

EDITORIAL

It is a great pleasure to note that the February 2003 Editorial in Iran Zamin requesting all those who love Ancient Iran and its culture to stand behind the Tajiks and celebrate the designation by UNESCO of the year 2003 as the year of Zarathushti Culture and Religion; has had its effect and caused people to celebrate all over the world.

Thanks to the "Creating Awareness" site on the Internet for it helped to coordinate the efforts of all who were interested especially after our good friend Jamshid Zartoshty of Belarus raised the issue on the site by quoting from Iran Zamin and wanting more information. Today we know that apart from Zarathushti organizations all over the world there are other interested groups planning even bigger events. In Australia our good friend Professor Garry W. Trompf of Sydney University (Religious Studies Dept.) is sponsoring a seminar of scholars from all over the world to speak on the life and influence of Zarathushtra. The seminar will be held in November 2003 at Sydney University, Australia.

Dr. Masoud Mirshahi from Paris who attended the celebrations in Tajikistan and has sent us a report that is printed in the Farsi section. He says on the 5th of September 2003, at the amphitheater of the Tajikistan Ministry of Culture over 35 scholars from all over the world presented their papers on various topics with regard to the Ancient Iranian Culture and Religion. The program started with a message from the President of Tajikistan followed by a speech by the Minister of Culture Dr. Alamof and that night a play about Zarathushtra was staged at one of the theaters in the city. He further informs that the province of 'Sogd' named an area after the father of Zarathushtra's as 'ESPANTAMAN' and a city located near the place believed by the Tajiks to be the birthplace of Zarathushtra as 'AVESTA'.

Dr. Mehr Master Moos who also attended the celebrations has sent a detailed and interesting report. She tells us how since independence the Tajiks were inclined towards their ancestral culture and religion and how since 1991 the Zarathushti community has failed to respond to the cultural and religious needs of the Tajiks. She says on various occasions they had requested for religious books, they had requested for Mobeds to go and perform the initiation ceremony, (because during the Soviet rule, religion was banned and majority of them were basically born with no religion and now that the restrictions were lifted they wanted to return to their ancestral religion); they wanted help to build a Fire Temple and they wanted businessmen to help them restart their economy. She further reports that the Prime Minister of Tajikistan in a speech at the Indian Merchants Chamber in Bombay had said publicly: *"I could have taken the FIRST official visit with my Cabinet Ministers to any country in the world -- Europe, USA..... I brought them to India because our Zoroastrian brothers and sisters live here"*.

The lack of response and leadership from the Zarathushties to attend to the spiritual needs of the Tajiks left the field open for others to capitalize.

It is the heart felt desire and wish of the intellectuals to be able to return to their roots, and in this endeavor they need support and guidance.

As further reported *"On 8th September the President of Tajikistan His Excellency Emomali Rahmonov gave an one hour long speech at a glittering function held annually at Borbad theatre. He castigated the intellectuals for not giving him sufficient proper support for reviving the ancient original culture of Tajikistan and declared year 2006 as the YEAR FOR REVIVAL OF ANCIENT ARYAN CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE."*¹

¹ Extracts from report by Dr. Mehr Master Moos.

Dear friends it is a THREE-YEAR NOTICE and all those that love their Ancient Culture, have been given a second chance. Lets come together and with the help of the one and only government in the world that shares our aspirations, REVIVE OUR ANCIENT CULTURE and present its true colours to the world.

To start it would be appropriate to respond to the Tajiks who have time and again requested help to built a CULTURAL CENTER.

The latest request was during the celebrations, for Dr. Mehr Master Moos writes *"As it was the 3000 anniversary celebration and the Tajiks were pressing for a Zoroastrian Cultural Center to be built in Dushanbe (like North American Dar-e-Mehrs) with one room for Atashkadeh, one room for library and one room for meetings and Jashans, I hurriedly decided to raise at least US\$3000 to be presented for the purpose and for books and Zoroastrian literature publication, for presentation at the Conference.*

We at IRAN ZAMIN had also managed to help our Tajik friends buy computers to facilitate them in their cultural work leading to the 3000-year celebration.

Herein we announce the setting up of an account earmarked the **"TAJIKISTAN 2006 FUND"**. It will be a transparent account with the proceeds used for setting up a CULTURAL CENTER in Dushanbe, to be ready for inauguration in 2006 and funds permitting we will help set up one center in each of the major cities. We invite you to send in your contributions to

"IRAN ZAMIN for TAJIKISTAN 2006 FUND."

Names of all Contributors and amount donated will be displayed permanently at the structure. Those who will donate over

US\$3000 will receive prominence. If any one would like to pay the cost of building a center or part of the center the whole or part respectively, will be named according to their desire. All money received and all interest accrued will be solely used for the purpose of building Cultural Centers in Tajikistan. Transparency of the accounts is assured and audited statements will be available to contributors.

We may not be able to built 600 centers but that should not deter us from building 6 and show the Tajiks that we are with them and that we appreciate their efforts.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE to "IRAN ZAMIN for TAJIKISTAN 2006 FUND." If you have any questions please feel free to call us, send us an email or write to us.

Khordad Baad,

Fariborz Rahnamoon

P:S: The Theme Topic for our next issue will be "**THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF MAINTAINING CALENDARS IN ANCIENT IRAN AND TODAY.**" Please send in your papers for publication on the theme topic or any topic of your choice, we need your support to be able to continue.