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PIR-E SABZ:

PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREEN SAINT

A DOCUMENTARY FILM


presented by

Manouchehr Asgari-Nasab

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for

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PIR-E SABZ:
PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREEN SAINT
A DOCUMENTARY FILM

By

Manouchehr Asgari-Nasab

A THESIS

Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

PIR-E SABZ: PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREEN SAINT A DOCUMENTARY FILM

By

Manouchehr Asgari-Nasab

The main element of this thesis is a 35-minute color film which documents the yearly pilgrimage made by people of the Zoroastrian faith to a shrine in the desert mountains of Iran. A videotape cassette of the film is on file with the Department of Telecommunication, Michigan State University.

Over the ages many events have come and gone having direct and indirect influences upon the evolving history and environment of the land. Many of these events come to pass without the attention of historians. For those events which are recorded, often times there are misinterpretations and/or distortions due to any number of problems and reasons.

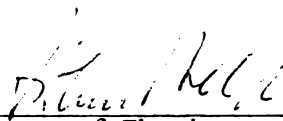
The script and film of this Zoroastrian ritual share with us a people's perspective of the way they view and value their religion, and the way they view themselves in the world.

As a part of this thesis we also find an historical review of the events revolving around the Zoroastrian beliefs. This material includes legends which are difficult to verify due to a loss of documents such as those lost when the library at Alexandria burned.

Further, this thesis contains a description of the filming conditions and problems. These help one gain a more objective perspective as to the symbolism and selection of images presented in the film.

In sum, the videotape/script, the historical background and the descriptions of the filming conditions each add an important dimension to the work. These different vantage points contribute to a fuller interpretation and understanding of this unique documentary than a single perspective would have offered.

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Telecommunication,
College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts
degree.



Director of Thesis

An integral part of this thesis is a video cassette of the film entitled "Pir-e Sabz," which is on file with the Department of Telecommunication, Michigan State University.

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My sincere appreciation to all those who gave their time and cooperation during my research and filming of this script.

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CHAPTER I

ZOROASTRIANISM IN IRAN

History and Tradition

Eminent scholars, over the centuries, have proclaimed differing ideas and theories as to the origins of the ancient religion of Iran called Zoroastrianism, the Greek name given to describe the beliefs of the Iranian prophet or reformer, Zarathushtra.

Early invasions, catastrophes, and calamities of one sort and another resulted in leaving Iranians without any writings from their own historians. Instead, what is left as a source of historical information comes from the ancient national enemies of Iran, the Greeks. The conflicts between the old Persia (the Greeks used this word to denote the land of Iran) and old Greece are a matter of extensive classical writing. Herodotus and Xenophon, whose works have survived and become the basis for much of what Westerners know about Iranian history, wrote their accounts from the point of view of the Greeks and not the Iranians.

Thus the most important source of information about social thought in ancient Iran is the tradition recorded in the Avestan tongue, as well as other Zoroastrian scriptures and literature, followed by the Pahlavi works which were written during the Sassanid period, and the commentary of Pazand. These writings

probably furnished the famous Iranian epic poet, Ferdowsi, with much information and inspiration for his renowned Shah Nameh, The Book of the Kings.

However, even today, few facts are so controversial as the actual time of Zoroaster. Some historians place it as recently as about 600 B.C., others between 1800 and 2000 B.C., and still others date it at 8000 B.C. There are those who believe that some 3,700 years have elapsed since the birth of Zoroaster, that he was 30 years of age when he proclaimed his prophethood and that at the age of seventy-seven he died (or was killed).¹

Pliny writes that the great philosopher, Hermippus, who lived early in the third century B.C., had studied some two million verses composed by Zoroaster. Two renowned Arab historians, Tabari and Masudi, state that the Zoroastrian texts were copies on 12,000 cowhides. According to Zoroastrian tradition, Zoroaster's work was compiled in twenty-one volumes (Nasks) which dealt with religion, philosophy, ethics, medicine, astronomy and other sciences.

King Vishtaspa ordered two archetype copies of these sacred texts and deposited them in the libraries of Dizh-i Nipisht and Ganj-i Shayigan. One of these copies perished in the flames when Alexander burned the royal palace at Persepolis. The other copy, tradition maintains, was taken by the conquering hordes to their own country, where it was rendered into Greek.²

It is thought that because the Arab invasion and the downfall of the Persian Empire (generally thought of as a Zoroastrian empire) in the seventh century A.D., Zoroastrian scripture suffered heavy losses. It is thought that only about one-fourth of the original twenty-one volumes remain. However, since the people of India and Iran share

a common religious heritage, the Rig Veda and other sacred Indian scriptures furnish information on old Iranian religions as well as on the history of Zoroastrianism.³

According to Avestan works, Zoroaster brought about the first organization of society into four professional classes: (1) priests, (2) warriors, (3) husbandmen, and (4) artisans. This seems to be the first social stratification to have taken place and been recorded in the history of the Middle-Eastern world.

Iranian society was based on the patriarchal family which formed the essential unit of society.⁴

Religion was the foundation of the social order. Zoroastrian texts were considered the word of God and the expression of divine wisdom. According to these tenets, the king is next to God. The founder of the Sassanid dynasty, who revived the ancient Zoroastrian faith, is quoted as saying:

Religion and kingship are two brothers, and neither can dispense with the other. Religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship practices religion. For whatever lacks a foundation must perish, and whatever lacks a protector disappears.⁵

The religion and the state were so interconnected and interwoven that one could not exist without the other. Social structure, order, and classes are well presented in this analogy:

Ohrmazd created the Religion which is omniscience like a mighty tree with one trunk, two great boughs, three branches, four off-branches, and five roots. The one trunk is the mean, the two great boughs are action and abstention, the three branches are good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The four off-branches are the four religious castes by which both Religion and secular life are maintained (namely), the priesthood, the warrior caste, the caste of husbandmen, and

the caste of artisans. The five roots are the five degrees in the government hierarchy whose names in religion are manpat (householder), vispat (village headman), zandpat (tribal chieftan), dehpat (provincial governor), and Zarathustrotom (the highest religious authority and representative of Zoroaster on earth). (Over and above these) is another, the Chief of all chiefs, that is, the King of kings, the governor of the whole world.

And in the microcosm which is man (four things) are seen to correspond to the four earthly castes, the head to priesthood, the hands to the warrior caste, the belly to the caste of the husbandman, and the feet to the caste of the artisan. So too the four virtues indwelling man, that is, temperance, fortitude, reason and energy. Priesthood corresponds to temperance for temperance is the highest duty of the priests, and through temperance they do not commit sin for very shame and fear. The warrior caste corresponds to fortitude, for fortitude is the sovereign adornment of warriors; it is explained (as meaning) innate manliness. Reason corresponds to the caste of the soil and the promotion of a continuous evolution towards the final Rehabilitation. Energy corresponds to the caste of the artisans, for it is the greatest stimulant of their trade. All these various functions (are) based on the one trunk of righteousness and the mean (and are) opposed to the lie and its instruments, which are their opposites.⁶

The Avesta, Zoroaster's holy text, contains his commentaries which are referred to as Zand and Pazand. The text and commentary together are called Zand-Avesta. Zoroastrianism is the earliest, or one of the earliest and most important of the archaic religions which introduced monotheism to the world.

Ahura Mezda (the Wise Lord), is the Creator and Lord of the whole world, seen and unseen, with no equals in greatness, majesty, and power. He is a spirit. He is not anthropomorphic. His essence is light and absolute purity.

The six cardinal virtues of Ahura Mezda which were actually considered to be His attributes and powers were the Amsha Spentas or "The Holy Immortals." These divine qualifications were:

1. Vohu Manah (Good Thought), the protector of mankind and beasts;
2. Asha Vahista (Righteousness), protector of fire;
3. Khshathra Vairya (Divine Kingdom) protector of metals;
4. Armaiti (Devotion), protector of earth;
5. Haurvatat (Perfection), protector of water; and
6. Amertat (Immortality), protector of plants.

As taught by Zoroaster, the Amsha Spentas form Ahura Mezda's being. They were but moral concepts and symbolic ideals. Later, however, under the influence of Vedic Adityas, the Amsha Spentas became personified heavenly beings. It is thought that the personification of the Amsha Spentas was a compromise on the part of later Zoroastrianism with the polytheistic cultural milieu wherein the religion was first founded.

Next to the Amsha Spentas are a host of spiritual beings, called Yazatas or Izads. To this group belong Mithra, Srausha, and Anahita.

In Iranian tradition, which according to Dhalla goes beyond 2000 B.C., reference is made to the first human pair. They are referred to as Mashya and Mashyoi who noticed that they were nude and covered their bodies with herbage.

The existence of evil as a being is recognized in Zoroastrianism. There is thought to be an empire of organized evil spirits. As Ahura Mezda is the Supreme Creator, the Eternal Lord, and the God of Good, so he has, though inferior to him, a counterpart, Ahriman, who is the supreme hostile spirit, all evil and death.

The Zoroastrians believe there is an eternal conflict between good and evil. The Zoroastrian doctrine maintains a dualism of forces, one the beneficent spirit, good and constructive, represented by Spenta Manyu; and the other his opponent, Ahriman, the evil spirit, dark, evil, and destructive. It is sometimes thought that because of this dualism Zoroastrianism is a dualistic religion, but inasmuch as Ahura Mezda is considered to be the one and only creator of the world the term could not be correct.

Zoroaster proclaims that there is but one path of life for mankind to follow, the "Path of Righteousness." Man is given freedom, a free will to choose whatever he pleases. There is no predestination and men are responsible for their deeds. Their mission is to help the God of good and to hasten the victory of good over evil.

Zoroastrian ethical standards are found in these words:

- Almsgiving is recommended:

"He who relieves the poor makes Ahura king."

- Righteousness is to be loved and the liar damned:

"Whether one is lord of little or much, he is to show love to the righteous, but be ill unto the liar."

- Asceticism does not exist:

"He who sows most corn, grass, and fruit, sows righteousness; he makes the religion of Mazda walk."⁷

The Kushti is a sacred cord or girdle made of 72 cotton fibers woven into 12 strands of 6 fibers each, the 12 strands being further woven into 3 cords of 4 strands each.

These three cords are plaited together to form Kushti and to represent the three fundamental principles of the Zoroastrian faith:

Hu-maneshni--Good Thoughts;

Hu-go'eshni--Good words; and

Hu-koneshni--Good deeds.

The Kushti is tied like a belt to the middle of the body. It is considered to be a symbol of moderation, and moderation is the most essential value in Zoroastrianism. The girdling of the Kushti around the waist of the Zoroastrian child at the time of his declaration of faith is part of the initiation ceremony.

According to Iranian tradition, fire is one of the holiest and purest elements. The other holy elements are air, water, and earth. It is believed that the civilization of mankind began with fire and so this element was considered to be sacred in most of the ancient cultures including the Indian, Greek, Roman, and German.

With the Avestan people, the significance of fire is different. They believe that fire is the reflection of their Highest Deity, Ahura Mazda, and that it is the symbol of moral purity and a strong weapon of defense against the demons.

Other beliefs of Zoroastrians include that of life after death and immortality. They consider the next world a reality wherein the pious receive their rewards and the wicked their punishments. The soul remains close to the body for three days after death; at dawn of the fourth day the soul leaves the body and soars to the heavens. At heaven's gate the soul has to cross the "Bridge of Chinvat" or the "Retribution Bridge," or the "Bridge of Judgment." This is the bridge that separates Paradise from this world, which connects the physical world with the spiritual world. The wicked will fail to cross the bridge and are thrown into the outer darkness, Hell.

With the Avestan people the family was ranked as one of the holiest of all institutions. The family system was consanguineous, patriarchal, and patrilocal. Progeny, parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents lived together in the same abode. The eldest male was the head of the household. He was then the provider for all the family's receivings and handled all the earnings of the other male members. At the death of the eldest, the headship of the family was assumed by the next eldest member. It was important to have sons. A large family with numerous children was considered a blessing, but the prayers for sons were most fervent. Parents together sought protection, strength, and happiness for the family through offerings and prayers to the divine beings.

The man who has a wife is far above him who lives in continence; he who keeps a house is far above him who has none; he who has children is far above him who has none; he who has riches is far above him who has none.

The wife was referred to as the mistress of the house, while the title of the husband was the master of the house. There was more or less a type of equality rather than absolute subordination of the wife to her husband. She was not his slave but his companion. The wife's sphere of action, however, was confined to the indoor affairs of the household.

For a bride, the most strict and important requirements were for unspotted reputation and unstained virginity. The Avestan people were to preserve the purity of their blood and to refrain from intermixture with foreign elements. Marriage between relatives was thus encouraged; polygamy was not forbidden among old Iranians, especially if the first wife was unable to bear a male offspring. A senior priest might use the following as he blessed a couple at the marriage ceremony:

May the Creator, the Omniscient Lord, grant you a progeny of sons and grandsons, plenty of means to provide yourselves, abiding love, bodily strength, long life for a hundred and fifty years.⁸

With the downfall of the Sassanid Empire which had espoused Zoroastrianism as its state religion, and the advent of the Arab invasions with the arrival of the Arab prophet, Mohammad, the situation with Zoroastrians in Iran was forever and irrevocably changed.

However, there is yet today, these thousands of centuries later, a devoted group of Zoroastrians who still practice the primary principles of their prophet for Good Deeds, Good Thoughts, and Good Words. Many of these faithful make an annual pilgrimage to the ancient mountain place, Chak Chak.

The film that we have produced in connection with this project gives the viewer a rare opportunity to gain insight and information concerning some of the ceremonies and rituals of these modern-day followers of their ancient prophet, Zarathushtra, called Zoroaster by the Greeks.

CHAPTER II

SYNOPSIS

There are three legends concerning the Temple at Pir-e Sabz as to how and why it became an important place of worship.

In order to convey these stories, we chose to film pilgrims on their way to this annual holy celebration which lasts five days.

One of the pilgrims was selected to explain the story of King Yazdigerd the III, the last Sassanian king, and his daughter, Bibi Shahrbanou.

Imam Hossein, the son of Ali (who was third Imam, also the son-in-law of Mohammad) had married Bibi Shahrbanou.

The Zoroastrian legend says that when the Arabs attacked the country, some of the army soldiers were following Yazdigerd's daughter (a sister of Bibi) and were suddenly about to capture her. She fervently prayed for deliverance and miraculously the mountain (Chak Chak) opened and she was able to hide safely from her enemies.

It is thought that this story was used as a cover-up in order to offer the Zoroastrians a safe place for their worship. After the Arab attack, there were some Zoroastrians who did not convert to Islam. These people were scattered throughout Iran with Yazd and Kerman being two locations settled mostly by these followers.

They gathered at Chak Chak, a very difficult place to reach (over uncharted desert land to the foot of the steep mountain which

they climb on foot, hand-carrying all of their supplies for the five-day stay).

Here they would talk together as to how they could continue their worship despite the persecution of the Arabs. Arab rulers would permit the Zoroastrians to continue their worship but they were forced to pay a sum of money, a fixed amount, to the governor of their province.

In the film, another interview with a sociologist who is a Zoroastrian, tells about this legend (that after Arab attack Zoroastrians wanted a safe meeting place).

A third legend has it that Chak Chak was the site of an ancient temple of Anahita, goddess of water and of fertility; Zoroaster also believed in the significance of the element water, and he retained this symbolism for his religion.

Zoroastrian brides and grooms come to Chak Chak for a special marriage ceremony, a festival ceremony to secure the blessings of the Goddess Anahita for health, many children, and long life.

Thus, in the film, we see contemporary men and women expressing themselves in ways that are without doubt deeply rooted in traditions that are more than 2,000 years old.

CHAPTER III

THE SCRIPT OF PIR-E SABZ--PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREEN SAINT

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
FIRST SEQUENCE		
TIME: Noon		
LOCATION: Desert road with mirage		
1-L.S.	People moving towards camera on bicycle, donkey, walking, motorcycle and in car. Superimposed title and credits move up the screen over this shot. Shot fades out.	<i>Music fades in and fades out at the end of this shot.</i>
SECOND SEQUENCE		
TIME: Afternoon		
LOCATION: Shrine at PIR-E SABZ		
2-L.S.	(Fade in) of an old man at the water storage getting water. Then he walks up the stairs toward the camera (close-up dissolves into next shot).	<i>Background sounds of birds and action sounds, etc., continue throughout script.</i>
3-L.S.	Old man walks up steps of building, then walks toward the camera (shot dissolves into the next shot).	OPENING: SACRED PLACES ARE SECRET PLACES, WHERE MAN COMMUNES WITH THE MYSTERIES OF GOD'S UNIVERSE. AWAY FROM THE WORLD OF DAILY CARE, MAN HAS A MOMENT TO BRING HIMSELF INTO HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHM OF NATURE.

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
4-L.S.	Old man climbing steps while carrying water. He moves toward camera. Camera pans as he walks by. (Scene dissolves into the next.)	
5-L.S.	Old man walking down an open corridor towards the camera. He stops to rest.	AS THE ZOROASTRIANS BELIEVE MAN'S SOUL IS ETERNAL LIGHT OF THE SAME SUBSTANCE AS THE DIVINE. MAN WAS BORN OF LIGHT AND TO LIGHT HE MUST RETURN PASSING THROUGH THE WORLD OF MATTER AND EMERGING FROM THE DARKNESS ONCE AGAIN TO THE LIGHT OF GOD. A SACRED PLACE IS A PLACE WHERE ONE CAN COME AND CONCENTRATE ON THESE THINGS, SUCH AS THE SHRINE OF THE ZOROASTRIANS OF IRAN, KNOWN AS PIR-E SABZ CHAK-CHAKOU.
6-M.S.	Old man looking into the distance from the corridor, shading his eyes. Camera zooms in to a close-up.	<i>Music starts and continues to the end of shot 15.</i>
7-L.S.	A scenic view of the mountains and valley. Camera zooms forward to identify an empty road.	
8-C.S.	Water being poured into a tea pot. Camera zooms back to find the old man seated on a rug. He puts the tea pot on the coals, then relaxes and looks out into the distance.	
9-C.S.	Bird in the tree top. Camera zooms back as the bird flies and follows it. (This picture dissolves into the following shot.)	
10-F.S.	The camera follows the bird as it flies into the valley.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
11-M.S.	Camera angled up at the buildings.	
12-L.S.	The old man is lying down on a balcony with the shrine in the background. There are many buildings, doorways, and balconies in these shorts, but only the old man is here.	
13-M.L.S.	Buildings from a side angle.	
14-L.S.	Front view of the buildings. Camera zooms back and dissolves into the next shot.	
15-L.S.	The camera continues to zoom back from the same front view of the buildings to reveal its setting in the mountains in the desert.	
THIRD SEQUENCE		
TIME: Morning		
LOCATION: Highway in desert		
16-L.S.	Cars full of passengers moving on road, low camera angle.	<i>Highway sounds continue to the end of shot 28.</i>
17-C.S. to M.S.	Traveling shot on road surface. The camera tilts up to the cars following.	
18-L.S.	Helicopter shot moving with the traffic along the highway. (This picture dissolves into the following scene.)	
19-L.S.	Helicopter shot of dusty road.	EACH YEAR ON THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER, PILGRIMS FLOCK FROM ALL OVER IRAN, TO HONOR THE GREEN SAINT, THE LADY OF THE MOUNTAIN, HIAT BANOU.
20-L.S.	Traveling shot of cars traveling on a dusty road.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
21-M.S.	Traveling shot of cars passing each other.	IN AGES PAST THE WAY WAS HARD, THE JOURNEY OFTEN ONE OF MANY MONTHS. THE THOUGHT OF THE ROAD AND ITS DIFFICULTIES WAS FAR FROM THE MINDS OF DEVOTEES WHOSE STRIVING WAS LIGHT, WHO THOUGHT OF THE END TO BE OBTAINED.
22-L.S.	Traveling shot. More cars on the dirt road. Mountains in the background.	
23-F.S. to C.S.	Cars moving toward camera over small hills. Camera pans left with the cars' movement.	THE SHRINE OF HIAT BANOU IS SITUATED 87 KILOMETERS FROM THE CENTRAL IRANIAN CITY OF YAZAD. THE ROAD BETWEEN YAZAD AND ARDEKON IS THE HEART OF THE REGION WHERE IRAN'S DWINDLING ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY SURVIVED THROUGH CENTURIES AFTER THEIR BRETHREN BECAME CONVERTED TO ISLAM.
24-M.S.	Traveling shot of cars on a dusty road.	
25-L.S.	High camera angle of vehicles moving toward the camera. Camera gradually zooms in. Camera pans right with the vehicles.	
26-M.S. to L.S.	Cars pass the camera. Camera pans with one car to reveal the building of the shrine in the background.	
27-L.S.	High level shot of vehicles moving up the winding road to the shrine.	
28-F.S.	High level shot of vehicles moving up the winding road. Camera zooms back and tilts up.	
29-F.S.	Shepherd with his camels walking. Camera pans with movement and also zooms back.	<i>Bells on animals and shepherd's coaxing yells which continue to the end of shot 33.</i>
30-L.S.	Traveling shot of shepherds walking with their camels, sheep, and goats. Shot will dissolve into the next.	
31-L.S.	High level shot of shepherds and animals.	
32-F.S.	Sheep and goats pass camera.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
33-M.L. to L.S.	Camera zooms back as the animals move toward the mountains and shrine (which come into the picture) and away from the camera.	
FOURTH SEQUENCE		
TIME: Afternoon		
LOCATION: Shrine		
34-M.S. to L.S.	The camera pans left and tilts up as a man carrying a woman walks by. Other pilgrims are also walking up to the shrine.	<i>Background noises of the groups of people as they gather continue to the end of shot.</i>
35-L.S. to M.C.	Panning and tilting up, the camera follows the pilgrims up the steps. It zooms in on an old woman ahead of the others.	THE PILGRIMS ARRIVE IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE PERSIAN MONTH OF TEIEC WHICH MARKS THE TURNING POINT FROM SPRING TO SUMMER, THE SUMMER SOLSTICE, THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR. THE MODERN PERSIAN, TEER, IS DERIVED FROM THE ANCIENT WORD <u>TIESH</u> TAR NAME OF THE ZOROASTRIAN DIETY OF RAIN.
36-L.S.	High angle looking down at pilgrims moving up the steps.	
37-L.S.	Low angle looking up at pilgrims moving up the steps.	
38-L.S.	Low angle looking up at pilgrims moving up the steps. Buildings in the background.	IN ANCIENT TIMES THIS SITE WAS THE SCENE OF PETITIONERS TO THE HEAVENS, TO BRING BLESSED RELIEF OF WATERS TO THE SUN STRUCK LANDS OF SUMMER IN THIS REGION WHERE BRIGHT SKIES MEAN TORRID HEAT AND A PARCHED EARTH.
39-L.S.	Low angle isolated shot of old woman near the top of the steps. The camera pans with her movement.	
40-L.S. to M.S.	Woman walking up dark steps towards the camera.	
41-M.S. to L.S.	Woman walking up steps away from camera.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
42-M.S. to L.S.	Camera to the side of steps panning with the old woman as she walks up. Camera zooms back.	
43-L.S. to M.S.	The old woman walks up some steps toward the camera, then she sits down to rest. Camera pans and tilts down with her movements.	
44-M.S.	High angle shot of pilgrims walking up steps passing close to the camera.	
45-L.S.	Side shot of the pilgrims moving up the steps.	
46-M.S.	High angle shot of many pilgrims walking up the steps. Camera zooms forward to a group of women.	
47-C.S.	The old woman speaking for the camera in Persian.	
48-C.S.	High angle shot of pilgrims walking up the steps. Camera changes focus point.	<i>Music starts on shot 48 and continues to the end of shot 51.</i>
49-C.S.	High angle shot of pilgrims walking up the steps. Camera isolates on the old woman.	THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE SHRINE HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN AND THE PILGRIMS TELL ANOTHER TALE TO EXPLAIN THEIR YEARLY VISIT.
50-C.S.	Old woman's veil moving in the breeze as she walks by. Camera travels with her movement.	. . . ALTHOUGH THE INNER MEANING REMAINS THE SAME.
51-M.S.	Crowds of pilgrims moving toward the camera. The old woman close to camera and out of focus.	THE LEGEND THAT GREW UP IN THE ISLAMIC ERA SYMBOLIZED THE ZOROASTRIANS' OWN SENSE OF PLIGHT AT THE INCURSION OF ARABS, WHICH ENDED THEIR REIGN IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY, FOLLOWED BY THE PERSECUTIONS OF TURKISH RULERS IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY WHICH FINALLY DROVE
52-M.S. to L.S.	Old woman is walking up steps. Camera tilted up and pans with her movement.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
53-L.S.	Camera tilts up as old woman walks away from camera up the steps.	THEM INTO THE ARID CENTER OF THEIR LAND TO SEEK REFUGE. THE STORY GOES THAT THE LAST ZOROASTRIAN SHAH, YAZDEGERD THE THIRD, OF THE SASSANIAN DYNASTY HAD THREE DAUGHTERS OF WHOM ONE, HIAT BANOU, FLED FROM THE INVADING ARABS UNTIL SHE REACHED THIS MOUNTAIN SITE. SHE BEGGED THE MOUNTAIN TO OPEN UP AND LET HER INTO ITS BOSOM SO THAT SHE MIGHT BE SAFE. WHEN THE MOUNTAIN REMAINED DEAF TO HER PLEAS, SHE WEPT AND HER TEARS FLOWED OVER THE EARTH AND BECAME THE LIFE-GIVING SPRINGS THAT BRING THE PATCHES OF GREEN ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE AND IN THE DESERT. MOVED BY HER SORROW THE MOUNTAIN HEEDED HER SECOND PLEA AND OPENED ITS EMBRACE TO ENFOLD HER IN SAFETY. A SHEPHERD WANDERING WITH HIS FLOCK ONCE HEARD HER VOICE ISSUING FROM THE MOUNTAIN TELLING HIM TO INFORM THE PEOPLE THAT THE DAUGHTER OF YAZDEGERD WAS HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS HEART AND THEY MIGHT COME AND FIND REFUGE THEMSELVES IN GOD.
54-L.S. to M.S. to L.S.	High angle shot of old woman coming up steps. Camera pans as she passes camera and walks to some water faucets.	
55-C.S.	Three faucets and old woman washing her hands.	
56-C.S.	Woman's face as she washes and dries it. Camera pans slightly. This shot dissolves into the next.	
57-C.S.	Camera angle up pointed through some leaves which are gently swaying as the sun flashes through them.	
58-C.S.	A flower on the end of a swaying branch.	
59-M.S.	Birds on a thin tree branch.	
60-C.S.	One bird on a tree branch.	
61-E.C.S.	Water dripping over some plants on a rock wall.	
62-E.C.S.	Water dripping over some plants on a rock wall. Heavy shadows.	
63-E.C.S.	Water dripping into a small pond. Bright sun contrasted by dark shadows.	THE WORD, PIR, IN THE WORD PIR-E SABZ HAS THE SENSE OF SPIRITUAL MASTER IN MODERN PERSIAN, BUT ATTACHED TO THE SHRINE IT REFLECTS A DERIVATION OF THE WORD, PARI, MEANING SPIRIT, TO WHICH THE ENGLISH WORD, FAIRY, IS
64-C.S.	Camera tilted down. Water dripping down foliage.	
65-M.S.	Birds hopping on branches with water dripping over foliage in the background. Camera pans with the birds' movements.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
66-C.S.	Camera tilted down at a rippling pond with water dripping in it.	RELATED. TO THE ZOROASTRIANS, PARIES WERE ANGELIC FIGURES, IMMORTAL AND NEVER CHANGING. HIGHER THAN HUMAN BEINGS IN CREATION THEY WERE UNABLE TO EVOLVE LIKE HUMANS WHO COULD, THROUGH STRIVING, RISE STILL HIGHER IN THE UNIVERSE INTO DIVINE CREATION.
67-C.S.	Low camera just above the surface of the pond catching the streaks of the drop of water and the splashing.	
68-C.S.	Camera catching refracting light as it reflects through the dripping water.	
69-M.S.	Camera tilted down catching the refracting light of the dripping water and the splashing in the pond.	COUCHED IN PRESENT-DAY LEGEND OF HIAT BANOU IS THE ANCIENT SECRET OF LIFE, WHICH IS THE SPIRIT FLOWING IN THE BODY LIKE WATER COURSING THROUGH THE VEINS OF THE EARTH.
70-E.C.S.	Drips of water splashing over the rocks and plants.	
71-M.S.	Camera pointed through the foliage at dripping water.	
72-M.S.	Water dripping down a wall covered with foliage.	
73-M.S. to C.S.	Water dripping over plants and rocks into a pond. Camera zooms in to the main flow of water.	
74-M.S. to C.S.	Water trickling down rocks and foliage. Camera zooms back to reveal a pool of water. Then it pans back and over a rock wall to a double doorway. The old woman comes through the door. Camera fixes behind an altar which has a fire on it as the old woman places some things on the altar.	
75-C.S.	Woman's hand lighting a candle. Camera pans with her movement.	
76-C.S.	Woman's face from the side.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
77-	Camera behind the altar zooms in as the woman places materials on the altar.	
78-C.S.	Side view of woman's face, zooming back as she prays.	WE VENERATE WATER SOURCES WE VENERATE WATER COURSES WE VENERATE ROAD DIVERGENCES WE VENERATE ROAD CONVERGENCES WE VENERATE WATER SHEDDING MOUNTAINS; WE VENERATE WATER SAVING FOUNTAINS. TO AHURA MAZDA AND ZOROASTER WE SEND OUR GREETING. THE ANCIENT PRAYER FROM THE HOLY AVESTA SACRED BOOK OF THE ZORO- ASTRIANS, GOES BACK TO THE TIMES WHEN WORSHIPPERS PETITIONED THE AMSCHOST PANDA THE DIVINE BEINGS AROUND AHURA MAZDA THE SUPREME DEITY, SYMBOLIZED GOD'S POWER IN NATURE. ANAHITA WAS GODDESS OF THE WATERS AND FERTILITY. AN EXPRESSION OF THE DIVINE FORCE OF GIVING LIFE SHARED WITH AHURVA--THOUGHT THE DEITY OF PLANT LIFE AND THE PANTHEON OF ANGELIC EXPRESSIONS OF DIVINE QUALITIES.
79-L.S.	Front view of woman and altar.	
80-L.S.	High angle of altar and woman from the rock wall.	
81-L.S.	Through open door, the altar and the back of the woman.	
82-L.S.	Side view of the woman and altar through some pillars.	
83-C.S.	Fire and offerings. (Soft filter.)	
84-C.S.	Candle flame. (Soft filter.)	
85-M.S.	Side shot of the woman lighting incense. Then she moves around the altar to some wall structure.	
86-L.S.	This shot is over a rock wall and framed by another rock wall of the woman pouring oil into wall lamps.	
87-M.S.	Fire of altar in the foreground. The woman is lighting the oil lamps. Her back is to the camera.	
88-M.S. to C.S.	Side angle of woman lighting the wall oil lamps. Camera zooms back over the rock wall and pans right to reveal plants and dripping water. Camera zooms forward to locks and ribbons on the plants.	THE PIR-E SABZ OR GREEN SPIRITS OF TODAY ARE REMINDERS OF AN ANCIENT FAITH THAT SOUGHT FRUITFULNESS IN THE EARTH GIVEN ENERGY BY THE SUN, SYMBOLIZED IN FIRE AND TEM- PERED BY THE MOON. THE GODDESS, REPRESENTED BY BLOWING WATER AND THE CHANGING TIDES EXPRESSING THE INFINITE

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
		HARMONIES OF THE CREATION RIPPLING RHYTHMICALLY BACK TO THEIR DIVINE SOURCE.
FIFTH SEQUENCE		
TIME: Noon		
LOCATION: Outdoors at the Shrine		
89-C.S.	Camera tilted slightly up of a different woman's face. Camera zooms back to show a crowd clapping.	BUT CONTEMPLATION AND WORSHIP ARE ONLY PART OF THE FULL LIFE, IT'S TIME FOR THE PILGRIMS TO KICK UP THEIR HEELS. A WEDDING PARTY HAS MADE ITS APPEARANCE AND THE GROOM GETS A FRIENDLY BEATING WHICH GOES BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN YOUNG MEN HAD TO UNDERGO AN ORDEAL BEFORE BEING INITIATED INTO THE ORDER OF MANHOOD.
90-M.S.	Three men picking up another for a mock beating. Camera zooms back then pans right to a woman bringing two sugar cones.	<i>Crowd, festivities noises which continue until the end of shot 185.</i>
91-L.S.	Festive crowd facing camera and wedding party while some gifts are being carried to them. (Their backs are toward the camera.)	NOW IT'S JUST A MATTER OF FUN AND GAMES.
92-M.S.	Camera pans left with two men carrying gifts above their heads.	
93-L.S.	Front shot of men bringing gifts to wedding party.	
94-C.S.	Camera tilted down to gifts on the ground.	
95-C.S.	Side profile of a woman's face from the crowd.	
96-M.S.	Low angle of wedding couple receiving a gift as they are seated on the ground.	
97-C.S.	Camera tilted down on two men seated in the crowd.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
98-M.S.	The wedding couple seated on the ground receiving gifts and laughing.	
99-C.S.	Bride's face.	
100-C.S.	Face of a woman in the crowd.	
101-C.S.	Two women in the crowd.	
102-M.S.	Low camera angle of male dancer kneeling on the ground with a pan of water and sugar cones. The camera pans down to the pans.	LIKE THE CEREMONIAL OFFERINGS OF SUGAR CONES ACCOMPANYING THE ZOROASTRIAN GREETING, CALMAT CHEREE, WISHING THE NEWLYWEDS THE SWEETNESS OF LOVE AND HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER AND ALL AROUND THEM.
103-C.S.	Faces in the crowd.	
104-C.S.	Side view of a girl in the crowd.	
105-C.S.	Camera tilted down. Older woman in the crowd.	
106-M.S.	Low camera angle panning with a male and female dancer who are performing for the crowd.	
107-L.S.	The dancers in the middle of the crowd.	
108-M.S.	Low angle shot of dancers.	
109-C.S.	Side profile of male dancer's face.	
110-C.S.	Bride's face.	
111-L.S.	Side view of crowd watching dancers.	
112-C.S.	Female dancer's head. Camera pans with her movements.	
113-M.S.	A woman seated playing the hand drum. Camera pans the crowd then moves to the female dancer.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
114-L.S.	Dancers in the middle of the crowd.	
115-C.S.	Groom's face.	
116-F.S.	Low angle of bride and groom and the people nearby.	
117-C.S.	Female dancer's hands, the camera pans to follow.	
118-C.S.	The face of a woman in the crowd.	
119-C.S.	Female dancer's hand gestures, camera pans with her.	
120-F.S.	Low camera angle of a group of people seated on the ground for a snack and some discussion. In the center, facing the camera, is a man talking to others. Camera zooms in.	THE FADING OF THE OLD CUSTOMS, THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF THE RITUALS, IS GRADUALLY LOST TO MEMORY. THE SOCIOLOGIST HAS REPLACED THE PRIEST AS THE EXPLAINER OF MEANING OF THINGS. AND SO THE MODERN VIEW OF THE SHRINE'S FUNCTION IS THAT IT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER IN A PLEASURABLE ATMOSPHERE MADE RICHER BECAUSE OF THE PROFOUND TRADITION BEHIND IT. HERE TOTAL STRANGERS FIND A MOMENT OF INTIMACY TO CONFIDE IN EACH OTHER, THEN TO PART, POSSIBLY TO NEVER MEET AGAIN.
121-L.S.	Camera pointed almost straight down from a balcony of people walking up steps.	
122-C.S.	Two women walking along a wall. The camera pans with them.	
123-C.S.	Camera tilted down for a side profile of a seated woman.	
124-C.S.	Camera tilted down on a picture of another woman.	
125-C.S.	Camera tilted down on a picture of another woman drinking from a cup.	
126-C.S.	People descending stairs, camera pans with them.	
127-L.S.	People resting in courtyard.	
128-M.S.	Three boys teasing another boy.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
129-M.S.	High angle over a boy's shoulder of him play-gesturing with his hands.	
130-L.S. to M.S.	Camera angle low and pans with a woman who is walking through a courtyard.	
131-M.S.	Camera pans with a man as he walks through a courtyard carrying food.	
132-M.S.	A woman through a gate. The camera pans with her movements.	
133-M.S.	A man praying as he sits on some steps.	
134-M.S.	Camera tilted up to an old man behind a fence and wall.	
135-M.S.	A young boy facing directly into the camera. Camera pans right to and focuses on an older man sitting behind the boy.	
136-L.S.	High camera angle of two women talking in a courtyard.	
137-L.S.	Camera tilted down onto a woman sitting in a courtyard.	
138-C.S.	Two old men discussing an issue. One facing the camera, the other facing away from the camera.	
139-L.S.	Low camera angle of two women on a balcony watching those below.	
140-C.S.	Camera tilted down. A woman's hands kneading bread in a pan.	
141-C.S.	Camera tilted down. A woman's hands are preparing food in a pan.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
142-L.S.	Camera tilted down. Two women are preparing food in a courtyard.	
143-L.S.	High angle. Two young men preparing food in a courtyard.	
144-L.S.	A woman eating.	
145-C.S.	Low angle of a young girl.	
146-L.S.	A boy unfolding a carpet in a courtyard.	
147-L.S.	High angle shot from above balcony of a group of men in a circular gathering.	
148-M.S.	Camera tilted down. Children and family resting in a part of a courtyard.	
149-C.S.	Camera tilted down. A young child resting on a pillow.	
150-C.S.	Camera tilted down. A boy sleeping.	
151-C.S.	Camera tilted down. The sleeping boy's hand.	
152-C.S.	Camera tilted down. A man sleeping.	
153-L.S.	People sleeping in a courtyard.	
154-C.S.	The face of a priest over the shoulder of a woman.	
155-C.S.	The face of a woman over the shoulder of the priest. Camera zooms in.	THE OLDER FOLK COME TO SPEAK OF THEIR TROUBLES, SEEK THE ADVICE OF THE MOBAO, THE ZOROASTRIAN PRIEST, WHOSE
156-C.S.	Priest's face through a flame from a small fire.	WORD IS ALL THE MORE HALLOWED FOR BEING SPOKEN IN THIS SACRED SPOT.
157-C.S.	A woman's face as she dances.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
158-C.S.	Another woman's face as she dances.	
159-C.S.	A man's face as he dances.	
160-C.S.	A woman's face as she dances.	
161-C.S.	The man's face as he dances.	
162-C.S.	Camera pans to follow a woman's face as she dances.	
163-L.S.	The crowd in the courtyard watching the dancers.	
164-M.S.	Low camera angle. A group of women and children in the crowd.	
165-C.S.	A planning camera follows a woman dancer zooming in and out.	
166-L.S.	A camera pans with a procession of people escorting the bride.	
167-L.S. to M.S.	High camera angle (over sitting priest's shoulder). The procession of people walking up the steps toward the shrine's entrance. Camera zooms back.	FOR THE YOUNGER PEOPLE, IT'S AN OCCASION TO RELIVE AN OLD RITUAL, THE ESCORTING OF THE BRIDE INTO THE SANCTUARY OF THE GODDESS ONCE FORBIDDEN TO MEN ALTOGETHER. IN THIS WOMEN'S CEREMONY, THE BRIDE COMMUNES WITH THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE IN NATURE AND DIVINITY AND SEEKS INSPIRATION THROUGH A FIRE EMBODYING THE MALE PRINCIPLE RADIATING THROUGH ALL LIFE.
168-M.S.	Women around the altar lighting candles from the fire.	
169-E.C.S.	Panning shot of candle flames.	
170-C.S.	Low camera angle. The bride lights a candle and incense as the camera zooms in.	
171-C.S.	Low camera angle on another woman's face.	
172-C.S.	Intense expression on another woman staring through the crowd.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
173-C.S.	Bride's face.	
174-C.S.	Man's profile. As he moves a woman steps into the shot.	
175-C.S.	A man seen through the flames from the fire. Then a woman walks through the shot.	
176-C.S.	Bride's face.	
177-C.S.	A woman holding a child.	
178-C.S.	The profile of a woman.	
179-C.S.	The profile of a man.	
180-C.S.	The bride's face. As she is greeted by friends and guests the camera zooms back to a low angle.	
181-L.S.	The entire altar room and guests. The priest is near the altar and the bride circles it.	THE GREENS CROWNING THE BRIDE'S HEAD ARE PART OF HER OWN FEMALE'S INITIATION RITE TO A NEW LIFE OF MARITAL RESPONSIBILITY CONSECRATED THROUGH THE GODDESS.
182-C.S.	Camera tilted down and trucks around the altar with the many candles, shooting only the candles.	THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES, ZOROASTRISM'S GIFT TO CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER MORE RECENT FAITHS, SYMBOLIZES THE VOTARY INTENTION TO FULFILL ONE'S COMMITMENT TO GOD AND ONE'S FELLOW VOUCHERS. THE CIRCLE AROUND THE FIRE SYMBOLIZES AND FORMS A SACRED MANDALLA, REPRESENTING THE COMPLETENESS OF THE FULL LIFE AND THE RETURN OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL, ITS CYCLE TOWARD PERFECTION. THE ONLY POINT OF RELEASE IN THE RECURRING CYCLES OF MATERIAL EXISTENCE, EXPRESSED BY THE ZOROASTRIANS AS FOUR AGES, CULMINATING IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.
183-L.S.	High camera angle. The people start circling the altar.	
184-M.S.	Camera tilted down and trucks around the altar with many candles shooting only the candles. (Soft filter.)	
185-L.S.	Aerial shot of entire shrine complex with people visible on rooftops. Panning down the road and mountains. Shot dissolves into next picture.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
SIXTH SEQUENCE		
TIME: Dusk		
LOCATION: Land around the Shrine.		
186-L.S.	People walking over hills away from the camera.	
187-L.S.	High camera angle of a small group of people sitting and talking on a ledge above the valley.	
188-L.S.	Low camera angle of a young man and woman sitting in the open land with the mountains in the background. The camera zooms into the woman's hands.	LIFE IS A PROCESS OF WEAVING STRANDS OF THREAD, THE MANY PREOCCUPATIONS OF WORLDLY EXISTENCE. ONCE WOVEN INTO A UNITY, LIKE THE MIND CONCENTRATING ITS FORCES INTO A SINGLE POWER, THEY FORM A SINGLE PIECE, LIKE THE FOCUSED MIND WHICH SOARS UPWARD TO HEAVENLY ASPIRATION.
189-C.S.	Woman's face and hand as she lets the string be carried away by the wind.	
190-L.S.	People silhouetted against the sunset by a fire, dancing.	
191-L.S.	Two people silhouetted against a large fire.	HERBS CONSECRATED TO THE FLAME STAND FOR THE HUMAN EXISTENCE CONSUMED BY THE DIVINE LIGHT, THE SPARK OF AHURA MAZDA IN EVERY ONE OF US, ULTIMATELY BURNS UP OUR MATERIAL LIFE OF ASPIRATIONS IN THE FLAMES OF PERFECTION. EACH LIFE FOR THE ZOROASTRIANS IS A CONSTANT STRIVING TOWARD PERFECTING.
192-L.S.	People dancing and silhouetted against the sunset.	
193-L.S.	Someone by a fire with the mountains faintly in the background.	
194-C.S. to L.S.	The hands of the dancers silhouetted against the sky. Camera zooms back to see the dancers.	<i>Festive music starts at shot 190 and continues to the end of shot 217.</i>
195-L.S.	Aerial camera catches the sunset on the mountains. Shot dissolves into the next.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
196-L.S.	Aerial camera comes upon the shrine and many fires from the surrounding encampments. This shot fades into the next shot.	
197-L.S.	Aerial camera closer to the shrine complex than the previous shot, then fades into the next shot.	
198-L.S.	Aerial camera circles over shrine and zooms in, then exits over a ridge to the road.	
199-L.S.	A distinct fire in the foreground. Camera zooms over this fire to some fireworks in the background.	
200-M.S.	The camera pans down a fountain-type spray of a firework, then pans over and zooms in to another fountain-type firework up to the top of the spray.	
201-F.S.	Spinning fireworks on a pole.	
202-F.S.	Shooting fireworks.	
203-F.S.	Spinning fireworks.	
204-F.S.	Rocket fireworks. A quick pan to follow its movement.	
205-F.S.	Spinning fireworks.	
206-F.S.	Fireworks on a stand and zooming in on a fountain-type display.	
207-F.S.	Spinning fireworks. Camera zooming back.	
208-F.S.	Spinning fireworks with the camera zooming back.	
209	Fountain fireworks with the camera zooming back.	

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
210-L.S.	Fires of campsites with the camera zooming in.	
211-L.S.	Rocket fireworks. Camera tilts up to catch the explosion and the descending sparks zooming in some.	
212-L.S.	Sky rockets over the campsites. Camera zooms in.	
213-M.S. to L.S.	The rocket exhaust shoots past a camera which pans quickly over and up to a bursting sky rocket.	
214-L.S.	Bursting skyrocket over the fires of the campsites.	
215-L.S.	Camera tilted up to catch a bursting skyrocket.	
216-L.S.	Skyrockets over the campsites.	
217-L.S.	Skyrocket over two distinct fires. Camera zooms forward to the fire on the right.	
SEVENTH SEQUENCE		
TIME: Morning		
LOCATION: Patio in the Shrine		
218-L.S.	The old man from the first part of the script is lying on a rug relaxing and conversing with a woman behind the camera. Camera tilts up when he stands. Then he walks down a hall away from the camera. Picture dissolves into next shot.	THE PILGRIMS GONE, LIFE GOES ON AS IT MUST, THROUGH THE CYCLE OF THE YEAR. <i>Music starts and continues until the end of the picture.</i>

<u>Shot</u>	<u>Picture</u>	<u>Sound</u>
219-L.S.	The old man descends some steps past a conspicuously empty courtyard. Camera pans with him then fades into next shot.	A HOT TEA TO WARM THE BELLY, ONE MUST MAKE THE EFFORT TO SEEK COOL WATERS. WORK IN THE WORLD IS LIKE MAINTAINING A SACRED SHRINE, LIFE'S LIKE THAT.
220-L.S.	A front view of the shrine. Camera zooms back to show the shrine located in the mountain setting.	

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCTION PROBLEMS

This was an involved and complicated documentary to film. Preproduction planning had to be very carefully done, coordinated, checked and double-checked.

In the first place, the people in the film were actual pilgrims on a holy mission. There were no professional actors among them. None had ever appeared in a film, worked with a film crew, or had any experience whatsoever. This required amazing cooperation, patience, and total willingness to assist in an effort to produce a document that would help outsiders understand something of the beliefs and practices of Zoroastrians.

The people unselfishly acted and re-enacted sequence after sequence with innumerable takes and retakes. The shooting ratio was one to four. How carefully the people were coached!

The crew also was a remarkably cooperative group. They had to provide their own food and lodging; had to carry their own ice to preserve the food (and provide protection for film footage) from the intensity of summer heat. The director hired a cook and two assistants who spent hours in preparing food and meals.

The crew consisted of two camera men, two camera assistants, two musicians (working with the dancers), two unit managers, three

gaffers, one sound engineer, four drivers for the four trailers, one director and one assistant director, and three men to manage and coordinate the spectacular firecracker segment.

Big problems occurred with making dolly shots and helicopter shots. All equipment had to be hand carried up the steep mountain incline and the hundreds of narrow steps finally leading to the cement platform of the building on top of the mountain.

The helicopter could not remain in the desert over night and it took six hours for it to make the trip from headquarters in Tehran. One day communications became so fouled up that the pilgrims, at their appointed location to begin the filmed sequence of their travel to Chak Chak, had to wait four hours in the heat of the day! The helicopter had been unable to land at the designated place and had gone to another location. The director was finally able to get everything straightened out and, despite these adverse circumstances, everyone carried on cooperatively.

The firecracker sequence, filmed at night, didn't come off satisfactorily the first night, and so the pilgrims being filmed had to climb the steep mountainsides to their four mountain-top locations, and the lighting of the firecrackers (an enormously complicated procedure) had to be done again. This was a three-camera shoot with walkie-talkie instructions (which because of mountain heights and echoes and other factors didn't always work) which had to be followed to the split-second. The director was three miles up in the air, firecrackers down in the valley placed among stones by the men who awaited signals.

Hundreds of arc lights had to be provided and placed in strategic locations. Sometimes the generators failed.

In one sequence, the director wanted a rainbow to appear in the water inside Chak Chak. Between 12:00 noon and 12:30 there was often a rainbow to be seen inside as the water came tumbling down the mountain side. This was visible to the naked eye. However, the cameraman declared that this would not be visible on film; so, by using two of the arc lights, it was then possible to obtain an image of the rainbow.

The director wanted, in another sequence, to film a single bird taking flight from a nearby cypress tree (the cypress is an important symbol in Iranian culture suggesting the ability of the Iranian people to endure storm and pressure without abandoning their roots and determination to persevere and preserve their heritage).

So, on the last day of affairs, when the crew and pilgrims were packing up to leave, the director with a camera in hand, plus another cameraman with camera, sat for five hours waiting for a bird to arrive. Finally, a bird "got the message," arrived, performed, and flew away in perfect rhythm and beauty exactly as the director wanted!

Shooting on the film was commenced in 1976, but due to many complications, certain re-shooting had to be done. And the lady in the red dress, who is prominently featured in the film, kept her same red dress, her same hairstyle, her same happy countenance and willing spirit, even though between 1976 and 1979 (completion date of the film) many of her scenes had to be re-shot for final editing!

The endurance of all the pilgrims attending the conference was amazing! It is their usual custom to sleep by day (when heat is so intense) and to celebrate, sing, dance and pray at night. However, the film crew needed to work by day and try to rest at night.

Due to the noise of the celebrants at night, the crew was unable to sleep and rest. This necessitated their having to set up their camp (coming down and up from the steep mountain again, and again) in a location thirty minutes by car distant!

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF PIR-E SABZ PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREEN SAINT

This film offers an introductory documentation of some customs and aspects of the Zoroastrian people of Iran, in the setting of an annual pilgrimage. It also offers us a classical perspective of our spiritual attempts to understand ourselves in our universe.

The opening scene is a telephoto shot down a highway. The heat from the pavement causes a mirage through which people are moving towards the camera. The first people we see are a man on a donkey, another on a bicycle, and another walking. Next we see someone on a motorcycle and someone else in a car. Over all of this the title and credits are superimposed with some violin music.

This scene has two basic purposes. First, it introduces the setting and supports the title as we assume these people to be the pilgrims. Second, it suggests that as we travel towards our spiritual endeavors, we in fact have a distorted view, caused by the mirage, of what we are looking at.

In the second sequence, we find an old man, the caretaker of the shrine, carrying some water, from the water storage, for his domestic needs. He walks up steps, down hallways, through courtyards and patios on his way back to his apartment. In following him, we

realize that the shrine is virtually empty. There are no people or objects in a rather expansive building complex except perhaps the caretaker and his wife.

The narration starts here with a relaxed low voice to introduce the shrine and the mood of the setting.

The old man pauses as he walks down a corridor. He looks out into the distance as though he is waiting and expecting something. The camera looks with him into the desert mountain setting, zooming forward to identify a small empty road in the valley.

This view down the road is symbolic of man's incomplete knowledge. Though he can see a path before him, he can only see so far. He in some ways senses beyond the end of the road (beyond death), yet he finds only unclear clues to what is beyond.

In the next shot the old man is in a patio relaxing and waiting in an otherwise empty shrine. The camera finds a bird in a nearby tree and follows it into the valley. We then find ourselves looking at the shrine from the valley. The camera zooms back and gives us a distinct view of the isolated setting in the seemingly barren mountains.

In the third sequence we find ourselves following people on their way to the shrine in their different forms of transportation. The narration gives us some information of the pilgrims' efforts today compared to those of ages past. Though some aspects of their actions have changed (motor power vs. animal power), their motivations are fundamentally rooted in religious intentions.

In the fourth sequence we are now following the pilgrims up the final path to the shrine. We see people and vehicles moving up the last stretch of road and walking up the many steps of the shrine (from many different camera angles). The narration gives us historical information about the development of this site and ritual.

The camera then isolates on an old woman who follows some different steps away from the crowd and eventually we find her completely isolated from the rest of the people. After she speaks to us about the legend of the shrine she moves on and washes her face. The camera dissolves into an idyllic perspective of the ponds and foliage in the shrine. We see rippling water, rainbows in the refractions of the water, and leaves dancing in the sunlight as birds chirp and hop through the trees and shrubs. A crane shot takes us over a wall back to the old woman who is now in the main altar room offering her prayers.

This sequence strongly suggests that though people gather in a religious collective, we as individuals have our own perspective and path of appreciating and interpreting the divine. Our spiritual aspiring is symbolized by the old woman's walking up many flights of steps and then resting. This will lead us towards a harmony with the universe, symbolized by the scenic shots of the shrine's ponds and foliage.

In the fifth sequence we come upon the festive mood of a wedding party. The crowd is cheerful, relaxed, and ready for fun. There is a good deal of dancing and chanting. The mood of the scene then shifts to

a calmer tone where people are talking in small groups, eating, or preparing food, praying and playing while others are napping.

The general feelings one gets from these shorts are that these people are relaxed and fun loving. The pilgrims often refer to this yearly event as "Happiness in the Pir-e Sabz." It is evident in their amiable ways that they have little conflict with the sincerity of their beliefs and the enjoyment of the same.

Also from this scene we find another message which is suggested mostly through the narration. The suggestion is that different religions share many similarities and in fact many of their customs are taken from one another. "The lighting of candles, Zoroastrians gift to Christianity and other more recent faiths . . ." is a quote from the narration. Concepts such as mandalas, cycles, and an emphasis on light are some similarities that the Zoroastrians share with the Islamic and Hindu religions. The bridal party circling the altar and being showered with greens bears a great similarity to fertility/prosperity rites of other cultures, such as the throwing of rice at weddings. Some of this Zoroastrian ritual came from a pre-Zoroastrian worship when prosperity, rain, and fertility were granted from the Goddess Ahahita.

In the sixth sequence, the end of the film and pilgrimage is foreshadowed by shots of the sunset. The people have moved out onto the land surrounding the shrine and built fires around which they dance.

In the past a temple was a place where a fire was always burning for anyone whose fire needed rekindling. Though this practicality is no longer required, an appreciation for fire is

still an obvious part of the Zoroastrian's life. This is expressed by the campfires and the fireworks enjoyed by the people.

In the final sequence we again find the old man in an empty shrine except for his wife. The pilgrims have gone and this part of the yearly cycle has passed.

The old man's waiting represents more than a waiting for the return of the pilgrims. He is waiting for death/God/understanding of the world he finds himself in. A lack of finality is represented by the old man in that as we approach old age and near the end of our physical existence we are stimulated to ask ourselves just how much we really understand about our existence.

The perspectives from our past, a religion or a philosophy offers ideas on this matter, but even so there is still obvious ambiguity to the answers one seeks and what we are trying to look at is not a clear image, almost as though one is looking through a mirage. Therefore we wait. Pressed by a desire to understand more, we strive to improve and purify ourselves, and in doing so, expand our perspectives.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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