and he functioned as Naoroji's main informant on the Indian scene. He was implacably opposed to Bhowmagree. Even in his letter agreeing to Naoroji's plea to halt the newspaper campaign, Wacha commented:

On this side people have not much faith in his assurances which, it is observed,

will only be kept so long as they suit his purpose. He will then throw up his allegiance and show his teeth ... there is deep distrust for him in matters affecting our county's welfare. He and Malabari are known to be self seekers. They pursue their personal objects and in doing so, do not care whether they betray the county's interests or not, so long as they are patted on the back by the Anglo-Indians here and the ignorant and credulous Englishman on your side. (Patwardhan II, i. p. 417)

In a letter three months later Wacha berated Bhownagree as 'That pomposity of "Bow and agree"' and later that year, in October 1896, said 'As to this busybody Bhownuggree he is determined to play the grand role'. The basic question I want to address in this paper is this: were these powerful, personal criticisms of Wacha, and of other I.N.C. leaders like Mehta, and some of the native Press who supported them, justified?

Bhownagree's parliamentary work has never been discussed in any publication and merits attention. He was the third person to be offered the role of prospective Conservative candidate for the North East Bethnal Green constituency for the 1895 election. The first two potential candidates refused the seat because it was such a safe Liberal stronghold that it did not appear winnable. Bhownagree's credibility was not helped when the *Times* newspaper (14th July) said that he was expected to withdraw at the last minute. Yet he achieved a clear majority. Why? There were several factors. The Liberal campaign in the constituency was not efficiently organised and was rather complacent. Bhownagree was a good orator and campaigned on local or national, not Indian, issues; for example he opposed the dis-establishment of the Church of England and similarly opposed Home Rule for Ireland. He stressed that he had lived in England for fourteen years, and had both constitutional and political experience in India. Although he said little about India, he did refer to the glory of the Empire which was threatened by radicals. As a result of this campaign Bhownagree entered Parliament as Naoroji left it.

Once in Parliament, Bhownagree attacked the INC and especially one of its supporters, Sir William Wedderburn, and did so in terms which some of the established English press, *Daily Telegraph* and *Manchester Guardian* thought were intemperate. He soon discoursed eloquently in Parliament on the blessings of British rule in India. He asserted that most Indians shared his patriotism and referred on several occasions to 'our Empire'. He remained

a convinced Imperialist throughout his parliamentary career, as of course many Parsis were. The aim of education in India, he believed, was not to remove British rule, but to educate and instruct the Indian people in order that they might appreciate, and profit from, being part of the Empire. As Conservative party policy changed, so Bhowndree changed unquestioningly with it. There is, therefore, at least a *prima facie* case for the popular image of him deserving the nickname 'Bow and agree'. However, I think that if his total parliamentary contribution, and his other activities, are analysed then the popular image of Bhowndree will be seen as an over-simplified caricature.

Seventy percent of Bhowndree's many interventions in the House of Commons were concerned with Indian affairs, most of them focusing on the Indian economy. Not only did he deploy the same terminology as Naoroji concerning 'the drain' on the Indian economy, imposed by the British taxes, he similarly questioned what items were included on the Indian taxpayers' bill. For example, on 26th July, 1900, he spoke concerning the annexation of Chital. This is a subject he had addressed in several speeches. He supported the 'annexation' (a term he questioned) on the grounds that the tribesmen of the region were not themselves likely to protect the Indian border. But he seriously questioned whether the Indian taxpayer, certainly not Indians alone, should meet the costs of the actions. He urged that the Imperial Exchequer should share the costs and said: 'The patience and fortitude of the people in India were severely put to the test. More even than their bodily sufferings, their mental condition was one of extreme strain and anxiety.' Political firebrands, he warned, would stir up discontent and if the Government wished to ensure Indian loyalty to British rule, the Government should make a substantial contribution to Indian finances. He particularly objected to India having to contribute towards the cost of a garrison in South Africa, just as Naoroji before him had objected to having to fund non-Indian causes such as the Afghan wars. In 1902 the pay of British soldiers was increased, and Bhowndree complained that this was an intolerable burden, which had been imposed without consultation. He said: 'The people of India regard this imposition of the New Army charges as a flagrant act of injustice, an opinion which is largely endorsed here by men of every shade of politics who are at all conversant with the condition of the country.' (PD, cxxvii, p. 1239). On 12th August, 1904, Bhowndree similarly protested in Parliament at the demand for Indian taxes to fund the Tibet campaign:

But I regret to say, although it is unpleasant to say it, I feel I should not be thinking and acting imperially if I refrained from frankly telling you that in the adjustment of your financial relations with her [India], you have been parsimonious.

Again like Naoroji, he objected not only to Indian taxes funding foreign adventures, but also to Indians being made to face increasing military expenditure in India. So in August, 1903, he complained in the House that the British maintained a garrison 'twice as large... as her requirements warranted' and described the new imposition of army charges as 'a flagrant act of injustice'. He protested not only at the injustice of the charges, but also at the process by which Parliament dealt with Indian finances, for the annual India debate, he noted, was always 'at the fag end of the session'.

Bhownagree argued more vigorously than ever Naoroji had done for British investment in Indian education, specifically in scientific, technical and vocational education. Arts education he dismissed as producing too many intellectuals who he dismissed as mere 'spouters and writers.' It is probably no mere coincidence that many of the INC leaders were Arts graduates. He argued in Parliament on 26th July, 1900, that in India every school should be provided with workshops and scientific laboratories because 'making the people literary scholars ... is right enough in its due proportion, but a nation of literary scholars is not one that is likely to advance in prosperity.' His emphasis on technological development, clearly opposed to the causes Gandhi espoused, were shared by some Parsi industrialists, notably Tata and Godrej. Had they been followed, then Nehru's campaign to develop Indian technology would have been far easier. India, he pointed out, imported nine times more than she exported and if she could develop technologically she could reverse that economic dependency. So in that same speech, and on several occasions over the next four years, he argued:

Ninety percent of the population of India subsists on agricultural pursuits, and that if we succeed in withdrawing, say, even ten percent by teaching them to turn raw material into articles of domestic use, everyone of which nearly they now import from foreign countries.

He protested at the way the Government restricted existing Indian industries, for example by preventing the sugar cane industry from taking the logical step of moving the refining process into the rum industry, and by the imposition

of taxes on Indian tea. He also called for the repeal of the cotton duties in order to help the Indian textile industry. What is not commented on in existing publications, is that he called for the abolition of the opium trade. He was concerned that the decline of established industries, which were not being replaced by new ones, and forecast that the result would be the further impoverishment of India. So in 1897 he laid a motion before Parliament which said:

This House views with concern the fact that the old industries of India are fast disappearing without being replaced by new ones to any appreciable extent, with the result that its vast population has to largely depend on the imports of foreign manufacturers for even the most ordinary articles of every-day use, a circumstance to which is mainly due the condition of poverty under which large sections of the people of India labour and that is as much as the present system of education, among other causes, has had a tendency to divert the energies of the people from the preservation and development of industrial pursuits, this House is of the opinion that an inquiry should be held, by such means as the Government of India consider advisable, with a view to ascertaining and suggesting measures for remedying the evils indicated.

Unfortunately, his Motion was blocked, but Bhowndegree made repeated further efforts. He started these campaigns as early as 1896, but took them up again in 1900, 1901, 1902 and 1903. Over the same period he repeatedly pressed on the Viceroy a five point plan for Indian technical development and education which involved forestry schools, polytechnic and industrial schools, and industrial exhibitions, not only to enable Indian manufacturers to learn about products but also to display their own wares. He called for the encouragement of Indian manufactured goods, and for grants to enable Indians to study practical and technical subjects both in India and Europe. He several times urged that the Imperial Institute, to which he had been a donor, should do more for Indians, but appealed in vain. He protested when Cooper's Hill Engineering College, established to enable British people to study Engineering before going to India, was closed to Indians yet it had to be shut down because insufficient British people were going there. Bhowndegree said more than once that 'European and native interests are not, nor ought to be distinct or distinguishable in India. The interests of both are the common interests of India.' (PD lxxvi, p. 221). A more technical study of agriculture, he argued, would help ease problems of famine. In 1900 he appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury to call for an Appeal in churches to help India's poor, but the Archbishop declined. Instead, Bhowndegree

worked with Wedderburn, Naoroji and other Congress supporters to form the Indian Famine Union (*India*, June, 1901). Another technological development which Bhownagree campaigned for was the building of railways. Naoroji had opposed such work because the costs involved would increase India's debt, but Bhownagree argued that they would help trade, facilitate the transporting of supplies at times of famine, and would unify the country. It is interesting that in India it was the less radical politicians, rather than the INC which supported technological change. For example, the newspaper, the *Indian Spectator*, which was closely identified with the INC and frequently criticised Bhownagree for being pro-British, urged him to pursue more modest reforms in Education.

So far, then, we have seen that in his parliamentary work Bhownagree was critical of the basis of the Indian taxation system and a radical reformer concerning educational policy and in terms of technological development. He was also a more active campaigner for justice than is generally appreciated. On 16th August, 1900, he protested in the House that qualified Indian medical staff were being denied promotion and were restricted to inferior posts with trivial salaries. Such racial considerations, he argued, were 'inconsistent with the traditions of British rule in India', and like Naoroji before him, he pointed out that they were against the assurances given by Queen Victoria in 1858 when she assumed the title of Empress of India. In 1904 Bhownagree campaigned against the Salt Tax because of its affect on the poor:

... I would point out that the very poorest classes, who feel the weight of this tax to be intolerable, are in a condition of existence which can be likened to that of those who seek Poor Law Relief in this country. By their toil and thrifty ways of living they contribute to the wealth of agricultural and trading interests, so that, after all, if not in coin, certainly in kind, they contribute to those sources from which the public revenue is derived and I think they should not be subjected to any further exaction by the State.

The following year, Bhownagree noted with great concern the dramatically rising number of refusals of appeals to the Secretary of State for India and argued that such access to justice must be seen to be available to the people of India. He campaigned for raising the tax threshold for India's poor. He expressed concern on seven parliamentary occasions about the hours of work, conditions and lack of educational opportunities or medical care for labourers' children on tea and other plantations. On a further five occasions

he sought also to protect the rights of lascars on P & O ships.

But the main campaign with which Bhowndree was associated was the cause of Indians in South Africa. He raised the subject forty-four times in Parliament, and it was the main theme which he pursued during his second spell in the House. So in 1904 one-third of all his interventions in Parliament were concerned with British Indians in South Africa. His basic argument was that Britain was not honouring the pledges which she had given regarding the equality of all subjects. The Indians had been forcibly expelled from the Transvaal region during the Boer War. Under the Germans, he argued, conditions had deteriorated, but when the British regained the territory conditions did not improve, indeed if anything they deteriorated yet further. For someone nicknamed 'Bow and agree' his condemnations were strong. He complained that Indians were treated differently from all other people in the colonies.

When in our own colonies, as well as in foreign countries, Indian subjects of Her Majesty - not only coolies, but merchants, men who had helped to make British settlements - were treated in a manner that was a disgrace to the Empire, were robbed of the rights that belonged to them not only as citizens of the Empire, but as human beings, without a word of protest from statesmen who have direction of foreign and colonial affairs, no wonder this talk of care for Indian interests was regarded as hollow by the whole community of India.

This speech was early in his campaign, delivered on 6th July, 1896. Some unpublished papers auctioned at Sothebys in 1990, and tracked down for me by Dr Rashna Writer, contain some interesting sidelights on Bhowndree's campaign. In a letter to Bhowndree dated 23rd August, 1897, the Prime Minister, Chamberlain, expressed sympathy for the Indian condition but went on 'it would be idle ... to seek to disguise the fact that there exists in Natal a strong feeling against the influx of immigrants from Asia', and basically he proposed doing nothing. Later in Parliament Bhowndree argued that if the British Government said it would not require the self-governing administration in Natal to give the British Indians justice

when they trampled underfoot the nobles traditions of the British constitution, then the right to govern India from here, would be seriously impaired not only in the eyes of the people of India, but in the sight of foreign nations.

In a parliamentary letter, published in 1906, Bhownagree said that what Indians asked for was:

abrogation of legislation that imposes disabilities on them because they wear a brown skin. The white inhabitants ... ask for drastic legislation against Indians, and they are strong. The Indians are weak. But the British Government has always been known to protect the weak.

He further argued that it would be 'injurious' to prestige in India

for the people to learn that more than three years after the State was incorporated within the King's dominions, the grievances of their fellow-countrymen not only remained unredressed, but owing largely to the enforcement of laws that were inoperative under the Boer regime, have been aggravated.

It is simply the result of prejudice, aye of hatred towards the people of India on the part of the settlers. It is unreasoning and uncalled for. (PD cxiv p. 554)

Bhownagree's remarks on South Africa were often commented on favourably by INC leaders, the Indian press and fellow politicians at Westminster, even by officials, but nothing was done, and he became deeply dissatisfied with the Government's excuses, while it indulged in vain regrets at the situation.

How, then, should Bhownagree the politician and the man be assessed? To answer that question adequately it is necessary to look briefly at the rest of his career, at his relations with other political figures and, not least, at his role in the Zoroastrian community in London.

It is worth noting that Bhownagree won a second consecutive term in Parliament, increasing his majority in his constituency, against the national trend in that election towards the Liberals. That is remarkable in a seat which had strong Liberal traditions, and which was Liberal both before and after Bhownagree's period as MP. The rest of Bhownagree's career is simply described. When he lost his parliamentary seat in 1905 he did not seek re-election, even though he was then only fifty-four years of age. He did not espouse any causes in India and although his obituary in *The Times* refers to his continued role in public life, no precise

illustrations are given. He did continue to practise at the Bar. The only time Bhownagree 'appeared' in the British public eye, as opposed to the Zoroastrian community, was in 1916. In order to counter German war propaganda about the British treatment of India, the Government sought a writer to present a positive image of British India and Bhownagree was commissioned to write a book, *The Verdict of India*, published by Hodder and Stoughton. Bhownagree rightly pointed out (pp. 19f) that his was not a lone Indian voice and that most people on the sub-continent supported the British war effort. Even the 'militant' leaders of the INC called off their campaign for the duration of the war and signed an address of loyalty and co-operation. But what is interesting for this assessment of the validity of the nickname 'Bow-and-agree' is that even in the context of expressing loyal support in the war, still Bhownagree makes clear some reservations about British rule: '...there have been many defects, avoidable and unavoidable ... legitimate aspirations ... remain to be fulfilled.' Nevertheless, he concluded with praise for the advantages of British rule, which he identified as justice, technology and investment in roads and railways.

What of Bhownagree's relations with other politicians? I have already alluded to his relations with Wacha, but more needs to be said. First it should be noted that there are indications that Bhownagree tried to build bridges with his opponent, at least in the early years. In a letter to Naoroji of 31st October, 1896, Wacha said that Bhownagree had asked to meet, but he had refused. It is worth quoting a passage from another letter from Wacha to Naoroji of 16th October, 1891, because of the light that it sheds not on Bhownagree but on Wacha. The letter comments on a speech made by Bhownagree at a Parsi New Year, Pateti, occasion:

The Pateti celebration was all right, but the community as a whole is rather offended by the fulsome speech in praise of Lord Harris by Bhownagree. You cannot gauge the depth of the incensed feeling for all the rubbish and nonsense he [Harris] has spoken. He is dead against the Parsis. He has all through continued to insult them. Even when Wadia's term in the Legislative Council expired he did not appoint another Parsi, but appointed Naylor. It is a shame, therefore, of Bhownagree to pose as an exponent of the community (which he is not) and deceive people into the belief that Harris was a friend of the Parsis. The general opinion is that he made the Pateti occasion an opportunity to promote his own selfish ends ... Everybody knows that Bhownagree is playing a high diplomatic game all for himself (Patwardhan II.i. 267)

This complaint that Harris did not nominate another Parsi to succeed Wadia may say more about Wacha's communal insularity, than it does about Bhownagree. Whether Wacha is justified in pretending to represent the Parsi community may be doubted. In the late twentieth century, Naoroji and his supporters are seen by most Parsis as heroes, but Bhownagree was not alone at the end of the nineteenth century in fearing that the INC was playing a dangerous political game and many of the Parsi (and wider Indian) 'establishment' feared that Naoroji and the INC might harm Parsi (or Indian) interests. Further, although Wacha may in one sense display communal insularity, not even the hagiographic account of Wacha in the Natesan collection of biographies, *Famous Parsis*, can find an example of Wacha actually working for the community. His claim to speak for the community may, therefore, be doubted. The records of the Western Indian Liberal Federation, when Wacha became its Secretary after he left the 'radical-led' INC in 1908, show him to have been a tetchy individual, unable to accept any criticism. In the passage quoted above Wacha also poured scorn on Malabari as a self-seeker, yet Malabari emerged as a leading radical in Indian social affairs, one the Parsi community is justly proud of. I am not, therefore, sure that we should simply accept Wacha's assessment of Bhownagree, even though it was determinative in INC circles. Bhownagree was a convinced imperialist, a view not acceptable to the INC then, nor one which commands much support at the end of the millennium. But he was not alone among Indian leaders in general, and Parsis in particular, in holding that view. Indeed, Naoroji himself only abandoned that position long after Bhownagree had left parliament. What is clear is the passion of the crusade Bhownagree conducted for justice within the boundaries of that empire, whether it was in taxes on the poor; the needs of plantation workers' children, lascars, or the British Indians in South Africa. Those campaigns have been generally ignored in published political assessments of Bhownagree.

Bhownagree's relations with Naoroji were less strained than they were with Wacha. Initially, Naoroji sought to restrain Wacha, but then asked him to undermine Bhownagree in the course of his tour of India in 1896/97, following his election to Parliament, notably through a published scrapbook of Indian newspaper cuttings criticising Bhownagree under the title *Bhavnagree Boom Exposed*. The book was published anonymously, but it is generally assumed to have been the work of Wacha. However, Naoroji refrained from attacking Bhownagree publicly. They collaborated in some public political concerns, for example the Indian Famine Union. But mostly

their cooperation was in private and is best evidenced in the records at Zoroastrian House. Bhowndegree chaired the banquet to honour Naoroji on his election. In 1899 and 1907 they again cooperated, this time in leading deputations to the Shah and to the Persian Chargé d'affaire pleading the cause of oppressed Zoroastrians in Iran. Those incidents might be set aside as evidence of collaboration, because of the importance of the cause for the sake of the religion (a subject pursued further below). Perhaps a more significant incident was on 10th June, 1907, when Naoroji as President of the London Zoroastrians led an appeal to Bhowndegree to withdraw his resignation on a matter of principle from the Managing Committee. Naoroji said:

I am sorry that Sir Muncherji proposes to resign ... He has done much active and valuable services (sic) to the Fund and I agree with the Hon'ble Secretary that Sir Muncherji be asked in the name of the Managing Committee to reconsider his resignation and to withdraw it.

After a vote expressing 'continued and unabated confidence' in him Bhowndegree withdrew his resignation. Later that year, Bhowndegree chaired the meeting that expressed deep appreciation of Naoroji's services when he was forced by ill-health to retire back to India. Bhowndegree succeeded Naoroji as President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe on 11th March, 1906, just as he had previously succeeded him in Parliament. Bhowndegree's work for those Funds will be discussed shortly, but the point here is that the Zoroastrian House records show that the two politicians could and did work together.

Bhowndegree's relations with two other politicians, Gandhi and Saklatvala, are even more interesting. The correspondence with Gandhi was found in the Sothebys' papers already referred to. Gandhi, as Secretary of the Indian community in South Africa, wrote to Bhowndegree on 6 August, 1898. The letter reads:

The Committee of the British Indians resident in Natal having heard of the work done by and on behalf of the British Indians in South Africa hereby places on record its thanks to Sir M.M. Bhowndegree KCIE MP., for the splendid support extended to the cause of the British Indians in South Africa and hereby directs the Hon. Secretary to convey this resolution to Sir M.M. Bhowndegree.

From 1895 Gandhi had been Bhowndegree's main informant on the situation

in South Africa and when he heard in 1903 that Bhownagree might be retiring from Parliament wrote to him to say ‘.we in South Africa had begun to rely upon the fruits of your continuous labours in the House on our behalf’. When Bhownagree lost his seat in 1905, Gandhi again wrote, tendering his sympathy and saying ‘It deprives us in South Africa of our greatest champion in the House of Commons’. Another unpublished letter from Naoroji is in the Zoroastrian House files and it suggests that Bhownagree did more quiet diplomatic work than is generally realised. In a scarcely legible letter he said:

You are doing much work privately for the British Indians in Africa. It may be somewhat... undesirable that this work should be made public. When... you think so could you let me know. I would ask [the newspaper] India to publish it.

Books generally mention Bhownagree’s work for this cause in passing, but none give him the credit he deserves, nor the recognition such influential politicians as Gandhi and Naoroji gave him.

There are more records of contacts between Bhownagree and Saklatvala. It was inevitable that the two Parsi MPs clashed: Bhownagree the knighted Conservative, *Saklatvala* who arrived in England in 1905 a Liberal, who soon moved through the Independent Labour Party to join the Communists (Squires; Saklatvala). Bhownagree, the staunch Parsi, could have been expected to oppose Saklatvala, who was known to have undergone Christian baptism and had married out of the community. There are many memories of Bhownagree ‘cutting’ Saklatvala at Zoroastrian House, and of other Parsis walking out in protest at this treatment. But in the summer of 1927 there was an exchange of letters between Saklatvala and the Association in London which led to an improvement in relations with Bhownagree. The Hon. Secretary, Spitama Cama, in a letter dated 14th July, wrote to Saklatvala:

... I greatly appreciate your sentiments about Sir Muncherji Bhownagree and I am forwarding your original letter to him. I do personally wish the past to be forgotten and peace and harmony reign among all parties here. We might disagree in politics and in the past Parsees have disagreed even with the policies of the great Dada of Hind [i.e. Naoroji], but in social life we all ought to make no difference.

The occasion for this, and the following, letter was Saklatvala’s wish to have the initiation ceremony of his children performed and supported by the

Association, even though, according to Parsi practice in India, that was forbidden because he had married out.² The initiation did take place and according to Indian newspaper reports Bhowndree was present and as President must have authorised it. Saklatvala then sought permission to be buried in the Zoroastrian cemetery at Brookwood, again something which the Bombay high priesthood would have forbidden. The problem was not only Saklatvala's out marriage, but also the fact that while at a Jesuit school in Bombay Saklatvala had been baptised. He assured the committee in London that he had only done this to see what it felt like, and swore:

I assure you emphatically that there is no truth whatever that I have ever renounced or given up my Zoroastrianism and I emphatically deny that I have accepted any other creed as my religion.³

Under Bhowndree's presidency, the Association gave Saklatvala permission for his remains to be interred at Brookwood.

Some interesting correspondence between Bhowndree and Saklatvala has come to light recently in the Zoroastrian House records, which I think show the Conservative MP in an interesting light. It is worth prefixing the following quotation by noting that the Communist MP had no sympathy with the religious ties of Gandhi. In the middle of Saklatvala's last parliamentary campaign, in Glasgow in 1930, he wrote to Bhowndree excusing himself

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2. Committee Correspondence file, 31st October, 1927, and see also 20th July, 1928. A Test Case in the Bombay High Court in 1906 (see Writer 1994: pp. 129-49) had decreed that the offspring of a male Parsi married out could be initiated, unlike the offspring of an intermarried Parsi female, because the community was basically a patrilineal group. But, in practice few priests then and now perform the naujote of any intermarried Parsi. However, Malcolm Deboo has drawn my attention to a letter from Sir J.J. Modi, as Secretary of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, dated 28th August, 1923 stating that they would consign the bodies of the offspring of the children of intermarried Parsi males. That is unlikely to have been done if the children had not undergone initiation. The letter therefore suggests that more such initiations took place than most of the available records indicate.
 3. *The Times* Report, 5th July, 1928. Association Annual Report, 1928-9. I am grateful to Malcolm Deboo for drawing my attention to this incident.

from events at Zoroastrian House the following week and said:

My politics and standards of fights are otherwise at pole's end from yours, yet there are several factors that often make me think of you. When you first started breaking the Indian superstition that all Liberals are really liberal and all Conservatives were cruel you were considered the only 'fool among all wise men'! After 35 years the superstition still lingers. Now in Labour we have worse Impostors even than in Liberals, and in so called Left Wing I.L. [Independent Labour] Party we reach the maximum of political hypocrisy of present day. My last few years are spent in fighting this error, if injustice and oppression are to be fought. Our old-fashioned countrymen still adhere to this superstition. Gandhi seriously replies to Fenner Brockway, and he and old Punditji waste their time in giving long interviews to Slocomb. What a leg-pulling all round! Or is it the case of Birds of the same feather? When in between my whirlwind campaign I give thought to these things, I think of you.

In the concluding sentence Saklatvala acknowledges that in 'word and spirit my politics will be unacceptable to you'.

Bhownagree replied within days in what is a reasonably gracious letter, which begins with a recognition of the labour of writing letters during an election campaign and went on:

The couple of generations that have elapsed since my notions of men and matters political were taking shape, have not shaken the foundations of my beliefs; and as I have never cared to shift them in accordance with popular, that is mob, moods, I have been content to look on while groups of favourite leaders have enjoyed their transient day of fame, and passed into oblivion, or been surpassed by others of their kind, feeling firm in the faith that I, or rather my beliefs (for it is not persons, but principles that live) shall be in some remote future justified ... I have seen your election literature. It is not new to me. The goal being the same, namely the welfare of India, it is only in the methods of attaining it, lies the difference.

It is interesting to note that Bhownagree's own private - for this was very private correspondence - self perception was that he was someone who refused to court popularity. Also of obvious importance is his emphasis on the welfare of India. He expressed similar views on a more public, but hitherto unpublished, occasion. On 27th July, 1927, the London Parsi community held a function to honour him. They had tried to arrange such a function on previous occasions and each time he had blocked the plans. This

time he was not told until it was too late to stop the proceedings. There are two passages in his reply to the toast which have political interest. On his time in Parliament he said:

... in respect of my career in another place, it was a privilege which I have always cherished, to follow - doubtless at a long distance and by methods which, in spite of some of them seemingly different, were yet designed to arrive at the same goal - the course pursued by that venerable patriot of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, whose friendship I had the honour to enjoy from early years.

He then went on to talk about relations with other communities in India:

... while thankful for the security and prosperity enjoyed under the Pax Britannica, it has ever been the aspiration of the Parsee race to work hand in hand with Hindu and Mahommedan compatriots for the development and wellbeing of the common mother-land of them all. ... I express the conviction that when the tasty dish of a common nationhood which is now in process of preparation is ripe for digestion, there will be detected in it a savour of that pinch of salt and spoonful of a sauce which the Parsees are pouring into it. (*Presentation of an address and portrait to Sir M.M. Bhownagree by his friends and admirers*, 1928, pp.4f)

There are several relevant points in this episode. Whereas Wacha represented Bhownagree as wholly self-seeking, it is worth noting that Bhownagree had several times stopped a function to honour him. In political terms, his remarks are interesting in that although he and Naoroji pursued different courses, their goal was the same. Further, he looked forward to the multi-religious mixture and the wellbeing of the common motherland, and in the 1920s Bhownagree was positive about a common nationhood.

Almost the last piece in the jigsaw puzzle of Bhownagree's literary portrait is his work as President of the Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe. What sort of man does that suggest he was? Within a year of succeeding Naoroji as President, Bhownagree had the parliamentary lawyers, Bull and Bull, draw up legal documents, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, which made the Zoroastrians a properly constituted Association instead of the rather informal body it had been. The aims were roughly similar to those outlined in the original agreement of 1861, namely:

charitable help with Zoroastrian funerals in Britain; support for indigent Parsis; money for academic research on, and purchase of books about, Zoroastrianism. But under Bhownagree's guidance the Aims and Objectives extended the caring role of the Association and reiterated the need for a Zoroastrian House. Later correspondence makes it clear that the Parsi establishment in Bombay, the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, was unhappy about some of these developments, fearing in particular that the formal constitution of the Association was displaying undue independence from the traditional Indian authorities, despite the fact that Bhownagree had taken care to consult, not least on issues related to Saklatvala's children. Bhownagree also set about three further reforms.

First, he developed a social atmosphere among Parsis, organising not only steamer trips on the river but also splendid banquets at such places as the Ritz and Criterion restaurants, to which he invited not only Parsis but also some leading social figures such as Field Marshal, the Earl and Countess Haig, the Rt. Hon. Lord Ampthill, with whom he had corresponded with his petition to Downing Street about South African Indians, various MPs, Muslim leaders and a Maharajah as well as the occasional western academic. In such activities, Bhownagree was not only providing a social life, he was also proclaiming to the leadership of British society that the Parsis were not poor low caste people like the lascars he campaigned for, nor the indigent, undesirable immigrants whose entry to Britain Parliament was then seeking to ban. Bhownagree, therefore, sought to establish both a community spirit and an outside image of a sophisticated body of people.

Second, under his presidency the Association was more active than it had been under Naoroji in searching out, and aiding, its members who had fallen on hard times, especially during the slump and the General Strike of the 1920s. One incident which occurred during that decade may illustrate the general point. A Parsi lady from Bombay sought help in tracing her father in England. He was known to have been in the Manchester area so, under Bhownagree's presidency, the Association sent letters to the Superintendent of the Union Workhouse Hospital in Manchester, to Withington Hospital in Chorlton, Hope Hospital in Salford; and Salford Union Infirmary in Pendleton. The letter said:

I beg to point out that the gentleman referred to is a Parsee residing in England for nearly 60 years, and although as you say 'coloured' he is whiter than a good

European in every respect.

Parsis, of course, commonly then and now, assert that they are not really coloured. The search was successful. Mr 'X' was traced, the Association gave him £50 plus second class fare to Bombay. The need for such help increased as the slump worsened.

The third development in the Association under Bhowmagree was the search for a house. First, one was leased in Cromwell Road, where Bhowmagree lived, and then one was purchased in Kensington in 1929. The allocation of rooms in the Kensington House is an interesting reflection of the role Bhowmagree and the committee saw it having. It was in part a Parsi club, with a billiards room and a room for card games. It had a social function in that it had guest rooms so that it could be a hostel for needy Parsis or for those passing through London. It was a sort of dharmshala.

The new Zoroastrian House was also something of a ritual centre, for it had a prayer room. Bhowmagree was concerned not simply with social matters, but also with Zoroastrianism. It was under his presidency that the first Naujote was performed in the diaspora. Dastur M.N. Dhalla performed the naujote of Goolcheher R.R. Desai, on 30th January, 1915, at Caxton Hall (Dharukhanawala 1939: 392). He also held discussions about the employment of a priest in London, specifically the appointment of Sir Jivanji Modi. The suggestion had already been made during the period of Naoroji's office, and was raised again with the offer of Bai Ruttanbai Edalji Bamji of Rs 30,000 in memory of her late brother, J. N. Tata, for both a Fire Temple and a priest. Bhowmagree gratefully declined because such a sum would not provide an adequate corpus and a room was set aside in the new building for her son (Mody 1932: 18). He was more successful in his work on behalf of Zoroastrians in Iran. He was also involved, during Naoroji's presidency, with the rebuilding of the sagri at the Zoroastrian cemetery at Brookwood, and with the building of N.M. Wadia mausoleum in the shape of Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae and the planting of a Persian-style garden with cypress trees. Another Zoroastrian concern which concerned him on several occasions was the plight of the Iranian Zoroastrians. He supported initiatives by Naoroji, and initiated them himself, in 1899 (with Naoroji,) 1907 and 1919 (for the earlier petitions see Hinnells 1996). On the last occasion the Zoroastrians in London was received by the Shah at the Persian Legation, on the 2nd

November. They presented him with an illuminated address of welcome in a silver casket which read

From time to time in the past the lot of our co-religionists at Yedz and in other parts of your Dominion has been made unhappy and harassing by want of tolerance on the part of neighbours among whom they form a relatively small minority. Our Association and Representative Parsee Bodies in India had to bring these considerations to the notice of the Persian Authorities and especially your Grandfather, the Shah Nuzffer-ud Din on his visit to Europe in 1900, through the kindly offices of your Minister in London ... Since then their lot has been steadily ameliorated, and our fraternal in their welfare permits the confident assurance that under the constitutional reign of Your Majesty they will receive equity of opportunity and treatment with all other classes of your subjects, and will suffer no civil or religious disabilities, thus strengthening the attachment to your throne and person of one of the most loyal and devoted sections of your Empire.

To which the Shah replied:

I am glad to receive you gentlemen, as the Representatives of the Parsees who, as you have well said, remind us of the glorious tradition of the Fatherland.... It has always been my aim to promote the long-standing relations of unalloyed friendship existing between Persia and Great Britain, and I am gratified at the pleasing opportunity offered to me to come over here with the object of strengthening these ancient ties to the mutual advantage of the two Empires. I have always had at heart the well being of my Parsee subjects whose loyalty to my Throne I much appreciate. I admire their particular qualities of love for the Fatherland, intelligence, probity, perseverance, laboriousness, all of which fit them to contribute very effectively to the common task of increasing the prosperity of the country. Although the constitutional laws of Persia guarantee to the Parsee their full rights as Persian citizens, I am happy to assure you, gentlemen, that their welfare will ever form the object of my personal solicitude.

It is difficult to say exactly what impact such diplomatic courtesies had on Persian policy. Clearly, much of what was said was official politeness, and drafted by an aide. However, the fact that the Shah was seeking good Anglo-Persian relations probably means that the clear indication of support of people of social distinction in London who were supporters of the Iranian Zoroastrians could only work to their advantage. This, it may be assumed, was reinforced by the Shah's public acknowledgement of the Zoroastrian contribution to the Fatherland. The Zoroastrians of Yazd certainly considered

the approach helpful, for they wrote to Bhowndree on 25th February, 1920 saying 'With high sense of gratitude we learn that the Members of the Association have been kind enough to make in that address mention of their co-religionists in Persia, thereby pleading their cause and suggesting the means by which to bring about their welfare and safety.' The Association in London also placed on record its appreciation of Bhowndree's work in this matter to thank him for what he did. This letter of thanks from Yazd was not the first time the Iranian Zoroastrians had thanked Bhowndree for his political work on their behalf. In a letter dated 19th April, 1909, no less a person than Arbab Kaykhosraw Shah Rokh Kermani (his spelling of his name in the letter) wrote to Bhowndree 'Not a minute one of the Zoroastrian of Persia forget to ask God Almighty to increase your successions prosperity and benevolence, from whom I am most really one of them. Because each step your Excellency advances in High ranks, the effects is our happy day and successions here.' Despite the difficulties with writing in English, it is clear that the prominent Iranian Zoroastrian, who was to become a member of the Iranian parliament, was grateful to Bhowndree, whose prominence and work he saw as helpful to his fellow Zoroastrians in the Fatherland. Only seven years later they were petitioning a new Shah after the demise of the Qajar dynasty and the emergence of Reza Shah. Bhowndree had at first expressed doubts about this approach. His concern was that by approaching a new dynasty, whose future was not yet clear, they might in the longer term make the position of their co-religionists vulnerable, if for example there was a counter-revolution. The Committee persuaded him to go ahead and the following Resolution was sent with his name at the head of the list of signatories. The annual Report for 1925-26 includes the text of a Resolution inscribed on vellum which read:

That at this, the first Meeting of the Committee of the Parsee Association of Europe, London, since the Coronation of His Imperial Majesty Riza Shah Pahlevi as Shah-n-Shah of Persia, the Committee beg leave to convey their congratulations upon his accession. It is their fervent prayer that he may reign long and prosperously over the country with which they have cherished ancestral associations and whose peoples include some thousands of their co-religionists. They rejoice in the many evidences of virility, justice and wise statesmanship which was afforded by His Majesty during the years of his Prime Ministership. They trace to this cause in large measure the restoration of good order and prosperity to the country, and in particular they beg to convey, with their felicitation, warm appreciation of the paternal interest His Majesty has shown in the welfare of their fellow Zoroastrians in Iran.

In his written reply the Shah assured the Zoroastrians:

...We deeply appreciate the sentiments and views therein expressed, and trust and assure you that by the Grace of Almighty God, OUR desires and thoughts which WE have long cherished will be realised to complete the happiness and welfare of this ancient country.

In short, what Bhownagree did was to transform the informal burial club which he had inherited from Naoroji into a reasonably thriving community. He established the prototype infrastructure which prefigured, in the 1920s, the sort of community network and resources which other diaspora Asian groups developed in the late 1960s and 70s. He sought to develop a social dimension, a caring role, a ritual context and a political visibility for his community. Bhownagree can be legitimately presented as a pioneer and innovator among western Asian leaders.

How may we assess him as a person? During his presidency there was conflict with a student-led body, the Parsi Social Union. In part its members felt that he was catering only for the well-to-do and neglecting impecunious students. There may also have been an element of reacting against him personally, for the loyal Association Secretary did once comment that Bhownagree was 'a little high handed'. Yet Bhownagree was among those who set up the first Zoroastrian building in Britain - a hostel for Parsi students in Edinburgh in 1909, and the records contain testaments to the work he did for students.

His relations with Saklatvala also shed light on his personality. Although it was Saklatvala who took the initiative in re-establishing relations, Bhownagree responded positively both with regard to Saklatvala's childrens' initiation and the Communist MP's own funeral wishes. The private correspondence regarding political matters which I quoted also suggests that Bhownagree was more able to set aside political differences than his opponent, Wacha, had ever been. An interesting light is cast on his community work by the records, written and oral, of a court case Bhownagree was compelled to bring on behalf of the Association against Dr Ardeshir D. Jilla, a relatively newly settled London Parsi, and Erackshaw R. Heerjibedin, the editor and owner of the *Kaiser-i-Hind* newspaper in Bombay. The latter had published Jilla's frequent and personal attacks on the Association and its

President, Bhowndree. He alleged the Association's functions were a 'vanity show', that partiality was shown in appointing officers, and that the President was autocratic and would not be guided by 'intrepid fresh spirits' like himself. He described the reports as tomfoolery and hypocrisy, saying how they should reform rituals and establish a fire temple. The fundamental charge was that the Association under Bhowndree had failed properly and honestly to carry out the objects for which it was formed. He attacked the committee for disposing of the House in Cromwell Road, charging them with 'short sighted selfishness', with the result that 'what promised to be an elegant centre for the growth and nurture of Parsee activity in matters educational and social was thoughtlessly scrapped and the future prospects and career of many a brilliant young man indirectly wafted to the wind'. In practice of course, Cromwell Road was poorly attended and expensive to run. Jilla also criticised the Committee for not helping some individual Parsis, but they were people unknown to the Association, people who had never sought help. In the end Jilla did not offer a defence and the court found against him. The Association was awarded £1,000 libel damages, and Jilla was to pay the costs. The Association records indicate that Jilla said he was unable to pay the damages, and the family memory is that Bhowndree accepted he could not do so, and did not pursue the money question, but was content with the vindication in court.

Bhowndree is a more complex figure than historians have previously recognised. What his critics have failed to acknowledge is that Bhowndree changed his political stance over his time in Parliament. The crucial turning point appears to have been his 1896-97 visit to India when I suspect he was deeply shaken by the depth and breadth of the opposition he encountered. The sharpness of his criticisms of Wedderburn and the INC thereafter softened and his inquisitorial attitude to Government policy increased. These trends were even more apparent in his second spell as an MP following his re-election in 1900. I have elsewhere sought to trace the changing position of Naoroji during his political career (Hinnells 1992), but he is remembered for his later more radical stance. Bhowndree, in contrast, is remembered for his earlier, less questioning phase, a phase perpetuated in the minds of historians by the vitriolic campaign of Wacha, a man, it seems to me, more insular in some ways than Bhowndree, yet who did little for his community and a man less willing to change than Bhowndree. His other vocal critic, Pherozeshah Mehta, for all his brilliant achievement in Bombay politics, was not a man who readily accepted opposing points of view. The commentators on

Bhownagree's work in the early years of the twentieth century found more to commend, for example his work in South Africa, than they had in the previous decade when Wacha and Mehta were so vocal. Bhownagree was not as isolated in India as Wacha would have his readers believe, for he was supported by the merchant classes as represented by Sir Dinshah Petit and Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, rather than by the intelligentsia, but it is the latter group which has left most records. Bhownagree was also supported by such 'moderate' politicians as Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney and Sir Pheroze Sethna but they did not belong to the eventual 'winners,' the I.N.C. and their views have been neglected by later writers. Similarly, the conservative Indian press, for example *The Hindu Patriot*, the *Muslim Chronicle* and the *Rast Goftar*, supported Bhownagree. What all his critics, and previous academic writers have totally neglected is the insights which can be gained into his personality and principles indicated in the records of Zoroastrian House in London. One feature of his personality which I think has been particularly overlooked is his willingness to listen to an opposite point of view and change his position as he did with Saklatvala, and over the last of the petitions to the Shah. To change one's mind in the light of contrary points of view can be the sign of a 'big person,' as Bhownagree appears to have been.

It is worth drawing to close with some of the tributes paid to Bhownagree, as counter to the criticisms so often levelled against him. Sir Pheroze Sethna paid fulsome tribute to him during a visit to Zoroastrian House when in Britain for the Round Table Conference. The Annual report for 1930-31 records:

The Honourable Sir Pheroze Sethna, C.I.E. then rising to propose a vote of thanks to the Chairman, dwelt on his personal reminiscences of more than a quarter-century ago, previous to which Sir Muncherji was regarded as the one to whom not only their Community, but their countrymen looked for advice, guidance and help, in difficult situations. The constitutional security of the Association and its funds were his conception, and it was the confidence which he had inspired in the Community, and especially among its leaders, which to his certain knowledge had induced large-hearted benefactors like Sir Dhunjibhoy and Lady Bomanji to endow the centre in which they met... It is likely the younger members amongst them who are mostly temporary residents here, may not be aware of the influence Sir Mancherji had wielded in England in the last two generations in the interests of the community: on them as well as on others, if any there be, who did not realise it, he would strongly impress the advice to rely on his guidance and experienced counsel at all times.

In her vote of thanks, Lady Bomanji confirmed:

from personal knowledge... that it was owing to the confidence in Sir Mancherji's genuine interest in the Community's welfare and to his personal supervision over the Association's affairs that the large donations, which had made possible the establishment of the Centre.

Speeches at Memorial meetings and Obituaries are not usually reliable guides to a person's achievements, because the circumstances make them hagiographic. However, it is worth quoting from both Lady Bomanji's speech at the Memorial meeting held at Zoroastrian House on Nov. 26, 1933, and two pieces from *The Times*. Lady Bomanji said that:

His active connection with the Association was so pronounced, and of such long standing, that, to quote Mr Shapurji Saklatvala, 'he was an institution in himself' - in fact, the mainstay and moving spirit of the Parsee Association of Europe.

The successful steering of this body through many vicissitudes by, and the magnet personality of, this great little man, had contributed in no uncertain manner to induce charitably inclined Zoroastrians to augment its funds from mere insignificance 40 years ago, to its present magnitude of £20,000 at his death.

The Times obituary commented that:

Bhownagree was of a different mould to either of his compatriots [Naoroji and Saklatvala] and possessed a versatility they lacked. He had a practical outlook, and with great tenacity of purpose there was nothing quixotic or crusading in his temperament...during his ten year membership [of Parliament] he impressed the House by the vigour and eloquence of his speeches on Indian subjects ... It will always be to his credit that he originated and unflaggingly maintained, in and out of the House, the struggle against the disabilities of Indians in South Africa and other overseas possessions of the Crown. Bhownagree was also one of the first Indians to press forward the need of technical and vocational education. (15th November, 1933)

Not even this obituary does justice to Bhownagree, and specifically to his reforming and innovatory works as shown by his early work for female

education, the reforming constitution of Bhavnagar, his campaigns for the poor in India with the Salt Tax, or for British labourers' children, or the lascars. These campaigns, his work in the Zoroastrian community, and the campaigns noted by *The Times*, show him to have been a man with a vision for change and reform, undoubtedly a figure worthy of more respect than historians, or the Parsi community, have shown him. But a scrap of information in another column of *The Times*, regarding his memorial service on 21st November, 1933, shows perhaps that he was an even lonelier and sadder figure than has been appreciated. Early in this paper I referred to the separation from his wife and children who remained in Bombay, to his son's death and to Bhownagree's depression following the death of his sister, a bereavement which he said in a letter to Sir George Birdwood, dated 28th December, 1888 (preserved in the India Office Library), had made him consider joining a religious community, but his faith in Zoroastrianism stood in the way. *The Times* reports that Bhownagree's memorial service was held at St Luke's Church, Radcliffe Square, where Bhownagree had paid for a window in his sister's memory. In his sermon during the service the vicar commented that Bhownagree had been a regular worshipper there for thirty-five years, since 1898. Bhownagree's grand-daughter explains that he did this because there was no place in Britain for a Zoroastrian to worship, but that he continued to wear his sacred shirt and cord, the *sudre* and *kusti*, throughout his life and to say his Avestan prayers. It was, presumably, this awareness of the lack of any religious provision for Zoroastrians which made him work for a Zoroastrian building with a prayer room, in order that those who came after him need not face the problems of a religious vacuum as he had. It was, perhaps, because of his own difficulties that he could be sympathetic towards Saklatvala. Not only have writers and the community neglected Bhownagree the political and community reformer, the campaigner for the welfare of the Indian motherland, the lawyer whose skills served his community well. They have also failed to appreciate Bhownagree the religious man.

There is much in the Bhownagree story which strikes a chord with current debates in the Parsi community, about the naujotes of the children of intermarried Zoroastrians, the funerals of the intermarried, the naujotes of people who have been baptised and the devotional needs of overseas Zoroastrians. Bhownagree was far more independent in his thinking than any writers have acknowledged. He was prepared to stand against contemporary heroes, like Wacha and even Naorji, when he thought that they were wrong. He was prepared to oppose his own political party at Westminster over such

issues as taxation or the needs of labourers' children and the lascars; he was willing to question in public the actions of his government, for example on South Africa; he transformed the Zoroastrian Association; he was prepared to ignore the antagonism of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat towards the formal incorporation of the Association, a move which Zoroastrian House Records show nearly lost Bombay financial support during the Slump of the 1920s. He dramatically expanded the caring role of the Association. Parsis and academic historians alike, have done Bhownagree a grave injustice.

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16 The Modern Zoroastrian Diaspora

The documented history of the (Parsi) Zoroastrian diaspora across India, to East Asia, Africa and the 'West' (mostly to Britain, America and Canada) stretches back to the mid-eighteenth century. It therefore provides a longer record of the 'trajectory' of the pattern of settlement of an Asian community than is available for any other group from the subcontinent. This chapter seeks to provide the first historical overview of this global dispersion, to identify the characteristic features of the various communities and to reflect on the impact of international migration on the preservation of traditions. Among the most important sources¹ of evidence are two recent worldwide

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1. This chapter is based on research conducted between 1984 and 1990 for the Katrak lectures at the University of Oxford, the publication of which is in preparation. The following resources were utilised: (i) the archives of each community listed (minute books of meetings, annual general meetings, correspondence files, etc); (ii) all the books, pamphlets, newsletters and other public documents produced in the various centres; (iii) a survey questionnaire distributed within each community (response rates varied from 30 per cent in East Africa to 95 per cent in Sydney and Hong Kong, yielding a total of 1700 responses). In this short paper it will be possible only to offer a general picture painted with broad brush-strokes; (iv) A programme of 245 interviews was conducted in Britain as a follow-up to the postal survey, mostly by my research assistant, Dr Rashna Writer. It is both a pleasure and a duty to record my gratitude to the various funding bodies behind this research: the Universities of Hong Kong, Manchester and Oxford; the British Academy; the Spalding Trusts; the World Zarathustrian Trust Funds; and individual Parsi sponsors, Tahemton Aresh, Minoos Treasuraywala and the Rivetna family. I learned more from the numerous families I lived with over the years, and from Dr Writer, than from all the records. The computer analysis of the survey data would not have been possible without the help of the whole Mehta family, especially Gillian, and the support of the Manchester University Regional Computer Centre. Archival research would not have been possible without the permission, indeed active

questionnaires conducted among Parsis about their practices and attitudes.

A Brief History of the Zoroastrian Diaspora

The Zoroastrian diaspora began in the sixth century BCE when the Achaemenids established a large empire stretching from North India to Anatolia, Israel and Egypt. Officials and tradesmen travelled throughout the empire and beyond. Another major turning point was the escape into exile of Zoroastrians, oppressed under Islamic rule in their Iranian homeland, who settled in north-west India in the tenth century CE, thus establishing the Parsi (or Persian) community. That community settled first in Gujarat and from the seventeenth century migrated in increasing numbers to Bombay.² This chapter is concerned with subsequent travels.

The first record of an overseas sojourn related to Naoroji Rustomji who travelled alone to Britain in 1723, to protest to the Court of Directors of the East India Company against unjust treatment by Company officials in Bombay. The Court found in his favour and he returned to Bombay a

encouragement, of the Committees of the Zoroastrian Associations in Chicago, Hong Kong, Houston, Karachi, Lahore, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, Melbourne (Victoria), Mombasa, Nairobi, New York, Sydney, Toronto, Vancouver (British Columbia), Zanzibar. In Bombay I worked mainly in the offices of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, Zoroastrian Studies, Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay University Library, and of various political and social bodies (e.g. Parsi Association, Western Liberal Federation, Masina Hospital) and received help from the editors and records of the magazine *Parsiana*, the newspapers *Kaiser-i-Hind*, and *Bombay Samachar*. But above all I am indebted in India to my friend and patient collaborator, Dastur Dr K.M. JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram, Bombay, for his advice, guidance and help in untold ways for 20 years.

2. The best single-volume history of Zoroastrianism is M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices* (Routledge, 1979) with an associated volume of translated texts covering the various periods, *Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Manchester University Press, 1984). There is an extensive commentary on publications relating to the Parsis in J. Hinnells, 'The Parsis: a bibliographical survey', *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, III, 1980, pp.100-49.

wealthier man - and an influential one, for he used his 18 months in Britain to develop contacts.³ His visit was important because it suggested to Bombay Parsis that there were considerable benefits to be gained from visits to Britain. He came and returned alone (apart from servants to prepare his food according to the purity laws) and so there is no suggestion of a 'community'.

The first Parsi settlement abroad was in the China Seas. Hirji Jivanji Readymoney migrated in 1756 but others came and stayed in small 'groups' from the 1770s (Readymoneys, Edulkakas and Camas). The oldest grave is in Macau, dated 1829. From the 1830s and 1840s one can begin to refer to 'communities': the Canton Zoroastrian Association was started on 19th September, 1845; the Shanghai Association on 18th March, 1854, and a building was opened in Hong Kong in 1861. Parsis came mostly to import opium and export tea, silks and spices. They moved into real estate and banking. The communities in China were expelled after the Communist revolution: some returned to India, others joined the Hong Kong community. They had already established a reputation there for charity, for example by starting Hong Kong university (Sir Homi Mody), a TB sanatorium and a rest home for sailors. As 1997 approaches the Parsi community has built a new tower block, including a community hall to replace the old one, as an act of faith in the future. In the early 1990s there are approximately 150 Parsis in the colony, mostly in business but one or two professionals (doctors, lawyers). Although the community makes regular charitable donations to local groups, there is little interaction either with the Indian or the Chinese societies (apart from the social contacts arising through business). The ties back to India are reasonably close. The prayer room and funeral ground are maintained by a full-time priest, and with regular weekly dinners the community is tightly knit.⁴

The 1830s and 1840s were decades of considerable Parsi overseas trade,

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3. See J. Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, Oxford, 1996, ch. 2 and M.S. Commissariat, 'The first Parsi in England (1724-25); Nowroji Rustom Manek of Surat and his relations with the East India Company', *M.P. Khareghat Memorial Volume* (editor not stated) (Bombay, 1953) I, pp.221-58.
 4. See J. Hinnells, *The Modern Zoroastrian Diaspora*, Katrak lectures, OUP (in preparation). See also K.N. Vaid, *The Overseas Indian Community in Hong Kong* (University of Hong Kong, 1972).

travel and settlement in Sind, Aden, East Africa and Britain. They began to trade in Sind from the 1820s, but numbers and wealth grew after the Afghan wars in 1839 when various Parsis (for example the Dinshaw, Minwalla and Ghadially families) travelled as brokers, agents and suppliers to the British. They moved into real estate and were noted for charitable work, particularly in the fields of education and medicine. The community there has built two temples, two schools, two Towers of Silence (*daxmas*), housing colonies, hospitals and dispensaries, a social centre and a library - despite the fact that at their numerical 'peak' (1911-40) they numbered only 4000-5000. Partition and the establishment of the Muslim state of Pakistan raised the concerns of some because of their historical memories of persecution. Responding to that fear, but even more to the attractions of education and career development in the West, a number migrated in the 1960s and 1970s so that in the 1990s there are only approximately 3000 left. The low birthrate, delayed marriage and the typical longevity of the Parsis in Pakistan mean that it is an ageing and numerically declining community. Despite the fears following 1947, Parsis have thus far flourished in Pakistan. Jinnah's wife, mentor and doctor were all Parsis. The early cabinet meetings were held in a Parsi hotel, the owner of which (Dinshah Avarai) went on to own the Lahore Hilton hotel and its equivalent in Karachi. His son became an MP in Islamabad, and several Parsis have held high government office: in the 1940s a Parsi was Mayor of Karachi (Mehta); in the 1980s a Parsi (Marker) was ambassador in Paris, Washington and then at the United Nations. Parsis have also held one of the highest law posts in the country and senior military positions. In broad terms the community is affluent, tightly knit and, being conscious of the high profile of Islam, they perceive a religious gulf between themselves and the majority population. As mosque attendance is common, so also temple attendance among Parsis is high, not least among the young, for being religious is not considered socially unacceptable among peers. Intermarriage is rare, for marriage to a Muslim would inevitably mean conversion to Islam. Some Pakistan Parsis fear for the future if Pakistan becomes militantly Islamic, particularly in the smaller communities, for example Lahore, rather than in cosmopolitan Karachi where Parsis exist in greater numbers and have the material resources and influence to support each other.⁵

5. The most informed account of the early history in Karachi is J.F. Punthakey, *The Karachi Zoroastrian calendar* (English translation by F.H. Punthakey, Karachi, 1989). The demographic picture as seen in the 1970s is related in E.F.

Aden developed as a port in the mid-nineteenth century and became important as a coaling station for steamers passing through the (new) Suez canal en route for the Indian Ocean and beyond. The pioneering Parsi family was the Dinshahs, or as they became known, the Adenwallas. Cowasji (arrived 1845) brought technical innovation to the port: a condenser to convert seawater into drinking water, an ice machine and a floating dock. An agent for British companies, Cowasji also began his own shipping line dealing with East Africa. His son, Hormusjee, developed further the family shipping business and diplomatic standing before retiring in 1920, aged 63, to Bombay, where he became influential in Parsi community and national politics. (He was a member of the Western Indian Liberal Federation, a conservative body with some Tory links.) In Aden the Dinshahs undertook considerable charitable work (educational, religious and medical, both communal and inter-communal) and they dominated the Parsi community, which grew to about 250 persons. In 1884 the Dinshahs expanded into East Africa, which became a more important Parsi centre, although a dwindling community remained in Aden until 1976 when the sacred temple fire was moved to Bombay. In this context, the significance of the Aden group is twofold: it exemplifies the business expansion of the community's interests and illustrates their technical innovation and their charitable activities; and it became an important stepping-stone in Parsi history for the community's move to East Africa.⁶

Whereas most Parsis went to Aden only for their working life and retired to Bombay, in East Africa (especially in the twentieth century) more people settled and reared their families. 'Africanisation' in the 1960s drove most Parsis from the region onwards to Britain (and a few to Canada). These twice-migrants became an important element in other communities and therefore merit more attention than the Aden community. Indian traders had a tradition of trade in East Africa and became a crucial element in Zanzibar,

Gustafson, 'A demographic dilemma: the Parsis of Karachi', *Social Biology*, xvi, pp.115-27.

6. The only items published on Aden are the biography of Hormusjee by A.N. Joshi, *Life and Times of Sir Homusjee C. Dinshaw* (Bombay, 1939) and an article in the popular Parsi magazine, *Parsiana* (January, 1977), pp. 18ff.

which came under increasing British control in the nineteenth century and was 'administered' mainly through Bombay. This connection, plus the time spent in exile in Bombay by Barghash before he came to power in 1870, resulted in a number of Parsis moving to the 'emerald isle' of Zanzibar. Some were professionals, others came as engineers, but most came as businessmen. When the Cowasjis came they built a fire temple - a full-time priest had already been funded - and with a funeral ground the Association (which had been formed in 1875) had the physical resources to maintain a religious life. The Zanzibar community reached its numerical peak after the Second World War but diminished with the revolution of the 1960s. In the 1990s only two Parsi families remained.

From 1870 Parsis began to settle on the mainland of East Africa, first in Mombasa and then at the turn of the century with the opening up of the East African railways they moved to the new centre of Nairobi. The two earliest leading figures were builders and architects, responsible for ports, law courts, treasury buildings, customs house, post office and banks. Lawyers, surveyors, engineers and doctors were the main professions pursued by Parsis in the early years in Kenya; more were businessmen and suppliers to the British. There is no evidence of any manual labourers among these Parsi settlers. Initially men came alone and returned to their families in India at the end of their employment, although occasional visits back to India were possible. An Association was formed in Mombasa from approximately 1897 and in Nairobi from about 1902 (when burial land was purchased). No temple was built on the mainland, although there was a community hall, with prayer room, and accommodation in Mombasa (which also had a priest from 1909), but Nairobi has not developed the same resources. The two centres have shared the services of the priest, but have not interacted a great deal otherwise. Both reached their numerical peak (c. 300 persons in each) after the Second World War, but diminished in the 1960s and at the start of the 1990s there are about 50 Zoroastrians in each city.

In none of these three East African centres have Parsis achieved the political and diplomatic status they did in Sind or Aden. Parsis in East Africa have remained a distinct community, mixing little with 'whites' or Indians and hardly at all with the majority 'black' population. Although they have not been able to carry out the full liturgical practices, lacking a fully consecrated temple and team of priests, nevertheless they have, as a distinct community, been reasonably free of 'acculturating' influences and can in some senses be

seen as islands of nineteenth century attitudes and practice. When the Zanzibar revolution and the Africanisation programme in the 1960s caused most to migrate they took with them this traditional mental framework.⁷

The history of the Zoroastrian community in Britain is more fully documented than that of other communities (Zoroastrian or South Asian).⁸ It has a number of distinctive features. From the middle of the nineteenth century many came for education. Some travellers were businessmen who wanted to see the fruits of the industrial revolution at first hand in London, in the textile industry in Manchester and the port of Liverpool. Others were students, mostly coming for Law (in London) and Medicine (in both Edinburgh and London). Some also came simply for business - the first Indian firm established in Britain was set up in London and Liverpool in 1855. The number of visitors was such that a formal Association was started in 1861 and by the end of the century families were settling at 'the heart of the empire' as Parsis were fond of describing London. The perceptions of these nineteenth century visitors recorded in a number of diaries and travelogues show they were impressed by the industry and 'busy-ness' of Britain, its technological advancement and the 'splendours' of high society, above all of royalty. But they did not like all they saw, for example severe poverty in inner-city Britain, the divisions between the Christian churches, and the racial prejudice they encountered - specifically, in their opinion, from the 'lower orders' (the term used by the Wadia brothers in 1842). Parsis in India and in Britain were convinced that they were an important factor in establishing British power in western India, in the early military defence of the island of Bombay, as middlemen in trade, as negotiators and mediators on behalf of the British (e.g. with Muslim rulers), in building the Bombay dockyard and developing the port's overseas trade, in bringing the industrial revolution to India, and in pioneering various social reform movements. Parsis arriving in Britain therefore considered they had a good working relationship with the British by

7. Until the publication of the Katraks the only published material on East African Parsis is C. Salvadori, *Through Open Doors: A View of Asian Culture in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1990), pp. 22-8. See also the unpublished manuscript by H. Kased (now of Bombay), *Parsee Lustre on the Emerald Isle of Zanzibar*. I am deeply indebted to Mr Kased for generously giving me a copy of his work.

8. Hinnells, *Zoroastrians in Britain*, for details.

whom they believed they were respected.⁹

The declared aims of the Association founded in 1861 were to care for indigent Zoroastrians in Europe, to obtain and administer a funeral ground, obtained in 1862, and to support education, especially the study of Zoroastrianism. For the first 50 years of its existence, under the presidency of Dadabhoy Naoroji, the Association was essentially an informal burial club, but under its next president, Sir Muncherji Bhowndree, it became a formal incorporated body, owning its own property in London, which functioned mainly as a social centre but also had accommodation for visitors to stay, and a prayer room. Until the Second World War numbers were approximately 150-200 but thereafter grew, reaching approximately seven to ten thousand in the 1990s. Numbers increased for various reasons: several medical people migrated to Britain when the National Health Service was started in 1947; in the 1960s Parsis migrated from India and Pakistan along with other South Asian groups for education and a career when fears grew that Britain was going to restrict immigration; also in the 1960s there was an influx of Parsis from East Africa when South Asians were forced to leave; in the 1970s a number of Iranian Zoroastrians came to Britain, again mainly for education (some for careers), and a number settled after the fall of the Shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979.

In comparison with other Parsi diaspora groups, British Zoroastrians have a high profile within national politics. The first three Indian MPs were all Parsis: Dadabhoy Naoroji, 1892-5, Liberal; M.M. Bhowndree, 1895-1905, Tory; and S. Saklatvala, 1922-8, who was first elected as a Labour MP and then as a Communist. All were elected for London constituencies. They were very different personalities, as well as in their political allegiance.¹⁰ Naoroji saw himself as the MP for India and sought election in order to present the case regarding the 'Condition of India' that the Indian National Congress

9. J. Hinnells, 'Anglo-Parsi commercial relations in Bombay prior to 1847', *JCOI*, 1978, 46, pp.5-19; and 'Bombay: the Zoroastrian community', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV, 4, pp.339-46.

10. See E. Kulke, *The Parsees in India* (Freiburg, 1974); R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London, 1939); M. Squires, *Saklatvala: A political biography* (London, 1990); J.R. Hinnells, 'Bhowndree: politician and Zoroastrian' in *JCOI*, 1999, 63, pp.60-93.

was, with increasing frustration, trying to present in India.¹¹ The themes which he pressed were that Britain drained away substantially more in revenue (e.g. through taxes) than it invested; it perpetrated a gross injustice by effectively excluding Indians from entering the Indian Civil Service; and finally robbed them of a role in administration of their own country.¹² Bhowndree is commonly represented as a Tory counterpart to Naoroji and uncritical in his obsequious acceptance of the British. Although he was deferential, at the heart of his message, especially during his second term in parliament, was a serious questioning of British economic justice in its dealings with India. He called for a greater emphasis on technical education so that India could become more economically independent. He was also at the forefront of the campaign on behalf of the Indians in South Africa and a mentor of Gandhi's work there. Saklatvala's primary concern was to see justice for the working classes, whom he was convinced were unjustly oppressed by wealthy rulers the world over. He condemned Britain as the most bloodthirsty nation in history, for the British, he said, not only killed those who challenged them, but also defenceless peoples in their own homes in Africa and Asia.

It is difficult to assess the impact of these MPs. Naoroji was successful in campaigning for a Royal Commission on the Indian budget, but the Government effectively determined the outcome by the members it appointed. One way in which they were important was in the pride and self-image their elections effected among the Parsi community. Why were these three successful when other attempts by Indians (before the 1980s) to obtain election all failed? Evidently each was supported by their party - but why did the parties choose them? Naoroji was an educated man (at 27 he was the first Indian to be appointed a professor). His appearance and manners made him seem British, despite some opponents describing him as a 'blackman' (the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury), and the 'right wing' press accusing him, on his election, of being a fire-worshipper. Bhowndree was a (constitutional) lawyer, very western in appearance and manners and a good speaker.

11. See collected letters in R.P. Patwardhan, *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence*, vol. II, parts i and ii (Bombay, 1977). (No other volumes have been published.)

12. *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, a collection of his writings on the subject republished by the Government of India (Delhi, 1962).

Saklatvala was less well educated but came from India's leading industrial family (the Tatas) and so was accustomed to moving in 'exalted' society - however much he came to reject it as a Communist. He was respected even by his opponents as not only an able speaker but also as a man of great courtesy and civility.¹³ He was successful because of Labour support in a Labour stronghold but it is remarkable that neither Naoroji nor Bhownagree contested such 'safe seats' - their achievement is, therefore, all the more remarkable. The three of them reflected, in different ways, typical Zoroastrian virtues, above all an absolute commitment to justice, though how each of them saw the focus of that quest for justice was different. Saklatvala, for example, went to prison rather than agree to stop speaking on behalf of the striking workers at the time of the General Strike and could probably have been Under-Secretary of State for India had he been willing to follow the Labour Party line on India. Each of them benefited from being seen as members of a 'marginal' group whose success did not threaten the standing of other groups (as for example a Hindu or Muslim might have done). They were all prepared to work within the existing British political framework. However much they wanted to reform it, none of them supported violent means of protest. The Parsi role in British politics has not ceased, for there is at the time of writing another, Zerbanoo Gifford, who is an important figure in the Liberal Democrat Party, campaigning on the rights of ethnic minorities and especially on women's rights. In Britain, therefore, Parsis have seen themselves as continuing their involvement in the running of government as they had in nineteenth and twentieth century British India. This same willingness to identify themselves with the majority population, more than they have in Muslim Pakistan, Chinese Hong Kong or Black Africa, has perhaps left them more open to the forces of acculturation.

The first Parsi known to have visited America was J.H. Kothari in the course of his world tour in 1883-4. Three of the first Parsi settlers in the 'new world' became millionaires at the turn of the century: P.S. Saklatvala (in the oil business); N. Heeramaneck (art dealer) and P.F. Davar (business

13. See the personal memoir of his daughter, Sehri Saklatvala, *The Fifth Commandment: Biography of Shapurji Saklatvala*, private publication (Salford, 1991).

unknown).¹⁴

As a result the American image as a land of opportunity was reinforced. Some older American Zoroastrians remember that there were 12-20 Parsis studying in New York at any one time in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵ The most influential of these was M.N. Dhalla (1905-9) who studied for a PhD at Columbia University under the distinguished Iranist, A.V.W. Jackson. His studies included courses on Comparative Religion. He also had contacts with various Christians; above all his Protestant mentor, Jackson, exerted considerable influence on him. In his own words, Dhalla, who had been a strict orthodox in Karachi, eventually left the shores of America a staunch reformer.

When he was elected high priest (Dastur) of Karachi, he was known as 'the Protestant dastur' because of the way his beliefs and practices were thought to be influenced by that tradition.¹⁶ Dhalla wrestled with integrating his devotion to his religion with Western learning and assumptions in a way which not only prefigured spiritual wrestlings of Zoroastrians in the West at the end of the century but which many have found helpful so that his books are often quoted in newsletters and pamphlets produced by various associations in Britain and especially America.

Until the mid-1960s immigration from Asia to America and Canada was restricted to those with needed talents and was essentially restricted to Europeans. So it was estimated that there were less than 300 Zoroastrians in the two countries in 1965 when the Hart-Celler Act changed American immigration policy and allowed an equal number of migrants from Asia as from Europe. Canada changed in a similar fashion soon afterwards. The

14. J. Pavri, 'Brief summary of Zoroastrians abroad', in *Proceedings of the Fourth North American Congress* (Montreal, 1982), pp. 88-95.

15. Source of information: Mr. R. Wadia, in whose restaurant Parsis tended to meet.

16. For a more extensive discussion of influences on Dhalla and his theology see J. Hinnells, 'Modern Zoroastrian philosophy', in B. Carr and I. Mahalingam (eds), *Asian Philosophy*, Routledge, 1996, pp. 64-92.

earliest Zoroastrian centres were Montreal, Vancouver and Chicago in 1965. Further centres quickly developed, notably in Toronto, New York, Los Angeles and Houston. Over the 25 years, Associations acquired their own buildings in five different cities, and formal Associations were established in a further 16 and an umbrella organisation, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), was started in 1987. There is a mixture of countries of origin in America and Canada, though in comparison with Britain there are far fewer East African but many more Iranian Zoroastrians. The motivation behind migration was higher education, especially in the sciences. 92% of Zoroastrians in New York and Chicago have been to university, most (62% of the total population) to pursue postgraduate studies. Others have moved to the continent because of employment with multinational companies. The American and Canadian Zoroastrian population is therefore mostly of highly educated professionals and relatively few business people. They display a high degree of organisation and a strong emphasis on religious education as a means of enabling the young to resist the acculturation pressures of the 'melting pot'.

The most recent, and increasingly popular, target of Zoroastrian migration is Australia, especially Sydney and Melbourne. The first Zoroastrian I have been able to trace was Hirji Lentin who opened a textile business in the mid-1920s. The first Association was started in Sydney in 1971 but a building was not opened until 1986. The Melbourne Association was started in 1978 and its constitution was formally incorporated in 1987. By 1990 there were approximately 500 Zoroastrians in Sydney and just over 200 in Melbourne. Australia is proving increasingly popular with Bombay Parsi youth partly because of the perceived career opportunities, and the climate which is more attractive than the Canadian winters. Higher education is not as attractive a magnet on this continent.

The diaspora communities all have a different demographic profile from the 'parent' community in the old country. Data is not available from Iran, but in India and Pakistan the community is an ageing one, with a growing proportion over 60 years of age. There are fewer marriages, delayed marriages (as young people pursue education and careers) and fewer children

in each family.¹⁷ The result is that the Indian community decreased by 20% in the decade 1971-81. The age structure is also different, for it is mostly the young who have migrated and relatively few have been able to take their parents and grandparents with them. Thus, although diaspora Zoroastrians also have small families (an average of less than two children was indicated by the Survey) overall numbers are growing because the young average age of the community means that the death rate is lower than the birth rate and some migration continues. The diaspora is at once 'draining away' numbers and many of the potential leaders because it is the highly educated and the 'achievers' who are settling overseas.

Diaspora Zoroastrians: Their Settlement and Religion

How different is it, being a Zoroastrian in, say London, Hong Kong, Mombasa or Chicago? What follows will have to begin with generalisations which will in turn require qualification. Many of the terms used, for example 'acculturation', require discussion. 'Acculturation' does not indicate a clearly identifiable or consistent process: not only do different individuals adopt the majority culture in different ways from each other, some individuals adopt the culture in one aspect of their lives, such as language, but not in another, such as marriage customs. One 'shorthand' term used in this chapter is 'traditional' as it is less emotive than the labels commonly deployed within the community, namely 'orthodox' and 'reform'. The criteria by which respondents' level of 'traditionalism' was measured were frequency and especially manner of prayer (for example language used); religious practices (for example lighting a *divo* or 'oil lamp' in the home and festival observance); attendance at a religious centre (where practicable); attitudes to the purity laws and intermarriage and links with the old country through correspondence and visits.

17. M. Karkal, *Survey of Parsi population of Greater Bombay - 1982* (Bombay, 1984); for Pakistan see Gustafson, note 5 above.

Origins and Motives

Where people come from affects how they settle after migration. Typically those who have migrated from rural Gujarat preserve the Zoroastrian traditions more fully than those who have migrated from cosmopolitan Bombay. So more people from Gujarat tend to continue to think in Gujarati, compared with people from Bombay who generally think in English; they pray more frequently and more traditionally (i.e. in Avestan, not the vernacular) and they hold more 'traditional' views in opposing intermarriage. They also tend to keep in closer contact with the 'old country'. The explanation is that Parsis living in westernised Bombay have already begun the process of adaptation which people moving from Gujarat have not taken so far. Other trends are also clear. Zoroastrians who have migrated from Pakistan are more traditional than the Bombay Parsis. In part this would appear to be due to the Religious Education Programme, which is stronger among Karachi Zoroastrians than in Bombay. A major influence in this was undoubtedly Dastur Dhalla, who inspired the teaching in the Karachi Parsi schools. His policies have been continued by his pupils so that they have affected recent as well as earlier migrants from Karachi, and they have travelled with a clearer perception of their religious and cultural heritage than have many from Bombay. Another factor in the Karachi tradition is that living in a Muslim environment Zoroastrians typically see it as potentially hostile and therefore remain behind their own 'cultural walls' and acculturate relatively rarely. Through Dhalla, however, they have been subject to the 'protestantising' influences of Western education.

Those from East Africa have travelled with a different set of 'cultural luggage.' As noted above, they have typically preserved more of the community's early traditions. They have been relatively isolated not only from the culture of the majority 'black' population, but also from the British in East Africa, who were more distanced from the Indian community than they were in contemporary Bombay. Zoroastrians in East Africa have, therefore, not been subject to as much influence from the evolving Westernising influences of their educated co-religionists in the commercial capital of British India. When the East African Zoroastrians came to Britain their existing set of networks were stronger than any within the existing Zoroastrian community in Britain, and indeed there are several references in the London records of the Committee expressing concern that they were not

proving successful in establishing contacts with the new arrivals.¹⁸ In the 1980s there were serious divisions within the London community due to a complex web of factors, including clashing personalities, and the belief of the new committee that their predecessors had been too 'liberal' in their adaptations of traditions (for example over non-Zoroastrians at death ceremonies). It would be simplistic to say that the new 'traditional' committee is identified with East African Zoroastrians and the 'old' with Bombay and Karachi, yet there is an element of that division.

Zoroastrians are different from other South Asian communities because there is an important group from outside the subcontinent: the Iranian Zoroastrians. There have been difficulties in integrating the co-religionists, so much so that in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco separate groups have been formed, and formal divisions have been feared elsewhere. When the two groups viewed each other across the Hindu Kush, the Indian and Iranian communities were able to stress their identity, but living together after migration has proved difficult. At a superficial level there have been disagreements over food at communal festivals: Parsis do not enjoy kebabs and Iranians found Parsi food too spicy. Language barriers have proved a problem as have the different calendars of festivals. But the differences lie deeper also. Living in a Muslim environment Iranian Zoroastrians see all authority as lying exclusively in the words of the Prophet as revealed in sacred scripture; they emphasise the abstract nature of religion and often speak negatively about the role of a priesthood and of rituals. Parsis from India have existed in a Hindu environment and commonly see the priest as a man of spiritual power and complex rituals as points of access to that power.¹⁹

18. Studies of other East African Asians have drawn similar conclusions. See, for example, P. Bhachu, *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (London, 1985) and V. Robinson, *Transients, Settlers and Refugees: Asians in Britain* (Oxford, 1986) ch.9.

19. See, for example, K. Mistree, *Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective* (Bombay, 1983), chs. 12 and 16. Mistree was born in Bombay, but after a professional career studied Zoroastrianism at Oxford and London before returning to Bombay where he set up an influential teaching body, 'Zoroastrian Studies' (ZS). One of ZS's many activities is organising lectures and seminars. These have proved attractive (but also controversial) to many in London (and America and Canada), especially to the educated youth questing for their roots. His

There is also a dispute about temporal power: traditional (though by no means all) diaspora Parsis accept the authority of priests and leaders in Bombay but not that of the priests in Iran, whereas Iranians in the diaspora would not accept the Indian authorities at all. Thus, in terms both of spiritual and temporal authority and perceptions of religious experience there is a marked difference between the two groups which it has so far proved difficult to reconcile.

In short, the place whence Zoroastrians migrate affects how they settle in the new country. In addition, the motive behind the migration affects the patterns of settlement. Where people have migrated for their own self-perceived benefit (such as for education or career as Bombay Parsis did) then they tend to accept and adapt more to the new 'home' than do those who have felt forced to migrate, as did the East African and in particular the Iranian Zoroastrians. The last group have a stronger 'myth of return' to the homeland, feel closer emotional ties to it (even though questions of safety mean they cannot yet easily go for visits) and maintain the language and allegiance more strongly. Many Iranian Zoroastrians strongly assert that they are the true, original, Iranians: their ties to the 'homeland' are therefore especially strong.

Different patterns of settlement, especially in religious matters, tend to correspond to the types of people who migrate. The essentially business communities (Karachi, East Africa and Hong Kong) are more traditional than those with a high proportion of educated professionals (e.g. America and Canada). Businessmen who travelled overseas in the nineteenth century were innovative individuals and their activities required them to take what was then a 'liberal' attitude to certain traditions, such as long sea voyages which involved defiling the sacred element of the waters. But it is remarkable how many of them sought to preserve the purity laws, for example by taking servants with them rather than inter-dining. Further, those who were successful had the funds with which to erect buildings, even fire temples, and employ a full-time priest (in the China Seas, Sind, Aden, East Africa), whereas the professionals have rarely acquired such fortunes, and so communities they dominated (e.g. in Britain and many centres in America and Canada) have had fewer material religious resources. The assertion needs some qualification,

book has, therefore, a particular relevance to the present discussion.

because some wealthy businessmen have funded religious resources (notably the Iranian Rustom Guiv who has funded most of the centres used and largely dominated by the professionals in America), but broadly the two groups have different values and resources. Further, highly educated individuals commonly seek to articulate and reason their religion in order to elucidate both for themselves, their children and their non-Zoroastrian friends the nature of Zoroastrianism, in a way which typically business people do not, for they commonly see their religion as part of their life to be practised, not reasoned. Few communities consist entirely of one section of society and there are exceptional businessmen and professionals, but the exceptions do not invalidate the broad picture of a business community tending more towards a traditional religious pattern than do highly educated professional classes.

The Destination of Migration and its Impact

New migrants commonly have as many stereotypes concerning the majority population as the wider society does of them. Generally, interviewees indicated that they viewed the British as cold, remote, unfriendly, untrustworthy, sexually promiscuous and lacking in a sense of family responsibility. Britain was broadly seen as a very secular, and therefore religiously threatening, society. In America, Canada and Australia such negative images are less evident, though some do emerge, of America above all as a 'melting pot' and as a place where religion is a highly publicised dimension of life, both in missions on the street and television and the influence of evangelicals and the 'moral majority' on government. The major threat is seen to be the dilution of individual cultural identities in the quest to produce the 'real American.' Canada is, according to our recent Survey (see note 1), seen as less of a threat. Although the country is known to have had a strong racist element in recent history it is typically seen as having a powerful multicultural programme which encourages individuals and groups to preserve their identity (so, for example, the Association in Toronto received a substantial grant to enable them to extend their building, without any conditions regarding access for non-Zoroastrians). It is probably not coincidental that more Zoroastrians in Canada were willing to identify themselves as Canadians than were their co-religionists in the United States willing to identify themselves as Americans.

The actual experiences in a new society inevitably affect both individuals and groups. In the Survey, respondents were asked if they considered they had met racial discrimination, and if so, whether it was in specific dimensions of life (education, employment, housing, police, or in public places) and whether it was an experience they considered they frequently/sometimes/rarely or never had. The city with the highest proportion of individuals considering that they faced discrimination was Toronto (48%), but most of them said that it was rare (usually in initial moves to obtain employment). Forty-two percent in London said they considered they had experienced prejudice but in contrast to Toronto most of them said they thought they experienced it more often and more substantially, mostly at school, than in career terms and much less in housing and little from the police. These figures, obviously, do not measure actual prejudice. They probably underestimate it, for several people said they did not face prejudice, but had experienced 'Paki-bashing'. Many implied that racial prejudice was something 'others' experienced, because it was assumed that they themselves 'were above that sort of thing because you see I am Westernised.' But the data indicate that contrary to popular 'myth' there is no one type of person who provokes prejudice. Those who considered they had experienced it were as much those who thought in English as in a non-English language, the educated, the professional high flyers (perhaps the group which most experienced the problem were people in the medical profession), and those who were born here more than those who migrated in the 1960s. Prejudice would, therefore, seem to be in the eye of the beholder rather than in any type of 'victim.' The impact of that perceived prejudice depends on a variety of factors. In various ways Zoroastrians in Hong Kong and in East Africa would consider that the majority Chinese and 'blacks' respectively are prejudiced against South Asians, but they appear to feel less affected by this than in Britain, America, Australia and Canada, where their lifestyles and desired social acceptability are at stake. The impact of prejudice seems to be to provoke individuals to assert their identity rather than to acculturate to avoid prejudice.

The physical location, as well as personal experiences, inevitably affect patterns of settlement. There is a different pattern of practices and attitudes between Zoroastrians living in a 'centre' (for present purposes defined as having a formal Zoroastrian Association with a meeting place) and those living in the 'periphery', that is, without such a Zoroastrian support system. In Britain, for example, there are different levels of practice between Zoroastrians in London and Manchester. Because the former can meet reg-

ularly at Zoroastrian House their level of community contacts is greater, their wearing of the sacred shirt and cord (*sudre* and *kusti*) is higher and so is the saying of the associated prayers; and people tend to keep in closer contact with the 'old country.' Since the Survey was conducted, a Zoroastrian Association has been started in Manchester, which seems to have led, among some individuals and their families, to an increased level of Zoroastrian activity. Certainly, the Survey in America and Canada indicates that where individuals are deployed by their companies to work in areas distant from fellow Zoroastrians then, because it is difficult to maintain the practice, the ties decrease emotionally as well as physically. Undoubtedly, the prejudice and persecution associated with ghettos are undesirable, but ghettos have the merit of facilitating communal contact and support, thus reducing pressures of acculturation.

Each community has its own distinctive history which can produce different Association 'characters' even within the same country. A striking example for Zoroastrians is the cities of Chicago and Houston. In the Survey the responses from these communities displayed a contrasting pattern: broadly, Houston appeared to be more 'traditional' than Chicago and several reasons for this emerged on further study. First, Chicago is one of the older American associations and therefore has a high proportion of 1960s migrants who, typically, tended to be the more 'liberal', innovative and Westernised sections of educated Parsi society. Houston, in contrast, is relatively 'new' in that most of the members migrated there in the post-1980 oil boom, and generally migrants tend to be more traditional for the first 10-15 years of their settlement. Second, Chicago has attracted a very high proportion of educational and professional 'high flyers' and scientists. In Houston, however, the Zoroastrians are mostly businessmen attracted there by the booming economy. Third, whereas Chicago is a predominantly Indian (mostly Bombay) Zoroastrian population, in Houston there is a substantial section of the community from 'traditional' Karachi. 'Chain migration' is a major factor in this pattern, for a Karachi family was among the early arrivals and they encouraged friends and relatives to come also. Fourth, within small diaspora communities individuals can play a very significant role in shaping that community (an important, if somewhat obvious, point to make since surveys identifying trends can falsely imply that when certain factors combine, such as age, gender, education, then the pattern of settlement is determined). Within the Chicago community prominent figures, both priestly and lay, have emphasised the need to adapt to the American continent, whereas Houston has

some quite traditional leaders. Finally, there is a different history of migration to the two cities. In Chicago most Zoroastrians arrived as students and only gradually were they able to marry and set up a family and relatively few achieved sufficient wealth quickly enough to bring their extended family. In Chicago, therefore, there is a higher proportion of nuclear families. In Houston, in comparison, most came as reasonably successful businessmen and went straight into well-paid jobs, and were therefore able to bring their families with them - including grandparents.²⁰ Where grandparents are present, especially grandmothers, they appear to act as particularly powerful forces for the preservation of tradition. The important point suggested here is that it is wrong to refer to 'American Zoroastrianism',²¹ as though it were a monolithic phenomenon. In an international perspective, there is even greater diversity within 'diaspora Zoroastrianism'.

Some Common 'Trajectories'

Despite the diversity of 'Zoroastrianisms' in the diaspora it is possible to identify some common trajectories. From the international Survey it would seem clear that, typically, the Zoroastrians who migrated to Britain, America and Canada in the 1960s (and similarly those who migrated to Australia in the 1970s and 1980s) were the Westernised, innovative people most likely to acculturate fairly quickly. Those in the vanguard of the migration are commonly the most 'adaptable' people. Those who have come later tend to be traditional. However, once an individual has been settled in 'the new world' for 10-15 years the process of adaptation often becomes clearer, whereas in the early days of settlement not a few try to stand firm against what they then see as the erosion of their identity.

20. Working totally independently of each other, Raymond Brady Williams came to the same conclusion as those outlined above regarding other South Asian groups in these same two cities: *Religious Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry* (Cambridge, 1988).

21. See J. Hinnells, 'Zoroastrian migration to the American continent,' in M. Treasureyala (ed.), *Proceedings of the 6th North American Congress* (Toronto, 1989), pp. 19-49.

Many individuals, particularly those born in the 'new world', follow a similar pattern of development: they follow the religion of their parents until late teens when they leave home for work or (more often with Zoroastrians) to go to university. At that point many turn their back on their tradition, but as marriage approaches (especially if it is marriage within the community) then they begin to build bridges to their heritage, bridges which in a number of cases become highways when they have children of their own. The Survey would suggest that there is a strong connection between having a family and seeking to preserve the heritage.

But other factors may affect these common 'trajectories.' In terms of gender differences, women tend to be slightly more religious than men (frequency and manner of prayer, attendance at a centre of worship) but markedly stricter on issues relating to the family, for example on issues concerning race and religion, especially intermarriage, and observance of the purity laws. There can be counter-factors: if men do go to the centres of worship they typically tend to go more often and become involved in committee work. But where women go out to work the pattern of their religion approximates much more closely to that of the men, in other words, it is less a gender difference than the role of the housewife.

Education is, inevitably, a major factor in the preservation of heritage. Those who had a primary education in the 'old country' tend to practise their religion more than do those who had a primary education in the West. The location of secondary schooling and the first degree does not appear to be as significant, but whether someone goes on to a higher degree and research does make a significant difference. Those who undertake postgraduate studies in the sciences typically affirm what might be called their 'ethnic links' (food, language, music) more strongly but substantially fewer of them assert their religious links. If such a survey were conducted among any community in Britain, America or Australia the same conclusions might be drawn. The problem for Zoroastrians is that such a high proportion of their diminishing numbers pursue these studies that the long-term threat such education poses for them is correspondingly greater.

There is a popular image of young Asians as distanced from their elders and rebelling against parental pressures to conform to community traditions, and as distancing themselves over two or three generations from their religions as

they become progressively Westernised. The Survey suggests that this is far too simplistic a picture. Certainly the global responses suggest that the young pray less often, pray less traditionally, observe fewer religious practices, attend Zoroastrian centres less often and do not keep in such regular contact with fellow Zoroastrians. But were the present generation of elders any different in their youth? Is religious activity commonly something which increases with age? Another way of looking at the figures is that it is remarkable how many young Zoroastrians said they prayed regularly (approximately 40% globally) - more than their non-Zoroastrian contemporaries, if the answers are an accurate reflection of actual practice. But this broad statement, like so many, requires qualification. What also emerged was that when the young people do engage in their religion they commonly do so with particular vigour and on many issues can be stricter than their elders. For example, a substantial proportion of the youth seem to be engaged in a quest for their roots and among this section there is a strong desire to preserve community boundaries, for example, in terms of in-marriage and of not allowing non-Zoroastrians into prayer rooms. Thus one 16-year-old respondent in Toronto commented that every day of her school life she was in contact with non-Zoroastrians and she wanted one place where she could go and be herself. Many in each country commented on the need to keep explaining oneself when not in Zoroastrian company. Interestingly, when asked about visits back to the 'old country' a higher proportion of the youth said that they had found such visits stimulating than did those who had migrated to the 'new world' in the 1960s - again an indicator that this particular section of the older generation appears to be one which has acculturated more than others, more than the young people born in the West who seek to affirm their identity. Thus it is a mistake to assert simply that the younger generation is less religious. The extent to which they are involved in the religion is dependent to a significant extent on the level of activity the elders allow; hence some centres have far more active youth programmes than others, for example by having youth representatives on the managing committee and allowing youth to organise their own social activities. Many young Zoroastrians are alienated by the feuding which characterises so many groups. From an external perspective it is evident that the communities need to unite in the face of the threat posed by the demographic decline and dangers of dispersion. But precisely because so many are acutely aware of the danger of extinction, views held about future policy are held with particular vigour and the disagreements can be very vitriolic because each fears the 'others' are threatening the survival of the whole community. Given

the strong family ties, it is very common for whole families to become alienated as their elders dispute with each other. Young Parsis, therefore, often feel caught between at least four factors: the acculturating pressure of their peer group at school/ college or workplace, their quest for their roots, the internal community debates, and the great difficulties of practising the religion in the diaspora where there are simply not the physical provisions for the religion (for example, pure temples and a team of priests).

The transmission of tradition from generation to generation is a serious problem, especially for parents educated in a different continent and by different methods, such as for those brought up in Parsi colonies in Bombay where religion is something 'caught not taught,' a matter of community membership not of rational elucidation. Such a background does not equip them to help their young brought up in a Western educational background, not least in Britain where there is a formal Religious Education programme in schools which is in practice Christian-based and commonly unavoidable (it is, for example, effectively impossible to opt out of the Christmas play which dominates school life for days, if not weeks, in junior schools).

Intermarriage is typically seen within the community as one of the greatest problems it has to tackle. The tradition is that in cases of intermarriage the offspring of a Zoroastrian male may be initiated (following a 1906 High Court test case in Bombay) but that a Zoroastrian woman's children by a non-Zoroastrian may not be. Commonly, Zoroastrians assert that there should not be such gender differences in the religion; therefore in Bombay the 'orthodox' priests argue that no children of any intermarriage should be initiated, but in the diaspora there are growing calls to accept the children of any intermarriage. The issue has, for example, become an extremely contentious one in 1992-3 in London where the World Zoroastrian Organization (partly because of its consciousness of trends in other countries) has decided to accept partners and offspring as full members and has been vigorously attacked for doing so by what has become a more 'traditional' Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, also based in (but not wholly concerned with) Britain. It is a matter of great debate in Australia, but here it seems that in this younger, more 'liberal' community it is a less acrimonious debate, despite differences between Sydney and Melbourne. The Survey suggests that the people who intermarry are most typically the very well-educated, especially the postgraduates in science, and the career 'high flyers'. Not surprisingly, it is much more common in the smaller Associations and among people living

in 'the periphery' than in the larger Associations where young people have more opportunity to meet potential partners. The Survey suggests that, typically, intermarried Zoroastrians pray less often, pray less traditionally, observe fewer Zoroastrian practices and keep in touch with co-religionists less frequently and attend centres of worship less often. There is no way of knowing which is cause and which is effect. Is it that the less religious tend to be those who marry out or that out-marriage tends to distance individuals from the community? Undoubtedly, in some instances the community distances itself from the intermarrieds. Although intermarriage occurs, and is a matter of very public debate in the 'old country', not least in Bombay,²² it is much more common in the diaspora and is naturally a phenomenon associated with migration.

Religion

Most studies of ethnic minority communities focus heavily on housing, education and discrimination and neglect religion. But religion is also a highly significant issue. Almost all the author's respondents, interviewees and personal contacts asserted strongly that they considered they had become more religious after migration than they were before. Contrary to a popular image migrants do not leave their religion behind in Asia. As noted above, for many of the young people born in the West religion is a crucial part of their identity which they wish to assert. The definition of 'religion' needs expanding. Approximately two-thirds of respondents said they considered religion was a matter both of belief and of race (less than 20 per cent thought it was simply a question of belief). For most Parsis religion is something that is 'in the blood' or 'a matter of genes'. Zoroastrians have a particular problem in asserting their identity. They want to assert that they are not simply 'Indian' or 'Pakistani' or 'British' or 'American.' They may identify with both the 'old' and the 'new' country to a substantial extent, yet they want to assert their distinctiveness. Many want to assert that they are the 'original Persians' (since 1979 the term 'Iranian' is less popular because it is thought to have connotations of Islamic fundamentalism). Many also, however, want to transcend national boundaries and to assert that they are simply

22. See Huzan Karas, 'Intermarriage among Bombay Zoroastrians', PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1993 (unpublished).

'Zoroastrian' - and this may not indicate a theological allegiance, for a number of interviewees expressed the view that one could be both a Zoroastrian and an atheist. Even if the Zoroastrian is a theist, there remain severe problems of identity in that few 'outsiders' would recognise what a Zoroastrian is. Public ignorance about the religion (or race) means that it is difficult for Zoroastrians to assert the identity that they wish to claim.

For a sense of identity to be strong it is necessary for it to be 'meaningful.' What was meaningful for an older generation living in a Parsi colony in Bombay may not be meaningful for an American or Australian High School student. It is difficult for the religion to be the same in the diaspora since there are not the material resources such as a pure temple where the traditional expressions of devotion and ritual can be conducted, nor are there full-time priests able to dedicate their lives to the pure pursuit of spiritual power as there are in the 'old country.' Funerals can also present a major problem. In India the traditional Zoroastrian funeral involves exposure of the dead to vultures in towers of silence and an associated rich temple tradition of rites and prayers for the dead whereby the soul is aided, grief is channelled, respect is shown and duty performed. This is simply not possible in the diaspora. My own observation, having lived with Zoroastrian families when bereavement has unexpectedly occurred, is that after a death in the 'new world' natural grief is compounded by a sense of guilt because mourners are not observing fully what they were taught from infancy to be their duties for a loved one.

Different needs and different resources therefore generate a distinctive religious expression in the diaspora. This is a subject which has hardly been studied.²³ Within the Zoroastrian community there have been lively, indeed bitter, debates on who can guide any such development. Many in the diaspora feel that only those living outside India can understand the needs and pressures in their situation. There have, therefore, been meetings of priests (*mobeds*) organized in Toronto to try and define a consistent liturgical practice for the continent. The need is acute for all the priests are part-time. In their youth they received the conventional training for boys in their early teens but few, if any, of them when they migrated for education or business thought that they would function as priests. It is only in the wealthy

23. An exception is Kim Knott, *Hinduism in Leeds* (Leeds, 1986).

nineteenth-century business communities (Karachi, Aden, Zanzibar, Mombasa and Hong Kong) that priests have been recruited for sacral duties from India. None have been recruited from Iran. The diaspora priests would not, therefore, see themselves as 'professional' priests in the traditional sense. An interesting, though still very rare, development is for youth in the diaspora communities to spend some time at a priestly college in Bombay, to return and minister to their co-religionists. Many of the traditional high priests (*dasturs*) in India strongly object to diaspora 'part-time' priests changing (which virtually always means shortening) the hallowed rites for the convenience, as they see it, of those who have migrated for their own personal benefit. Thus, on the one hand the diaspora communities consider the traditional authorities do not understand their needs and on the other the *dasturs* consider that diaspora reforms are done for personal convenience, not for religious reasons. Because there is no clear religious authority in Zoroastrianism, comparable to the Pope or the Dalai Lama, it is difficult for Zoroastrians to obtain a clear guide on what is and is not theologically acceptable.

Change nevertheless happens. In the Survey more Zoroastrians consider they have changed their practices than they have their beliefs. From an outside perspective it would seem likely that if rites have changed, then so have beliefs, even if the practitioner is unaware of the latter. As already indicated, it is evident that practices have changed, for example the absence of a pure fire temple. My own observation suggests that a distinctive liturgical pattern is evolving. An age-old rite in Zoroastrianism is the *jashan*. It is celebrated by a number of priests in any 'clean' place - it can be the home or in a public place or a temple. By changing some of the prayers it can be used either in memory of the dead, as an act of thanksgiving, as a communal act of petition or to honour a newly appointed high priest.²⁴ Because this ritual is not dependent on a temple and is a very adaptable rite, it has become a common part of diaspora communal religious activity, a focal (or sometimes a starting) point of community gatherings. Traditionally, although many can and sometimes do attend, in practice such rites are generally private ceremonies, as are almost all formal acts of worship in Zoroastrianism. This perspective on congregational religious practice harmonises with the natural

24. See J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937); and Mistree (note 19 above).

wish for co-religionists to meet and socialise. It is easy to overlook the wider importance of such apparently trivial social activities as bingo or discos, for they can provide rallying points whereby people come together to exchange not just news, but to reaffirm and reinforce their identity. They provide a chance for Zoroastrians to be themselves without having to explain or justify, to relive memories, to maintain social networks and not least to give the young opportunity to meet peers who share their background.

Being the only Zoroastrian in workplace, school or college can leave some young people not only ignorant but feeling awkward about their identity. Linking such crucial activities with a religious function, such as a *jashan*, adds the specifically Zoroastrian dimension to the occasion. But many, not least the young, also feel the need to have the rite and its significance explained to them, for in a Western environment there is a felt need to explain 'rationally' why everything is done as it is. Custom and tradition (rightly or wrongly) are not often accepted as reasonable justifications. The result is that elucidations of rites and beliefs are developing.²⁵ The most 'productive' area for this is America and Canada, partly in Sunday-School booklet form (Chicago was among the leaders in this) and newsletters. These tend to present Zoroastrianism in what may, perhaps, be summarised as a Protestant format, that is with a perception of prayer as a means of communication or dialogue with God so that understanding the meaning of the words by using the vernacular or having translations is assumed to be necessary if prayers are not to be seen as 'mumbo-jumbo', in contrast to a traditional Indian (Parsi) attitude that prayers involve making alive through recitation the spiritually powerful, words which invoke and make present the divine forces.²⁶ Traditional myths are allegorised or ignored, evil is thought of as an abstract force within man, and the only authoritative texts are seen as the words of the Prophet himself, and later priestly writings are seen as medieval 'ecclesiastical' corruptions. Rituals, especially the aspects associated with the

25. A good example of such an explanation is Ava Mehta, *The History of our Religion, Zoroastrianism* (Bombay, 1988) pp. 47ff. Although published in Bombay it was written (and delightfully illustrated with cartoons) by a London Parsi schoolteacher for children in the community.

26. See, for example, the exposition of the high priest, Dastur F.M. Kotwal, in Kotwal and Boyd, 'The Zoroastrian *paragnā*', *Journal of Mithraic Studies*, II (i), 1977, pp.5-8.

purity laws, are simplified and expressed in terms of Western scientific concepts, such as hygiene. This theological interpretation was prefigured in the writings of some Parsis in India who had pursued Western approaches to the study of Zoroastrianism, such as Dhalla and Sir J.J. Modi, for they too had tried to integrate their traditional faith with modern knowledge.²⁷ It is these rather than the 'orthodox' writers who most diaspora Zoroastrians turn to, although there are indications that some in the diaspora are beginning to turn to the traditional high priests and writers. If these indicate a developing trend, together with the impact of East African Zoroastrians and more recent arrivals, and with the 'traditionalism' noted among the young 'questing for their roots', then the popular image of migrant communities acculturating progressively until they disappear, is a false image of the trajectory of settlement. The Zoroastrian diaspora history would suggest that a reaction against what is seen as 'excessive' liberalism may well develop and seek to reassert what is seen as the 'true' tradition.

Conclusion

There are many ways in which the Parsi diaspora represents a microcosm of South Asian migration to the West: they come from India, Pakistan and East Africa. They have a longer history of migration than other communities and much can be learned from the study of this history regarding the patterns or trajectory of settlement, but they travelled in their greatest numbers at the same time (from the mid-1960s) as other groups did. They therefore became subject to the same laws, restrictions and prejudices. In many ways their religious and social needs replicate those of others, for example the importance attached to in-marriage, the need for community networks for mutual support, the evolution of an 'appropriate' religious tradition. However different Zoroastrians consider they are from other South Asian groups, they are seen by most 'outsiders' as a part of an imagined 'whole' of Indians/Pakistanis.

There are, however, evident differences from other South Asian groups. The first is the length of their stay in the West, at least in Britain. This has

27. For a study of the various trends and influences, with full bibliography, see Hinnells in note 16 above.

enabled that particular community to evolve certain strategies for survival (for example, community infrastructures for teaching religion, for social interactions and helping the needy, a body of religious literature and teaching considered appropriate for the new situation). They tended to come to Britain with a distinctive range of perceptions regarding their good relations with the British and their own importance in British India, and in British politics, that made them positive about settling here (not all of them, however, think that Britain has lived up to their expectations). They were unusual in bringing their families with them at an early stage of settlement, and they have a far higher incidence of education and professional career patterns than is common among peoples from the subcontinent. In America, of course, most South Asian migrant communities are typically well-educated professionals because of immigration requirements, so that the Zoroastrians there do not stand out as much as in Britain, though even by American-Asian standards, Parsis (more than Iranian Zoroastrians) have a very high proportion in the 'executive' class. In Australia, the general pattern of immigration is more like that of America (that is, of people qualified according to the nation's perceived needs, mostly the educated) so that there, also, Parsis stand out as less distinctive than in Britain, yet still even more educated and more successful in business than the other Asian communities in the continent (in proportion to their overall numbers).

Relative to other groups Parsis probably keep less close links with the old country, because for many of them the 'real' old country is Persia, a country with which they cannot currently establish relations. They are, therefore, in some ways a community adrift. The lack of a strong sense of homeland outside Britain, America, Canada and Australia and (originally at least) a positive attitude to relations with the British, probably makes them more ready to identify themselves as British than many other groups - which causes problems of identity for those who consider they face significant prejudice from the general population. In America, Canada and Australia, it is those in the vanguard of migration who appear to be most ready to identify with the country of settlement, but differences have been noted between these countries. The Iranian Zoroastrians are different in whichever country they settle, because of their distinct sense of links to the 'old country.'

Zoroastrians have an unusual, perhaps unique, knowledge that in the old country' (be that India or Pakistan) they are a rapidly diminishing

community on the verge of extinction, so that the future of their diaspora group is of crucial significance for the very survival of their religion and heritage. In Iran numbers may not be diminishing, but there remains a great sense of vulnerability. The result can be, ironically, more tortuous internal wranglings, as different strategies for survival are canvassed. Often these are mutually exclusive yet passionately believed by their upholders to be vital if extinction is to be avoided. They have often been referred to as the Jews of the Eastern world and in their perceptions of the interconnection of religion and race, their memories of centuries of ruthless oppression and persecution, their theological understanding of human nature, destiny and of history, there is much the two communities share.²⁸

Different demographic patterns and internal divisions over fundamental issues mean that it is questionable whether one should refer to a Zoroastrian community even within a specific locality such as London or New York, much less globally. In the Zoroastrian case, divisions are compounded by the national divisions (for example, Zoroastrians have fought on each side in the wars between India and Pakistan and there are, as we have seen, tensions between Zoroastrians from Iran and the subcontinent). As Zoroastrians continue to migrate around the world not only in growing numbers but also, and perhaps more significantly, in a greater proportion compared with the population in the 'old country,' so the threat of dispersal seems to make ever closer the apocalyptic scene of the extinction of the world's oldest prophetic religion. Some diaspora Zoroastrians would see that as far too negative an assessment. Many in America and Canada consider that just as the time had come for their religion to move on from its Iranian homeland to India in the eighth to ninth centuries, so now the time has come for it to 'move on' to the 'new world.'

They see the community in India as having become too 'Hinduised', as a dying phenomenon, and in Iran as an oppressed and deprived minority, whereas in the 'new world' they believe there is a young growing community with the intellectual and managerial leadership to carry Zoroastrianism into

28. Demographic studies of diaspora Jewish communities often raise issues of fascinating comparability to those of Parsi groups. An example I have found instructive is S.M. Cohen, *American Modernity and Jewish Identity* (New York, 1983).

the third millennium.²⁹

This chapter has suggested that there are many problems not yet properly tackled in the study of diaspora communities, notably the subject of religion. But another conclusion is that it is essential not only to study both ends of the 'chain of migration' (both the old country and the new³⁰) but that there is an even greater need for more comparative studies of the diaspora experiences of communities in different countries in the 'new world.' If the Zoroastrians are a reasonable indicator, then the diaspora experience is very different from one country to another and in order to see what is distinctive and characteristic of any one country it is essential to compare it with others. Here lies a whole new field of research.

29. Australian Zoroastrians have not yet, to my knowledge, evolved such a perception of their place in Zoroastrian history. Few Zoroastrians outside Hong Kong see the community in that colony as having a long-term future.

30. A recent example of such a dual focus is M. Banks, *Organizing Jainism in India and England* (Oxford, 1992).



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17 South Asian Diaspora Communities and Their Religion: A Comparative Study of Parsi Experiences

Introduction

Although South Asians have migrated around the globe for centuries and in substantial numbers since the mid-nineteenth century, it is only within the last two decades that a number of extended studies have emerged, not simply of the history of that migration (see for example the works of H. Tinker), but rather of those communities for their own inherent interest and importance.¹

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1. The research underlying this article was originally undertaken for the series of public lectures, the Katrak lectures, delivered at the University of Oxford in 1985 and to be published by OUP (a separate OUP volume on *Zoroastrians in Britain* appeared in 1996, see also Hinnells in Ballard, 1994). I wish to record my deep appreciation to all the Associations contacted who, without exception, provided all the help I could desire both with the survey and granting me access to their records. Substantial financial help was given by various institutions, particularly Manchester University (where I taught 1970-93), also the Universities of Oxford and Hong Kong, by the Spalding Trust and the World Zarathustrian Trust Fund in London, and various individuals, particularly Tahompton Aresh, Minoos Treasurywala and the Rivetna Family. The survey work in America and Canada was coordinated by Hushtasp and Perviz Bhungara. The interviews in Britain were conducted by Dr Rashna Writer, and some by Ms Shirin Patel. The enormous labours with the computer (yielding almost 100,000 pages of printout) was made possible by the help of the Mehta family and supported by the Regional Computer Centre in Manchester University. I am deeply grateful to them all.

A major feature of this increased study has been a surge in publications, from what is sometimes slightly referred to as the race 'relations industry,' concerning racial or ethnic minority groups and their place in 'white societies'. This began in earnest in the 1970s in Britain and America, a little later and less prolifically in Canada, and in the late 1980s in Australasia. Perceptions of 'race' have changed over the centuries and differ in various countries (Banton, 1987) but in much recent writing, particularly in Britain and America, 'race' alludes mainly to 'black-white' relations.² There are indeed countless assumptions that merit debate, for example should studies of all 'non-white' communities be labelled as 'black studies,' a common current trend that may result in the blurring of significant differences between groups in terms of their respective histories, cultures and experiences in the 'West.' Another question is whether the study of 'black' minorities should take into account the history of 'white' ethnic minorities, for example, the Irish and Jews in America (D Innocenzo and Sirefman, 1992, but compare Ringer and Lawless, 1989) and Britain (Holmes, 1988), or European groups in Australia (Ata, 1989). Studies of 'diaspora communities' are beset with numerous problems of definition, not only the obvious one of defining 'race' and 'ethnicity', but also terms such as 'acculturate,' 'assimilate' and 'community.' These and numerous other debating points suggest a subject still in its infancy. This article does not attempt to engage in these particular issues but rather, by taking the case of one particular South Asian community, seeks to make another point, namely that it is important not only to engage in comparisons between 'groups' (for example, Ballards study of Jullundur and Mirpuris in Clarke, Peach and Vertovex, 1990) and to compare both 'ends of the migration chain' in the 'new' and the 'old' country (Banks, 1993), but also to undertake a comparative study of the same group in different places both within a country and between different countries (see Hinnells in Brown and Foot, 1995). One merit of comparative studies is that they can highlight not simply what is common to the experience of religion and culture in migration, but, perhaps more importantly what is distinctive in each. A neglected area in the study of South Asian diaspora groups is of the 'high flyers' both in terms of education and career. Typically, books focus on the difficulties encountered in housing and employment due to discrimination (Robinson,

2. Miles (1993, p.iv) bewails the lack of a substantive theoretical framework for migration studies (but see Kritz, Keeley and Tomasi, 1983; Stahl, 1988; Clarke, Peach and Vertovec, 1990, pp. 8-28; Barkan, 1992; Morawska in Yans-McLaughlin, 1990).

1986). Doubtless these are serious issues, but the almost exclusive focus on them results in South Asians being thought of essentially as 'problems.' Another gap in the subject is the neglect of the study of the religion in migration, as though people left their religion behind in Asia.³ This study is concerned with these last two gaps, as well as the wider point regarding international comparison.

In many ways the Parsis are a microcosm of the macrocosm of the South Asian diaspora. They have migrated not only from India (and from different parts of India, mostly from Bombay but also from other cities and Gujarat) and from Pakistan. Important sections of the communities (especially in Britain) also came from East Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Because Parsis have a long history in Britain, there is, in addition, a substantial number of young people born in the diaspora. The Parsi dispersion extends around the world, but it is not as extensive as the wider South Asian diaspora. In what follows I shall compare the experience of Parsis in Britain, specifically the London community and small groups around Britain; in America, particularly in the 'Centres' of Chicago, New York and California (principally Anaheim and Los Angeles, although there were some responses from other Californian groups, notably in San Francisco) and the small groups distributed through the USA, but isolating the one in Houston; in Canada, particularly in Toronto, but also the smaller groups across the country, and in Australia comparing Sydney and Melbourne. These communities in the 'West' (a difficult term, especially when including both Britain and Australia) will generally be compared with the older settlements in Karachi (dating back to the mid-nineteenth century), Hong Kong (early nineteenth century) and Kenya (specifically Mombasa and Nairobi both late nineteenth century).⁴

It is necessary to give a brief account of the nature of the research and to explain some terminology. There are many academic debates regarding the

3. Exceptions are: Haddad and Lummis, 1987; Haddad, 1991; Knott, 1986; Williams, 1988.

4. The total number of Zoroastrians in the various countries, at the time of research in the 1980s, were approximately: Britain, 5,000; America, 3,500; Canada, 3,000; Australia, 300; Pakistan, 3,000 (almost all in Karachi); Hong Kong, 150; Kenya, 80.

value of certain types of research, not least survey questionnaires. Tables I-IX summarise very briefly a few of the statistics gained from a survey conducted among all the groups listed above. The response rate varied from 30 per cent (in Britain) to 93 per cent (in Sydney). A response rate of over 20 per cent is normally considered reasonable for postal surveys. A total of 1822 responses was received (the absolute numbers for each group are indicated in square brackets as 'N' numbers at the head of Chart I). In Britain the issues identified by this postal survey were followed by 242 structured in-depth interviews. Comments on the London and British Zoroastrians, therefore, have a research resource not present in the study of other communities (obviously a global programme of this kind would be yet more costly, and longer). Questionnaires have been criticised by many because they impose a vocabulary on the respondent, it is difficult to ensure a balanced sample and many questions (especially on religion) cannot be answered with the simple 'yes/no' response necessary for computer analysis. In my opinion such doubts often undervalue the developed art of questionnaire design (Moser and Kalton, 1971). Nevertheless surveys do have a significant problem in the interpretation of figures obtained. Hence the importance of the periods spent living with Parsis in each of the communities discussed.⁵ Extensive study was made of the archives (records, minute books, correspondence files, and so on) in each place. Finally, all known publications by Zoroastrians in these communities (newsletters, pamphlets, Sunday School materials, as well as books) have been consulted. Where the 'hard figures' of the survey require interpretation, in what follows the comments are based on this personal experience.

This article is very much a piece of research in progress. The limitations of space in a journal article covering a global phenomenon mean that full documentation is not always possible. For example, it is normally considered essential that charts of survey statistics show the full total for each section of the question asked, including don't knows, so that the reader can be satisfied the correct picture is given. This was not possible in the space available. Some of the figures raised questions that at present I cannot answer.

5. The one exception is Kenya where personal circumstances twice necessitated the late cancellation of planned visits. One of my research students, Nymla Singh, kindly undertook the visit in my place and brought back extensive notes, microfiche of the records and the questionnaires. I am most grateful to Nymla and to the Parsis in Mombasa, Nairobi and Zanzibar for their cooperation.

Certain terms require comment. The term 'Centre' is used to designate a Zoroastrian community that has its own building in which it can meet. The label 'scattered groups' refers to the smaller associations around Britain, America and Canada which have no building and only a smaller membership (even by Zoroastrian standards). In Australia, Sydney has a Zoroastrian building, Melbourne does not. The word 'community' is a useful one, but has dangers because it can misleadingly suggest the existence of a unified body. The responses for Nairobi and Mombasa have been conflated under the heading 'Kenya' because the numbers for each were too small (N=30) to permit confident assertions, but the two groups are different and a further survey would be of value - though as there are only approximately 40 Parsis in each city this represents a high proportion of the membership. The figures for Karachi should be treated with caution. The questionnaire was sent there as a 'pilot study' with the intention of substantial future research in that city. Of the 150 questionnaires sent out, 114 were returned and provide a basis for some generalisations, but the informal system of distribution has almost certainly yielded a skewed sample, reflecting particularly the views of the Association and its leaders, but as the Centre has particular interest because of its history and role as a 'sending' society, and with the good number of responses received, it seemed worth including these figures.

All questionnaires were distributed through the Associations. As they have the only address lists for Zoroastrians, and there are no distinctive Zoroastrian names, (unlike, say, 'Singh' for Sikhs), telephone directories or voting lists are of no help; there is therefore generally no alternative route for questionnaire distribution. In the new communities in America, Canada and Australia this is not a great problem because the close network of contacts and the careful maintenance of records from the beginning mean that most Zoroastrians are known to the Association. In small centres such as Hong Kong, Nairobi and Mombasa any Zoroastrian in the area is known. The problem is most acute in Britain where there is a long history of Zoroastrian settlement (the first Zoroastrian to come to Britain did so in the 1730s, and the formal Association was started in 1861). Many individuals have migrated alone for education or work to various cities around the country, and to very different parts of London and the Home Counties, without necessarily contacting co-religionists. The address list at Zoroastrian House, therefore, is not a complete list of Zoroastrians in the country. Through extensive personal contacts established with Zoroastrians since 1971, the questionnaire in Britain was circulated beyond the Association. Approximately half of the

responses were from people who are not members of Zoroastrian House. The sample for the structured in-depth interviews was balanced in terms of age groups, gender and to some extent country of origin, based on the data yielded by the survey.

This article uses the term ‘diaspora’ communities because of the difficulty of available alternatives. ‘Migrant’ or ‘immigrant’ are unfortunate terms because so many communities have a substantial proportion of persons who have not migrated, but were born in the country where they now live. ‘Ethnic minorities’ is too general since many groups have their ethnicity (depending on definition) not only in national groups but regional ones - I personally wish to assert my Derbyshire ethnicity! The term ‘diaspora’ emphasises the sense of a community living away from what its members would consider to be its original homeland.

Other terms are used which will require definition in the full publication, but two that need some immediate comment are ‘orthodox’ (or ‘traditional’) and ‘liberal’. These are commonly used by Parsis themselves and there are various ‘litmus tests’ of orthodoxy (for example, attitudes to purity, intermarriage and conversion), but it must be appreciated that what is ‘orthodox’ in, say, America, might be seen as ‘liberal’ in Bombay. Further, individuals or communities may be ‘orthodox’ regarding one issue (say intermarriage) and ‘liberal’ in another (say purity laws relating to menstruation). Defining what is meant by ‘orthodox’ and ‘liberal’ is not, therefore, an easy or clear-cut matter. Finally, although this article refers to Iranian Zoroastrians, it seems appropriate in a journal on South Asian studies to focus mostly on the Parsis, without intending any discourtesy to the Iranian members of the communities studied.

THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF ZOROASTRIANS: SOME DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

The Origin of Communities Studied

Chart I Parsis of Indian origin formed the majority in all communities studied with the exception of Karachi where, naturally, most respondents had been born in Pakistan, and California where there was a substantial Iranian Zoroastrian population. However, there are variations between the groups studied concerning the composition of the non-Indian Parsi minority. East

African 'twice migrants' (to use the term of Bhachu, 1985) are found mainly in Britain, mostly outside London. The only other country to which they migrated in any numbers was Canada, and in Toronto they form 10 per cent of the Zoroastrian population. The main centre to which Karachi Zoroastrians have migrated is Houston, although they form around 10 per cent of the population in Sydney, Toronto, London and of the general Zoroastrian population of the USA and Canada. When UK-born Zoroastrians have migrated they have generally settled in Canada rather than the main USA cities, and suprisingly few have migrated to Australia where they form around 7 per cent of that Zoroastrian population. The survey suggested that relatively few Zoroastrians have (yet) left Hong Kong, although small numbers have moved to Houston and the UK.

Chart II illustrates one dimension of the 'age' of the living community. Prior to the twentieth century, numbers in the long-established communities were (Karachi apart) very small with approximately 100-150. The main period of global Zoroastrian migration was from the 1960s, and Chart II illustrates the main decades of settlement in each. It indicates that there is still some migration to East Africa and Hong Kong (mostly people working for multi national companies such as airlines). The Western centres are generally more recent settlements. In Britain the main decade of growth (despite the long history of the Association) was the 1960s. In America and Canada the cities with the (relatively) older settlements are Chicago and Toronto where approximately one-third of respondents arrived in the 1960s, but in all areas the main period of growth appears to have been in the 1970s, although Texas grew in the 1980s, as did the Zoroastrian population in California. For both Australian communities the 1980s have been the main period of growth, and this growth has continued in the 1990s. In very general terms, therefore, Britain was the destination of many migrants in the 1960s, America and Canada in the 1970s and 1980s, Australia in the 1980s and 1990s. There does need to be some qualification, however, because different cities within the same country can have a different history, for example Chicago and Houston in the United States (Hinnells, 1988; see also Williams, 1988 with reference to other South Asian communities). A further brief point on the history of settlement is important.

The nature of each community is affected not only by the proportions of the different sub-groups it encompasses, but also by the role those sub-groups have played in the history of that Association. For example, Karachi Zoroastrians are important in Houston not only because of the proportion they

constitute of that population but also because of the fundamental role some of the earliest settlers (Karachi-ites) played in setting up the Association and helping people to settle. In London, East African Zoroastrians are important not only because that is where most of them live, but also because, though still a minority in the Association, they are an influential, vocal group who have in the late 1980s and 1990s influenced community policy.

Age Ranges

The different communities have different age compositions (Chart III). The long-established centres of Hong Kong, Karachi and London have a higher proportion of members in the 16-25 age range than some of the newer American and Canadian centres because they have more older families whose children have grown up. The exception to this is California, where the explanation is probably the attraction of the higher education programme, which has resulted in a high proportion of students in the population. It may possibly be due also to the high proportion of Iranians who, following the revolution, felt forced to migrate in 1979-80 with their families, many of whom are now entering adulthood. It is interesting that Sydney and Melbourne have such a high proportion of younger people. The figures may be skewed because the high percentage response to the survey in Australia probably means that the survey was responded to by a higher proportion of the young people there than elsewhere, but it is also probably due to the attraction Australia now has for many Indian Zoroastrian youths as a land of opportunity.

The American Zoroastrian population is mainly in the 25-55 age range, with most communities having the largest proportion of members aged between 36-45. Within the general picture the longer-established Centres of Chicago and New York have a slightly larger proportion of older people than California (long established but only recently having large numbers) or Houston (more recently established). The Australian population, although having a high-ish proportion of young people, as indicated, also has 19 per cent of its members over the age of 55 compared with 9-14 per cent in most American groups. The Australian population has a more even spread of ages. The Canadian picture is similar, though with fewer in the range 25-35 and a slightly higher proportion in the 55-65 age range - but still not as high a proportion as in the long-established Centres of Kenya, Kararchi, Hong Kong and London. It is only in these old Centres that the over-65s exceed 10 per cent of the Zoroastrian population. (For comparison, in Britain 19 per cent of the white

population are over 65 (Jones, 1993, p.23) as are 19 per cent of Bombay Parsis (Karkal, 1984, p.48.) The Kenyan communities have a different age profile from the other long-established Centres, with fewer younger people and more elders, because many of their young people have chosen to migrate overseas where they believe there are better opportunities for advancement. There appears to be a tendency for the population of the 'scattered groups' away from 'Centres' to have a larger proportion of their population in their thirties and forties. Personal observations in America and Canada, as well as the figures discussed under 'Education' below, suggest that this is due to highly educated and particularly successful people being deployed by their companies around the country, so the attraction of promotion leads them to move away from a 'Centre', but then some settle back near friends and family in the 'Centres' as the hectic pace of their careers begins to slow down. The Centres are typically where most migrants first settle when they are seeking education and work (because of existing contacts). In short, Zoroastrian communities in the 'West' are typically younger than in the 'old countries,' and tend to be younger in 'the new world' than in the older 'Centres' of Britain, Hong Kong and East Africa. There are also different patterns between cities within any country. There is, therefore, no simple clear-cut age pattern among diaspora Zoroastrians.

Family Patterns

The variations in the marriage patterns between the communities are interesting. Those with the highest proportion of single people were London (35 per cent) and Karachi (27 per cent). The London figures are affected by the number of students, but this is not the full explanation because the same could be said of a number of American cities. The London community itself often expresses the view that its members face problems in finding suitable partners. Although this is the conviction of many of my London informants, it seems strange that this should be more of a problem in London than in smaller communities in America and Canada. But there are in London (as in the 'old country') a number of women who have chosen not to marry because they cannot find a suitable partner, rather than bring distress to their families by marrying out. My impression is that there are more 'traditional' pressures in London than in much of the 'new world'. In Karachi also, one possible explanation for the large proportion of single persons is the pressure not to marry out, even when it is felt that there is a paucity of suitable marriage partners. But that still does not allow for the fact that Karachi is

approximately ten times larger than most, if not all, American Associations and its young people should therefore have less of a problem finding a partner. In America, there is more of a continent-wide network to ease the problem. In informal discussion I have heard Parsis in both Pakistan and India speculate on the possibility that the high level of inbreeding is resulting in a lower level of fertility. The high figure for single people in California almost certainly reflects the student population there; and in Sydney it is due to the young age of the community in comparison with most American centres. There may be another factor. My subjective impression is that Sydney has been relatively successful in keeping its young people involved within the community in comparison to many other diaspora groups where the broad pattern is that young people follow the religion of their parents until they leave home, but often then leave the religion at university or work until marriage, and especially children, come along, when many return to their roots.

The figures for the rate of intermarriage confirm, as one might expect, that intermarriage occurs most frequently in the 'scattered groups,' be they in Britain, America or Canada, rather than in the 'Centres.' It is also higher in Sydney than in other Centres - again, this may be explained in part by the fact that Sydney, at least when the research was being conducted, was quite successful in keeping not only its young people, but also its intermarrieds, within the community. It is plausible that the rate of intermarriage is higher elsewhere than the figures suggest, but that these intermarrieds have been distanced from the community and did not respond to a survey sent out through the Associations. The low rate of intermarriage is not surprising in Muslim-dominated Karachi but it is also noticeably low in Houston, Toronto, California and Melbourne. The explanations may be different in each case. The Karachi-Houston network has already been commented upon and both will be seen in this study to tend towards traditionalism. Houston is also a relatively new community composed of successful businessmen (many associated with the oil boom of the early 1980s) who have been able to afford to bring their families with them, and so they have not come as single persons for education - an environment which can be conducive to intermarriage. In the case of Toronto the explanation may be that the Zoroastrian community there is very well-organised in terms of religious classes and social functions, both factors facilitating and encouraging in-marriage. In California there is a high proportion of Iranian Zoroastrians, and although they have not been subject to the caste influence of India there is nevertheless a particularly

strong opposition to intermarriage among them (partly because of the implications regarding conversion to Islam in the 'old country' and partly because they are fiercely proud of being the 'original' Iranians). The explanation for Melbourne is less obvious. The most plausible explanation is that it is a consequence of the influence of two orthodox teachers there. In the study of such small communities it is important not to forget the impact of individuals when trying to draw broad conclusions from 'hard' survey figures concerned with overall trends. The low rate of intermarriage in Kenya is obviously explicable as a consequence of the 'emotional' or 'personal' isolation of the Zoroastrian community there. Intermarriage with the majority 'black' population is very rare and the 'white' population was probably more inward-looking than its counterpart in India (Gregory, 1971; Mangat, 1969; Twaddle in Clarke *et al.*, 1990.)

The enormous contrast for the figures on the proportions of nuclear versus extended families indicate important differences between the communities. The proportion of nuclear families is low in Karachi because the long history of that community means that almost all its members have a network of family ties. This Karachi feature has been carried over to the Houston community, and the second explanation for this has already been mentioned, namely the fact that well-to-do businessmen were able to bring their families with them. Whereas major university 'Centres' such as Chicago and New York attracted Zoroastrians on an individual basis, the very early Houston arrivals were particularly active in encouraging and helping co-religionists, family and friends to settle near them. It is, therefore, quite a close-knit community. At the other end of the scale, the very high proportion of nuclear families in Melbourne and Sydney is due to the fact that they are the two 'newest' Zoroastrian communities and evidently people, or families, have migrated alone to set up a new life. The higher figures for Toronto, and for Canada in general, are difficult to explain and merit further research.

Education

Chart V. Naturally the places where most people finished their formal education at school and did not proceed to higher education were Kenya (where higher education provision is less readily available) and Hong Kong, a Centre with a high proportion of businessmen and relatively few professionals. Thereafter, the two highest figures are in the inter-connected cities of Karachi and Houston. Again, both are important business centres.

At the opposite end of the educational spectrum it is the dispersed American Zoroastrians who have the largest proportion of postgraduates. At this point it is worth commenting on the Houston figures - although that community has a high proportion of people completing education at school, it also has a high proportion of postgraduates. It would seem they are, given the city's business and professional resources, strongly represented at both ends of the spectrum, with few in between. The communities with lower rates of postgraduates are London and the UK, both groups in Australia, Canada in general and Toronto. Clearly, America is seen as the land of opportunity for the high flyers. Kenya has no such postgraduate members as far as this survey found.

It should be noted that in Chart V the figures for respondents who have completed postgraduate education are not percentages of those who went to university, but percentages of the total response. If, therefore, a complete picture is wanted of the proportion of respondents who went to university at any level, then the figures for those completing at degree level Diaspora and for those who pursued postgraduate study should be conflated: thus 69 per cent of London respondents have been to university (a far higher proportion than in the white population) and 90 per cent in New York had done so. The Parsi diaspora communities are exceptionally well-qualified educationally. In several places, from New York to Hong Kong to Sydney, I have sat down with secretaries of the Associations for days at a time to go through the address lists and check these percentages with them. In every Association checked our conclusions were that the survey underestimated marginally (by a couple of per cent) the numbers who had been to university.

If one looks at where that education took place, it is very clear that the American 'high-flyers' had a substantial part of their higher education in America. The picture is similar in Canada but less stark. Roughly similar proportions of London and UK Zoroastrians had their postgraduate education in Britain. In the newer communities of Australia most had their higher education back in India. These patterns presumably reflect not only where people grew up (as a longer established community more British Zoroastrians had their education here), but also what the respective countries' employers will accept in terms of qualifications - Americans like American graduates.

There is an interesting pattern of the type of education (liberal arts compared with the sciences) pursued by members of the different communities. Typically, Parsis in India pursue arts subjects (or accountancy). Arts

graduates predominate in most Western 'Parsi' centres - London, the UK, Hong Kong, Karachi, Kenya, Australia and Canada - but in the USA most are science graduates. The USA has, therefore, typically attracted the very high flyers educationally, and offered them part of their training, which has been predominantly in the sciences. The different countries have, as a consequence, not only had different histories in the sense of when people came, and different age compositions, they also have different educational patterns.

Employment

The figures for the employment patterns are, regrettably, not available at present for London due to computing problems, although these will of course be included in the full publication. The figures are not given for Karachi because the classification of careers is based on an inappropriate American model (also the skewed Karachi sample results in severe distortion). The heading 'Not in employment' (NEs) denotes retired persons and housewives, not the unemployed in the sense of those not able to obtain work (an alternative term, but offensive to many, is dependants). This 'economically inactive' group is largest in the affluent and traditional centres of Hong Kong and in Kenya where fewer wives go out to work. There are fewer NEs in the American cities which have attracted the high-flying academics and careerists, namely New York and Chicago, but also in Canada in general and in Toronto - a less easily explained phenomenon. Overall in the Zoroastrian diaspora the general figure for this group is between one in four or one in five persons. At the opposite end of the economic scale the places with the highest proportion of 'executive level' persons are Chicago, New York, and the scattered groups in America, but they are less well-represented in Kenya and Hong Kong. The British and Australian Zoroastrians stand midway between the extremes in this regard. Not surprisingly, the levels of careers largely correspond to the levels of education.

The fundamental point behind Charts I-V in Section A is, therefore, that it is a mistake to view the Zoroastrian diaspora communities as a uniform phenomenon. The different nature of each base has attracted different people from different parts of the Zoroastrian world at different times and provided them with different opportunities. They have different internal demographic features. Even within one country there are differences between cities, most clearly evident here in the figures for Houston and Chicago, and Melbourne

and Sydney. A more detailed comparison between London and Manchester, or between Toronto and Vancouver, would yield similar contrasts. It is common for writers on Asians in the West to emphasise that there is no such single phenomenon as the 'South Asian community.' That is an outsiders imposition of a category which bears little correspondence to the self-understanding of members of the many communities who see themselves as, possibly, Hindus, Muslims etc, but more likely as Gujaratis, Punjabis, Bengalis etc or identified by *jati*. The point here is that this breakdown of the reified '(South) Asian community' has also to be questioned because there is considerable diversity even within those more precise categories. To what extent are these 'demographic' differences matched by differences in internal community ties and religion?

COMMUNITY TIES AND RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

In broad terms 60 per cent of Zoroastrians in the sample maintained contact with fellow Zoroastrians in 'other' countries (Chart VI). There is, therefore, a substantial international Zoroastrian network. Fewer Karachi respondents maintained an overseas correspondence, presumably because that city has a sizeable and more self-sufficient Zoroastrian community. The explanation in California is different. The Iranian Zoroastrians there have greater difficulty keeping in contact with co-religionists in the 'old country' than do people from India or Pakistan. The higher levels in New York and the scattered American groups merit further research. The local networks are, as might be expected, stronger than the overseas ties, with around 70 per cent of the overall sample maintaining regular contact 'here'. That might be expected in the older Centres of Karachi, Hong Kong and Kenya, but it is also true of 80 per cent of respondents in Sydney (already seen to be a close community), California (the Iranian network is very strong) and Canada, where I suspect the figures are affected by the responses from Vancouver, another community with a large Iranian community - a group which typically remains tightly knit. Not surprisingly, the level of local contact is lower in scattered British and American groups, yet even here two-thirds of respondents said that they were in regular contact with fellow Zoroastrians.

Another medium of contact is Zoroastrian literature. Detailed studies of what was read suggested that it was mostly community newsletters, especially in American and Canadian centres, which have a strong tradition of newsletters,

notably Toronto (so have Vancouver and Montreal which explains the figure for the rest of Canada). In Australia, the community in Sydney has put more energy into such contact than has the one in Melbourne. At the opposite end of the scale the Zoroastrians in Britain read relatively little Zoroastrian literature (there has not been a sustained production of a newsletter throughout the long history of the Association in Britain). Nor has there been a sustained attempt to produce a newsletter in Houston. But there are other factors. First, one might ask why have some Centres produced newsletters and others not? Generally, American groups, even the smaller ones, have tended to develop more of a religious education (RE) network as a deliberate response to the perceived threat of the (American) melting-pot. It is also likely to be a consequence of the highly educated and literate nature of the respective communities. In Karachi, the high level of reading religious literature is due to the RE network firmly established there by the revered High Priest Dastur Dhalla (1875-1956), the first Zoroastrian to undertake postgraduate research in Zoroastrian studies in the West (Columbia University, New York 1904-8), and the author of a number of books on Zoroastrianism still read in Karachi. The figure in Hong Kong is probably due to a different factor. There is no tradition of a newsletter, but the Bombay-produced *Parsiana* is commonly circulated there. In California, the figure is high because of Iranian Zoroastrians reading the Persian equivalent of *Parsiana*. Behind these simple figures for reading Zoroastrian literature, then, there are various sources, a number of factors and explanations. But coupled with the figures for contact with co-religionists overseas and here Toronto, other Canadian groups and Sydney to be actively part of a Zoroastrian network, with the British communities less active.

The figures for religious practice suggest a higher level of activity than might be found amongst the general population of most of the countries that the Zoroastrians live in. The figures perhaps require some caution because it is possible that although the questionnaires could be returned anonymously, people may have been inclined to indicate what they thought they ought to do. However, this factor might be taken to operate fairly consistently across the sample, and therefore some comparative judgements are possible. As one might expect, more respondents from the old 'sending' communities in Karachi and Kenya say that they pray daily than do those from secular Britain. The high percentage figures in Australia merit comment. The more complex studies to be published in the Katrak volume suggest that for the first 10-15 years after migration many people tend to preserve their traditions at

least as determinedly as they did in the old country. The Sydney and Melbourne communities both consist mostly of people who have migrated recently. Earlier references to Houston Zoroastrians being more traditional than those in Chicago are justified in the figures for praying daily and wearing the sacred symbols-cum-garments, the *sudre* and *kusti*, the sacred 'shirt' and cord. The lower numbers in Houston observing the festivals and lighting the sacred oil lamp, the *divo*, are almost certainly due to the fact that they have no meeting place of their own in which to celebrate community based festivals (the same is true in the 'scattered groups' in the USA, Britain and Canada). In contrast, those communities which do have a building have higher figures for observing the festivals. A brief consideration of the figures for non-observance of festivals and not lighting a *divo* highlights two points: first, how few Zoroastrians cease the practices of their religion when living in their 'new country'; second, the figures for Melbourne and Sydney contrast with the previous figures which indicated that the two communities are traditional and religiously active. The explanation would seem to be that, although the majority of Zoroastrians maintained their traditions after migration, nevertheless there is a proportion who in the act of migration (be it cause or effect is unknown) sever their links with important parts of their heritage. This highlights the danger of drawing oversimplified generalisations from a set of figures. Just as it is mistaken to accept uncritically the popular notion that migrants leave their heritage behind when they leave the 'old country,' so it is also unwise to reproduce unthinkingly the account given by many within the community that they become more religious after migration. This research would suggest that although the majority do continue to practise their religion, there is also a smaller group which does indeed turn its back on its heritage. On average only one respondent in ten was willing to describe themselves as non-practising. That is a higher figure than for people saying they did not observe the festivals. The apparent discrepancy is due to the fact that observation of festivals is not on its own a good indication of a level of Zoroastrian practice, any more than a British person enjoying the Christmas festival is thereby necessarily practising the Christian religion. A single indicator is an inadequate guide to religious commitment.

Religions are typically expressed in customs associated with rites of passage, not least death ceremonies. In Zoroastrianism the dead are traditionally exposed in Towers of Silence to vultures (thereby avoiding defiling the sacred earth or fire with the pollution of death). The practice has ceased in

Iran and is not observed in all Parsi communities in India (not all towns have vultures), but it continues in Bombay, throughout traditional Gujarat, and also in Karachi. These funerals are an important part of the tradition but one which is not possible anywhere in the diaspora. Some, however, have their bodies flown back to India for the rites of exposure and, as Chart VI shows, an average of approximately one in five respondents wish for this (because of the high costs involved few in fact are flown there). It is interesting to note the variations between communities regarding this example of a 'litmus test' of adherence to Zoroastrian tradition. It is strongest in Melbourne, again presumably due to the fact that so many of the community have recently migrated and still feel strongly about traditions. Hong Kong has similar figures, but for the opposite reason that it is a long-established community which has retained close links with India and has been distanced from Western academic studies which, it has to be said, have not always had a beneficial influence on the communities. There is no Tower of Silence here but there is a full-time priest (the only one in the diaspora communities, counting Karachi as part of the 'old country') who in Zoroastrian House and the long-established funeral ground has upheld the traditions of purity and pollution in general, and those involving death in particular. Chicago and New York again appear less traditional.

Almost all communities are 'traditional' regarding food, with 80 per cent and more of all respondents throughout the diaspora saying that they continue to eat Indian or Iranian food regularly. This is an aspect of what might be called 'secular ethnicity' which all groups preserved however the responses were analysed: as common among science postgraduates as among those who completed their education at school, among men and women, among young and old.

Religious Beliefs

Questionnaires may be somewhat less reliable in assessing beliefs since these rarely permit simple 'yes/no' answers. However, religion is about both practice and belief, and so respondents were asked a number of questions regarding beliefs, but many more were possible in the face-to-face interview schedule undertaken in Britain: this aspect of the subject is pursued further in *Zoroastrians in Britain*.

Intermarriage

Intermarriage is a subject of considerable and acrimonious debate within the Zoroastrian community in India and the diaspora. In Iran intermarriage is rare for the reasons discussed above. The same is true in part at least for Pakistan. In India, Zoroastrians have rarely married out of the community because of the caste system. However, with a degree of Westernisation in the twentieth century there were cases of marriage to a Westerner and since Independence a number have married members of other Indian communities (mostly, but not only, Hindus (Kharas Fraser, 1993)). In the diaspora, where it is more difficult to find a suitable partner because of the small size of diaspora the communities, the practice has grown. The traditional orthodox response is to argue that in mixed marriages there is an increased danger of departing from the tradition in general and the religion in particular; that there is a higher incidence of divorce in mixed marriages; that the children grow up in a religious vacuum; and that the inevitable consequence of intermarriages is the further diminution of the minuscule community. The counter-arguments advanced are: that intermarriage is inevitable and excluding intermarrieds will reduce numbers even more quickly; that it will bring fresh blood into the community; and that banning intermarriages is racist.

The question takes on a strong religious dimension because it raises the issue of conversion (of spouse and offspring). The traditional 'orthodox' argument is that Zoroastrianism has never practised conversion (except for some royal heretics in Sasanian times) but has always practised freedom of religion, witness the great tolerance of Cyrus the Great when he liberated the Jews from exile in Babylon in the sixth century BCE; that there is truth in all religions and people should concentrate their energies on being religious in the tradition into which they were born (according to many orthodox this is a part of divine dispensation); and that to change one's religion is psychologically damaging because it involves standing aside from one's total cultural heritage and conditioning. It is also commonly asserted that conversion involves the idea of proselytism, something which Zoroastrians believe is inevitably linked with persecution. The counter-arguments advanced are: that if religions are true then it is wrong to exclude committed persons from the religion, especially family members; families should not be divided and therefore Zoroastrians should accept converts even if they do not proselytise. The issues of intermarriage and conversion are thus interwoven matters of intense debate (Hinnells, 1987). They make a suitable litmus test

of attitudes both to the community and to the religion.

Chart VII shows that less than half of the respondents are willing to say that they actually approve of intermarriage and approximately a third object to it. But there is considerable variation between communities. As might be expected, the traditional communities of Karachi and Kenya show the lowest level of approval. Generally, there are higher levels of 'approval' in the scattered communities in Britain, America and Canada than in the Centres, although Chicago and New York are again less 'traditional.' The position of the Canadian respondents is interesting since they too have a relatively high proportion 'approving' of intermarriage, as do the two Australian communities. The explanation here, I believe, is important, though because of its complexity will have to await full justification in the *Katrak* volume. It flows from other questions on the questionnaire which focused on perceptions of 'mother country' and the extent to which respondents were willing to identify themselves as British, American, Canadian, and so on, rather than Parsi or Zoroastrian. The conclusion drawn from that analysis is that in America more respondents want to assert their Zoroastrianness rather than their Americanness, because the latter is associated with the threat of the melting-pot culture which is thought to erode distinctiveness. In contrast, the high profile 'multiculturalism' of Canada is seen as non-threatening and therefore more respondents were willing to identify themselves as Canadians, that is, as citizens of the country of abode, not of birth. The Australian perception appears to be nearer to that of Canada than America. The British picture is more complicated because of the long (generally good) history of Anglo-Parsi relations in the Raj (Hinnells, 1978), but among British Zoroastrians there is a fairly widespread perception of the British as rather cold, secular, untrustworthy, sexually promiscuous, neglectful of family responsibilities and inclined to be racist (see below and *Zoroastrians in Britain*). It is reasonable to suppose that the attitudes to intermarriage reflect these perceptions of what being American, Canadian, Australian or British involves.

At the other end of the scale it is worth noting the high levels of objection to intermarriage in California. The explanation here is not only the high proportion of Iranian Zoroastrians but also the presence of a powerful 'orthodox' Parsi voice. Again the traditional nature of Houston is shown in these figures. The London traditional position is due to more than a hypothetical 'Anglophobia'; it is also due to a revival of the traditional

Zoroastrian position in London in the 1980s led in large part by the East African Zoroastrians. In this study, as in others (Bhachu, 1985; Robinson, 1986), East African Asians appear to have preserved older traditions than have their counterparts in India because, being more distanced from the wider society than in the 'old country', they have lived more within the walls of their own community and been less subject to changing influences. The high level of Melbourne 'objectors' again illustrates how a community can polarise (since it was also seen to have one of the higher proportions of those who approved). The explanation is, once more, the presence of influential teachers holding strong traditional views.

These figures and their implications illustrate the complexity of factors which affect the developments of different patterns of beliefs between and within communities. They illustrate the falsity of simple explanations or blanket generalisations.

Conversion

Turning to the related question of the initiation of non-Zoroastrians: overall, approximately two-thirds of respondents thought that the offspring of intermarried couples should be initiated, a slightly smaller number thought that the non-Zoroastrian spouse should be initiated, and a smaller group (though still approximately half of respondents) thought that any non-Zoroastrian could be initiated. Again, there are differences between the various groups. The most traditional centres are, once more, Karachi and Kenya and the least traditional Centres are Chicago, New York, Sydney - with an interesting and consistent tendency for Melbourne to be more traditional than its (relatively) close Australian sister community. Generally, the Canadian response is half-way between the 'liberalism' of Chicago and the 'traditionalism' of Houston, but the response in Britain is more traditional still. With the question of initiation, the differences between the 'Centres' and the scattered groups are less pronounced than in the question of intermarriage. My impression is that the question of intermarriage has become a not uncommon reality in the 'Scattered groups', but that the question of initiations is still relatively less common (though such events have taken place occasionally, and discreetly). The position of Hong Kong is interesting in that it is a community generally associated with 'orthodoxy,' but on these questions is more 'liberal' than the British community. Intermarriages have happened in the colony (both with Chinese and Western

persons) but they have been rare and have not resulted in very public acrimony, at least not since the Second World War (there had earlier been such a public difficulty). Whereas California appeared to be traditional on the question of intermarriage, in comparison with, say, London, it is generally more open on the issue of initiating non-Zoroastrians. The probable explanation is the presence there of an influential (albeit very controversial) teacher who stresses the universal nature of the Zoroastrian religion and would take a much more proactive approach to encouraging non-Zoroastrians to enter the religion than is found elsewhere. The figures are, at this point, probably a reflection of his influence. But he would not see such initiations as a necessary part of intermarriage, and hence his work would not be so likely to affect the responses on that question.

Life after Death

Chart VIII deals with what a 'Westerner' would see as the more religious questions of life after death. 'Outside' academics would agree that the traditional Zoroastrian teaching is of a belief in heaven as a place of reward for the good, and hell as a place of punishment for wicked souls, but this separation is not eternal for they are post-mortem states prior to the general resurrection at the end of world history when, after the final judgement and further temporary reward or punishment, all will dwell in heaven with God (Boyce, 1975, ch.IX and 1979, chs.II, IV). Such academics do not believe that reincarnation is part of the ancient tradition, but see it as an example of Hindu influence on the Parsis (it is not a belief found among Iranian Zoroastrians). Parsis who believe in rebirth naturally argue that it is part of the original tradition but that a spiritual (or occult) appreciation of the texts is necessary to appreciate it. From the perspective of this study a belief in reincarnation may be taken as an indicator of the preservation of traditions of 'the old country' (India) if not of the ancient tradition.

Perhaps the first point meriting comment in Chart VIII is the generally high level (around two-thirds of respondents) of belief in the immortality of the soul. More respondents from Karachi than from anywhere else affirmed a belief in some sort of life after death. This may be due to a skewed sample, though that is not the sole explanation. The belief of my informants, and my own observations on visits to the city, suggest that as the public profile of Islam increased through the 1980s, so religion became more socially respectable than before in Pakistan society in general, including among Parsis.

It was one of the few, if not the only, places I visited in the course of this research where members of the older generation said that the youth were more active in the religion than they themselves had been. As far as belief in resurrection is concerned, this is affirmed most frequently by respondents from the Muslim city of Karachi (the resurrection is still part of Islam), from Toronto, a Centre with a strong tradition of Zoroastrian RE, and from Melbourne with its traditional teachers. The belief in reincarnation, in contrast, is strong in the various traditional groups (Kenya, Hong Kong, Houston) but also in communities with a strong RE tradition, such as Toronto (the general Canadian figure is probably affected by the active RE programmes in Montreal and Vancouver) and weak in 'liberal' Chicago and New York and the scattered American groups. The lowish figure for California is presumably due to the number of Iranian Zoroastrians, among whom a belief in reincarnation is rare. The figures for a belief in heaven and hell show wide variations of acceptance, very high in two older settlements, Karachi and Kenya, but low in Hong Kong, otherwise approximately half of respondents from around the world accept this doctrine.

Another Zoroastrian tradition related to a belief in the afterlife is the attitude to prayers for the souls of the deceased. These have been part of Zoroastrian practice for millennia and are a central part of the traditional funeral prayers. Only in Kenya do more than half the respondents affirm the essential nature of these prayers. The other more traditional Centres are Hong Kong and London. Both have had their own funeral grounds for over a hundred years, and so more of the hallowed practices have been preserved there than in places where an undertaker makes arrangements in an ordinary home or funeral parlour. Melbourne is again fairly traditional. As on many other issues, Chicago, New York, the scattered American communities and California are more 'liberal.'

Overall, therefore, in regard to this dimension of belief, there is a high level of faith in life after death. In most communities it takes the general form of the immortality of the soul, which tends to be interpreted most commonly as a belief in heaven and hell, but in Hong Kong, Canada and Sydney more believe in reincarnation, indicating close spiritual ties with India. The ties between Hong Kong and India have already been commented on. In Sydney, the explanation is almost certainly that it is a new Centre and most of its members are in the relatively early years of their settlement and still retain old ties. The figure for Canada has no obvious explanation I can think of and

merits further research. It is interesting to note that more people said that they considered themselves 'practitioners' of the religion than said that they believe in life after death. For many, the religion is a matter of who you are not so much what you believe. The British interview schedule showed a high level of belief in God, but some informants felt that it was possible to assert their Zoroastrianness, even though they were atheists. It is, therefore, necessary in a full study to define what is meant by Zoroastrian.

Religious Change

The final question on teaching is: to what extent are the Zoroastrians themselves conscious of any change in their beliefs and practices as a consequence of migration? Obviously this question was irrelevant in the old settlements of Hong Kong, Karachi and Kenya, and for the young people born in a 'new country'. The first point to comment on is that most asserted that their beliefs and practices had not changed. More respondents asserted that they had changed their practices rather than their beliefs. Academics in the field of the study of religions generally assume that religions are more conservative with regard to practices than to beliefs, but this study is not concerned with what 'really' happened, rather with respondents perceptions. The percentages are not so different between communities that many strong assertions can be made. At one end of the spectrum lies Melbourne, where very few believe that they have changed, and at the other lie New York and the scattered groups in America and Canada, where approximately one in four think that they have changed. These figures may not be surprising in that the newer communities are peopled by individuals in the early years of settlement when they typically cling to their traditions for stability and security at a time of great upheaval. In the 'scattered groups,' where contact with fellow Zoroastrians is most difficult, change is more likely. But this is not inevitable. The community in Houston conform to what my study has described as a scattered group (that is, it is very small and has no building of its own). Nevertheless, in its own 'eyes' it has been relatively little affected by migration and is seen in this article to be traditional in various ways because of the type of people who came, when, why, and where they came from, and the strength of the Zoroastrian network established there in the earliest days.

In one sense, of course, the respondents are right and their practices have changed, because without a consecrated fire temple or full-time (and therefore

ritually pure) priesthood they cannot observe many of what in Bombay are seen as the central practices. Without the Towers of Silence they cannot fulfil the duties that many have been taught from infancy are necessary. But from the time of the religions infancy it has been a nomadic tradition and worship has been offered not in temples but before the divine creations of fire and light (the sun, ritual fire or a lamp) or the waters. These can be, and in earlier times were, venerated as much in the home as in the temple. My own impression during my various stays with Zoroastrians in eighteen cities around the world has been that the domestic dimension of the religion is, indeed, alive and active.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Chart IX is concerned with respondents' perceptions of community relations, both within the community and with those outside. An 'outsider' might well assume that internal relations are inevitably good, because of the need for members to support each other in a new environment. This is not necessarily the case. One factor, for example, is that because most Zoroastrians are conscious of the threat of extinction due to declining numbers, strategies for survival are commonly disputed with great vigour, because each side fears that the policies of the other will result in the (hastened) disappearance of their community. There are also some tensions between Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians on the grounds of language, secular customs (for example, diet) and religious practices (for example, the contrasting level of authority given to priests – important in Hindu India, not in Islamic Iran – and scripture – central in a Muslim environment, less so in India). Again, the questionnaire cannot provide evidence of what relations are actually like, only of how respondents perceive (or want to project) the situation. In Kenya there are deep communal divisions and that figure is not surprising. California is also divided not only between Iranians and Parsis, but also between some Parsis who incline to the Iranian perspective and those who do not. The Chicago divisions were not evident during my visits there, but came to the surface later with a change of leadership. Otherwise the global response suggests a strong sense of Parsi unity.

The perception of relations with Iranian Zoroastrians is less positive, but broadly speaking two-thirds want to assert that relations 'here' also are good or excellent. The figures are inevitably low for New York because at the time

of the survey a formal split had emerged, resulting in two separate Associations, one Iranian, one Parsi. There was also a time of particular difficulty in California. At the other end of the scale, some of the high figures may be due more to ideals than to reality because there are very few Iranians in Melbourne or Sydney, but the high figure for Canada probably reflects the (then) generally harmonious situation in Vancouver, where the Zoroastrian population was, unusually, almost equally Parsi and Iranian. Certain local leaders worked very hard at maintaining that unity. While the unity can sometimes be due to determined efforts by the community, it can also be affected by the perception of the 'outside world.' Thus, in Karachi there is a consciousness of the need for community solidarity in a Muslim environment. In Hong Kong there is a great sense of distance from the majority Chinese (which is true of all Indian communities there; see Vaid, 1972). In Sydney, at the time of the survey, there were strenuous efforts on the part of leaders to maintain harmony in the community. Community solidarity is affected by the physical provisions available. Thus, in Karachi there are housing colonies, social centres as well as temples, schools, hospitals and Towers of Silence. In Hong Kong there is a well-resourced building and prayer-room as well as a funeral ground. Seen in this light, the high rate of asserted unity in Canada in general merits further research. Knowing the leaders personally in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Montreal, I suspect that unity is achieved through the devoted labours of individuals despite their difficulties. Once again: it is important in a study of general trends to allow for the influence of individuals.

There is a less than overwhelming affirmation that relations with non-Zoroastrians are 'good or excellent.' It should be added that 'good' does not necessarily mean 'close.' Thus Kenya has the highest affirmative response, but relations, if cordial, are not intimate with the majority black population. The same may be said of relations in Karachi and Hong Kong. My own observations while in Australia were that the 'young communities' there were very positive about their settlement in what they considered a flourishing country (my research there preceded the worst of the Australian recession), and that is how the successful young Zoroastrians who constitute most of the scattered groups in the USA feel about that country. There are, then, different explanations behind the assertion that relations are good with the majority population. The low figure in Britain calls for explanation. As noted earlier, the typical Parsi perception of their position in the Raj is that they were important figures of whom the British had a high opinion and on whom they

relied. They also believe that they have contributed a great deal to Britain with the first three Asian MPs (Naoroji, 1892-95; Bhowndree, 1895-1905; Saklatvala, 1923-29), as well as producing pioneering musical figures (Zubin Mehta, the conductor; Nicola Katrak, prima ballerina with the Royal Ballet; Freddie Mercury, the pop singer); cultural and sporting figures (playwright and TV producer, Farokh Dhondy; Farokh Engineer, cricketer) and with a high number of educated professionals. It may, therefore, be surprising to find this relatively low-level assessment of relations. In the interviews, as commented above, many expressed a negative attitude to the British and almost all parents said that they did not want their young people to grow up like their British peers. Further, there is also a strong sense of racial discrimination. This survey cannot assert that discrimination was exercised, since I was not present on any relevant occasion. What can be asserted is what respondents believe. However, my opinion is that the level of discrimination is probably higher, not lower, than asserted, since several people said that they had not experienced discrimination but had suffered from 'Paki-bashing' - which would appear to be a form of discrimination! Naturally, the figures given in these charts are those for people giving a simple positive assertion of perceived discrimination whatever was said elsewhere on the form. Many informants gave the impression that they considered discrimination was something which one could (and they did) avoid by being educated, Westernised, etc., and so found it difficult to admit that they faced discrimination. This issue will be addressed more fully in subsequent publications. Viewed internationally, the country where most respondents said that they had experienced discrimination was Canada and especially Toronto. However, only 23 per cent of those Canadian Zoroastrians who said that they had faced discrimination thought that they had done so frequently [N=106], whereas in London of the 42 per cent who thought that they had faced discrimination 39 per cent [N=78], considered they had done so frequently, the highest figure for any community studied. A separate questionnaire was circulated in Britain on the subject of perceived discrimination. Briefly, the conclusions were that not only did a high proportion consider that they had faced it frequently, they also believed that they had faced it in a substantial form, mostly in employment, but also particularly in the educational system, mostly from peers, but also from teachers and from the school curriculum. There was no standard 'type' of person who thought they faced discrimination, it was experienced as much by the highly educated as by the less-well educated (the medical profession was quite often identified as a problem in this respect); as much by those born in

Britain and those whose mother tongue was English as by the Gujarati speakers (who, it might be assumed, tend to keep themselves more at a distance from 'white' society). In short, it would seem that a substantial factor in the relatively negative Zoroastrian assessment of Britain is the experience of prejudice.

CONCLUSION

Because this is research in progress it would be rash to draw too many hard conclusions, but some points can be made and issues identified for further study. Clearly, the communities in different countries, and within any given country, are different. This diversity is a reflection of where people migrate from, when and why they migrated; the sort of persons they are (for example, in terms of level and nature of education); the nature not only of the country but of the actual city in which they settle (South Asians, Parsis or not, have rarely settled in rural areas); their perception of the wider community in the new environment (in terms of its religion, the degree of perceived hostility, its morals); the sort of physical provision they are able to make for themselves (for example a community building or funeral ground). In a small community it is difficult to overestimate the impact of individual leaders and teachers.

Because of the perceived opportunities provided in a country or city, different groups tend to migrate to specific places (for example, postgraduates to Chicago and New York; scientists to America in general; businessmen to Houston or Hong Kong, wealthy retired people to Vancouver). Even climate can be a factor, thus many informants preferred to dwell in California, if possible, rather than face the Canadian winters, but California is expensive and so typically it is the wealthy who settle there. Once a pattern is established it is often reinforced through chain migration, not just of friends and relatives but also of business or educational contacts. The age composition of different communities varies because of those trends, so too do family patterns (single persons, in- and out-marrieds, extended families), and further study would also show a difference in the proportion of the genders in various centres.

In broad terms it is possible to see a fairly common trajectory of settlement both in the case of individuals and communities. Thus, it is fairly common for young people to follow the religion of their parents while living at home, to

react against it when leaving home (especially when going to university) but then to return to it as marriage approaches (especially if that be an in-marriage) and particularly when children are born. In community terms the early period of traditionalism (exemplified by the Australian communities) is not infrequently followed, after 15-20 years, by a slow process of broad assimilation. The rise of a second generation then produces significant developments.

But these common trajectories are affected by countless factors. The different locations can affect the trends of community ties and religion. Religions are affected by the environment in which they exist: they react against, or mirror, local patterns, for example the preservation of the doctrine of the resurrection in Muslim Karachi or the greater degree of secularism in the British compared with many American or Canadian communities (a point elaborated in *Zoroastrians in Britain*). The image of the wider community and its religion affects which features of a persons received tradition are preserved or emphasised, and how. For example, where Parsis feel culturally distanced from the majority population, as in East Africa, Hong Kong and Karachi, then typically the community boundaries are strong and the degree of local influence is small. Where Parsis arrive with a perception of shared values (as in Britain, however they may modify later, or the highly educated in Chicago) then they are more open to influence. But these common trajectories may be affected by countless individual influences and factors. It must be asked: to what extent are the differences between Zoroastrians in Sydney and London, or Chicago and Toronto, a consequence of the local environment or of the types of people who settle there? For example, is the 'liberalism' of Chicago a consequence of life in that city, or is it a consequence of higher education, or of a specifically scientific education? Are there different patterns of community allegiance and religious practice between people who followed an arts compared with a science education or between businessmen and professionals? Are there differences between the genders? What are the differences in community ties and religion between those who migrated to the 'West' in the 1960s and those who have been born 'here'? What are the different patterns of allegiance and commitment between couples with and those without children, independent of where they are living? These are some of the questions asked in the *Katrak* volume.

One feature of these figures that merits emphasis is the high level of asserted religion both in terms of affirmation of beliefs and in statements about

frequency of prayer and other forms of practice. Even allowing for an element of respondents stating that they did what they think they should do rather than what they actually do, there is nevertheless a high level of religious activity. This is consistent with my informants frequent assertion that they believe that they are more religious after migration than they were before, and of many young people born in the diaspora who see the religion as part of their quest for their roots. If this picture has a basis of truth then it is highly regrettable that so many studies have neglected the religious dimension of the communities studied.

In what ways are Parsis similar to, and different from, other South Asia groups? In Britain there is a different history of settlement: Parsis arrived and established a formal Association at a much earlier date than other groups. In the 1960s most South Asians who migrated were young, single males who came to earn money through manual work to send back to their families in the old countries, and families only came later when the 'myth of return' evaporated (Anwar, 1979). The Parsis who came at that time often came with their families in order to settle, those who had come in the previous hundred years did so for education and professional careers. In America, Canada and Australia there is less of a contrast between Parsis and other South Asians because each of these countries selects for immigration those with the skills it requires. Normally this nowadays means a high level of education and professional training or experience. The Parsis may have these qualifications to an even higher degree than other communities, but they are not fundamentally different, as they are in Britain. Studies of the Australian communities are not as developed as in Britain, America and Canada, but the indication is that the situation approximates more closely to that of America than Britain. Attitudes to intermarriage and conversion are not dissimilar between Parsis and Hindus, Jains or Sikhs, though Muslims, of course, have different beliefs. Where Parsis are different is in the size of the community both at local and international levels. This has significant consequences. It is more difficult for them to provide material resources such as temples or funeral grounds, and they have more problems funding full-time religious leaders. Further, whereas the other religious groups are conscious of increasing numbers of members, especially in the old country, Zoroastrians are acutely aware of their diminishing numbers. The census data are often referred to in such popular publications as *Parsiana*, showing that numbers were down in India by 20 per cent in the decade 1971-81 and they are now little more than 100,000 globally, with approximately 40 per cent in the

diaspora (unless recent Iranian government figures suggesting 90,000 is correct). The question for Zoroastrians in general, and Parsis in particular, is: have their numbers dropped below the critical level necessary for survival? Consciousness of this issue affects debates of practically every issue both in the 'old country' and in the diaspora. There is a sense among some diaspora Zoroastrians, especially in America, that with the rate of decrease in India, then uniquely among South Asian communities it may well be that the future of religion lies in the new worlds. For outside academics, that makes them a particularly interesting subject of study.

But, fundamentally, I hope that this article has demonstrated the importance of (a) studying not only both ends of the migration chain but also the comparative experience of sister communities in different countries; and (b) the study of religion within diaspora communities. A fundamental question yet to be tackled is whether a distinct diaspora form of religion has evolved.

SECTION A: Demography

Chart I: Place of Birth

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	[N=1822]
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Cali-formia	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Mel-bourne	Sydney	Kenya	
[N=]	[251]	[237]	[66]	[114]	[82]	[151]	[55]	[127]	[175]	[224]	[101]	[80]	[122]	[37]	
E.Africa	18	32	4	2	1	1	4	6	2	10	15	5	5	54	
India	54	51	60	16	70	38	49	71	66	58	62	79	64	46	
Pakistan	10	6	0	80	4	6	27	1	11	11	4	0	12	0	
UK	9	6	3	0	7	3	5	10	10	13	14	8	6	0	
The West	1	1	7	2	5	10	2	5	2	3	0	2	4	0	
China Seas	2	2	26	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	
Iran	6	2	0	0	12	43	9	7	9	4	5	2	6	0	
Australia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	

Note: In the charts all figures represent percentages except figures in square brackets which show the actual number of responses [the N number].

Chart II: Decade of Migration Here

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Cali-fornia	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Mel-bourne	Sydney	Kenya
[N=]	[226]	[213]	[51]	[22]	[80]	[143]	[55]	[123]	[171]	[218]	[101]	[76]	[116]	[22]
Pre 1960	22	21	33	82	0	2	0	8	7	2	4	0	1	41
1960s	37	40	20	9	38	14	11	22	26	35	28	9	13	9
1970s	33	32	20	0	45	52	47	52	52	49	45	40	37	36
1980s	8	7	28	9	11	32	42	18	15	14	24	51	49	14

Chart III: Age of Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Cali-fornia	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Mel-bourne	Sydney	Kenya
Under 25	18	15	16	19	8	17	17	6	10	10	9	17	19	11
26-35	11	10	12	10	24	25	24	18	25	20	24	14	16	6
36-45	18	20	28	12	36	30	26	37	35	26	32	21	24	14
46-55	20	31	15	17	22	16	25	22	21	22	16	30	16	22
56-65	19	14	15	23	9	6	4	12	8	13	13	14	22	33
66+	14	10	14	19	1	6	4	5	1	9	6	4	3	14

Chart IV: Personal and Marital Details

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Cali- formia	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Mel- bourne	Sydney	Kenya
(a) Male	51	53	47	60	51	55	54	55	61	50	58	53	40	46
(b) Single	35	21	18	27	11	31	18	15	16	17	20	19	29	20
(c) Intermarried	16	25	12	2	17	8	5	13	23	8	21	9	19	3
(d) Part of														
Nuclear family	12	12	12	3	11	16	7	12	13	25	25	78	91	77
Extended family	73	75	61	96	75	66	73	71	67	61	61	18	7	23
No family	14	13	27	1	14	18	20	17	20	14	14	4	2	0

Chart V: Education and Career

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	California	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Melbourne	Sydney	Kenya	
(a) Level of education completed															
Secondary High School	20	24	35	24	12	13	25	6	6	22	19	20	16	51	
Professional qualifications	11	8	2	5	0	1	4	4	2	6	9	9	6	17	
Degree	45	44	46	54	42	52	29	41	34	51	48	47	56	32	
Postgraduate study	24	24	17	17	46	34	42	49	58	21	24	24	22	0	
(b) Place of post graduate study															
	[N=60] [58] [11]														
India	35	14	45	90	16	14	30	20	19	45	52	53	56	0	
UK	57	69	55	5	8	0	4	5	4	6	14	0	7	0	
USA/Canada	3	0	0	0	62	65	57	64	59	45	14	5	4	0	
Other/Mixture	5	17	0	5	14	17	9	9	18	4	15	42*	33**	0	
Iran	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	
(c) Nature of education															
Liberal Arts	53	90	79	69	43	39	49	42	41	62	59	54	65	76	
Scientific	47	10	21	31	57	61	52	58	59	38	51	46	35	24	

continued ...

Chart V: Continued

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Melbourne	Sydney	Kenya		
(d) Careers														
Not in Employment	32	21	37	+	19	24	22	15	23	19	14	23	24	32
Manual	2	4	6	+	3	1	8	3	2	9	8	12	1	3
Clerical	39	35	16	+	13	17	16	16	12	29	27	26	37	38
Managerial		7	24	+	11	21	12	12	9	10	17	10	10	15
Executive	27	29	18	+	53	37	42	52	53	32	34	29	27	12
No response [121]	4	0	0	+	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	0

Notes:
 * - 2 Individuals in Australia
 ** - 4 Individuals in Australia
 +- Categories not applicable

Chart VII: Attitudes to Intermarriage and Conversion

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	London UK	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	Cali- fornia	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Mel- bourne	Sydney	Kenya	
(a) Attitudes to Intermarriage															
Approve	22	27	26	10	38	22	22	32	42	33	38	31	38	14	
Accept	44	42	42	26	42	31	31	48	35	39	45	28	41	50	
Object	33	25	26	54	19	46	42	19	23	23	14	33	18	33	
(b) Reactions to Intermarriages															
Priests should perform wedding	43	39	56	40	69	64	37	66	56	58	52	40	48	29	
Initiate off-spring of inter-marriage	60	62	69	53	91	66	60	82	77	78	80	61	81	46	
Initiate spouse	57	55	61	59	78	64	55	72	67	54	53	55	69	35	
Initiate any non-Zoroastrian	52	55	59	54	71	61	44	67	61	52	51	51	58	41	
Exclude non-Zoroastrian from Indian temples	42	36	50	50	20	35	41	27	37	39	35	49	31	50	

Chart VIII: Beliefs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London	UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	California	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Melbourne	Sydney	Kenya
Believe in														
Immortality	64	60	61	75	65	63	54	58	66	66	68	65	69	64
of soul	35	44	45	45	26	36	48	27	25	51	49	40	52	64
Reincarnation	11	11	6	25	8	13	0	7	9	18	13	20	6	0
Resurrection	45	47	33	71	54	46	49	46	51	51	31	46	38	77
Heaven & Hell														
Prayers for dead														
essential	43	33	44	39	18	32	38	24	31	28	36	42	34	56
Beliefs here														
changed	15	19	+	+	19	14	13	23	25	19	23	5	15	+
Practices here														
changed	26	35	+	+		34	25	17	37	38	31	32	17	21

+ Question inappropriate

Chart IX: Perceptions of Community Relations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	London UK	Hong Kong	Karachi	Chicago	California	Houston	New York	USA	Toronto	Canada	Melbourne	Sydney	Kenya	
(a) Internal Relations														
Parsi relations														
excellent/good	80	79	89	95	76	62	86	83	86	79	88	80	90	51
Parsi/Iran relations														
excellent/good	61	57	+	+	67	43	63	32	65	59	71	76	72	+
(b) External Relations														
Zoroastrian/non-Zoroastrian relations														
excellent/good	53	61	74	71	68	62	54	67	72	68	60	73	73	78
Believe experienced discrimination	42	37	27	17	30	36	34	36	37	49	44	30	28	26
Believe experienced frequently in employment	39/ [78]	34/ [67]	+	+	+	27/ [44]	26/ [46]	32/ [51]	16/ [62]	23/ [106]	25/ [40]	++	++	++

+ Question inappropriate

++ Numbers too low for percentages to be valid

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18 The Zoroastrian Diaspora: A Comparative Study of Communities in Britain, Canada and the USA

This chapter will consider the situation of Zoroastrian communities in the three countries, including education issues, links with the old countries, then at the patterns of religious thought and practice of western Zoroastrians; their strategies of adaptation and perceptions of public policy. Although there is no separate piece on the place of women, their role in the various communities is discussed under a number of headings. But first a word is necessary on theoretical issues.

1) Some Methodological Comments

This chapter is based on fieldwork in all three countries, in Britain mostly in London; in Canada mostly in Toronto and Vancouver; in USA mostly in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Houston. In each centre I studied the records such as minutes of committees, newsletters etc. A survey questionnaire was circulated in 1986 which yielded 483 responses in Britain, 325 in Canada and 589 from the USA.

This represented approximately one-quarter of formal members of Zoroastrians in these countries. In Britain 240 structured in-depth interviews were undertaken.¹ There is much methodological debate over

1. The postal survey was funded by the universities of Manchester and Oxford, the British Academy and the Spalding Trusts; the interview schedule was funded by Manchester University and almost wholly carried out by Dr Rashna Writer. The visits were funded by Manchester university, Tahempton Aresh, the Rivetna

the relative merits of quantitative versus qualitative data collection, historical research versus anthropological fieldwork. This research attempted to use all of these methods to obtain a rounded picture of diaspora Zoroastrians.² No scholar is free of bias, and it is important to articulate mine. Apart from California where the Iranian community was especially helpful, my sample is weighted towards the Parsis. Most of my earlier research was with the Indian community where I am better known. Further, Iranian Zoroastrians and Parsis in several American centres were in dispute in the 1980s, so questionnaires distributed through the centres were responded to mostly by Parsis. In a volume on South Asians this weighting is not as significant as it would be if the work was on the total Zoroastrian community. Within Parsi communities my main contacts tend to be with people of my generation (i.e. the over 50s), though many younger Zoroastrians are also friends. Through my Bombay contacts I tend to be linked with the orthodox sections of the community, though again I have many 'liberal' Zoroastrian friends. It has been a conscious lifelong decision to avoid involvement in Parsi religious disputes, despite requests

family and the British Academy. The organisation of the Canadian and US surveys was organised by the Bhumgara family with the help of the relevant Zoroastrian Associations. In Britain substantial help was given in distributing the Survey by the Avari family and the Managing Committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. The data was put on the computer by the Mehta family and with the help of the Regional Computer Centre at Manchester University. The work could not have been undertaken without the active support of the Associations in each country. I am deeply grateful to them all.

2. In Canada and the US the sample is almost wholly based on contacts through the formal associations. The newer communities on the American continent probably have more complete membership records than the London Association has because migration to Britain has spread over a longer period and is more diffuse. Of my British sample approximately half were not formal members of the Association. My California sample could be skewed, because the help I received in distributing the questionnaire there was particularly effective among the younger people and the Iranians. Figures for questions on religious practice may be inflated as respondents may have replied in terms of what they believed they should do, rather than what they actually did. However, the questionnaires could be returned anonymously and so the need to give the 'right' answer may not have been felt. The figures were confirmed in Britain by the detailed discussions of the structured interviews and by personal observations in each country.

to comment on religious controversies. I share in the current anthropological agonising over the influence of outside scholars on the groups we study (see Luhrman 1996: Ch. 7).

2) A Brief Historical Introduction

A group of Zoroastrians sailed from their Iranian homeland to escape fierce Muslim persecution and settled in India in the tenth century. They remained mostly in Gujarat in security and insignificance until the arrival of European traders (Boyce 1979). From the seventeenth century they migrated first to Bombay and thence around the world as traders. In the eighteenth century they went to China, then in the nineteenth century to Sind, Britain and East Africa. The majority of British Zoroastrians arrived with other South Asian migrants in the 1960s. A number came from East Africa and Pakistan, but most came from Bombay. Also in the 1960s and 70s Indian and Pakistani Parsis migrated to America as part of the South Asian migration to the New World (Hinnells 1994b). The earliest Associations were founded in 1964/65 in Toronto, Vancouver, Chicago, New York and California. From the late 1970s some Zoroastrians left Iran with the rise of the Islamic Republic. A few settled in Britain, most moved to Vancouver, New York and California (Writer 1994). At the end of the millennium there are approximately 5,000 Zoroastrians in Britain (mostly near London), approximately 4,500 in Canada (mostly in Toronto) and 6,500 in the USA (about 2,000 in California).

There are two main formal bodies in Britain. The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), founded in London in 1861, is the oldest of Britain's Asian communities. The other main British-based organisation is the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), formed in 1980, which has mainly educational and charitable concerns. It is in dispute with ZTFE, mainly due to personality clashes. But there are religious differences. The latter is more liberal (e.g. concerning the participation of non-Zoroastrian spouses) whereas the former is more heavily influenced by the typically traditional East African Parsis (Hinnells 1996a). There is an umbrella organisation for both Canada and the USA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) which, in collaboration with four local

associations in Canada³ and seventeen associations in the US,⁴ organises congresses, youth activities, religious education ventures, and publishes a widely read journal. There are two Zoroastrian buildings in Canada (Toronto and Vancouver), and four in the US (Chicago, New York and two in California).

3) The Current Situation

The demographic profiles in the three countries are different. Generally, the numbers of male/ female members are roughly equal, though there are more males in the scattered groups in each country. The families usually stay in the larger centres, presumably to help their young meet co-religionists. The Canadian and especially the US communities, are typically younger than the British communities, with 14% of London Zoroastrians over the age of 65, compared with 1% in Chicago and the scattered American groups and generally under 6% throughout the continent. The different age profile is due to the longer history of the British community. As there are so few elders in the West, the birth rate exceeds the deathrate. Most western Zoroastrians are married. The number of single persons is generally under 20%. Few respondents in any country had three or more children, most had only one or two, but on average only one in five families had no children.

Zoroastrians in any country have always taken advantage of educational and professional opportunities presented to them. In Iran they were denied such rights until the twentieth century, but under the Pahlavi dynasty they were significant achievers in business, education and the professions. In India, they are highly educated. Most details are available for the Bombay community. There, the Parsis have a literacy rate of approximately 98%; approximately 25% of males and only slightly less of females go to university and consequently achieve high social status (Karkal 1984). It has

3. These are at Alberta (Calgary and Edmonton); British Columbia, mainly Vancouver; Ontario, mainly Toronto; Quebec, essentially Montreal.

4. These are in Arizona, Boston, three near Los Angeles, two near San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, Kansas, two in New York, Pennsylvania (mainly in Pittsburgh), Rosemont, Washington and Washington State.

been the educated professionals who have migrated westwards, notably doctors, lawyers, engineers and in the US a high number of scientists. They are justly proud of their achievers. Three Parsis have been elected as Members of the British Parliament, the first, Dadabhoy Naoroji, as early as 1892; they have provided famous musicians (Zubin Mehta and Freddy Mercury); novelists (Rohinton Mistry has had two novels shortlisted for the prestigious Booker prize (Mistry 1991 and 1995)) and Parsis have held high diplomatic office. The first Indian High Commissioner in London was a Parsi, as are Palkiwalla, the former Indian ambassador in the USA, and Marker, the Pakistan ambassador in Washington and then at the United Nations.

The educational levels of the British Zoroastrians is remarkable. 68% had a university or college education and 24% have proceeded to postgraduate study. The figures for Canada are even higher, 72% and 23% respectively, and still higher in the USA where approximately 90% have been to university and in some places some 50% have undertaken postgraduate study. In Britain and Canada the majority are arts graduates, in the USA they are predominantly scientists. The career consequences are that between a third and half western Zoroastrians are in executive class employment. The employment figures vary not only between countries, but between cities. New York (52%), the scattered American groups and Chicago have the highest, London (29%) and the scattered British groups (18%) the lowest proportion of executives.

So the USA has the youngest, the mostly highly educated, and the most scientifically inclined, Zoroastrian population. In Canada, the Zoroastrian population is younger and better educated than the British community, but the latter two countries have attracted arts rather than science graduates. There are also some ethnic variations: Iranian Zoroastrians are more numerous in the USA, and Canada than in Britain. The East African Parsis are found mostly in Britain, a few in Canada, but very few in the USA.

My research suggests those who practise the religion less tend to be the young, highly educated, scientists, single, and out-married Zoroastrians, in comparison with those who finished their education at the school level, especially where that schooling was in the old country, the arts graduates, the recently migrated and the inmarried, above all those who had children (Hinnells 1994a, 1996a and b). Given these different demographic patterns

between the three countries, one would expect to find different religious patterns among Zoroastrians in the three countries.

Informants from the first generation commonly asserted that they practice their religion more after they migrated than they had before, because it represented a bond with their heritage. The Survey evidence is, in broad terms, that two-thirds of respondents kept in regular contact with Zoroastrians overseas (the figure is naturally lower for those born in the West) and with Zoroastrians in the same country. A similar proportion of Parsis said that they prayed daily and wore the sacred shirt and cord, *sudre* and *kusti* (these are less commonly worn in Iran). Obviously, Zoroastrians in scattered groups met co-religionists less frequently; but more Zoroastrians in Canada and the USA tended to keep in contact with fellow Zoroastrians than do British Zoroastrians. The explanation, I suspect, is that they are more recent migrants and the ties are closer. But that is not the sole explanation. More US and Canadian Zoroastrians said that they read Zoroastrian literature regularly than British respondents did (50% in Canada, California 56%, and scattered US groups, 45%, compared with 25% in Britain). This may be due to the high level of education characteristic of American Zoroastrians. But that is unlikely to be the major reason because the educational level of British Zoroastrians is also high. It may be that more American groups produce good newsletters. But this raises the question, why have American Zoroastrians done this? The question will recur in section 6 below.

Intermarriage is a subject of intense debate among Zoroastrians (Kharas 1993). When this research was undertaken, there were more intermarrieds among the scattered groups in each country (roughly one in four marriages were out-marriages), but otherwise only London (16%), Chicago (17%) and New York (13%) had over 10% of their people married out. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that recently the rate of out-marriage has increased, especially in the US, and particularly in the scattered groups where young Zoroastrians rarely meet co-religionists who may be potential spouses. Attitudes to intermarriage vary between and within countries. It is strongly opposed in Britain (33% of respondents objected strongly). In California an even higher proportion objected (46%), a proportion almost certainly explained by the number of Iranian Zoroastrians there who are especially keen to preserve their identity. In Houston, 42% similarly objected. That is a centre which often emerged in the survey as being

traditional (Hinnells 1988). By contrast, fewer objected to intermarriage in the scattered groups, in whichever country they lived, presumably they accepted the high probability of such out-marriages in their circumstances. But also in Chicago and New York less than 20% expressed objections. It is presumably no coincidence that it is these two cities which have the highest proportions of the very well educated, for Hinnells 1994a and Kharas 1993 both found incidence, and approval, of intermarriage most common in this group.

The issue of conversion is related to that of intermarriage. Although some Iranians accept the possibility of conversion, very few Parsis do. There has only been one public initiation of a person who was not of Zoroastrian descent, Joseph Peterson in New York in 1983, which was highly controversial. The typical Indian Parsi arguments regarding conversion are: (a) it is psychologically damaging to change the religion into which you were born; (b) some argue we are born into the religion God considers appropriate for our development in the sequence of rebirth, and it is therefore wrong to change it; (c) as salvation is achievable through all religions, conversion is unnecessary; (d) conversion is often linked to missionary endeavors and these have caused more persecution and death than any other force in human history. There is little doubt that ideas of caste have also influenced Parsi thinking. The problem has arisen in the diaspora concerning the acceptance into the religion of non-Zoroastrian spouses and their offspring. Although this is not allowed in India, and extremely rare in Britain (though WZO membership is open to them), in Canada and the USA increasingly these family members, especially the children, are being quietly admitted to the community, mainly because of the fear of losing members, but also some have argued that to refuse initiation contravenes the American constitution on the freedom of religion (see further Hinnells 1987).

In terms of religious beliefs, generally two-thirds of respondents affirmed belief in an after-life. The percentage variations were too small to draw major conclusions, other than there was a generally higher affirmation of the belief in Canada (68%) than among New York's highly educated professionals (58%). More distinctive patterns emerged with regard to rebirth (a belief many Indian Parsis have absorbed), which was strongest in Canada, notably Toronto (51%), and least among the educated groups in Chicago, New York (26%) and in California, for whose Iranian members

this is not part of the heritage. Crucial practices for Zoroastrians in the old countries are the ceremonies and prayers for the dead. These are most commonly considered essential in London (43%), Houston (38%) and Canada (36%), and less commonly seen as important in Chicago and New York (18% and 24% respectively). In short, the centres with the highest concentration of highly educated scientists tend to be more liberal, and fewer of them assert the importance of traditional practices. London and Houston commonly appear as more traditional centres of Zoroastrianism, as do Canadian centres, notably Toronto. The Californian groups are different because of the numbers of Iranian Zoroastrians there. But the level of religious commitment (though not necessarily of religious knowledge in terms of history and theology) is generally high.

4) Worship and Religious Practice

If the level of religious practice is high, what is the nature of that practice? How does it relate to practices in the old country? For these questions the survey material is not especially helpful. The following account is based partly on records (e.g. the minutes of priestly gatherings and of panels at conferences on religious practice), but mostly on discussions with countless Zoroastrians in the centres named.

For the religion to be a link to the old country, and express individual and communal identity, there has to be a substantial degree of continuity. The fundamental value system impresses me as preserving the old traditions: the importance of the family; the priority given to charitable giving; the emphasis on individual responsibility; the distinctive sense of humour; the love of food etc. Much religious practice preserves the tradition: the daily prayers; the use of the sacred language of Avestan in worship; the reverence for fire; the concern for purity; the prayers for the dead and the observance of major festivals.

Yet change is also inevitable. The absence of a consecrated pure temple in the three countries means that the higher, or inner, liturgies cannot be performed. Nor is there a permanently burning fire before which devotions may be offered. In each Zoroastrian building there is a separate prayer room. Although these are not fully consecrated as a temple would be,

something of the temple ritual is translated for use in these prayer rooms, which in one sense function as temporary temples.

For Parsis the first question is ‘who may enter?’. Because of the strict purity laws, non-Zoroastrians cannot enter fire temples in India. Iranian Zoroastrians do not restrict entry and this has caused friction in the West. But the problem is more complex. Debate focuses particularly on allowing non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children to enter the prayer room when they have not been initiated. On the one hand they are necessarily impure as non-Zoroastrians, because they do not observe the purity laws or say the preparatory *sudre/kusti* prayers. For traditional Parsis, the sacred fire radiates holy power, and non-Zoroastrians are considered vulnerable because they do not have the spiritual protection of the prayerfully donned *sudre* and *kusti*. In London, when a non-Zoroastrian was invited to a *jashan* (a ceremony discussed below), and given a place of honor at the front, there was consternation, both about defiling the fire and the risk to the guest. Guidance was sought from one of the orthodox Bombay High Priests. His advice was that a person could attend the ceremony when it was not in a temple, providing they kept a distance from the fire.

Other Zoroastrians, however, think it is important that spouses and children of intermarried Zoroastrians should be welcomed into the prayer rooms so that the next generation will remain in the religion. Such Zoroastrians also tend to believe it is important that other non-Zoroastrians, notably those involved in inter-faith activities or academics, may enter the prayer rooms in order to increase sympathy for Zoroastrians.

The balance between these opposing views again varies between and within countries. Broadly speaking, the British Zoroastrians incline more to the traditional point of view, partly because of the influence of the East African Zoroastrians, but also because of the higher proportion of older people in Britain. In general terms, US Zoroastrians incline more to the ‘liberal’ position, perhaps because of their level of western education. But this is too simple a picture of the US, because the Chicago community is more liberal (for demographic reasons, and because of the influence of their leading priest) than the group in Houston (Hinnells 1988). The latter do not have a building or prayer room,⁵ but they are more traditional in

5. A building with a prayer room was opened after this research was undertaken.

their attitude to non-Zoroastrians in domestic ceremonies where the sacred fire burns. In Los Angeles, where the building was funded and run by Iranian Zoroastrians, non-Zoroastrians are welcomed, as they are in Chicago. In Toronto and Vancouver non-Zoroastrians are admitted. There are also differences between generations. The survey figures indicate that generally it was the westernised, innovative individuals who migrated in the 1960s, who have had a long time to settle, who are most inclined to allow non-Zoroastrians to enter the prayer room. The more recent arrivals, still close to the old traditions, although they are younger and may be expected to be more liberal, are often stricter on this issue. But it is not simply a question of age. A higher proportion of young people born in the West compared with the 1960s settlers want to keep the prayer rooms for Zoroastrians only. As one teenage Zoroastrian girl in Toronto put it to me in conversation: 'Every day I am in a multi-cultural environment. I want one place where I can go and be myself'.

There is, however, one time in the year, *muktad* (or *Farvardigan* as Iranians know it), when the *fravashis* (heavenly selves) of the dead are invoked and few Zoroastrian groups welcome non-Zoroastrians. Anything associated with death, the presence and victory of evil, is a time when purity laws are crucial. This has caused problems when traditional priests have asked non-Zoroastrian spouses to leave the room during the recital of prayers. This caused a deep division in the London when the English wife of a deceased leading Parsi was asked to leave, although she had been welcomed by the previous leadership. The difficulties of preserving purity in an impure environment, in a country lacking the properly demarcated sacred space, pose both practical, theological and personal problems.

Questions of sacred space and community boundaries arise in connection with funeral grounds. The primary motivation in founding the London Association was to acquire a funeral ground, and this has been important in other groups also, e.g. Vancouver. Death poses special problems for traditional Parsis. They were brought up to believe that as the earth, fire and water are sacred then burial, cremation and disposal at sea involve the pollution of the holy. In India, and previously in Iran, the religious funeral has taken the form of the exposure of the corpse in *daxmas*, or Towers of Silence, to be consumed by vultures, with the bones bleached by the sun then disposed of in a pit at the centre of the *daxma*. No such Tower exists outside the Indian sub-continent - their use was discontinued in Iran in the

1960s at the wish of the Shah. Small Indian communities which cannot maintain a *daxma* sometimes use stone coffins to prevent pollution of the earth. Neither of these options is available in the West. Some western Parsis have their bodies flown to India for a *daxma* funeral, but that is costly and difficult to arrange speedily. The common practice is to cremate the body and, where possible, inter the ashes in a Zoroastrian cemetery. Inevitably such a practice is rationalised, and many argue that, unlike ancient practices, modern crematoria do not involve polluting a flame, because the body is consumed by intense heat generated by electricity. The largest and oldest Zoroastrian funeral ground in the West is near London. It has been laid out to resemble, as far as the climate allows, a Persian garden, the symbol of paradise, and has at its centre a replica of a monument from ancient Persia. There is, in other words, an attempt to define the space by traditional markers. Some of the grave architecture seeks to evoke Zoroastrian traditions with representations of a fire altar on the headstone and images of liturgical objects.

Death ceremonies present further problems. There are important ceremonies to be offered for the deceased, especially in the first three days when, according to tradition, the soul faces its judgement. These require a fully consecrated temple and a permanently burning ritual fire. Such rites cannot be practised in the West, though meeting to pray for the deceased is not uncommon. The families therefore pay for these ceremonies to be performed on their behalf in India. Having lived with Zoroastrians at a time of bereavement, my impression is that grief is compounded by guilt because the mourners are unable to do what they have been conditioned from infancy to believe is the 'right' thing for the deceased. Whether such guilt is reasonable is not the point. Bereavement is a time not of reason but of emotion. Zoroastrians who live near a Zoroastrian cemetery can perform some of the rites at the funeral ground (the London one, for example, has a special building for prayers), but for American Zoroastrians lacking such facilities the difficulties are acute. The time allocated at crematoria is so short, and the facilities at funeral parlours so limited, that the prayers which should be offered at the committal cannot be said. These may be said at home, but that distances the bereaved from their tradition because some of the prayers should be said close to the funeral site.

The absence of a temple is not the only factor for change in diaspora Zoroastrian worship. Some of the rites are easily preserved. Because the

religion originated among nomads, many practices can be continued without buildings. For Parsis the most important rites are the *sudre/kusti* prayers, traditionally said five times each day. Even if not said so often, they are said regularly by many, as the Survey figures quoted above show. These take about five minutes and remind Zoroastrians of their duty to commit themselves to good and to fight evil. A number of devout Zoroastrians also keep a *divo*, a small oil lamp, to remind them of the divine, for all fire is sacred, not just the temple fire. But the social needs of diaspora groups are different from those in the old countries and these affect worship.

In the old countries Zoroastrians commonly live in discrete areas. In Bombay and Karachi there are charitable housing colonies so that religion is something caught not taught, it is part of daily life and is reinforced by constant contact with co-religionists. That is not the case in the West. In Britain, the Zoroastrians are concentrated near London so that they can meet at Zoroastrian House. But in Canada and the USA they have not usually concentrated in one area. Because of their career patterns, they have moved where their work has taken them. The vastly greater distances make meetings with fellow Zoroastrians more difficult. A social programme, be it a 'pot luck' supper, a lecture or dance, is significant as a means of networking, not only in the search for marriage partners, but also for reaffirming identity. Worship has to meet a similar need. In the diaspora, congregational worship is more important than in the old country. In India, temple worship is essentially a personal pilgrimage to go and stand alone (even if others are present in the temple) before the fire and to receive the divine blessing. In the diaspora, there is also a need for religious practice that brings scattered individuals together as a group. To this end there are two rites common in the West: the *boi* ceremony and the *jashan*. These merit discussion.

The *boi* ceremony is performed five times daily in a temple to 'feed' the permanently burning fire. The rite consists of preparatory *sudre/kusti* prayers, and the priest laying sweet-smelling sandalwood on the fire and reciting the ancient Litany to the Fire. In the old country Parsis may like to attend the temple when such a ceremony is being performed, but they are not expected to. The purpose of a temple visit is not to observe the priest feeding the fire, but to stand in the presence of the divine. The *boi* ceremony is transplanted from a temple setting to prayer rooms in the

diaspora as a communal event for people to attend. The fire is specially lit and allowed to go out afterwards. It is a focal event observed by a congregation on important occasions.

The *jashan* is a part of the ancient tradition, practised in modern Iran and India. The intention of the ritual can be modified by the choice of certain prayers, so it may be used to celebrate a public event (e.g. there was a large public thanksgiving *jashan* in Bombay at the end of the Second World war); when moving into a new home; it may be the focus of the installation of a new high priest when his fellow priests present him with shawls as a recognition of his authority. Because it can be celebrated in any clean place, it is not dependent on temple availability. Like all Zoroastrian ceremonies, it requires the presence of a fire, but not an ever-burning one, so it can be lit for the occasion. Normally, several priest perform the *jashan*, but one priest may function. The physical restrictions of western life do not, therefore, restrict its observance. At major occasions in the diaspora, the *jashan* attracts large congregations to observe, and through it receive divine blessings. What is happening is not the creation of a new liturgy, but the yet greater importance of a traditional and 'portable' ceremony, around which the faithful can congregate.

There are seven main Zoroastrian festivals, the New Year and six seasonal, agricultural, festivals. The importance of the agricultural festivals declined in urban Bombay, but they remained important for Iranian Zoroastrians. In the West, Iranian Zoroastrians are reminding Parsis of part of their forgotten tradition. Such festivals may include some of the ceremonies mentioned above, but the focal point is the sharing of food, usually funded in memory of a deceased loved one. Their function as a congregational activity, performed independently of a temple, again makes them especially appropriate for diaspora groups. When they are observed varies.

There are three calendars observed by Zoroastrians. The majority of Indian Parsis observe the *Shenshai* calendar; but in the seventeenth century they realised this differed from that observed in Iran, and so a group calling themselves the *Qadmis* (Ancients) campaigned for the adoption of the Iranian calendar. In the early twentieth century a reform movement, the *Faslis*, introduced a new calendar to accord with the Western Gregorian calendar. The structure of the religious year is the same in each, but because of past differences in intercalation the festivals fall on different

days. In the diaspora, but not in the old country, there is a trend towards adopting the *Fasli* calendar because it coincides with the calendar of wider society. But that puts a religious time difference between western Zoroastrians and their co-religionists in the old countries.

5) Strategies of Adaptation

Some strategies of adaptation in worship and death practices have already been mentioned, but other measures are needed and taken. Because of the different demographic profiles between Zoroastrians in the three countries, the emphases of these strategies varies slightly. An important issue among diaspora communities is religious leadership (Hinnells 1996a). The Zoroastrian priesthood is based on patrilineal descent. In the old countries priests are not salaried but are paid for ceremonies performed, and the fees have not increased alongside twentieth century prices. It is, therefore, generally an impoverished profession, though some charities have recently sought to ameliorate the problem. The priestly training requires prodigious efforts to memorise the many lengthy liturgies, efforts which leave little space, temporally or intellectually, for independent critical thought. (But it must immediately be said that there are some very scholarly priests, especially the high priests.) As a result of these two factors, few young men of ability choose the priestly profession. However, they often undertake the first of the two initiations into the priesthood, so that the priestly lineage may be maintained, and then proceed to a secular education and career. A number of successful men of priestly lineage have then migrated to the West and it is they who function as priests in the diaspora. Few of them have ever functioned in a temple in the old country, though there are notable exceptions, such as the late High Priest in London Dastur Sohrab H. Kutar and the most active of the current London priests, Ervad Rustom Bedhwar. As the priestly training received by almost all western priests equips them to function only in the lower or more public rituals, and that training was given prior to puberty, so the liturgical and doctrinal knowledge of most western priests is limited, however real their commitment to serve their people. Some of the sons of British and American priests have returned to India for their priestly training so that they can continue the priestly profession in the West. But some leaders are asking if it is necessary for future diaspora priests to have a western

education in Zoroastrianism to equip them to deal with the sort of questions the young western educated people are asking.

It is rare for priests to take leadership roles in the Associations. A priest has been president of the Association in Toronto and London, but not elsewhere. The presidency of the larger bodies (FEZANA, WZO, ZTFE) and the local Associations, has been in the hands of lay people. Women as well as men have had leadership roles in all the larger bodies. One important quality of a President is not only good internal community relations, but also how they would represent the community to the outside world, e.g. in inter-faith activities. Religious education programmes are usually organised by lay people not the priests, but the latter may take the prayer classes for initiates. The communities are too small to fund the salary of a full-time priest, though an attempt was made in London. Because priests need to be free to travel at short notice, for example when deaths occur, many are retired people. The problems are greater in Canada and the US than in Britain because of the distances involved. Lack of training, temple experience and resources, and the pressure of secular daily life, mean that the priests, however devoted, sometimes find it difficult to meet their people's spiritual needs. Reconciling the conflicting views on whether the religion must change (a view expressed most forcibly perhaps in the USA), or remain consistent with that in the old country (most strongly argued in Britain) makes their task yet more difficult. The impact of religious leaders from India, and occasionally from Iran, varies. Such visits are more frequent in the wealthier Canadian and US groups. Some religious visitors have caused offence by pressing vigorously for the old traditions, especially by attacking intermarriages. But my impression is that generally these visits function well in preserving links between the communities. The active participation of diaspora Zoroastrians in meetings in India, and religious tours of Iran, also mean that the influence is a two way process. There are also diaspora links, for example British leaders often attend American congresses. Globalisation is therefore a feature of contemporary Zoroastrianism.

Prominent in all three countries is a religious education programme. Classes occur occasionally in the old countries, but in the West, the USA in particular, there is a conscious need to educate the young in Zoroastrianism if they are to be equipped to withstand the Americanising influences encountered daily. At its annual conferences FEZANA

consistently makes religious education a priority agenda item. As well as bringing priests and teachers from the old country, outside Zoroastrian scholars are also commonly invited to lecture and their publications used. These steps were pioneered in Toronto, Chicago and New York, but other associations soon followed, and in the 1990s such programmes revived in Britain. The London based WZO has, since its inception, organised academic seminars with approximately 50% of contributors being outside academics. The proceedings have been published regularly. So the education work is not limited to American communities, but it is the latter who set the pace, partly because of the sort of people they are, and partly because of the particular dangers of assimilation they see in the US. Youth camps, seminars, sleep-over weekends have been organised from the early 1980s to enable the young to meet fellow Zoroastrians, both with a view to seeking marriage partners, and to reinforce a sense of identity. In Canada and the United States, the different Sunday School groups often generate their own material, but there is also much networking. In the old countries religion is who you are, it is to do with community allegiance, blood and genes. In the West there is more emphasis on what you believe. The doctrinal dimension of religion is considered important if religious allegiance is to be retained. This reflects on attitudes to worship and prayer. The younger generation want to know why a ritual is performed and what the words mean. Among many traditional Indian Parsis, the point of prayer is not to understand the words, indeed it is thought that understanding the meaning may be unhelpful because it makes a person think about the words which reduces religion to mere human conceptual thinking. The point of prayers is that when offered in moral and physical purity, with devotion and intent, then the divine forces are 'really' present. Others see prayer as a mantra which induces a trance-like state. Sacred prayers in the ancient Avestan language are words of spiritual power. Many young western Zoroastrians fear that not knowing what the words mean results in 'mumbo-jumbo,' Be it in prayer or ritual, the young want to know 'why?'. In this, and the development of congregational worship, can be seen a 'Protestantising' process.

6) The Perceptions of Public Policy

The Zoroastrian perceptions of the three western countries merits further discussion. Britain is typically thought of as a secular society where

conversion to another religion is not a serious threat. The fact that Religious Education, which commonly means Christianity, is a core part of the State School syllabus means that young British Zoroastrians are exposed to Christian attitudes, for example about understanding the words of prayer, the emphasis on teachings and congregational worship as discussed above. But in my interview schedule British Zoroastrians were more likely to describe the British as cold, sexually immoral and neglectful of family, than as religious. To some extent, therefore, the religious boundaries do not have to be emphasised. The USA is different in two ways. First, evangelical Christianity is more high profile than in Britain. Second is the image of the American melting pot. This concept was originally introduced to emphasise the aspiration that all communities make their contribution to American society. But many Parsis fear it implies the melt-down of their identity, and that they may be submerged in a wider 'all American' group. The pressures for assimilation are commonly seen as considerable by US Parsis. So although Zoroastrians consider Americans also to be sexually promiscuous and the drug culture is seen as a threat, the parents further fear that their young people will be seduced away from their heritage by the American dream. Because the threat is seen as great, the strategies are more developed than in 1980s Britain. My Survey suggests that Canadian Zoroastrians typically feel less threatened by the wider society than do US Zoroastrians, especially since the Canadian Government emphasized its multi-cultural policies. Because minority groups are encouraged to preserve their traditions, they feel less need to draw a strict boundary between their ethnicity and their nationality. For example, the award of a substantial Ontario grant to refurbish the Toronto Zoroastrian House, with no conditions attached, reassured Zoroastrians that their religion was not threatened. Thus more Canadian Zoroastrians were willing to identify themselves as Canadian, than the US Zoroastrians were willing to identify themselves as Americans. The British were in-between. There is a difference between London-based Zoroastrians and those in the scattered groups, with the latter affirming their British citizenship more strongly. This may be an indication of the type of person, the more educated professionals, who has moved away from London. It may also be that the higher levels of perceived ethnic discrimination in London engenders a sense of personal distance between Zoroastrians and White Anglo Saxons.

The question of discrimination is an important one both in its own right and for its implications for the sense of identity. The city where most respondents said they faced discrimination was Toronto (49%), followed by the rest of Canada (44%) and London (42%). Approximately 35% of respondents in different US cities said they had faced discrimination. But the situation is more complex than these figures at first suggest. Respondents who said that they had experienced discrimination were then asked whether they had faced it 'Frequently,' 'Sometimes,' 'Rarely' and whether it had been in connection with occupation, housing, education or the police. In London 39% said they had faced discrimination frequently compared with only 23% in Toronto. In Canada and the US, respondents thought that they had experienced discrimination specifically in the work place. In Britain, by contrast, housing and education also appeared to be problems. Fifty four percent of London respondents who sensed discrimination said they faced it frequently or sometimes (i.e. less than half said it was a rare experience), compared with only 18% in Toronto, and 20 - 30% in other American cities. My informants during my visits to Toronto confirmed these findings, saying it was not uncommon to face prejudice when seeking employment, but once you had proved yourself, the discrimination disappeared. Typically, the people who said that they faced discrimination were the young, especially those born in the West, the well educated, those with successful careers, the East African Zoroastrians. This is in marked contrast to external stereotypes, which assume it is the less well educated, those who neither adapt nor speak English who experience discrimination. Respondents in all countries put the cause of discrimination down to colour prejudice. My impression is that perceived discrimination typically reinforces community allegiance and the sense of identity, and distances the 'victim' from wider society. But because this is a sensitive issue answers to surveys have to be treated cautiously. In my structured interview programme in Britain, a number of Zoroastrians said that they had not faced discrimination, but later in the interview said they had suffered from 'Paki-bashing.' The experience of discrimination is, therefore, likely to be higher than these figures suggest. Some Zoroastrians resent the suggestion that they would be subject to discrimination. One interviewee dismissed the question briskly saying, 'I'm above that sort of thing, because I am so westernised.' This research suggests that he is as mistaken on who experiences prejudice as the usual stereotypes are.

7) Conclusion

Some American Zoroastrians believe that the future of the world's oldest prophetic religion lies not in the old world, but in the new. My research suggests that religious activity is greater among British Zoroastrians in the 1990s than at any other time in their history (Hinnells 1996a). Some American newsletters have compared the migration to the West as the modern equivalent of the migration of Zoroastrians from Islamic Iran to India in the tenth century. Some attach symbolic significance to the fact that the next World Zoroastrian Congress, usually held every five years, is to be held in the year 2000 for the first time outside Iran or India. It is to be in Houston, Texas. However deep the ties with the old countries may be, and however real the threats posed by assimilation, by the melting pot, by discrimination, by westernising or protestantising tendencies, by factional divisions, by debates over change and continuity, nevertheless western Zoroastrians typically feel optimistic about the future of the religion in the West. Indeed they believe that they will play a crucial role in the history of the religion in the third millennium.

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