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# THE PLAIN DEALER

## Religion - Paths to moral life: Thoughts, words, deeds Focus on Zoroastrianism

by Peter Stroznak

Stroznak is a free-lance writer

For Dr. Jehan Bagli, the message of the prophet who founded the Zoroastrian religion is very simple, yet very profound.

The message of the prophet Zarathustra is just as relevant today as when he founded the religion more than 3,300 years ago. And that message is how human beings can live their lives in a truthful and righteous fashion, says Bagli, who was ordained a Zoroastrian priest when he was 14.

Bagli, retired research director for Wyeth-Ayerst Research Laboratories in Princeton, N.J., recently visited Cleveland to speak at a seminar on world faith traditions held earlier this month at John Carroll University in University Heights. The International Community Council's Multi-Faith Partnership and the Cleveland Conference of Religions presented the seminar. Zoroastrians are followers of the first revealed monotheistic religion of mankind.

One of the most important principles of Zoroastrianism is the threefold path to achieve morality through good thoughts, good words and good deeds. "We believe in progressive thinking in that we need to continue to learn throughout our lives so that we will be able to distinguish between the right from the wrong and the good from the bad," says Bagli, who lives in Toronto, home to the largest Zoroastrian community in North America.

Zoroastrians are actively involved in philanthropic projects that build hospitals and schools around the world.

They also support local charities as well as community-based projects

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ovarian cancer earlier this year at the age of 43, the Zoroastrian community established a memorial foundation in her name that will raise funds to finance research to find new ways to treat or even cure ovarian cancer.

While Zoroastrians support each other, they also believe in supporting the communities where they live, Bagli says.

The Zoroastrians also believe in being strong stewards of nature. "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children," says Bagli.

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