

JOURNAL



Mehr – Avan – Adar 1378 AY (Fasli)

• Ardebehesht – Khordad – Tir 1379 AY (Shenshai)

• Khordad – Tir – Amرداد 1379 AY (Kadmi)

FROM ROOTS TO WINGS

The Next Generation of Zoroastrian Leaders



Also Inside:



ZAGBA's 25th Anniversary Celebrations



Going Global: Tales from Sri Lanka



My Faith Restored By Khushnum Keramanizadeh



Social Media Revolution: Boom Boom Pow!



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A word from the Editor

The old saying goes, "Time and tide waits for no man", and however much we long for the nostalgic times of your youth, when the world was "perfect", to our young eyes, we cannot go back. Every generation moves on and stands on the shoulders of the previous, and hence it behooves each generation to provide a solid foundation of values and principles for the next to stand on. "

This issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL is dedicated to the NextGenNow, the generation to whom we have provided the wings to soar, the generation that will take over from us, hence we also need to provide them with the wind power to soar. They need our unconditional support, and our encouragement in their attempts to find their wings. . Each generation lives in a different time period and each has to adapt to their own realities. We grew up with typewriters which used carbon paper, which messed up our hands, and "Gestetner" cyclostyling machines with which we made copies. Today everybody is on internet and words fly across oceans in split seconds, photocopies are done very cleanly. Do we want to go back to a typewriter?

Just as technology evolves and improves the quality of life for all of us, our brain has evolved and our thought processes have also evolved, we see and perceive things differently, we interpret events from different angles. The NextGenNow sees activism, service, leadership, communications and inclusion from multiple angles, They have gone into professions we would not have dared, they are activists for abused and battered children, abused and battered women, they go to penitentiaries to help in rehabilitation of prisoners, they help AIDS and HIV patients, They are not afraid to accept people as they are with their shortcomings, their disabilities and their sexual preferences. This issue is to highlight the NextGenNow--who promotes inclusion and acceptance. They do not tolerate oppression and they do not nurture discrimination against those whose voices might differ from theirs. They recognize differences and celebrate them.

For this issue four youthful adults, from varied backgrounds, have been the guest editors. The seamless collaboration between four busy professionals located in four different cities in three countries augurs well for our far flung Diaspora. This issue of the journal gives us a taste of how cybertechnology connects Zarathushtis in creative collaboration. They have grouped together people who work in interfaith activities (Kamalrukh Katrak Khan), in the environment (Rashna Ghadialy), in the field of

racial profiling and police brutality (Niaz Kasravi), in countries undergoing war and turmoil (Shirin Kiani), in music, creating harmony (Faro bag Cooper), and a beautiful and moving piece about a human being who was dearly loved by his family and who passed away from this



life and his brother's activism for the cause he died for. All facets of the Zarathushti community as lived by the NextGen is laid before the reader.

The NextGenNow has a sharp social conscience and energy to match, hence in the same issue we have the work of Deena Guzder and the "Stitch Project" she started and we have portrayed a young dynamic duo of Boston (The Dubashes") who are taking their community to great heights. We also portray the next generation of young mobeds performing navjotes, jashans independently and confidently.

The NextGenNow brings a paradoxical mix of global consciousness and self-interest, curiosity about ancient practices as well as the living-out-loud styling of Facebook. They bring a devotion to faith but not its institutions built by previous generations. FEZANA as an organization has been active in social causes and human rights issues by its involvement at the UN and other interfaith groups and the NextGenNow will continue to do so The roots we have sown has allowed the wings to grow. We need to be proud of ourselves for having nurtured such a productive NextGenNow. Let them soar!

Deena Guzder

A Message from FEZANA President

While we concentrate our efforts on supporting the upcoming World Congress in Dubai on December 28-31, 2009, I am happy to announce the success of our North American Youth Congress which was held in July 2009. The preliminary numbers show good success and in black even after repaying back FEZANA the subsidy amount that FEZANA gave to each youth participants. I congratulate the Youth Chairs for the success.

I hope future North American Congress Hosts (Adult and Youth) will learn from this and keep the cost at minimum for all forth coming congress.

At the World Congress in Dubai, FEZANA is sponsoring the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series and also participating in various sessions including a joint session "Community Cares" with BPP, FEZANA, WZO, ZTFE, ZTFHK, Australian Zoroastrian Associations and Zoroastrian Association Singapore. Our Youth is also actively participating in the Youth Leadership Enhancement Program (YLEP) and will be presenting their projects at the congress. (<http://wzcongress.org/events.htm>)

The FEZANA/WZCC jointly sponsored Zoroastrian Stimulus Plan - A YLEP Project for Private Job Search & Career Counseling Service, with joint efforts of Jasmine Dadachanji (Victoria, BC), Eric Engineer (Dallas, TX), and Carl Irani (Orlando, FL) has been very well received and supported by our community. The project has excelled and exceeded all expectations. (<http://fezana.org>)

While we see some light of hope and improvements on the financial markets, I once again take this opportunity to thank Mr. Kavasji Dadachanji, FEZANA's financial and investment consultant for his timely advice which allowed us to convert all our investments in to cash just in time before the market crash and minimized any losses. Mr. Dadachanji has now retired and stopped his practice. We wish Kavasji and his family the very best.

The Finance committee has now appointed Mr. Adil Masani as our new financial consultant. I welcome Mr. Masani to FEZANA family and look forward to working with him.

The 2010 FEZANA AGM will be held in Toronto sponsored by Ontario Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (OZCF)

Bomi Patel

President



VOICES

Behram Pastakia

"Therefore one raises his voice in accord with both his heart and his mind, be he false speaking or true speaking, be he knowing or unknowing."

Yasna 31:12 (1)



A time to speak and a time to listen.....

This issue of the journal is designed for us to hear the voices of our youth. The views expressed are often disparate. We encourage different points of view. It is by listening to each other that we shall deepen understanding to find common ground and successfully meet our collective needs.

Intrafaith dialogue can help create bridges not only between generations, but between the laity and the priests. Our Zarathushti associations and our federation were established to identify the needs of our community and then find the wherewithal to meet those needs. In the western Diasporas, social needs are amply being met: witness the celebrations at Jamshedi Norooz, at Mehrgan, at navjotes, at weddings, at Gahambaras and fund-raisers for venerable institutions such as the Parsi General Hospital. Intellectual needs are being met: the Khorshed Jungalwala series of lectures, the Stanford University initiative, opportunities at Harvard University to delve into Zoroastrian history and culture, the Gatha Colloquium (Fezana Journal Fall 2009 pages.....) are examples. However, emotional needs largely remain unmet. The coming together in compassion at funerals, the outpouring of support for annual prayers for the dearly departed, validates this perception. Voices from the heart go unheeded. In a prize winning essay posted on the website of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Putli Mirza cries out for a consecrated place of worship in North America(2).

The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe [ZTFE] founded in 1861 has yet to establish its own consecrated place of worship. At one point the ZTFE came well nigh close to reaching the goal (3). Alas! It was not to be. On this continent the laity has reached out to the priests seeking their guidance (NAMC Seminar, Fezana Journal Fall 2005 page 8). We can only hope that our voices are

being heard. Or shall we, like our co-religionists in Europe, wait for more than a century and still be waiting to realize our dream of establishing a consecrated place of worship in North America?

For it is through listening to each other's voices, learned or unlearned that we shall find compassionate devotion to stand by to deliberate with the spirit of those of us perplexed by doubt [Yasna 31:12] to give our bodies the sustaining breath of life [Yasna 30:7] (4).

References:

- (1) The Gathas of Zarathustra: Stanley Insler (1975). [ISBN 90 04 03902 3] Bibliotheque Pahlavi, Tehran-Liege - E.J. Brill, Leiden.
- (2) Putli Noshir Mirza: Looking Back, Marching Forward -Vision 2020: A Vision for our Future http://www.zso.org/documents/ZSO_Library_Vision_2020-Winner.pdf [Fezana Journal Fall 2009]
- (3) Deepanjali - the magazine of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman - December 2001, page 114.
- (4) The Gathas of Zarathustra - Hymns in Praise of Wisdom: Pilo Nanavutty (1999). [ISBN1-890206-09-1] Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, India .###



FEZANA UPDATE



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, ORLANDO, FLORIDA, MAY 2009

The 22nd FEZANA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on May 22, 23, and 24 2009 at the Wingate Inn, Orlando, Florida, hosted by the Orlando/Tampa Bay Group of Zarathushtis. The Orlando Group under the leadership of Mezdi Birdie hosted this event, wined and dined us with traditional Zarathushti hospitality with the added generosity and personal supervision of Dinyar Mehta, the President of Quest Hotels (owner of Wingate on Wyndham) which was also the “command headquarters” of Ervad Soli and Jo Ann Dastur where every detail was attended to, from pick-up to drop off at the airport, to welcome baskets in the room. A beautiful banner hanging from the atrium of the hotel welcomed the delegates. In it was a computer generated Farohar which contained the 101 names of Ahura Mazda in English. The original was painted by Late Eruch Hormusji Patel with Ahura Mazda’s names in Gujarati in 2000. at the request by Ervad Soli Dastur, a young Ervad Pashin Madan from Dubai converted the names in English in December 2000.

The Orlando Group provided delicious lunches and dinners as well as the traditional “afternoon Chai” together with Bhakras, Nankhatais and Batasas. Entertainment was provided by Iranian and Indian students from the University of Central Florida. The Iranian students preformed ethnic Iranian tunes on a Santoor (stringed instrument) and a Dafli (Percussion instrument) followed by some Bollywood dances. The children (and the adults) were entertained by an in-house magician, Sarosh Mistry who came complete with his own assistant, his lovely wife Kim.

FRIDAY EVENING opened with discussions on

1. A presentation including a short movie clip about the 911 Unity Walk in Washington DC.

2
Memorandum of Understanding between FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, pertaining to the FEZANA Library to be located in Houston. It is to be called FEZANA Information Research Education System, (FIRES)

- 3 Discussion on Mission and Guidelines for Zarathushti Congresses in North America.

Documents for both these items were circulated in advance and the members had enough time to discuss each document item by item, word for word, collectively and individually, and come up with wordings and concepts which were satisfactory to all, so that when it came for discussion and approval at the AGM on Saturday, it would be accepted with everybody’s blessing.

President Bomi Patel was commended for delivering on his promise of having these two documents ready for the 2009 AGM. The secretary Firuzi Poonevala and assistant secretary Nahid Dasktaki need to be complimented for making the changes on the electronic copy in real time so that the delegates had the corrected and revised copy to take home to their respective associations.

SATURDAY

Benediction:

Ervad Soli Dastur used electronic visuals with the prayers and their English translations displayed on a screen so that coreligionists could understand the meaning of the prayers being recited. This innovation



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(above) From left VP Rashid Mehin, President Bomi Patel, Treasurer Katayun Kapadia, Asst Sec Nahid dashtaki, Secretray Firuzi Poonevala

is noted as a best practice that could be emulated by member associations in their own local events. After a warm welcome by Ervad Soli Dastur, and with the quorum established by a roll-call of member associations attending, (14/23 with a voting power of 45) the agenda for the AGM was approved . The results of the elections for the position of Vice-President and Secretary were announced. Rashid Mehin was returned to the position of VP, and Firuzi Poonevala , to the position of Secretary, both unopposed

The president in his report made mention of the Resource Centre in Houston an initiative of past President Rustom Kevala, The secretary in her report thanked the member associations for their support and their confidence in reelecting her.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC)

Representative Rashid Mehin

Sunday Prayers are organized between 11-12.30 p.m. by Mobed Dr Yahedi and Avesta and Farsi classes are also held with lunch provided. 7 students are participating in the training program for Herbads (Ervads). The centre now has four full-time employees to provide services to their members with 2 publications. However the recession has hit the California area very hard with a 50% drop in income for the Centre, with the result that the publication of one of their journals will be stopped.



Zarathushti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)

President Nazneen Spliedt

In addition to usual celebrations of Noruz, (March and August), ghambar, picnic, etc the anjuman conducts Sunday School classes for children with a



discussion group for adults on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The children planted trees at the Daremehr in April and participated in the annual spring cleaning inside the Atash-Kadeh, a real labor of love.

ZANC supports the Lecture Series on Zoroastrian Religion at Stanford University. They have a database of 359 family/single units with a paid –up membership of 217 with a total of 539 adult members. (photo page6 Ehler Spliedt cutting his birthday cake with his wife Nazneen looking on)

Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) President Vera Santoke

An event is planned every month to promote community togetherness and camaraderie viz, porapau picnic, Hollywood Bowl concert, Dolla's moonlight picnic, ladies Club meeting, walk-a-thon, Noruz and pateti functions , A Senior Appreciation Day was introduced for the first time this year, to the delight of the community.

The association is very busy raising funds to build a centre of their own.

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) President Kashmiri Suraliwalla

The membership continues to increase and the association and Trust are looking for larger premises to house community events. The children Avesta classes, the ZSBC food fair and seniors picnic remain popular events, They also host muktad prayers in August.

Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC) President Hosi Mehta

They sum up their activities by saying they are a "Full service association that is involved in customer service in our community from pre birth to post death."

More specifically, they hosted the NAMC seminar on meaning of prayers, as well as the Conference of the Society of Scholars. They hold muktad prayers for 5 days , an interstate youth camp for children 8-18 years of age, one person is training to be a mobedyar, and ZAC has sponsored another priest , and they actively participate in interfaith activities, and host groups from schools and other organizations, They have started a leadership group for Next Generation Challenges.

"A young adult" religious class started last year is going strong as well as a reorganized children's class..

Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) President Jamshed Dubash represented by Jerry Kheradi

A gala 25th anniversary event had been planned for July 25th (see page 35) The association had set a goal of increasing membership by 25%. The Community Building and Fund-raising calendar is in its third year, they are also registered for the Car Donation Program "Donate Car in USA" (details on ZAGBA website) Three levels of Children's Religious classes are held every month. They have 50 children under the age of 18 including 3 sets of twins

Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) Representative Sarosh Collector

In 2008 ZAH, the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center completed 10 years and this event was celebrated with an ambitious series of celebratory events spread throughout the year, These included a car rally, a Fiesta /Carnival, The Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture series, the NAMC AGM and its educational presentation, a Ghambar with a celebratory jashan and a gala dinner, ZAH library function with a guest speaker, A WZCC AGM along with the Coming Together Round Table was hosted in December 2008 . A Dance for Life Fundraiser for the Parsi Hospital in Navsari raised \$17,000 for that cause,.

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) President Kamran Behroozi represented by Firdosh Mehta

The activities include monthly children's classes, and adult religious discussion session (Vohu Manoh Group). teen group activities, religious education seminars jointly organized by ZANT and ZAH , All the yearly religious events are organized, fund raisers are held and the ground breaking ceremony for the ZANT Centre took place on the property bought in Nov 2006, After all the plans were approved by the Town of Flower Mound, construction began in November 2008, The Broach Parsi Panchayat has donated the prayer utensils for the new Darbe Mehr,



Zoroastrian Association of Michigan (ZAOM) President Hushedar Mehta

This newly formed association has a membership of 155. An education sub-committee formed in early 2008, contact established with Prof Windfuhr to conduct educational sessions at ZAOM, Mobed Tehemton Mirza gave a talk on jashan ceremony and its significance, established a user ID for University of Michigan database for Zoroastrian literature. The usual community religious events are organized, as well they participated in interfaith *Sabbath for World Peace and Religious Reconciliation*.

Zoroastrian Association of Quebec. (ZAQ) Presiden Faredoon Mistry represented by Dolly Dastoor

The association celebrates the regular religious festivals of Noruz and the ghambars.. Dr Ervad Jehan Bagli was invited to give a talk on the Yasna ceremony.

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario: (ZSO) President Sam Vesuna

Regular religious celebrations of Ghambars , Parabhs, Jashan, Mukatad observances and Festival days are observed according to the Fasli and Shahenshahi calendars.Regular youth activities of religious classes, scouts, sports events are held , interfaith activities including the celebration of navroze at the Ontario Legislation was held, The one day Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture was also organized, The rebuilding of a new Darbe Mehr is progressing slowly as it meets obstacles on the way.

This is a very active vibrant community where they have five priests under the age of 18, a new interest group of intermarried parsis has been formed. Significant fund-raising is done by the community to send funds to India for different philanthropic causes, including Parsi General Hospital, to Udvada for mobeds, and for the nassesallah (pall bearers) of Mumbai. A Gatha Colloquium was to be held in June 2009, jointly sponsored by ZAGNY, WZO and FEZANA

Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA)

President Shirin Kiamanesh represented by Homi Gandhi.

There has been greater joint participation with ZAGNY in addition to Sunday Persian classes, and ghambars and the Noruz Parade

Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and North Jersey (ZAPANJ) President Veera Karanjia represented by Katayun Kapadia

This association with 8 practicing priests turns 30 this year and they organize all the usual community functions. In addition the members have adopted two girls of low income families living in the slums of Mumbai to give them a better education. An educational session with the NAMC was held.

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI) President Mehrdad Aidun represented by Behram Pastakia

This active association holds Avesta classes, participates in the tree-planting ceremonies, the NextGenNow sessions, and their members were active in the 60th anniversary celebrations of the declaration of Human Rights at the Library of Congress,

Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF) President Jahan Daruwalla, represented by Vice-President Burjis Shroff

Under the new ZAF Board elected in March 2009, with the motto: "We believe that if we work together as one, following the simple yet priceless tenets of our Zoroastrian faith namely, Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta, we can move mountains!", ZAF under the able leadership of President Jahan Daruwalla and VP Burjis Shroff have revived the four community events – Jamshedi Navroze in March, Pateti/New Year in August, Picnic and Gahambar. The Zor & More Newsletter has been resurrected with 2 issues published already. Our Z Club under the able leadership of Prof. Aban Kavasmaneck (whose presentation was well received) is going strong. We publish our Directory and give support to FEZANA and ZYNA. Our future considerations are: Increase



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membership, Promote our presence in the South FL area, Set up college scholarship funds, Consider appeals of help with donations from community, Jointly host get-togethers with other Florida Chapters, promote youth involvement in the national programs, sponsoring Navjote/Navar ceremonies. Burjis ended his presentation with: "The ZAF Board of 2009 wishes to thank the 22nd FEZANA AGM committee, participating chapters and sends their best wishes and warm greetings from sunny South Florida." His wife Hovi then distributed fresh litchis from their own backyard to all present.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMITTEE REPORTS

SPORTS - CHAIR NIAZ KASRAVI

Started in 1988 with a budget of \$500 the first games were held in a LA high school with 30 local participants. In 2008, for the 11th Z games there were 1200 in attendance from 17 US states, as well as from France, Germany, England, Australia and Tajikistan and with a budget of \$165K. It has been a self-sustaining entity of FEZANA for 21 years and they have made charitable contributions to support participation of Zarathushti youth in sports in the US and abroad. The 5th Unity Cup Soccer Tournament is planned for September 5-7 2009 and the 12th Z games will be held in LA on 4th July weekend 2010. The committee is looking for hosts outside of California for the 2012 Games. As the activities grow in popularity and participation, the committee faces new challenges of finding venues to hold increasing number of athletes, and higher budgets to meet increasing costs,

EDUCATION, SCHOLARSHIP AND CONFERENCE CHAIR LOVJI D. CAMA

Scholarships of \$1500 are awarded from the Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education

A very successful teachers workshop was held for the Southern California associations in May 2008. Following this a survey was sent out to see if there was a need to hold another work shop and if there was a need for a website for teachers. There did not appear to be a need for another workshop but there was an interest in video clips of religious classes available through internet, ZAGNY will be launching a pilot

project to see if this can be accomplished. The Khorshed Jungalwala Lectures are being organized and prove to be highly successful,

AWARDS

CHAIR SHEHERNAZ JOSHI VERAHRAMI

A time line has been developed for the December 2010 NAZC in Houston. The call for nominations process has been revamped with better publicity, more comprehensive information on the awards process to be circulated in advance, With approval from the FEZANA executive an electronic filing of nominations will be possible on a sub site of the FEZANA website, it is also recommended that each association have a FEZANA Awards representative to disseminate all information to the local community,

FUNDS AND FINANCE

CHAIR JERRY KHERADI

Because of the guidance of *Integrity Investments* Advisors Kavasji Dadachanji and Zubin Bomanshaw, FEZANA funds were moved into cash and cash equivalents which helped prevent the large decline seen in the market, They were both thanked by the members. On January 1st a new program was launched for FEZANA - The FARESHTA CHALLENGE (FJ December 2008). The goal of this program is to increase support for the FEZANA funds and programs and to build community spirit and increase awareness of the larger Zarathushti community. The member associations and small groups have been divided into teams by geographical area, The winning team will be announced at the 2010 NA congress in Houston.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CHAIR FIRDOSH MEHTA

14 projects were dealt with in 2008-09 both in India and Iran to help financially in the restoration of religious infrastructure, in development of youth programs for the World Congress in Dubai, the world Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra, etc, Financial support for Amordad News agency in Tehran, the Parsi Resource Group and the Navroze Baug Sports Centre were received from both private and public agencies like FEZANA, WZO, This committee would like to have a youth adult member, So far the search has not proved



fruitful. If you would like to recommend a candidate please contact the chair.

RESEARCH AND PRESERVATION CHAIR ERVAD JEHAN BAGLI

The activities of this committee are divided into

- 1 Religious activities-Lectures and Discourses
- 2 Interfaith activities
- 3 Books, articles and other activities

All members of the committee are active in promoting diverse aspects of the Zarathushtrian faith and of the Zarathushti community

PRESERVATION OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

CHAIR PALLAN ICHAPORIA

The most ancient extant manuscript of YASNA J1 (dated 1320 CE of 700 pages) is ready to go to Press in Mumbai in 2009. It is being edited by Ichaporia and Bajan and it will be published under the FEZANA Banner.

The Vendidad Sade is under preparation and will be published in 2010

These two bulky manuscripts will be a trove of treasure for FEZANA and will be useful and available for research to present and future scholars

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

CHAIR, HOMI GANDHI and CO-CHAIR ROHINTON RIVETNA

Throughout the year many interfaith/interalia activities at the local level have been highlighted in details at the fezana@yahoogroups and in the FEZANA Journal, Zarathushtis from New York and Washington participated in the UNITY WALKS September 2008 (*FJ Fall 2008*), as well as in the Iftar prayers in Washington and New York. The New York Iftar was followed by a dinner and an international dialogue between religious leaders and political figures (*FJ Winter 2008*)

FEZANA is a member of the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) and of Religions for Peace

USA, (REP-USA) Homi represents FEZANA on its Council of Presidents and its Executive and Steering committees. Kersi Shroff attended the steering committee in Washington, DC in Feb 2009

Because of our active participation in RFP-USA, FEZANA was invited to a brainstorming meeting at Mary Knoll, USA to discuss an Initiative for a UN Decade of Inter Religious Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, (2011-2020), Homi Gandhi and Homi Dhalla from India attended the meeting (*FJ Summer 2009*)

A UNITY WALK will be held on 18 October, 2009 in Washington, DC

A motion was passed unanimously at the 22nd AGM that FEZANA would become a sponsor of the Unity Walk.

A SEASON FOR PEACE will be celebrated from September 21 (*International Day of Prayer and Peace*) to October 2nd (*International Day of Non-Violence*)

Fifth World Parliament of Religions will take place in Melbourne December 2-9, 2009

UN-NGO

CO-CHAIRS HOMI GANDHI, BEHRAM PASTAKIA and AFREED MISTRY

Activities in the US: FEZANA team participated at the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and presented a panel discussion on "Success stories in care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS: South Asia". The team covered the Bel-Air Hospital in PanchganSi, India and presented its advanced care facilities for AIDS and TB patients.

International: A presentation was made at the 61st Annual Conference for NGOs associated with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris from Sept 3-5 2009, The theme of the conference was "Reaffirming Human Rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60" (*FJ Spring 2009*)

A report of all the activities of FEZANA relating to UN was presented by Homi Gandhi. Based on that report our standing as an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has



been renewed , The next review will be in 2012. (*FJ Fall 2008*)

WELFARE AND UNITY/ CRITICAL ASSISTANCE

CHAIR HOSI MEHTA, HOUTOXI CONTRACTOR, FREYAZ SHROFF

In a written report all the work done by the committee was outlined, Even though the committee is North America based, they get requests for help from all over the world as needs stretch are global. . The local organization is contacted and the needs taken care of locally. This helps build strong bonds within the Diaspora community. This year the committee worked closely with people in Singapore, India, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, Iran, Middle East, Canada and the US

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

CHAIR DOLLY DASTOOR

25 applications had been received for FEZANA scholarships,(\$3000) The Mehraban and Morvord Kheradi Endowment scholarship (\$5000) FEZANA 20th Anniversary Endowment Scholarship (\$4000) and the Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment scholarship, (\$1000) Parisa Javedani (Oregon) was the FEZANA Scholar receiving the The Mehraban and Morvord Kheradi Endowment scholarship, of \$5000.

A donation of \$30,000 was received from the estate of Khorshed Panthaky (of ZAGNY) to set up an endowed scholarship fund for undergraduate studies for 5 years to be given to two undergraduate students each year, 2 scholarships of \$3000 each were awarded to Fariba Khoshnasib (Dallas,) and Benaz Colabewala (CA)

. A total of \$34, 000 was given out in scholarships for 2008-09 (*see FJ Spring 2009*)

PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS-

CHAIR SHERAZADE MEHTA

The call for 2009 P&CAs applications was posted, Only one application was received.

EXISS (SPORTS)

CHAIR KHUSHCHEHR ITALIA

Only one application was received in 2008 from Shireen Irani , Alberta , Canada and \$1000 was awarded to her, She is a top collegiate competitor in both Hockey and Soccer,

INFORMATION RECEIVING AND DISSEMINATION (Publications)

CHAIR BEHRAM PASTAKIA

The tasks of the committee fall under three headings

A FEZANA Journal

B Exploring Technologies in cyberspace

C Publications

A THE FEZANA JOURNAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF DOLLY DASTOOR

Four issues were published in 2008. Coverage of Noruz celebrations with Haft seen tables, dances, dinners parades and songs, gift giving serve to help build communities worldwide. These appear in the summer issue annually, with celebrations of Tirgan and Mehrgan in the Fall and Winter issues respectively, Providing space to the North American Mobeds' Council and the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce has proved successful. We continue to build bridges of understanding between the priests and the laity through education. We constantly try to promote the writings and achievements of the youth and young adults.

The subscription base has increased due to repeated reminders but it is still pathetically low. There is parity of rates between Canadian and US subscribers,

B Exploring Technologies in Cyberspace

The newly designed website www.fezana.org was launched with significant input from Brandon Chothia and President Bomi Patel. The website has an RSS feature which enables the individual to tailor the information they wish to receive

(past issues of the FEZANA Journal are now on the web).



FEZANA UPDATE

ZNA (Zoroastrian News Agency) bringing News of all Things Zoroastrian to a PC near you (*FJ Vol 22, No 2 page 83*), has been partnering with FEZANA. An interactive calendar of Zoroastrian events is now available on www.zoroastrians.net. Contact Yazdi Tantra (yazdit@gmail.com and Percis Dubash pdbush1@gmail.com to post events.

The proceedings of the Fourth Coming Together Roundtable hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, December 31, 2008 and portions of the WZCC annual meeting are archived on www.zoroastrians.net as a video recording.

The recording of the NAMC seminar held in Houston April 2009 is now available on line <http://zoroastrians.net/2009/04/27/divine-message-journey-through-zoroastrian-scriptures/>

C Publications

“Zoroastrian Connections with Judaism and Christianity” edited by Roshan Rivetna, based on articles from a past issue of the FEZANA Journal is available from RRRivetna@aol.com

Additional copies of the Spring 2009 issue of the FEZANA Journal, highlighting the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a resource for future Zarathushtis participating at the United Nations are available from the FEZANA office in Chicago.

SMALL GROUPS

CHAIR ERVAD SOLI P. DASTUR

This is a fragmented pocket of 11 small groups scattered across NA. An e.mail group of all contacts of these 11 small groups is being created. This will help them feel involved in FEZANA projects ,

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS' COUNCIL (NAMC)

PRESIDENT ERVAD KOBAD ZAROLIA

A successful seminar was held in Houston on Saturday April 11, 2009 The Divine Message : Journey through Zoroastrian scriptures. This was repeated in Chicago on May 16th and New Jersey and Toronto in FALL 2009.(*FJ Summer 2009*)

The NAMC website www.namcweb.org is undergoing changes to make it more user friendly, all communications to be sent to dastur@comcast.net

TREASURER'S REPORT

The total income in 2007 was \$443,723 while in 2008 it dropped to \$144,518, FEZANA committee chairs were asked to re-visit the proposed budget of \$187,200 and cutback to \$126,000, However the ZYNA academic scholarships, manuscript preservation, sports, UN/NGO, Jungalwala Lecture series have been supported 100%

Fund-raising needs extra efforts and we need to support the Fareshteh Challenge,

OTHER BUSINESS

The memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston was passed

The Mission and Guidelines for Zarathushti Congresses in North America was passed.

The subsidy to the young adults attending the Dubai Congress for the YELP program was fixed to a maximum of \$500 per person to a maximum budget of \$20,000. The subsidy for the orchestra for the World Congress was budgeted at \$5000

Children's Corner (Z Club) presentation by Prof Aban Kavasmaneck.from Florida

She presented a report on the activities of their Z-Club and focused on its aim, philosophy, instruction, curriculum, activities and successes. The aim is to foster a spirit of true Zarathushti fellowship by traditional, creative and intellectual methods of instruction, The goal is to provide activities which



FEZANA UPDATE

promotes religious, cultural and philosophical inquiry enriched by play acting and live performances, talent shows, hands-on activities, virtual scenarios. The Z-Club tailors to the needs, interest and requests from parents and their children. It tries to inculcate in the children the importance of the religion, culture and make them realize that they are special and unique and yet can assimilate in the American society,

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Strategic Plan needs to be revisited and Maharukh Motafaram volunteered to spearhead the revisit.

What came across quite clearly from the AGM was the growing urge to build the next generation of Darbe Mehrs across the continent to fulfill the spiritual needs of the community and to accommodate the growth of the community.

Serious plans are being made for purchase of land and /or property by Zoroastrian Associations of California, Boston, ZAPANJ, British Columbia. Work has already started in Dallas, and the renovation of the structure on the OZCF property has been completed. The expansion plans of the property of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario is meeting with some serious bureaucratic road blocks.

Reported by Dolly Dastoor



MEN IN DAGLIS



WOMEN IN SARIS WITH MEN PEEPING IN

The Brothers Mehta,
Firdosh, Past
President of FEZANA
on left and Dinyar,
President of Quest
Hotels, (owner of
Wingate on Wyndham,
the venue of the AGM)
on right





Groups at Saturday Night Banquet



Santoor and Dafli players amazed the audience



Florida grown Bollywood Dancers



Magician, Sarosh Mistry in the centre, Bomi Patel President, FEZANA cheering



Mez Birdie, of Orlando Group, and host for the evening entertainment



The dancing ladies



The 22nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) for FEZANA was held on May 22, 23, 24, 2009. It was hosted by the Zarathushti Small Group of Orlando in association with WZCC Central Florida Chapter at Wingate by Wyndham Hotel.

At the AGM all the FEZANA committees present their

reports and ask for a budget to continue the work they are doing for the Zarathushti community. The Association presidents and representatives then vote to approve or disapprove the budget. This year the total amount requested by all the committees was \$187,200. However, due to the economic down turn and very little money received in donations, as chairperson for the Funds and Finance committee, I felt it was my responsibility to request everyone to reconsider their budget needs and lower the proposed budget. After everyone had time to review their budget items, a new budget was presented totaling \$118,000 which was then approved by all present.

List of all the committees along with their approved budgets:

Academic Scholarships \$22,000, *Award Committee* \$0, *FEZANA Office* \$16,000, *FEZANA Office Supplies* \$1,500, *FIRES (FEZANA Information Research Education System)* \$5,000, *Funds & Finance* \$0, *Gatha Conference – ZAGNY* \$2,000, *Information Receiving & Dissemination* \$0, *Interfaith Activities* \$2,500, *Interfaith – Parliament of World Religions* \$2,000, *Interfaith – Ervad Dastur's project* \$1,000, *Journal* \$7,000, *Jungalwala Lectures* \$2,000, *Manuscripts Preservation* \$2,000, *Performing & Creative Arts Scholarships* \$2,000, *Religious Education* \$3,000, *EXISS* \$1,000, *UN- NGO Committee* \$3,000, *World Congress 2009 (Dubai)* \$10,000, *World*

Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra \$5,000, *Youth Without Borders (ZYWIB)* \$2,000, *AGM Expenses* \$2,000, *Administrative Expenses* \$4,000, *Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism* \$1,000, *ZSC* \$10,000, *ZYNA* \$12,000, *Stanford University Lectures – Director Series* \$0, *Stanford University – Undergraduate Courses* \$0, *Public Relations Website* \$0, *Public Relations Reprints/copyrights* \$0, *Research and Preservation* \$0, *Next Generation Conference* \$0.

Sadly, for the last 12 months the donations that came in to support the FEZANA committees are extremely below the levels that were received in previous years. At this time, we are requesting you to kindly consider sending a donation to the FEZANA committees and funds that you so kindly supported in the past.

In the spirit of the Fareshta Challenge, we need you to support FEZANA at this critical time. Take advantage of the year-end tax deductions for your generous donations. Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA and mail your donation to **FEZANA Treasurer, Katayun Kapadia, 33 Preamble Drive, Mt Laurel, NJ 08054**. You can also make donations online at www.FEZANA.org using a major credit card and receive a tax deduction along with the credit card rewards/points allocated by your credit card program.

“The kingdom of Ahura Mazda is for him who helps the needy.”

Jerry Kheradi, MD, FACG, Chairperson,
FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee
Morvarid Behziz, M.Ed., Co-Chair;
Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA Treasurer
Sassan Nadjmi, DMD, FACP
Celeste Kheradi

Next report will include “FARESHTA CHALLENGE Team Update.”



DONATIONS

List of Donations received April 1, 2009 through
June 30, 2009

FEZANA GENERAL FUND	
Nirvana & Khashayar Anoosheh, Los Gatos, CA	\$ 1,001.00
Farokh Contractor	\$ 250.00
Microsoft Matching Gifts Program, Princeton, NJ	\$ 102.00
Rayomand & Bakhtawar Bhadha, La Crescenta, CA	\$ 101.00
Meher & Aspi Patel, Roswell, GA	\$ 101.00
Khushroo Dastur, Northbrook, IL	\$ 55.00
Rustom Mehdiabadi, Lubbock, TX	\$ 55.00
Estate of Aban Noor, Towson, MD	\$ 51.00
Dady Mehta, Ann Arbor, MI	\$ 50.00
Noshir & Dinaz Langrana, West Windsor, NJ	\$ 30.00
Homi Minwalla, Las Vegas, NV	\$ 30.00
Jehangir Vania, Syracuse, NY	\$ 30.00
Boman Najmi, Potomac, MD	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,881.00
FEZANA WELFARE FUND	
Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA)	\$ 801.00
Nirvana & Khashayar Anoosheh, Los Gatos, CA	\$ 250.00
Ranjan & Shahnaz Duara, Miami, FL	\$ 200.00
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	\$ 30.00
Vira & Burjor Santoke, Huntington Beach, CA	\$ 30.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,311.00
FEZANA CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND	
Beach Cigar, Group, Miami, FL	\$ 2,500.00
Meherwan Boyce, Houston, TX	\$ 101.00
Parvez Mody, Orangevale, CA	\$ 100.00
Baji Palkhiwala, New Rochelle, NY	\$ 55.00
Homi Italia, Burnaby, BC, Canada	\$ 50.00
Firozi Alercia, Belville, NC	\$ 30.00
Freddy Engineer, San Jose, CA	\$ 30.00
Jamshed Modi, Arlington Heights, IL	\$ 30.00
Rusi Tavadia, Novi, MI	\$ 30.00
Shirin Antia, Tucson, AZ	\$ 25.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,951.00
FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
Behram Kapadia, Sewickley, PA (In memory of Mr. Homi J. Tata)	\$ 150.00
Parviz & Simin Ardeshirpour, Irvine, CA	\$ 101.00
Mezdi & Meena Birdie, Longwood, FL	\$ 101.00
Anne & David Trinkle, Lambertville, NJ (In memory of Dady Kapadia)	\$ 100.00
Laura A. Torres, Los Altos, CA (In memory of Dady Kapadia)	\$ 75.00
Roshan Bhappu, Tuscon, AZ	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 577.00
FEZANA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUND	
Bejan Malbari, Concord, CA	\$ 251.00
Roshan Bhappu, Tuscon, AZ	\$ 50.00
TOTAL	\$ 301.00
FEZANA JOURNAL	
Ruston Bankwalla, Washington, DC	\$ 55.00
Feroze Sidhwa, Coppell, TX	\$ 30.00
TOTAL	\$ 85.00
KHORSHED JUNGALWALA FUND	
Central Florida Group	\$ 355.00
TOTAL	\$ 355.00
ZYNA	
Dinyar Mehta	\$ 200.00
TOTAL	\$ 200.00
ZYNA - NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS	
Zarathosti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC)	\$ 650.00
JoAnnn & Soli Dastur, University Park, FL	\$ 501.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,151.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 8,812.00

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Calendar of Festivals

Calendar of Festivities September 2009 to March 2010

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

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

ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS

In keeping with the long term vision of the Federation, at its 22nd Annual General Body Meeting held in Orlando, Florida, FEZANA has for the third consecutive year sanctioned funds to provide support for Zarathushti youth who volunteer in countries abroad for humanitarian and social service missions.

Individuals who wish to apply are expected to provide a summary of their planned project, a letter from the hosting agency confirming acceptance for the service period and a written report to the Federation at the completion of their tour of duty.

Contact: Shara Godiwalla
sharagodiwalla@juno.com, or
Behram Pastakia
bpastakia@aol.com

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COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2009 , 62nd ANNUAL DPI/NGO CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, Mexico City, September 9-11, 2009.

SEPTEMBER 2009, NAMC SEMINAR "The Divine Message", ZAPANJ
September 12, 2009, Contact Ervad Adi Unwala nergisadi2@verizon.net

OCTOBER 2009, NAMC SEMINAR "The Divine Message", TORONTO
October 11, OZCF Hall, ZRCC 1187 Burnhamthorpe Rd East, Oakville, ONT contact Ervad Kobad Zarolia kobad@oakridge@insurance.ca

OCTOBER 2009, Seminar "The Legacy of Zarathushtra", HOUSTON
Peter Clark, of Cardiff University, author, lecturer will speak at the ZAH Library October 16-18 2009, Contact Arnavaz Sethna, asethna@comcast.com

NOVEMBER 2009 GRAND SSZ CONFERENCE, MUMBAI
The Scholarly Society of Zarathushtis conference, November 6- 8 2009 at the Banaji Atashbehrum Hall, Mumbai Contact Pallan Ichaporia, kerfegar@aol.com; Rohinton Rivetna rivetna@aol.com; or Ervad Pervez Bajan pmbajan@gmail.com



DECEMBER 2009 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

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

DECEMBER 2009 SINGAPOREW CHINA RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS AND CULTURAL EXHIBITION, December 16 – 23 , 2009 at Suntec, Singapore, organized by Inter-Religious Organization (IRO), Contact Rustom M Ghadiali VP IRO SINGAPORE russighadiali@yahoo.com
DECEMBER 2009 FIFTH COMING TOGETHER ROUNDTABLE



December 27th, 2009 at the India Club, Dubai December 30th and 31st at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dubai To submit items for the agenda contact: Rohinton Rivetna rivetna@aol.com

DECEMBER 2009, WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI.
9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time" to be held in Dubai, December 28-31, 2009. Contact meher_bhesania@hotmail.com



ARCH 2010, COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION, United Nations Headquarters, New York. (March 1-12, 2010) Contact: Afreed Mistry afreed.mistry@gmail.com, Co-Chair FEZANA UN-NGO committee

MAY 2010 EZANA AGM TORONTO hosted by OZCF

DECEMBER 2010, FIFTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN Z CONGRESS HOUSTON , TEXAS, www.zah.org

APRIL 2012 FIRST ZOROASTRIAN MOBEDS AND SCHOLARS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, Tehran, Iran. Contact: Mobed Firouzgary (for Mobeds) and Dr Farzaneh Goshatasbour (for Scholars) [Fezana Journal - Vol 23 No 2 page 127]

AUGUST 2012, SIXTEENTH NORTH AMERICAN Z CONGRESS NEW YORK , www.zagny.org
Zoroastrian existence in the Contemporary World

Operation Eyesight:

Planned camps for FALL 2009

Details at www.lionsinsight.org

October 15 - 18, 2009 Nueva Rosita, Coahuila, Mexico

November 12 - 15, 2009 Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico

November 2009 Nigeria, Africa

Give the gift of sight:

To volunteer, Contact: Khush Bodhan, kbodhan@gemsedi.com

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

January 7-9, 2010. New Delhi

Engaging the Diaspora:

The Way Forward

Concurrent sessions on

Investment, Knowledge, Philanthropy and Gender Issues

[http://\[bdindia.org/](http://[bdindia.org/)



FEZANA UPDATE

Rites and Rituals in The Diaspora

Compiled by Dolly Dastoor

In most religious traditions, the departed souls are invoked once a year. The Hindus refer these days as Shradh and the Christians as Lent (before Good Friday). Zarathushtis all over the world celebrate the last ten days of their religious calendar year, from *Roj Ashtad Mah Spandarmad to the Vahishtoisht Gatha, as the Muktdad*, when according to Zarathushti tradition the Fravashis descend to earth. The word Muktdad is also referred to as Muktat, which is closer to the Sanskrit word— mukt atman. the Sanskrit rendering of the Avestan word ashaunam.

Muktdad is a joyous occasion for remembering and worshipping of all Fravashis collectively, followed by the individual remembrance of souls and Fravashis of one's own dear departed ones.

According to Saddar Bundahishn during these days the souls of the departed come to earth accompanied by their Fravashis, (the guardians of the soul) go to their respective houses. All souls are liberated, during this period from wherever they are, even those from "hell".

Preparation for Muktdad:

In the past, when Muktdad was mainly celebrated in homes, preparations were started with the cleaning and painting of the entire house or a particular room. Food and fuel were stocked to last all the days of Muktdad and New Year so that one did not have the need to go shopping during these days. Sometimes night long vigil was kept by people and those who were actively involved with all the preparations, took a Nahan. Family members contributed towards buying household items. This sharing gave rise to the term Behru, a Persian word, which means "share". Today, what we understand by the term Behru is the consecrated vase or *karasya* in which water and flowers are kept during the days of Muktdad. The Behru is symbolic of the unity of the family and does not necessarily represent the departed person..

Muktdad in the house:

The main requirements for observing Muktdad in the house are fresh water, flowers, (changed daily) a metallic vase or a *Karasyo*, a metallic or stone table, fire, divo and chanting of prayers. Flowers and water are the visible emblems and symbolic reminders of the invisible souls and of Fravashis, representatives of Khordad and Amardad Ameshaspand.. Hence water,

plant and Fravashis are remembered together at several places (Yasna 26, Farvardin Yasht 23 etc.)

Duration - 10 or 18 days :

At the present time we celebrate Muktdad for 10 days, starting from *Roj Ashtad of Mah Spandarmad and ending at Vahishtoisht Gatha*. Zoroastrian texts have references to 10 Farvardegan days. (*dasa pairi khshafnao in Farvardin Yasht XIII, Phl Vd.VIII.22, Sdr Bnd, 52.1-3, Persian Revayats, Dhabhar*).

We know from references in books which refer to celebrations since the 15th century, Muktdad was celebrated for 18 days starting on *Roj Ashishwagh of Mah Spandarmad and ended on the dawn of Roj Amardad Mah Fravarden*. This was due to the fact that the seven days after Vahishtoisht Gatha are important as they belong to seven Amshaspands: *Hormazd Roj is Navroz, Ardibahesht Roj is consecrated to Rapithwin, Khordad Roj is Khordad Sal*. Hence these six days were clubbed together to form 18 Muktdad days. It should be noted that though the Muktdad are said to be of eighteen days, on *Ashishwagh Roj and Amardad Roj* hardly any prayers are said.

In the early seventies, on initiatives taken by Dasturji Khurshed Dabu and others, Muktdad were once again gradually reverted back to 10 days.

Hamaspathmaedhem Gahambar: The latter five days of the 10 day Muktdad are also the days of the sixth and the last Gahambar, Hamaspathmaedhem. According to the Zarathushti religion, each of the 6 creations of Ahura Mazda was created during one of the Gahambars. Man was created on the last Gahambar.

Muktdad are the days of heightened communication between the material and spiritual worlds— our need of health, happiness, peace and prosperity is fulfilled through the blessings of the souls and the Fravashis, and their need for our remembrance is fulfilled by our sincere prayers and invocations.

Adapted from *Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia*

First	Gatha Ahubavad	Friday	8/14/2009
Second	Gatha Ushtavaiti	Saturday	8/15/2009
Third	Gatha Spentomard	Sunday	8/16/2009
Fourth	Gatha Vohukhshthra	Monday	8/17/2009
Fifth	Gatha Vahishtoish	Tuesday	8/18/2009



FEZANA UPDATE



Photo above 1 Ervad Soli Dastur reciting prayers

2 Sitting from left mamaiji Tehmina Gundevia, Sheroo Vazir, standing from left Jo Ann Dastur, Arnavaz Irani, Shahnaz Dubash, Shirin Shroff, Nancy Daruwalla

FLORIDA

Historical First Ever Florida Muktaf Gatha Prayers were held in the home of Sheroo Vazir in the pious memory of her beloved departed husband Dick (Dhunjishah) Vazir. All 22 Florida families participated in this event and Ervad Soli P. Dastur performed all prayers for all Gatha Days and Navroze with the help of Ervad Zubin Panthaky on one of the days. Three daily Satum prayers, a Ghambaar/Gatha Jashan and the Ushahin Gah Jashan and Satum on the last Gatha (tonight) were all recited. The community would like to thank the Vazir family for giving a place to hold this event, the all Parsi Goranis Sheroo Vazir and Arnavaz Irani for their cooking for the prayers and every day meals, Arnavaz's ever spirited 90 year old mom, Tehmina Gundevia, "mumaiji", for her presence all day long giving us encouragement, Nancy and Jahan for their presence and organization in countless ways, Dinyar Mehta of Orlando for donating the beautiful white marble tables for the Muktaf, and all the ZAF ladies and members for helping and participating to make this event a resounding success for the first time.

May the flame of Z Religion burn ever eternal in our hearts and all over the Hapt-e-Keshwar of Ahura Mazda's creation! *Reported by Ervad Soli P. Dastur and Jehanbux Daruwalla photos Ervad Soli Dastur*

TORONTO

This has been the 27th year of our Muktaf observations at the ZSO. It is the most popular event of the year with the full participation of the community. Approximately 300 people attend the 3 prayers performed throughout the day, the morning Satum, followed by Afringan and Farokshi, afternoon Satum, and the evening Satum followed by a Humbandagi.

Our main priests were Ervad. Boman Kotwal and Ervad. Hoshang Udwardia. Other Ervads came to pray at various times. Our young navars under age 20 were there for the evening Satums. The cooking was



coordinated by Putli Mirza for the 5 days at the Darbe Meher with the help of many volunteers. About 100 people stayed for lunch and about 175 for dinner on each of the 5 days. Donation of Money, Fruits, Flowers, Sukhar, Loban, Papri, Malido, and many other food items is overwhelming. The participation of the young Zarathushtis is greater than the older generation which is so encouraging. We have a community of which we can be so proud.

We may be experiencing a revival in North America of trligioud zeal

Celebrations at the Ontario Zarathushti Cultural Foundation

The Shenshai Muktaf was observed for the fourth year at the Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Centre (ZRCC) from August 14 – 18, 2009. The completion of the hall brought a remarkable increase in daily



FEZANA UPDATE



attendance. And the place was, alive from early morning till late night with sweet fragrance of Sukhad & Loban, people young & old, praying, socializing and working. Each day there would be 80-100 people attending



Photo Above Ervad Gustad Panthaki performing baj

Every day there would be the morning Stum followed by Afringan, Farokhshi and Baj and then Stum for lunch and dinner followed by the Hum Bandagi. Our heartiest thanks to Mobeds, Ervads Jehan Bagli; Xerxes Bamji; Khushroo Bharda; Rushad Bharda; Freyhan Daruwalla; Jamshed Dhabhar; Darius Kanga; Nozer Kotwal; Xerxes Madon; Tehemton Mirza; Cyrus Panthakee; Armaan Panthaki; Gustad Panthaki; Kamran Panthaki; Jal Panthaky & Rishaad Unwalla who volunteered their time so generously Special thanks to the younger Mobeds who gave up their precious sleep during the summer break to come and pray early in the morning and to our young Mobed

Ervad Rushad Bharda for participating in the midnight prayers on the last day of the Muktd.

Rusi Unwalla and his scouts helped with the clean up of ZRCC prior to the Muktd, and numerous volunteers helped clean up every day, morning, noon and night while others coordinated by Armaity Anandasagar, Kermin Byramjee & Teenaz Javat brought food for the prayers for the five Gatha days. Khorshedbanoo Jobani and Nergish Kotwal helped all five days, from morning to night, looking after the Divas, serving the food, etc. This was a beautiful Community Event we could all be proud of. *Report and photos Cyrus Gazdar*

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



Between 30 - 50 persons attended each day with everyone bringing fruits, flowers, dried fruits, malido, rawa etc. On the Spentomard Gatha (Sunday) nearly 100 persons attended the prayers (*photo above*) which was followed by a curry-rice pot-luck lunch in the sunny hills above San

Jose, California Reported by Nazneen and Ehler Spliedt. Photo Ehler Spliedt

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

For the past 16 years Mobed Zarrir Bhandara (*photo right with son*) has been reciting the prayers in his home for 10 days of the Muktd,





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including midnight prayers on the 5th Gatha and New Year's Jashan.

VANCOUVER

Muktad ceremonies (photo above) were performed on all 5 days by *Ervad Adil Dastur, Ervad Jamshed Kuttar, Ervad Firdos Balsara and his son (Vancouver's youngest Mobed) Arzaan Balsara*. There were approximately 150 people attending and about 50 vases in memory of the dear departed. Meals for each day were prepared by volunteers. *Reported by Jesse Partovi*

CHICAGO

The Afringaan and Satoom prayers for the Anjuman were recited for all five days followed by prayers on Navroze and on Khordad Saal. On week days the prayers were held in the evenings and on the



weekend prayers in the mornings, with attendance each day between 60-90 individuals.

Chicago, is blessed with several Mobeds, including several young one who willingly volunteer their time

and provide the community with the required services as and when required. After the Satoom prayers, the entire Anjuman assembles in the prayer room and recites the *Muktad No Namaskar* as Humbandagi in front of the Muktad setup.

Following the anjuman prayers, on request, private Muktad prayers are performed by our mobeds on each of the five days.

On each Gatha day and on Navroze, two or more families volunteer and take turns to feed everyone with traditional meals. This effort is ably organized by our Vice President and Treasurer Dinaz Weber for the past several years.

The arrangements for fruits, flowers, divas and coordination of Mobeds and their priestly services was diligently co-coordinated by our Religion Committee Chairs *Ervad Pesi* and *Aban Vazifdar*. This year *Ervad Pesi* was overseas for his work and in his absence, his wife *Aban Vazifdar* managed the organization single handedly. The list of names recited in the Muktad prayers was prepared by obtaining, organizing and printing them for the Mobeds by *Aban Vazifdar* and *Dilshad Antia*.

With co-operation and team effort of the community members, 2009 Muktad were conducted successfully without a hitch and served the religious need of the community well. It was as usual a memorable event. *Report and photos by Kayomars Mehta*



ZAKOI (Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana)

On Saturday August 15th, the Second Gatha Ushtavaiti, a gatha nu jashan with muktad prayers was performed by *Ervad Yazdi Dastur (Columbus, OH)* and *Ervad Fred Desai (Fairfield, OH)* in the home of *Bakhtavar* and *Fred Desai* in Fairfield, OH, Prayers



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were said in the memory of 56 departed souls with 30 people attending the jashan. *Reported by Bakhtaver Desai*



HOUSTON, TX

For a several years the Muktdad Ceremonies have been held for all ten days in the two rooms of the Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center. *(photo above)*

On sunday, the Spentomard Gatha day, both the rooms were full to capacity, with people sitting outside with books in hand, silently praying for the departed souls of their family members listening to the melodious voice of the Ervad reciting the names of the departed ones. This year Houston grieved the passing away of four members and as their names were recited everyone bowed their heads. The fresh flowers on the table in vases brought by family members in remembrance of their parents, grand-parents, uncles and aunts; the aroma of Sukhad and loban filled the room and the people were lost in the spirituality of the prayers.

The usual "pachhli ratnu" prayers were held at 4:00 a.m. Wednesday morning. with 30 people attending this prayer. At the end of the Afrin ceremony, the congregation recited Satum no Kardo as a hambandagi, and the prayers ended around 6:00 a.m. The day had dawned, everyone wished each other Navroze Mubarak and went to the kitchen for tea and croissants.

(Reported by Arnavaz Sethna Houston, TX Photos Percy Behramsha)

DALLAS, TX

Since ten years the Dallas Zarathushtis have been holding "humbandagi" prayers to venerate the fravashis of the dear departed for all ten days of the muktdad, Since the dare-mehr, is under construction, the prayers are held at a home volunteered for the occasion.

The Dallas Zarathushtis have adjusted the ritual to suit their our lives here, taking inspiration from the Karachi Parsis who have had a tradition of holding humbandagi prayers to revere the "hama asho farohars" on the muktdad days, They met at the home of Anahita and Feroze Sidhwa in the evening, where a table was laden with flowers and food brought by the congregation. A small lighted lamp (divo) and a loban and sandal wood urn are also on the table. A few appropriate paragraphs from the Avesta together with its English translation are read aloud together. This



In photo above The young boy putting loban is Ervad Burzin Poras Balsara.of Dallas

year a few gatha paragraphs on each of the gatha days were also recited. The humbandagi is followed by individuals paying their respect by placing loban and continuing with their personal prayers. The evening ends with the 'chasn' and good camaraderie.

The attendance this year was very good on each day of the prayers, with at least twenty and sometimes thirty or forty people attending. Every year a jashan is held on one of the weekend days but this year the jashan will be held on farvardin roj and mah which happens to fall on a Sunday. *Report and photos by Anahita Sidhwa.*



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GATHA PERCEPTIONS, FROM PAST TO FUTURE

PERSPECTIVE ON 2009 GATHA COLLOQUIUM

NAWAZ MERCHANT



(from left sitting William Malandra, Elizabeth Tucker, Almut Hintze, Dina McIntyre, Kersey Antia, Farroukh Vajifdar; , Standing Kaikhusrov Irani; Stanley Insler; Ali Jafarey; P. Oktor Skjaervo; Gernot Windfuhr; Martin Schwartz)

INTRODUCTION: Fifteen years after the first colloquium held in NY, the 2009 event was attended by 150 Zarathushtis. The starting invocation by Ervads present, was led by Ervad Parvez Patel.

After a brief introduction by Gev Nentin, President ZAGNY, messages of greetings from Sammy Bhiwandiwala, President WZO, and Bomi Patel, President FEZANA were read.

Kaikhusrov Irani was the first speaker who opened the two day Colloquium. *“Ritual must not replace the vision of the Prophet”*, he said, quoting Max Weber. Zarathushtra proposed a life of thought and reflection, which is the opposite of a life of blind tribal obedience. What then is to be opposed? ‘Corruption’, said Prof Irani, is doing what one wants, for one’s own benefit. This is the opposite of Asha, the righteous path, doing right for the sake of right.

FROZEN IN TIME: The Gathas are the poems of the prophet Zarathushtra, that are the 17 Yasnas embedded within the 72 chapters of the Yasna, They

were part of the oral tradition for centuries, until in the 9th Century, when they became part of the written tradition. Today, scholars examine documents summarized from the Denkard, compiled by *Adurfarnbag Farrokhzadan* in the early 9th Century. William Malandra’s paper cited these sources and educated the audience with the history of the written documents whose copies are studied today. The Gathas are written in the Old Avestan language, whereas the remainder of the Yasnas is prose, composed in the later, or younger Avestan era. In her presentation, **Almut Hintze** suggested that there are also passages written in a pseudo old Avestan language, which is possibly a middle-Avestan language as well.

The prophet’s words are a time capsule, a poem written in strict meter, rhyme and rhythm, that the Zarathushti priests retained within their memories for centuries. These prayers were recited for major life events within the Zarthushti community, and memorized by both the priestly class and the laity. Yet the words are in Avestan languages, and we must lean upon the learned scholars of ancient languages, in order to fashion a key to that ancient wisdom.

QUESTIONS AT THE OUTSET: In preparation for the Colloquium report I had read the translation of the Gathas by Dr D. J. Irani, available at www.zarathushtra.com. In there, the prophet appears to be a very patient man, as he has reworded and rephrased his message tirelessly so that his meaning cannot be mistaken. Then, just a week ago, a You-tube video circulated among community members, included footage of a Dastoor in traditional jamo, (exhorting his views on Dokhmenishi). With a pointed finger, he insisted *“There is no choice in religious matters!”*

A SOLUTION EMERGES

On the second day, Ali Jafarey’s discourse contained a brilliant metaphor. Zarathushtra, in his opinion, was putting forward the laws of consequence, much like a scientist putting forward the laws of motion.



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Here is the logical sequence, he appeared to be saying. If you do good, here is the result... If you thwart it (Asha), here is the consequence. It is as objective as a knife. "If I put my hand down upon the blade, it will cut" said Jafarey. Here, at last, is the resolution I had sought, phrased in Jafarey's clear tones. We have a choice, we must always choose, Zarathushtra tells us. Our actions have consequences, and we must bear the consequences of that choice.

MORE QUESTIONS:

"Every religion must resolve this- If there is one powerful and good God, why does Evil exist? Within the Gathas there is no mention of Angre mainyu. Why?"

This may be, because of the ancient belief that to name something, gives it strength. Later Avestan writing gave it the name, and hence started the misperception of duality of two divinities. Kersi Antia went beyond the Gathas to the Bundhahisna and the Denkard. Every right choice augments God's power, he paraphrased, from these texts. The purpose of God creating humans was, to make us perfect, even to the extent of sharing his omnipotence, as we do whenever we make a choice. Thus Free Will is an idea which refutes determinism (the belief that all is pre-ordained). Frashokereti, (the idea that the world is moving towards its proper evolution), removes the contradiction between science and religion. When progress and harmony is the ultimate goal of such a world view, the contradiction disappears.

Does Zarathushtra's message condone violence? How should we deal with evil and evil-doers?

Ali Jafarey's paper addressed this important issue. Song 9 inspires and encourages individuals to ask questions. Other HAs instruct the one leading a life of religious competence to use a 'sweet tongue', to peacefully remove obstructions. Yet it is not a passive position, but a very active one. Zarathushtra's message is one to "tactfully teach, gladly guide, using simple meditative rituals" in a "well patterned mosaic of meaningful message". The verses are ever rational, logical, prescriptive recommendations, never demanding or imposing a devotion to duty. In Farrokh Vajifdar's paper, there is mention of evil and evil-doers as being likened to wild animals, and therefore untamed. Those that lived with the law of Asha are 'civilized' by the spirit of co-operation and rational thinking.

Yasna Haptangaiti is a Gatha? (Yasna 35-41)

This Yasna is usually accepted as a later addition, since it is in prose, and not the poetic style of the Gathas. However, Almut Hintze, believes that it is also in old Avestan, and therefore authored by the Prophet Zarathushtra, and not a later addition. Others, like Farrokh Vajifdar, disagree. The HA contains many interesting elements, such as equality of women, female rulers, and even priests

The last Gatha- HA 53, Vahishto Ishti - not written by Zarathushtra at all?

Farrokh Vajifdar's paper suggested that this last Gatha is not written by Zarathushtra. His discourse stated that it may be a later addition by the priests who carried on the prophet's message and developed the later Yasnas. This section is not written in the same poetic style, therefore it is possibly a later addition.

POLYTHEISM:

Martin Schwartz's paper stated that in many religions, there is a declaration "There is one God" which is the main tenet. No such statement is found in the Gathas. There is direction that no one should worship Daivyas, that they should worship Ahura Mazda, however there is a triad of Mazda Ahura, Vohu Mana and Asha Vahista mentioned in many Yasnas. The other Amesha Spentas are also frequently cited. He suggested parallels to the Jewish Kabala, where omni-significance of words is used (one word implies related words/ideas). Ashi appears to be the personification of reward, while Sroasha is a divinity embodying obedience, hearkening, prayer. Dr Mary Boyce was quoted as saying these were ancient divinities, given a place within Zoroastrianism. Armaity may have a root in Aramaati, an Indo-Iranian Goddess, cited in Vedic passages as the earth Goddess. Later papers refuted this, as the Amesha Spentas were stated to be aspects of the divinity or the world view, not independent divine beings themselves.

Animal Sacrifice- once part of the Zarathushti Religion?

Oktor Skjaervo's detailed analysis of some HA's of the Avesta showed the symbolism of the human body, where the head, or highest part, is symbolic for the higher power, or Ahura Mazda. Some passages appeared to indicate the misrepresentation of 'best mind' for top part of the animal's head which would be offered in sacrifice. While Parsis were surprised by this,



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he reminded the audience about the ancient context in which the later-Avestan priests wrote.

Proof that the Gathas were composed by one poet.

Ali Jafarey and Gernot Windfuhr's papers established in two different ways, that the Gathas are composed by a single author. Windfuhr's method relied on the citation of certain words in a detailed and symmetrical positioning throughout the text. He proposed the idea that three dimensions of the Divine Play exist, the performed ritual contexts, the cosmic story of the world appealing to Ahura Madza for protection, and the personal narrative of Zarathushtra such as his instruction to his daughter upon her wedding. Jafarey's scholarly paper with his wide understanding of the Persian culture delighted the audience. Zarathushtra's name is used in the third person 16 times in a well established tradition, such as the ghazal. The 17 songs can be assembled into 5 metrical units, where the verse Yenge- Hatham ends each of the sections. The unity and continuity of the verses indicates they were memorized as a single unit by the 'harassed and yet steadfast mobeds'.

"Happiness is to him who happiness gives" – Except Zarathushtra never said it!

In his dynamic discourse, **Farrokh Vajifdar** exhorted the audience to pay attention to the misconceptions among some of the community members. "The Gathas are mere poetry" is a perception among some members of the priesthood, "Fondness for the Gathas is leading the community astray!" Vajifdar stated this was Malice in Blunderland, and that the Gathas are a Dead Language only to those who are dead to its meaning. The Ashem Vohu prayer does not appear within the Gathas. The Ahuna Vairya prayer (Yasna 27, not in the Gathas) was also not credited to Zarathushtra as the author.

A DNA theory of the Gathas- decoding the prophet's vision

Stanley Insler presented a simple model of human DNA, and demonstrated how the Amesha Spentas acted as the agents, in pairs, such as Vohu Manu and Spenta Mainyu (Good thinking and Truth). Rulership and Respect are similarly paired, while the Good thoughts/words/deeds dictum is likened to the messenger RNA!

Zarathushtra as a physician:

In the Gathas, **Stanley Insler's** fascinating paper suggests, Zarathushtra has treated evil and deceit as a disease, and created a model to 'cure' the world. In this

simple and elegant vision, he proposes an effective model to live our lives. Was Zarathushtra a physician? Insler suggested that as a member of a priestly class, he may have been so trained, as the Buddha and Mani were also considered physicians.

Is Ahura Mazda one, or many?

In her delightful paper, "The puzzle of the singular and the plural", **Dina McIntyre** listed the many different times that the verb tenses and conjugates in the Gathas are sometimes singular, and often plural! Did Zarathushtra intend to imply that Ahura Madza is not one entity? McIntyre suggested this was not so. Instead, she drew parallels to fire (when joined, separateness no longer exists), and water, (it is sometimes droplet, but together it is a single entity). Zarathushtra's use of these verbs was to remind us that "there is a unity of being underlying the temporal shells we use, and we shall rejoin in spirit". The implication is that we are the stuff of spirit or God, and this is the essential humanism of his message.

HUMANISM:

Like Kaikhosrov Irani, McIntyre also focused on the universal message of Zarathushtra, a message which was not limited to a chosen few. Kersi Antia praised the universality of Zarathushtra's message, which is "true for all times and all climes". Farrokh Vajifdar quoted Yasna 45.1 where Zarathushtra exhorts us to "hearken from near and far", Who did Zarathushtra invite to do this? Vajifdar suggests that the obvious answer is: Whom-so-ever wish to hear.

ROLE OF PRIESTS:

A number of papers cited the role of priests in retaining the words of Zarathushtra through the oral tradition and that the community and the world, owes them a debt of gratitude for this priceless service. But for them and their diligent, unfailing industry, the words of Zarathushtra would have been lost over a millennia ago.

The belief that only the Gathas were to be valued, while the rest of the Yasnas were 'chaff' was opposed by some participants. Oktor Skjaervo and Almut Hintze in particular strove to dispel the view that the younger Avestan authors did not understand some words in the Gathas. They cited Has where lines were taken from the Gathas, correctly altered and used in a later Yasna. Elizabeth Tucker also cited examples where younger Avestan authors took sections from the Gathas, and used them appropriately.



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A MYTH EXPOSED: Ali Jafarey concluded that the younger Avestan composers were putting words in Zarathushtra's mouth because Avesta could no longer be understood in later Avestan times, so they paraphrased the meaning of Zarathushtra's words in the language of that day. This sparked a debate about praying in Avestan language. A question was: Did the words themselves create vibrations, such that the reciting of them caused a beneficial effect? This notion was shattered as Farrokh Vajifdar disclaimed it. "Explaining an unknown with another unknown" is a false method of logic. It cannot stand scrutiny".

There was much discussion of the Amesha Spentas, and whether they were pre-Zarathushtrian deities? Many speakers concluded that these were embodiments of principles by which Zarathushtra explained his view of the world, and human-kind's role in it. The discussion on the question: Should we translate the prayers, and recite the translations? ended with the comment: the best course appears to be that we should learn the meaning of our prayers, but continue to pray in Avestan.

DIVERSITY OF OPINION: Elizabeth Tucker, commenting on the diversity of opinions among the scholars responded "The Zoroastrian community is wonderfully accepting of the different translations and interpretations of the Gathas, perhaps more accepting than many other communities (of diverse opinions

about their religious texts)". This is high praise indeed from Elizabeth Tucker.

The colloquium ended with prayers from the Gathas (in the ancient Avestan languages), seeking Ahura Mazda's aid to calm the present turmoil in Iran.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The Gatha Colloquium was a joint effort between WZO ZAGNY and FEZANA with WZO providing a majority of the finances from the Firuz Madon Trust, and the local arrangements organized by Lovji Cama, Keki Dadachanji and Kaikhusrov Irani of ZAGNY. The speaker list was primarily arranged by Farrokh Vajifdar of London.



Nawaz Merchant is a past Vice President of ZAGNY, and long time fan of FEZANA journal. She works for a pharmaceutical manufacturer as a Business Analytics professional. Her hobbies include Mentoring ESL students, reading, and creative writing. She lives in New

Jersey with husband Hoshi and two sons, Sam and Cyrus. She is presently working with three "techies", her son Sam, Neville Dusaj and Dinyar Kalwachwala, on a website to present videos from "Zarathushti Oral History Project" which she coordinated in 2007. She hopes someday to have time to write novels about the universality of the human experience.

Individuals interested in pursuing the Oral History Project (Fezana Journal Fall 2007) should contact Nawaz Merchant

Nawazmerchant@yahoo.com

SPEAKER LIST

KERSEY ANTIA

ALMUT HINTZE

STANLEY INSLER

KAIKHOSROV IRANI

ALI AKBAR JAFAREY

WILLIAM MALANDRA

DINA MCINTYRE

MARTIN SCHWARTZ

OKTOR SKJAERVO

ELIZABETH TUCKER

FARROKH VAJIFDAR

GERNOT WINDFUHR

PRESENTATION TITLE

The multi-dimensional significance of Free-Will in the Gathas

Perceptions of the Yasna Haptanghaiti Law and Order

The Gathic Vision and its unfolding

The Gathas of Zarathushtra Spitama: their Order and Sequence

Citations of the Gathas in the Denkard and their relation to the Pahlavi Yasna

The puzzle of the Singular and the Plural Theology of the Gathas-New Perspectives

Liturgical functions of the Gathas

How well did later avestan composers understand the language of the Gathas Changed perspectives; channeled perceptions,

Dramatic structure and cosmic events in the Gathas



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THE OUTCOME OF THE COLLOQUIUM

NAWAZ MERCHANT

The Colloquium gave observers a great deal to consider. Many conversations at lunch honed in on the need to make the rituals more meaningful. *"The prayers are memorized, and recited by rote"* said a young attendee, Mr. Rushad Pavri. *"Do Jashan attendees ever know the meaning of what's being recited?"* In response Ervad Parvez Patel suggested that copies of the prayers, with their translation, should be distributed to Jashan attendees. I reminded Ervad Farhad Panthaky (Boston) that, after a Jashan I had attended in Connecticut, he had given a succinct summary, explaining the symbolism of the various steps in the ceremony. Clearly the community is already moving toward a more aware, participative approach to our rituals.

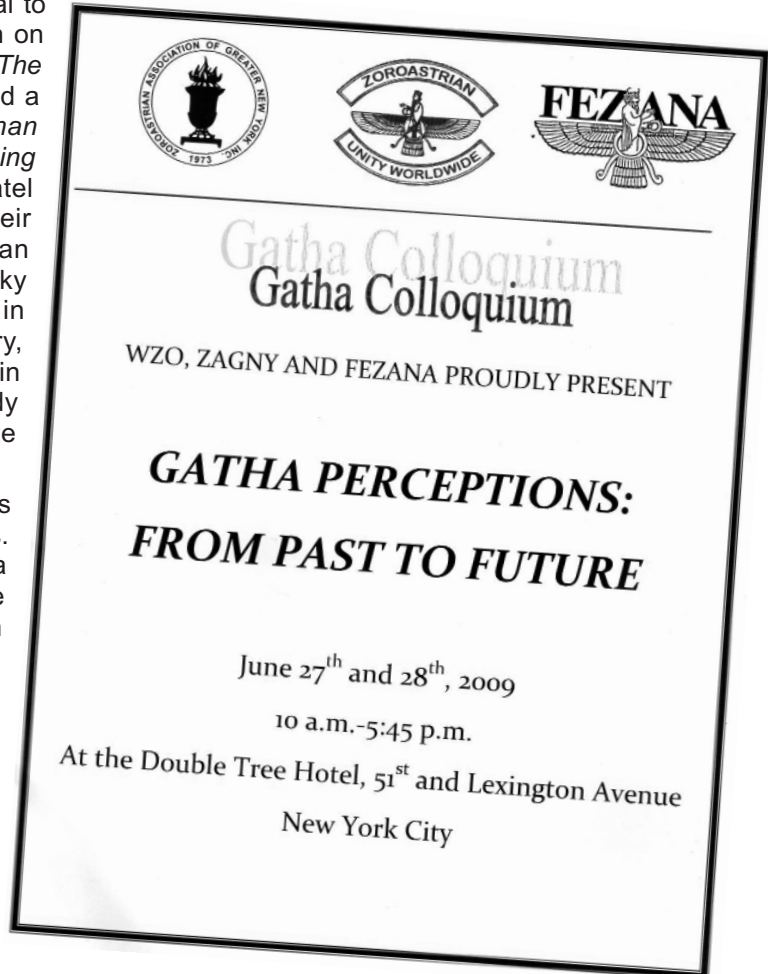
Gernot Windfuhr had presented the Gathas as a *'Divine Play'* with interaction on three levels. At the end of the Colloquium, Natalie Vania Gandhi suggested that such a play should be produced, perhaps during the North American Conference in 2012. She also broached the idea of using technology to collaborate, as it would allow for a wider distribution and readership of scholarly debate. The idea received heated debate, with opinions on both sides. While some scholars expressed skepticism about peaceful reconciliation of their ideas, an existing portal was identified, where scholars do already collaborate and develop their ideas. Many scholars expressed willingness to publish and compare notes, to better their common understanding and share their knowledge.

"Do Zarathushtra's words allow any shades of gray, any ambiguity?" I asked the panel at the end of the final day. Dina McIntyre answered. *"There is no ambiguity in his message. However, there is much diversity in interpreting his words."* So we are left with Zarathushtra's instruction: To consider, with the best of our honest intellect, to use our 'good mind' to identify which choice will further the path of Asha; To discuss with 'good words', hear the remarks of others and consider them; And then, to move forward and act according to our well-considered decision.

As the conference ended, a verse of Avestan prayer was recited again. This time there was a difference. Almut Hintze's slide was requested, and projected. For the first time, many of the audience saw before them, exactly word-for-word, the meaning of the words that they were reciting.

Kaikhushrov Irani had ended his address with the following quote from the Spenta Mainyu Gatha, HA 4.

This author can think of no better way to conclude the summary of a truly thought-provoking Colloquium.



*"With Truth moving my heart,
With Best thought inspiring my mind,
With all the might of spiritual force within me,
I venerate Thee, O Mazda, with songs of Thy praise!
And at Last, when I shall stand at Thy gate
I shall hear the echo of my prayers
from Thy Abode of Songs"*

Reporter's Note: *This summary is based upon my understanding, as a lay person, of the scholarly papers presented. No summary can be complete, necessitating many interesting remarks and ideas to be briefly mentioned, and some omitted due to lack of space. Any misrepresentations are inadvertent, and therefore sincerely regretted. Many thanks are due to Lovji Cama who proof-read this article and Ervad Jehan Bagli who helped to summarize and organize it.*



FAITH MEETS REASON: What motivates Non-Zarathushti scholars to study the religion of Zarathushtra?

D. Dastoor and N. Merchant

We have always wanted to understand what motivated scholars who were not born within the Religion of Asho Zarathushtra to dwell so deeply into its study and to make that a focus of their career.

Indeed, we owe these scholars a debt of gratitude for their interest in Zoroastrianism. Where would we be, if it was not for Anquetil de Perron? (Perron was the first European who, in 1561, brought western attention to the Zoroastrian religion and its texts.) He inspired others to follow, and it is these generations of Gathic Scholars who have been able to translate the Avestan texts, and unlock their mysteries for us. Similarly present-day scholars, who are interested in Zoroastrianism, inspire and cultivate students both Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti, to follow similar career paths and increase our collective pool of religious knowledge. These scholars explore the complexities of the Avestan language, and spend hours of loving labor to clarify the subtleties of the Prophet's message. Without support for this learning, we cannot hope to uncover these meanings, nor to deepen the community's understanding of these ancient texts, so the community must appreciate and thank them for their diligence and commitment.

We had a chance during the two days of the colloquium, to speak with two of the scholars *Oktor Skjaevro* and *Almut Hintze* regarding their motivation. Here are the insights we learnt.

Prods Oktor Skjaevro, Aga Khan Professor of Iranian



Prods Oktor Skjaevro, a Norwegian by birth, became interested in languages from a very young age. As a teenager, while learning English, German, and French in school, when others were busy elsewhere, he would learn Italian and Spanish from radio courses and listen to French chansons on the record-player, and gradually began taking an interest in "comparative linguistics." One day, at the library, he picked up a book on Comparative Indo-European linguistics, which kindled his interest in also learning Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and, eventually, Avesta. In 1963, having graduated from high school at age 18, he left his small home town in central Norway and went to study, at the University of Oslo, French, Latin and Sanskrit, which he still reads.

Towards the end of the 60s, the Shah and Shahbanoo of Iran were encouraging students to visit Iran to study the culture and languages. Prof Skjaevro's professors in the Sanskrit department suggested to him he might study Iranian languages with a view to obtaining a position in Iranian studies. He got a grant from the Iranian Department of Culture to go to Tehran, Iran, for a year to study Persian. Traveling in and around Iran, he also became interested in Zoroastrianism, and, when he returned to Norway, he took up Old Iranian studies full time, graduating in the mid-70s. But the Islamic Revolution caused a dwindling interest in Iran at universities, which seriously diminished the hope for a position in Old Iranian studies.

In 1980, however, he was offered a job as assistant to Professor Helmut Humbach (who has published three translations of the Gathas!) at the University of Mainz, Germany, where he was for 4 years. In 1981, he completed his Norwegian Ph.D. dissertation on the Middle Persian and Parthian Paikuli inscriptions of Narseh from ca. 290 CE. As the job in Mainz was coming to an end, (he also obtained a second doctorate from the University of Mainz in linguistics), Dr. Ehsan Yarshater enlisted him as assistant editor of the Encyclopedia Iranica at the Center for Iranian Studies at Columbia University, New York, where he was for 6 years. Professor Skjaevro emphasizes the importance these years played in educating him in all things Iranian, especially Zoroastrianism.

In 1991, he came to Harvard University, succeeding Prof. Richard Frye as Aga Khan Professor of Iranian and began teaching Old and Middle Persian, Avestan, and other Iranian languages, as well as Zoroastrianism and Manicheism. The students of the Harvard School of Divinity especially attended these religion courses. At this time, he also became acquainted with Khorsheed and Firoze Jungalwala and became involved with ZAGBA.

At Harvard, he began taking an interest in the study of "oral literature," and produced an in-depth study of the literary structure of the Yashts as oral epic-style compositions in 1994. At this time, a number of



GATHA PERCEPTIONS, FROM PAST TO FUTURE

colleagues expressed interest in a seminar on the Gathas, which he then studied intensively for several years. He presented the first results of these studies at the Second North American Gatha Conference, Houston, Texas, 1996.

His interest in the study of orality in literature has continued and is currently also focused on the Pahlavi literature. Prof. Skjaervo explains: By the second millennium Mesopotamia and Anatolia had flourishing cultures with writing and written literatures, but the Iranians did not; they relied upon the transmission of the spoken word. Occasionally, writing surfaced, notably in the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes (6th-4th cents. BCE), and of the Sasanian kings, Ardashir, Shapur, and Narseh (all 3rd cent.), but the Avesta was only written down about 600ACE, and the religious texts in Pahlavi only in the 9th to 13th centuries. This situation is similar to the Talmudic tradition, which was also oral and written down about the same time as the earliest Pahlavi texts. In fact, in the 4th-6th centuries, the Zarathushti and Jewish scholars lived next door to one another in Ctesiphon, the capital, and comparative study of their literatures reveals similarities that illuminate the sometimes obscure Pahlavi texts.

Prof. Skjaervo's other field of interest lies in Xinjiang, China, on the western Silk Road, where the Iranian kingdom of Khotan lay. In historical times, Khotan was

Buddhist, but numerous words reveal the Zoroastrian nature of the pre-Buddhist religion. For instance, the sun is urmazde from Ahuramazdâh and the goddess of the earth is Shandrâmati, the same word as Spentâ Ârmaiti.

Almut Hintze, Zartoshty Brothers Reader in Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

From an early age Almut Hintze has been interested in languages. She studied Greek, Latin and Indo-European philology as an undergraduate in Heidelberg and then did an MPhil. in Comparative Philology and General Linguistics at Oxford. Her studies of Sanskrit historical linguistics with Dr Elizabeth Tucker awakened her interest in Iranian philology, and she did her PhD in Indo-Iranian studies with Johanna Narten and Karl Hoffmann at Erlangen. Her doctoral dissertation was an edition of the Avestan Zamyad Yasht. The search for Avestan manuscripts took her to India, where she made her first contacts with Parsis who have remained friends to the present day. Ever since, she has been very fond of meeting Zarathushtis. The language of the sacred texts of the Zarathushtis, Avestan, happens also to be one of the earliest documented Indo-European language. So the texts are very important both from a linguistic and a religious point of view. Dr Hintze has always been very



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interested in both languages and religion, and the study of the Zoroastrian tradition allows her to combine both.

Almut Hintze teaches Avestan, Pahlavi and Zoroastrianism on both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).



Vendidad – The Significance of the Text and Ritual

Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw

THE TEXT

The word “Vendidad” is a corruption of the Avestan word “Vidaevodata,” which means “Law Against the Demons.”

<i>Vi</i>	=	<i>against</i>
<i>Daevo</i>	=	<i>demons</i>
<i>Data</i>	=	<i>law</i>

It has been said that in Achaemenian times there were originally 21 Nasks (Books) that were written down on 12,000 cowhides in golden ink and stored in the royal library at Persepolis. These documents were said to have been destroyed by Alexander when he conquered Persia, and burnt and pillaged the city.

Of these 21 Nasks, only one, the Vendidad, has survived. The Vendidad is in Avestan, one of the languages of ancient Persia. The text consists of 22 Fargards (Chapters).

The Vendidad may have been first compiled in Achaemenian times. After the destruction of the Library in Persepolis by Alexander, much of the then written religious literature was lost and only that which was orally transmitted survived. Later, in Parthian times, the Emperor Valakhsh (Vologese) sent out an order to collect and collate all the Avestan literature that was then still extant. It is possible, because of the fragmentary nature of the Vendidad, that it was recompiled in its present form during this period.

The Vendidad is a collection of various topics, which can be divided into three sections:

1. Fargard 1-3 – historical in nature, similar to the Shahnamah
2. Fargard 4-17 laws, ceremonies, and observances
3. Fargard 18-22 discussion on various other subjects.

THE CEREMONY

The Vendidad Ceremony is of two types:

1. **Vendidad Sadeh (Pure Vendidad):** In this ceremony the entire Vendidad is read by itself. It is read at night – starting at midnight, and can be conducted in any clean space at home. It is normally read by one priest. It is especially performed when people wish to drive away evil or ask for help to cure health problems. If so, during the 9th Fargard, the priest ties a thread with 9 knots, which he gives to the sick person to wear as a talisman after the ceremony is complete.

2. **Vendidad Ba Nirang (Vendidad with Ritual Direction).** This is an Inner Liturgical Ceremony – which must only be conducted in a consecrated place (Agiary or Atash Behram). It is always performed at night – it starts at midnight and lasts till dawn (6:00 or 7:00 a.m.) and must be conducted by at least 2 priests. It is a ceremony where the chapters of the Yasna, the Visperad and the Vendidad are interspersed with one another in a prescribed order. While the Vendidad Chapters are now read, originally they must have been memorized.

The Vendidad is the only ritual text that may be read by a priest. All others have to be memorized.

Significance of the Vendidad

In order to understand the significance of the Vendidad, it is necessary to first understand its controversial nature. The text has been misunderstood by numerous Western scholars, and much maligned by the Reformist movement.

There are some liberal Zarathushtis both of Iranian and Parsi origin across North America who disclaim the Vendidad as a religious text. Their argument is as follows

1. The Vendidad is a “Prescriptive” text, while the Gathas are “Reflective.” Hence, the Vendidad is inferior to the Gathas.
2. The contents of the Vendidad are pre-Zarathushtrian, and these pre-Zarathushtrian concepts were eschewed by Zarathushtra.
3. Its contents are based on “The Temple-cult of Priests and Priestesses” and, hence, have nothing to do with Gathic theology.
4. The Vendidad was codified by Priests after the time of Zarathushtra.
5. “Its laws are harsh, laborious, intricate, and time-consuming.”

A closer examination of the above statements shows that not only are these statements misleading but that there is a concerted effort to denigrate the Vendidad rather than to place both the Gathas and the Vendidad in their proper context.

To better understand the context, we may use the analogy of the U.S Constitution and its relationship to the Laws & Statutes that are promulgated.

The U.S. Constitution was written by the Founding Fathers as a document which lays down the fundamental principles by which the country is to be governed. It provides the legal authority underlying the existence of the United States. This document provides general principles for governing the country (the “Whats.”)



VENDIDAD AND THE US CONSTITUTION

The Statutes and Laws of the United States are written by the Legislature, long after the time of the Founding Fathers, and were originally based on old English Common Laws that were incorporated before the founding of the United States. These laws and statutes tell us “the How to” of conducting our lives in a civil society. They are “Prescriptive” in nature. However, there is one important requirement: All laws that are passed must be in compliance with the principles laid down in the Constitution. Without this test, no law can be said to be “Constitutional.”

I submit that a similar relationship between the Gathas and Vendidad exists as between the U.S. Constitution and the subsequent Laws and Statutes that are passed.

In other words, the Gathas (similar to the Constitution) lay down the general principles of our religion. They are Zarathushtra’s fervent prayers to and dialogue with Ahura Mazda. They never were intended to be the “Rules” for “how” to conduct our religious affairs.

In any society, or in any religion, there is an absolute necessity for “Rules” by which civil society or organized religion must conduct itself. In the case of Zarathushtrianism, at its earliest times, these rules were rightfully laid down and codified in the Vendidad. That Zarathushtra did not specifically make mention of Laws in the Gathas neither invalidates the necessity for having these laws, nor does it make the Vendidad, which is a compilation of such laws, inferior to the Gathas. The purposes of the two are entirely separate and different – and yet the Vendidad is an extension of, and dependent on, the Gathas. This is the important point that the Reformists overlook.

In more practical terms: the Gathas lay down the necessity of achieving “Spiritual Purity.” However, in order to achieve spiritual purity it is absolutely necessary to first maintain “Physical Purity.” The Vendidad, thus, was, at the time of its origin, the law or code for how to be physically pure in order to achieve the spiritual purity specified in the Gathas.

One criticism of the Vendidad is that its rules are outdated and harsh. Again, we must put this in context – specifically the period in which the Vendidad was written. In present times the punishments specified in the Vendidad for violating various rule of purity may appear to be “harsh,” but we must also understand that at the time they were written they may have well been acceptable. But the details of the punishments aside, let us agree that the fundamental principles of maintaining physical purity as laid down in the Vendidad are still very appropriate.

The most compelling argument for accepting the Vendidad as a Zarathushtrian text would come to be if it passes the “Constitutionality” test. That is: Do the

contents of the Vendidad meet the basic Gathic principles?

I submit that they do. Despite all the criticism of the Vendidad, none of its critics has claimed that any of its content violates Gathic Principles. If this is true, then the Vendidad must be rightfully considered as a Zarathushtrian text.

CONCLUSION

The Vendidad is an extension of the Gathas – it lays out the laws of Physical Purity to help us attain the Gathic principles of Spiritual Purity. Its contents are fully in accordance with Gathic Principles.

The Vendidad Ceremony is an important ritual which enacts the Gathic Principle of Dispelling evil.

Thus, the Vendidad is an integral part of the corpus of Zarathushtrian doctrinal texts.

NOTE: A complete version of the lecture (including questions and answers) by Sarosh Manekshaw, on this topic, is available for viewing at:

<http://zoroastrians.net/2009/04/27/divine-message-journey-through-zoroastrian-scriptures/>



Sarosh has been a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston since 1978 and 4 years on their Executive Committee. He has conducted Sunday School classes and adult education classes for the Zoroastrian youth and adults, He is currently an active member of the ZAH Library Committee, working to build a

leading research library on Zarathushti issues.

He was Co-Chair for the Second Gatha Conference, Houston, in September 1996, and the Editor of the Proceedings, He was the Vice-Chairman of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, held in Houston in December 2000.

Sarosh has served as guest editor of the FEZANA Journal, for the “Date and Time of Zarathushtra,” as well as for “Treasures from the Avesta: Our Daily Prayers.” He has actively participated in many Zarathushti and interfaith activities; spoken to church groups; presented papers at several conferences; and published numerous articles in the FEZANA Journal. He has presented papers at several Zarathushti conferences including at the NAMC Seminar in April 2009, in Houston.



Historical Record of Charity of Zoroastrians

PROF. TOURAJ DARYAEE & PROF YUHAN VEVAINA AT CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTRE, June 28, 2009

Maneck N. Bhujwala

Dr. Khosro E. Mehrfar, an Engineering Management and Energy specialist, and a principal in a Solar power related company, opened the proceedings and moderated the talks. He has served the Zarathushti community in Southern California in many capacities, including organizing Cultural Conferences and Educational Seminars for the Council of Persian Culture (a cultural branch of CZC).



The first speaker, **Dr. Touraj Daryaei**, Howard C. Baskerville Professor in the history of Iran and the Persianate World and the Associate Director of the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture at the University of California, Irvine, was born in Tehran, Iran, got his Ph.D. in History at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1999. His research has focused on ancient and early medieval history of Iran, specifically the Sasanian Empire. He has worked on Middle Persian literature, editing and translating several texts with commentary on geography, chess and backgammon. Interested in the history of Zoroastrianism in Late Antiquity and its encounter with Islam, He is the editor of the Name-ye Iran-e Bastan: The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies as well as the electronic journal, Bulletin of Ancient Iranian History and the director of Sasanika: Late Antique Near East Project.

Prof. Daryaei in his talk, "To protect the poor and the needy in the Sasanian period", said that for scientific research on historical matters, one needs to study

primary sources of information. He pointed out that the current false understanding about the fall of the Sasanian empire was mainly due to the study of secondary sources of information, and cited the following false assumptions:

- * Class distinctions (upper class, lower class, etc.) and ill-treatment of lower classes,
- * Pressure from the Priests, who were interested in taking money (and focused on rituals),
- * Rulers of Iran had become corrupt, collecting taxes from the people and enjoying a life of luxury.

Daryaei mentioned that Iranian Marxists like Ali Shaiati, Karim Keshavarz, and Jalal-Ahmed who read Persian history written by Communist Russian authors, and Edward G. Browne (Professor of Arabic at Cambridge University, U.K.) who had authored "A Literary History of Persia", used secondary sources to make the above false conclusions.

Daryaei presented evidence from the following primary sources:

* Archaeological finds of clay seals in many parts of Iran with Pahlavi inscriptions indicating the Priests administering "Office of Protector of the Poor" in specific cities. Pictures of the clay seals found in Shiraz and Daylam were shown.

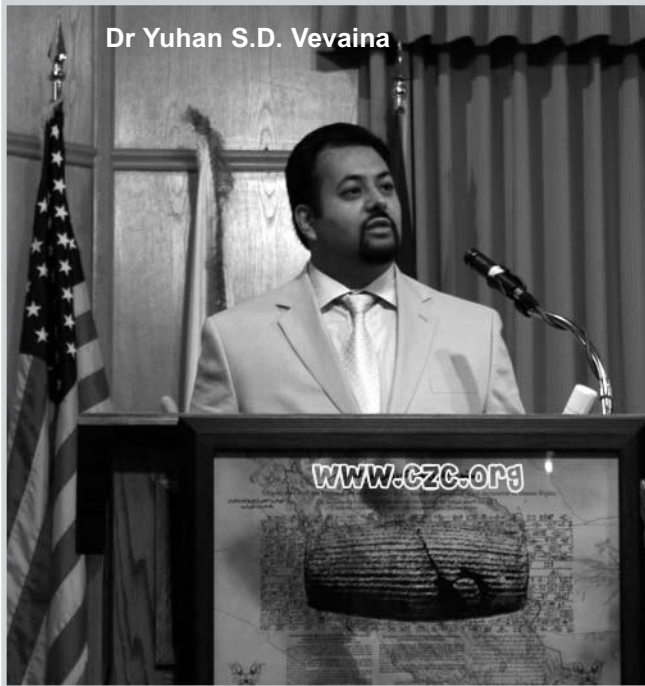
* Passages in the Gathas, Yashts, and Pahlavi texts specifically teach about taking care of the poor. Neglecting the poor was considered a sin.

* World history describes the rise and fall of all empires. Arab armies caused the fall of empires of Byzantine Romans, Turks, Chinese, etc.. Why is it that the same false assumptions are not given for their fall?

Daryaei attributed the fall of the Sassanian empire to a combination of

- a military weakened by wars with Romans, internal divisions within the military, uniting of Arab tribes, and environmental disasters (earthquake and floods in Iran)

The second speaker, **Dr. Yuhan S.D. Vevaina**, born in Bombay, India, received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2007. After completing his dissertation in Studies in Zoroastrian Exegesis and Hermeneutics with a Critical Edition of the Sudgar Nask of Denkard Book 9, Dr. Vevaina served as a Core Fellow in the Core Curriculum at Harvard College and as a Lecturer at Harvard from 2007-2008. He has taught a number of courses related to Zoroastrianism including, Old Persian and Middle Language and Literature, an Introduction to Zoroastrianism and a seminar course on Contemporary Zoroastrianism. His research interests include: critical



Dr Yuhan S.D. Vevaina

approaches to the study of Zoroastrianism; the history and development of Zoroastrian interpretation; the interplay between text and liturgy in ritual practice; colonial and post-colonial constructions of religion; and religion in Diaspora.

Prof. Vevaina's talk titled "Charity and Benevolence in Zoroastrianism, from Gathas to Today" cited evidence indicating the religious requirement for charity to the needy, and a continuity of the practice by Zarathushtis in Iran and India throughout the centuries.

* Vevaina mentioned the importance of certain concepts depending on the position of the verses in the scriptures. For example, the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer which is recited at the beginning of the Gatha passages and has the teaching to help the poor

"*Khshathremcha Ahurai aa yim drigubyo dadat vastaarem*" OR

"...that person who constitutes himself to the protector of the poor....",

and the reference to the poor in the last verse of the last Gatha passage

". *tat Mazda tavaa khshathrem yaa erejeyoee daahee drigaove vahyo.*" *Yasna 53.9* OR

"...O Mazda ! Your kingship (is such) that the poor person..."

* Vevaina pointed out that the teaching requiring Zarathushtis to provide for the welfare of poor people was present in passages in several other religious texts such as *Dadastane Dinig* and *Arda Viraz Namag*. * and that

Zarathushtis in Iran and India over many centuries, lived a life of charitable giving to the needy of all religions,

He mentioned that close cooperation existed between Zarathushtis of Iran and India (after the fall of the Sassanian empire), with correspondence and visits between priest scholars.

* Vevaina recalled fund-raising by Parsis of India and sending their emissary *Maneckji Limji Hataria* to Iran to get the *Jizya* tax removed by *Shah Naseeruddin*, rebuild temples, schools, etc. and save their co-religionists in Iran from near extinction.

The Zarathushtis of Iran gradually became successful in business, trade, and other fields, and they produced many philanthropic persons like *Meherban Zartosty*, *Arbab Rostam Guiv* and others who did charities for the poor.

* Vevaina mentioned philanthropist *Rustam Maneck*, who paid the *Jizya* tax on behalf of the poor people during the rule of Mogul emperor *Aurangzeb*, and who also paid Rs.10,000 as ransom to Maratha king *Shivaji* (who sacked the city of *Surat*) for release of Zarathushti hostages.

* Vevaina said that many books written by Zarathushtis in Persian and Gujarati have not been read and studied by scholars, otherwise they would not make false statements that Zarathushtis did not understand their religion until Western scholars came on the scene.

* ***Vevaina quoted Professor John Hinnels' research indicating that the number of Parsi charities was about 20 percent of the total number of charitable organizations in the whole of India.***

After a brisk question-answer session, everyone socialized over a delicious lunch provided by CZC.

**Then said a rich man,
"Speak to us of Giving."
And he answered:**

**You give but little when you give of
your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that
you truly give.**

***Giving , Chapter 5
Khalil Gibran***

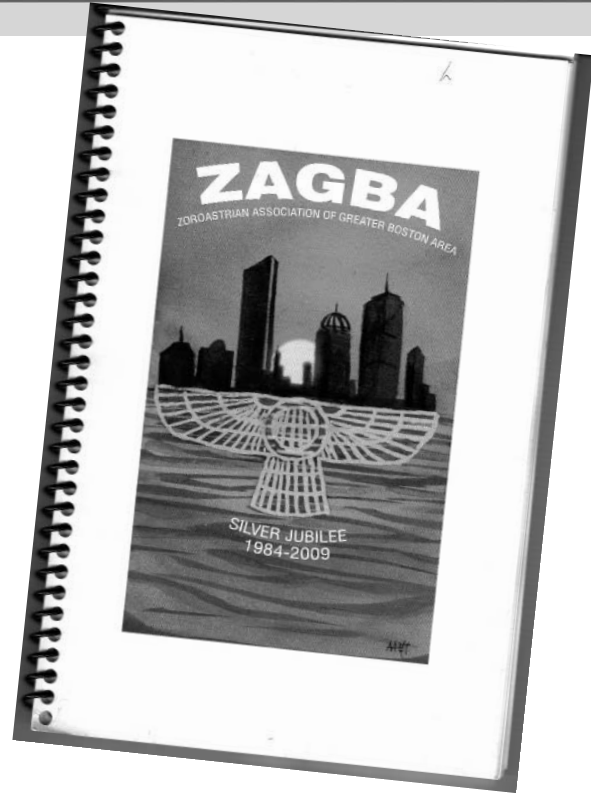


ZAGBA CELEBRATIONS

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON AREA (ZAGBA) CELEBRATES ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY

JULY 25TH 2009

Ater more than 10 months of meetings, rehearsals, conference calls and emails, the day the ZAGBA community had worked so hard in planning and preparing had finally arrived! On July 25th, at 3 p.m. the ZAGBA 25th Anniversary Gala event began at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover, MA with an extraordinary Grand Jashan performed by 26 mobeds from 8 U.S. states and Canada. The prayers were simultaneously projected onto screens on both sides of the stage making this an interactive experience for the audience of over 250 guests. Performed by mobeds with ages spanning over 5 decades, the Jashan was led by two of ZAGBA's mobeds, Ervads Farhad Panthaki and Yezad Nalladaru. Farhad along with Ervad Shavir Vimadalal had worked diligently to invite priests from around the region (to reach our distinctive goal of 25 to commemorate the 25th anniversary) and to arrange home stays for the families.



A few minutes into the Jashan, the smoke from the fire in the afarghan set off the hotel fire alarms causing a brief delay and a visit from the local fire department, but the



mobeds remained relatively undisturbed and the Jashan continued

Following the Jashan, seven of ZAGBA's nine presidents were introduced onto the stage and thanked for their service to the community. (Past president Yezdi Dordi, now living in California was unable to attend and Khorshed Jungalwala passed away in 2007.) The presidents (in photo page 36 from left in order Nasswan Dossabhoy, Sherazade Mehta of Dallas, TX, current President Jamshed Dubash, Firoze Jungalwala, Parastu

Dubash, Rohinton Dhondy, Farokh Karani had the honor of thanking each mobed as his name was called, presenting a gift on behalf of ZAGBA including the ZAGBA 25th Anniversary Commemorative Silver Coin.

The entertainment portion of the evening began with an energetic singing of "Chhaiye Hame Zarthoshti" in Gujarati by the children, followed by singing of this anthem with the audience joining in. The popular "Ey Iran" anthem led by Bijan Khosraviani with daughter Elnaz and Farshid & Shayan Bakhtiyari (photo middle page 36) was sung with audience invited to participate.



coordinated by Roshni Kapadia, Karishma Patel and Mehernosh Mody.

A dozen boys and girls skillfully performed a choreographed dandia dance to “Dholi Taro Dhol Baje.”, followed by exquisite Parsi and Indian attire modeled by couples and families strolling and dancing onto the stage. An unusual group of adults made up of some of ZAGBA’s board members, children’s religious class teachers, and 25th Anniversary team leads performed a victory celebration dance to the popular song “Jai Ho” led by Hufrih Sirohi who had also worked with the children on their song and dance performances. The final part of the show focused on the U.S. The children dressed in red, white and blue and jeans sang, “This Land is Your Land”, The audience was entertained by creative and humorous skits by the youth group depicting early arrivals of specific Zarathushtis to the Boston area in the 50s, 60s and 70s and the eventual creation of ZAGBA.



Throughout the evening, multimedia slideshow presentations showed photos from ZAGBA’s past, ZAGBA trivia and a remembrance of some of ZAGBA’s community members who have passed away. The entire nine hour gala event was precisely planned masterfully directed by Emcee Firdaus Bhatena to ensure that the events were on schedule.



Bijan (above) then sang a Persian song while playing a traditional instrument.

This was followed by an enthusiastic Persian dance by ZAGBA’s youngest children in costume, a re-creation of King Hoshang’s legendary discovery of fire, and a Persian fashion show with lively music. Celeste Kheradi made four of the women’s outfits using old pictures of traditional Persian outfits. Other clothing and accessories were borrowed from families and friends including some from Hovi Shroff of Florida. The fashion shows had been



After another break, the other highlight of the Gala evening was the performance by local ZAGBA members of a Gujarati natak (play), Sala Vera No Dali 2.

This natak was adapted from the original version which had been written for ZAGBA and performed ten years ago. Kaizad Patel and Nauzer Vimadalal who acted in this natak created new characters and dialogue, updated musical numbers, modified the storyline, and with the help of Firdaus Bhatena created well-positioned sound effects. Veterans of the previous play, Rutty Guzdar and Firoze Jungalwala were also joined by Kaiomarz Dotivala and Karishma Patel in this version. The play was immensely enjoyed both by children and guests who didn’t understand the language of the play as well as by those



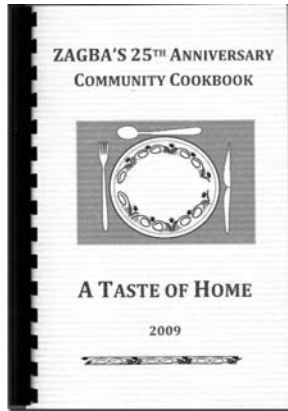
who had seen their share of this type of comedy over the years.

touch with former members of ZAGBA after they moved from the Boston area.



Following some appetizers, it was time for well-deserved acknowledgements for the volunteers who had made this evening and associated activities a success. Guests, donors and supporters were thanked. Team leaders of the Program Committee *Kaiomarz Dotivala and Ferzin Engineer*, the Marketing and Communications Committee *Parastu Dubash and Adi Guzdar*, and the Finance Committee *Aspiyan Gazder, Nazeen Kanga and Nazneen Vimadalala* were given flowers in recognition of their leadership as they came on stage. Logistics Committee Leaders *Jamshed Dubash and Rajiv Yadav* received standing ovations for their tremendous work in leading this incredible effort. Vice President *Firoza Panthaki* announced an additional acknowledgment that had not been listed in the schedule. *Parastu Dubash* was presented with a special quilt (photo above) created with photographs of her family in appreciation for her dedication and service to ZAGBA over the last 15 years. This included serving as President, writing newsletters,

Besides the events on stage, there had been great attention to detail elsewhere for the pleasure and comfort of the guests as well. Decorations for the entrance and stage included items loaned to ZAGBA by a local Boston resident *Mostafa Masomi* who had hand-crafted ancient Persian style artifacts, pillars and soldiers. Outside the main hall, there were a number of items for sale including ZAGBA t-shirts organized by *Jahangir Nakra*, commemorative silver coins spearheaded by *Yasmin Bhumgara*, photo frames created by *Nicole Talavia*, a community cookbook compiled by *Tanaz and Rajiv Yadav*, Laganu achar donated by *Arnavaz Vakharia* of Flower Mound, TX, Zarathushti-topic DVDs produced by *Tenaz Dubash*, educational books from FEZANA and ZAGNY, and artwork by *Avan Bhatena* of Houston, TX. A table display by *Zareen Karani Araoz* (photo left below) showed



her mother *Alu Noshir Karani's* handmade garas and additional embroidery work. An adjacent room had been arranged with sitters for the many small children, a magic show, videos, crafts and food had also been organized. A keepsake Program Book created for the event, contained over 100 color pages of ZAGBA's history, the evening's activities, ads and greetings from associations, individuals, and businesses, and a special ZAGBA Family Album with photos and greetings modeled after ZANT's similar book for their 20th anniversary. The beautiful cover artwork was designed by artist *Anaheet Gazder* and the book was created by *Parastu Dubash with Anaheeta Mody* and printed by the *Mody Family and Print Aspects of Arlington, MA*.



Following a dinner banquet with Indian and Persian food, dancing continued for many hours with young and old moving with style to the latest Persian, Indian and Western music. Shortly after 10 p.m., the ZAGBA Raffle Drawing was held. The youngest (two babies born in April 2009) and oldest members of ZAGBA were requested to help select the winning tickets. The winners included residents of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and Florida, and the winners of the first and second prizes were from California.

creating the community calendar, initiating the current Children's 25th Anniversary Giving Project and keeping in

The ZAGBA Executive Board and 25th Anniversary Team would like to express their sincere gratitude to all the local volunteers and community members for their time, energy and talents that helped make this an unforgettable event. They also would like to thank the Presidents of other Zarathushti associations, and all our friends across North America and the world for their donations, support and good wishes.

Report by *Parastu Dubash*



From Roots to Wings

FROM ROOTS TO WINGS : THE NEXT GENERATION OF ZARATHUSHTI LEADERS



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Director at NextGenNow
(www.nextgennow.org)



From Roots to Wings

The Road Ahead

The Next Generation and the Complexities of Change



We are grateful to both Dolly Dastoor and Behram Pastakia for the opportunity to guest edit this fall edition of the FEZANA Journal. Over the past six months, we have worked hard to bring FEZANA Journal readers insightful features that shine a deserving spotlight on the next generation of Zarathushti leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, parents, and students. Our features have been carefully selected, written and edited for your reading pleasure – and through this edition – we believe you will have a deeper appreciation for the shining stars of the next generation.

The evolution of Zarathushti leadership, infrastructure and organization is gradually turning to the next generation in virtually every capacity. Call it a transition or natural progression, the next generation is embedded in Zarathushti associations, in big cities, small towns, on the Internet, as well as in organizations like FEZANA, the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, and other initiatives worldwide.

How will the next generation impact the future? How will the founding and next generation transition smoothly? How will leadership styles, culture and new thinking shape the direction we take? Will customs and ties to our homeland dissolve over time? Will the next generation create a renewed promise of continuity and growth through tolerance and inclusion, or work to preserve age-old edicts that have reduced an already-shrinking Zarathushti population worldwide? And will the next generation work in concert with the founding generation or seek its own path?

While complex, these questions can be answered easily because the future is now. The proverbial “torch” was passed in North America the moment Zarathushti youth congresses were organized, allowing youths to tackle the issues important to them. Today, many of those “youths” are young adults, parents, professionals inheriting many of the same challenges and concerns older generations faced when they emigrated from India, Iran and other parts of the world.

Perhaps never in our history has there been a greater need for dialogue between the generations to keep the transition of leadership smooth and steady. Some North American Zarathushti communities are paving a pathway for responsible and meaningful change, operating with sound constitutions that allow for term limits in leadership, equal representation on boards and a vision for the future. Other organizations sadly struggle with leadership bottlenecks, nepotism, and a reliance on out-dated constitutions to power their organizations forward. Sadly, these organizations become jaded in their oversight and management of the community, failing to take into account the collective interest of all community members and losing sight of long-term priorities.

Some people fear change – and the mere existence of a next generation organization can rattle minds and create insecurity among a few who do not have control, interest, or influence in its future. Moreover, no single organization or person can lay claim to the next generation mantle because generational shifts take place over time, through action, conviction, and a natural evolution of mindset and thinking.

NextGenNow and other similar Zarathushti next generation initiatives worldwide will continue to succeed by taking a high-road approach, leading by example, and making a difference by always placing the organization’s mission and mandate ahead of self-interest, ego and politics.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Jim Engineer, Tamina Davar, Mantreh Atashband, and Lylah M. Alphonse



From Roots to Wings

A Look At NextGenNow

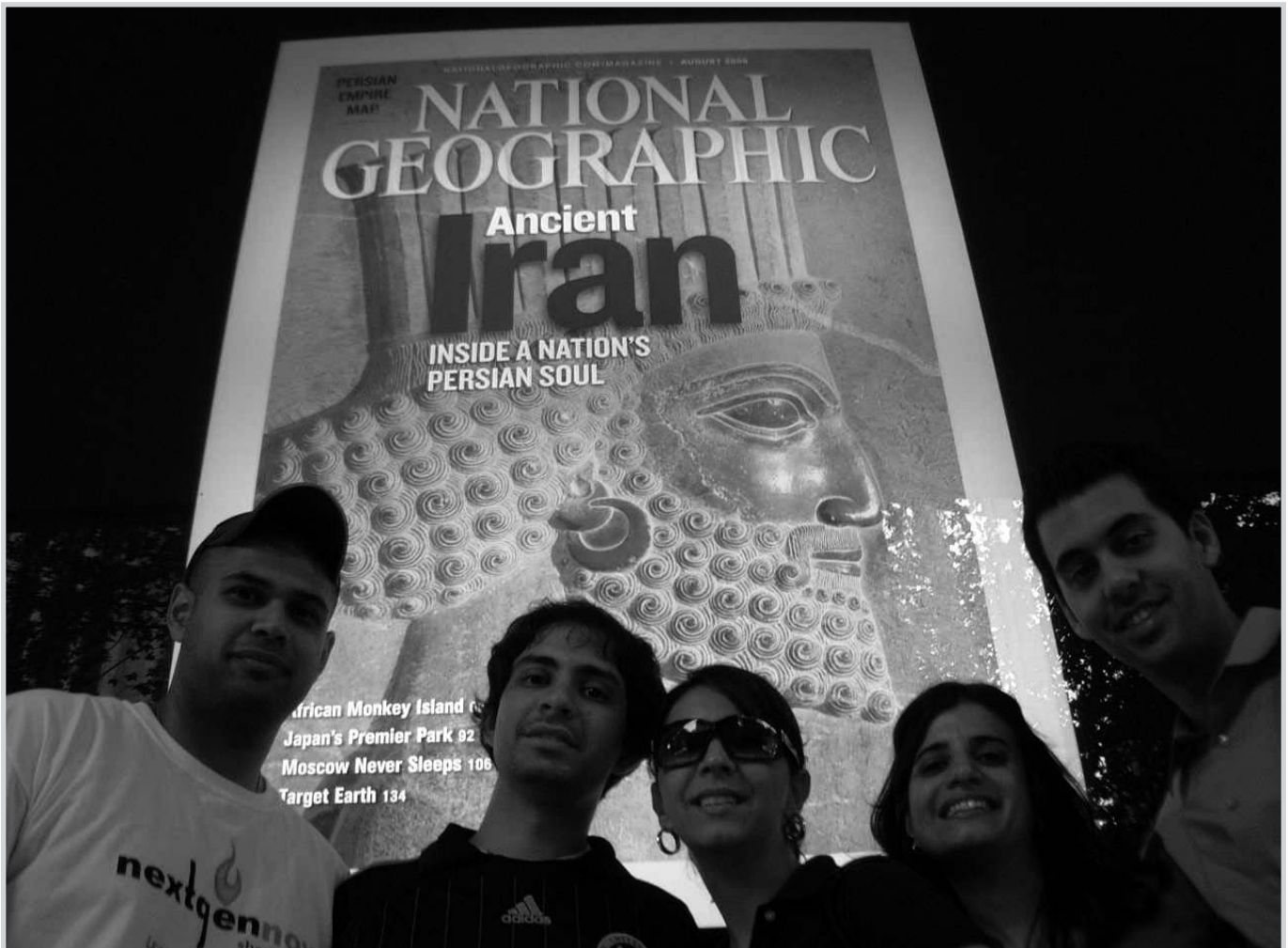
By Arzan Sam Wadia

The Zarathushti Diaspora migrating to North America started as a trickle in the fifties, and later turned into a steady stream of educated, talented, ambitious and adventurous youth in search of a way to make a mark in a foreign land. The incentive was higher education, economic prosperity, and several other factors. These immigrants set roots in their new homeland, worked hard, excelled in their professions and personal lives, and spread the word of Zarathushtra to a new continent. At the same time they maintained their roots with the mother ship, be it Bombay, India, or Tehran, Iran, and every location in between.

For those now considered the 'founding generation,' the West became fertile soil for the creation of new dwellings, communities and ultimately formal associations

and groups based on religious and cultural similarities. Zarathushti organizations sprung up all over the continent and played a big part in preserving and teaching the religion and culture to their own children. Their offspring, the 'first generation' of Zarathushtis born in North America in the late sixties and into the seventies and eighties had the comfort of being raised in a sound religious and cultural background where they understood their religion, mingled and socialized with other Zarathushtis, and had the luxury of an infrastructure built by the founding generation.

Today, while the founding generation matures, the first generation is rapidly developing from young parents to young professionals, and an unmistakable transition vacuum has emerged. The need for more community development, intergenerational dialogue, debate, idea sharing, leadership and networking and prompted the Coming Together Roundtable (a legacy project of the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress) to propose creation





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of a next generation initiative at its meeting in January 2007, led by Rohinton Rivetna.

NextGenNow was born from the Coming Together Roundtable mandate and held its first conference in Chicago with the support of FEZANA's youth wing, ZYNA, and an army of volunteers and leaders from the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. Conference co-chairs Jim Engineer (FEZANA's PR Chair at the time) and Nikan Khatibi (ZYNA Chair at the time) led efforts to bring young people to the conference, introducing a new and fresh approach to making the conference innovative, stimulating and fresh in content, including community building and development, intergenerational dialogue, religious education and interfaith awareness.

In early 2008, Engineer and Khatibi wasted no time attracting fellow conference attendees Mantreh Atashband, Armaity Homavazir and Farah Minwalla into spearheading the second NextGenNow conference in August 2008, on the campus of George Mason University in suburban Washington D.C. The group evolved organically with the five founders becoming directors of NextGenNow, and tapped Toronto-based Zarathushti graphic design and hosting firm Webngrafix to produce the the www.nextgennow.org web site, and its catchy logo was developed by Montreal-based Zareen Austin.

The group mobilized and continues to build an expansive online social media presence, establishing networking and awareness groups on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Its collective impact has touched more than 500 young Zarathushtis in North America and abroad.

The goal, according to Engineer, was to focus more on the community development challenges facing North American Zarathushti communities at various stages of development; to bring young Zarathushti college students, young professionals, transient professionals and young parents together; and to better understand, gauge and track the views and sentiments of the next generation community-by-community.

"It is the penultimate responsibility of each generation to provide a pathway for future generations so they can advance and grow harmoniously," Engineer said. "Our leadership team is committed to the mission of NextGenNow, and through intergenerational dialogue, bridge building and collaborative engagements, we will help facilitate a transition in leadership, attracting more young Zarathushtis back into the fold, and ultimately sustain and grow our communities as a purposeful agent of change."

NextGenNow, through its two North American conferences, grassroots focus groups and social media presence, has attracted more than 500 young Zarathushti professionals, students, community leaders ranging from 18 to 45 years-of-age. The group also prides itself on

attracting members of the founding generation who share and support the organization in its mission.

NextGenNow in its short life has had the kind of success many organizations wish for. And therein lie some of the challenges it faces moving forward. On the future of NextGenNow, director Mantreh Atashband says, "NextGenNow will be a community mobilization catalyst, supporting the next generation of Zarathushti leaders in creating and implementing innovative ideas and initiatives."

The issue of identity as an organization is another issue. Should NextGenNow stay on an independent path, or become an umbrella organization under the all-encompassing FEZANA?

Dr. Rustom Kevala, Immediate Past President of FEZANA, visualizes NextGenNow as an advisory body available not only to FEZANA, but also to all the FEZANA member associations and Zarathushti groups throughout the world. *"NextGenNow should be a conduit for the views of young Zarathushti students and professionals about the direction and goals of Zarathushti organizations in community and intergenerational matters. As such, the leadership of NextGenNow should have direct access to Zarathushti leaders and activists throughout the world."*

NextGenNow's Khatibi agrees, adding that independent or not, the movement behind the organization was to spearhead a concept of community building in a different way. *"Sometimes it just takes a new way of thinking to get people energized and motivated towards a common goal - and through NextGenNow, we hope to jump-start a youth community that is yearning to take charge."*

Can NextGenNow share the same autonomy under the FEZANA umbrella? That balancing act will be an internal challenge for NextGenNow as it finds its way. Thankfully its founders have a very clear idea of what they envisage the organization to be, and will lead it on firm footing for the 'next' generation to take the mantle in the years to come.



Arzan Sam Wadia is an architect and urban designer currently residing in New York City with his wife Shirrin. He runs Parsi Khabar (www.parsikhavar.net) an online portal about Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India. Arzan is an avid blogger, motocyclist and an active member of the Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group.



Social Media Revolution: Boom Boom Pow!

by Jim Engineer

"I'm so three thousand and eight, you so two thousand and late!" chants Fergie and the Black-Eyed Peas in their hit song "Boom Boom Pow."

Perhaps no song captures the fast-paced, always-on spirit of the next generation. And not to over-hype the Peas, but it was no surprise that Barack Obama invited them to perform at his inaugural concert on HBO last January. And who could forget Election night's first-ever hologram interview of Peas frontman Will.i.am?

Not since the social revolution of the 1960s, led by JFK and MLK, have we seen such symbolic generational shifts in politics and culture. I was lucky to attend President Obama's election night speech Nov. 4, 2008, with 250,000 fellow teary-eyed, inspired, and motivated supporters.

The term "next generation" is omnipresent in President Obama's rhetoric and actions. He stands on the shoulders of an entire generation, carrying the hopes and aspirations of a huge voting block: his election signified a new day both in America and worldwide.

So how did candidate Obama tap the youth vote, inspire children to become fans, and in turn, convince many parents to vote for change? Most importantly, how did he win the critical trust of independents and moderates?

It was through the Internet: specifically, highly interactive and innovative social media channels such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter. Obama certainly managed to inspire people en-mass, transcending age-old divisions, barriers and norms, but made his message "viral" in that it reached millions.

He connected. And took the high road. Moreover, his toughest challenge was not from Republican rival John McCain, but within his own party from both Clintons, who would have preferred Obama "wait his turn" as is often the challenge in generational leadership transition.

In our beloved Zarathushti community – and other religions worldwide – waiting one's turn is often the crux that degrades our ability to transition, advance and progress. Many of our most developed North American Zarathushti communities were built by members of the

founding generation, who nobly came to the Americas in search of a new land and promise to grow the Zarathushti faith.

While most leaders of the founding generation today are reenergized and retired, some have had a tough time letting go, and steady leadership – while valuable – should not be confused with effective leadership.

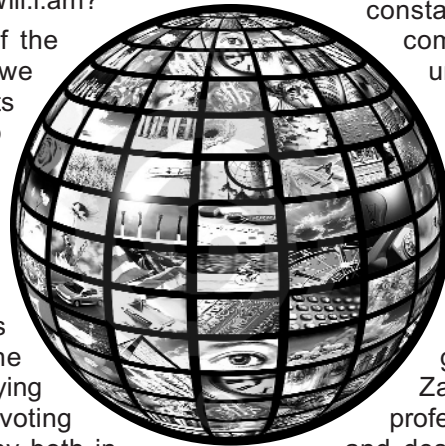
Outside of death and taxes, change is the only constant. If we are to ultimately advance our communities, leadership needs not only to understand how we are connected, but to actually connect. Where are the youth on most Sundays? How can we get more youth involved? How can we design programming to attract younger folks?

We launched the NextGenNow Chat Series earlier this year in New York City and Chicago, eager to tap the feelings and mindset of the next generation. We learned that more Zarathushti young parents and transient professionals are generally inclusive, tolerant, and desire a healthy community accessible to them. Most importantly, young parents want to be able to provide their children with a solid religious education program, a center of worship, and spirituality and communal bonding.

At the New York City chat, the geography and logistics of getting to the ZAGNY Darb-e Mehr in Suffern, New York, surfaced as a major concern for the large and growing community of young parents and professionals residing in the Big Apple.

According to the NextGenNow New York City Chat Series summary findings: The issue of attendance at local ZAGNY events was discussed. The general consensus was that the darb-e mehr was not accessible to people without a car, i.e. most individuals who resided in Manhattan. There was an acknowledgement that it was not just an issue of distance and time, but primarily accessibility.

Other items of concern included the growing number of young or transient professionals who are working in larger North American cities but without any particular affiliation with the local association.





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At NextGenNow, we found that by listening to the needs of young parents, young leaders, students and young professionals, we gained valuable insight on what

matters, and how people connect to their communities, geographically and virtually. How does everyone stay connected? Social media. Facebook (www.facebook.com), LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) and Twitter (www.twitter.com), in particular, bring a new definition to words like “community” and “connected.”

The next generation of Zarathushtis are more connected than ever before. Facebook group creation has been instrumental in attracting hundreds of Zarathushtis to particular causes, affiliations, organizations and news.

NextGenNow as a group started on Facebook in 2008, and has built a community of 108 Zarathushtis and followers worldwide; all have opted-in to keep abreast of news, information, pictures and announcements. On professional networking site LinkedIn, the NextGenNow group has attracted approximately 40 opted-in executives. Small numbers yes, but in proportion to a global Zarathushti community of not more than 200,000, it's not a bad start.

The ZYNA team leveraged e-mail, traditional newsletter announcements and Facebook to bolster awareness for last July's youth congress in Fremont, California.

Eric Engineer, a senior associate at Dallas-based venture capital and private equity firm Sevin Rosen & Associates, is spearheading WZCC youth leadership and presented at the youth congress. He cites LinkedIn as an essential tool to build a coordinated contingent of active young professionals and entrepreneurs.

Engineer has leveraged FEZANA and local association e-mail communication channels, Google docs, LinkedIn, NextGenNow, and WZCC chapters worldwide to help cross-promote the Zarathushti Stimulus Plan, connecting folks in search of employment, networking, entrepreneurship, business creation, and career guidance with Zarathushti resources and experts.

The Zoroastrian GLBT-Straight Alliance on Facebook represents a similar use of social media to build and rally connectedness that in the past simply didn't exist. Created by Fereshteh Dinaz Bulsara, the alliance unites Zarathushtis who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender and the straight folks who support them. The group boasts 58 members worldwide, all of whom now have a central source for news, information, idea exchange, and belonging with this virtual community.

Zpeakerbox (www.zpeakerbox.com) bills itself as the Zarathushti community's first online youth magazine; it's another example of Zarathushti social media innovation, connectedness and community-building. Created in May 2004 by Canadians Parizad Hathidaru, Narius Dastoor, and Sharon Chothia, Zpeakerbox launched after an e-mail

article sent to many Zarathushti youth called for an online medium through which young Zarathushtis worldwide could connect. Since then, it's had a snowball effect on the

Zarathushti youth community, reaching beyond North America to countries including Iran, Germany, Australia, and the Pacific rim, attracting more than 790 members.

The social media revolution continues to innovate, adapt and unfold as technology pushes new boundaries. To think that in a period of just several years, Yahoogroup lists – once viewed as a critical way to e-mail members of a particular group – remains relevant, but somewhat antiquated. Faster and more innovative social media channels have made collaboration and community-building more effective and on a far greater scale.

FEZANA member associations, Zarathushti organizations at-large, and other interest groups spreading a message or cause need to listen to and understand the needs of those they are trying to reach. Social media is a helpful catalyst in this context, an online agent of change that fosters broad collaboration, idea sharing and healthy debate – it's also the number one way to connect with the next generation of Zarathushtis here at home and across the globe.

Photo credit for Social Media graphic belong to Saniphoto (<http://saniphoto.blogspot.com>)



Jim Engineer is an independent public relations consultant, and a director of NextGenNow (www.nextgennow.org). For more than 20 years,

he has donated his time and talent to the North American Zarathushti community, serving twice as FEZANA's Public Relations Chair, starting and perpetuating the FEZANA Journal's Youthfully Speaking section, co-founding ZYNA, and representing Zarathushti youth at the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. He resides in Chicago with his wife Kiku, daughter, Zara, and English bulldog, Winston.



WE WANT CHANGE!

(But how do we get it?)

By Mantreh Atashband

Over the years, Zarathushtis have built a great reputation around being charitable and supportive to social causes in their own communities, and in society as a whole. Whether rallying to reconstruct an old school in Iran, or support a struggling family in India, the collective “we” always pulls together. We pull together and donate our time, talent and treasure to help support initiatives greater than our own self-interest.

Many communities have the desire and will, to mobilize and support change, but can get flustered and agitated in the process for a variety of reasons. Looking for resources and the tools to aid in supporting any cause, can be a challenging task. And sometimes these issues can cause ripples in a community and within its members. When individuals and organizations do come together to work for a common or shared goal, it is not uncommon to see a scrambling over power, leadership, opinion and competing interests. Ultimately, the group needs to come

to a consensus of moving toward true collaboration and team work – trust and transparency are critical ingredients to accomplishing a shared mission!

Most communities share the same struggles through similar dynamics – constantly in search of a change for the better, out with the old and in with the new, but how do we accomplish REAL CHANGE?! How do we begin? Who do we turn to?

In order to effectively mobilize a community, there are some key aspects that need to be addressed, including:

Who are the community gatekeepers?

You need to identify the key people in the community who can push your agenda—who are ready to take a stand, and are willing to work to see it accomplished. You need a catalyst!

What is the community vision?

It's very important to be on the same page, working toward the same goal—and making sure the vision and goals are aligned.

Who are the truly dedicated members?

Identify those individuals who can support the same goal, even if they don't see eye to eye!



From Roots to Wings

Have you recognized and encouraged?

Paying gratitude to those who contribute to reaching the goal is very important!

PATIENCE, TIME and WILL!

Make sure you have lots of it because you'll need it!

All this sounding too heavy, or maybe too familiar?

Wondering how in the world will all this be accomplished?

Case-in-point: NextGenNow

When I think of the work we've been doing at NextGenNow, I think of a young organization still in its infancy, but a shining example of a true community catalyst. As a director of NextGenNow, I've had the unique experience of helping to mobilize young Zarathushtis, to help start a dialogue about the future, to focus on the now and what we can do together to mature the inevitable change required to advance as a united community .

We are evolving into a catalyst of change, addressing the unique challenges facing the next generation of Zarathushtis through a respect for our religion, heritage, culture, and most importantly, the founding generation in whose footsteps we follow.

NextGenNow, is also a community think-tank in which ideas are shared, issues are tackled, and initiatives are launched. We work to support and sustain Zarathushti communities, providing a connection to the next generation of emerging leaders, and working in collaboration with FEZANA member associations, committees and other critical Zarathushti organizations worldwide.

Back to our model – once your people are hyped and ready to make an impact, don't forget to iron out a few additional kinks.

You need to ensure that everyone's morale is on the up-and-up before you launch. You need to communicate, communicate, and communicate! If you have personal biases, discuss them! If you feel a 'turf war' happening within the team, that may hinder the forward movement of the goal, talk about them!

As they say, "you have to clean your house first, before inviting people over!" So, you can't mobilize and be an effective tool for change, if there is fighting and

bickering on the inside. Everyone has to be on the same page, and working toward the same goals!

Okay – so one last thing before going to launch, make sure, YOU'RE ORGANIZED!

Ensure your team has a well thought out plan with measurable objectives, that you've selected a leader, your goals are in order, your timelines are set, and everyone knows their tasks.

Now that the groundwork is in place – let's PUBLICIZE!

In order to gain community support, you have to publicize, engage across divides and find a common ground. Relationship building is critical. Generate support and involvement for your cause through a good public relations plan. Remember that a new initiative must be recognized and perceived as an asset by the community in order for it to be successful!

So, now that you've got the basic understanding of community mobilization, let see you put it to use.

GO CREATE CHANGE!



Mantreh Atashband is a public health professional working with communities and organizations to address gender as a determinant of health. Aside from her involvement with various Zarathushti initiatives, she also holds executive positions on diverse boards of directors and supports organizations in their capacity building and organizational development.



Dr. Niaz Kasravi: A Conscience for Compassion

By Jim Engineer

Chances are if you know Dr. Niaz Kasravi, you know you have a friend, a leader, and a mentor. For those who don't know her, there couldn't be a better time to briefly shine a spotlight on the life of the selfless and conscience-driven Kasravi, who represents and leads her generation by example.

Currently an Independent Consultant to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Washington, D.C., Kasravi earned a doctorate in Criminology, Law & Society from the University of California at Irvine, where she also earned a Master of Arts in Social Ecology, and Bachelor of Arts degrees in both Criminology, and Psychology & Social Behavior.

But it's not just her extensive education that makes her story compelling – it's her passion for social justice and human rights that transcends every corner of her life. Most notably and arguably, she has been influenced and affected by the incredible life of Shirin Ebadi.

"I went to Iran in 2000 to do research with Shirin Ebadi for my doctoral dissertation on the role of women in the reform movement," Kasravi said. "Specifically, I focused on their work on changing custody laws in Iran, looking at the different tools and tactics women activists use to get their voice heard and work towards change."

Ebadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her significant and pioneering efforts for democracy and human rights, especially women's, children's, and refugee rights, and remains the only Iranian to ever receive the prestigious Nobel commendation. "Shirin Ebadi always says that if she could accomplish all that she did under the repressive conditions that she lives in, then we who live in freedom can do so much more," Kasravi noted.

Kasravi's research under Ebadi would be realized in a real-world sense on the streets of Tehran nine years later, with the struggle and sacrifice of a new generation of Iranians led visibly by women – who openly called into question the authority, oppression, and power of the government.

Like many in the Iranian American community, Kasravi has been witnessing the aftermath of the recent elections in her native Iran, looking in from the sidelines of a game being played with dire repercussions for some, and the promise of a generational shift in Iranian leadership, culture, secularism and democracy. *"I feel*



cautious," she said. "I don't feel it's my place as an Iranian who's been enjoying the benefits of freedom in the United States to determine what future the Iranian people should have. That decision must be theirs alone. The only ones who have a right to make demands are those who stand and fight on the streets of Iran. Our role in the diaspora is to support them. But that doesn't mean I don't have my own views on the matter."

She came to the United States in 1984 during another national conflict in Iran, the long and bloody Iran-Iraq war. She was in grade school and her parents were troubled about how much worse the war might get. Once settled in 1987 as permanent residents, her father Dr. Hoshang Kasravi and mother Farinam Shahvir, instilled a new hope in little Niaz – that their new homeland would provide for a life of active involvement, enriched with a strong identity for her Zarathushti religion, the Persian culture, and a ability to freely assimilate, celebrate, and worship with her fellow Zarathushtis.

In the mid-nineties, Kasravi got active in the southern California Iranian Zarathushti community, lending her time, talent, and energy toward youth programming and



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leadership at the California Zoroastrian Center's Youth Committee. She then took a particular interest in sports as a way to unify and bring people together, and became

actively involved in the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC). Today she serves as its president.

Under Kasravi's leadership, the ZSC was voted a standing committee of FEZANA in 2008. That year, the 11th Zarathushti Games had united more than 1,200 Zarathushti athletes and spectators from 17 U.S. states, Canada, Germany, Australia, United Kingdom, France and Tajikstan. The next Games will take place in 2010 and are sure to surpass previous events in quality and attendance.

The ZSC also organized the Sixth Zoroastrian Unity Cup Soccer Tournament, which was held Sept. 5-7 in Redondo Beach, California. The event, which takes place every two years, brings together Zarathushti soccer/football fans for a highly-competitive tournament, socializing, and camaraderie.

Commenting on the success of the ZSC, Kasravi remains humble and in awe of the dedication and focus of her leadership team – a philosophy of modesty and teamwork instilled and perpetuated by ZSC founder Bijan Khosraviani through the years.

"We've come a long way since the first Zarathushti Games in 1988," Kasravi recalled. "We relied on a small budget of just five hundred dollars from people who had chipped in, and the event generated 30 participants."

Kasravi mentioned that the ZSC is constantly working to address the perception of being an Iranian Zarathushti organization, with today's Games attracting approximately 60 percent Iranian and 40 percent Parsi athletes and spectators, a gap that's been closing through the years. *"Bridging the divide between Iranians and Parsis has been a challenge for the founding generation – and you can still see some of those divides,"* she added. *"The next generation is different. I remember people getting into arguments on whether Farsi should be spoken at events or not. We don't have those arguments. Our ZSC founders were primarily Iranians, but today we are working on being very conscious to show balance in food, music, and be as all-inclusive as possible."*

Kasravi also cited NextGenNow's ability to attract a broad cross-section of Iranian and Parsi Zarathushti youth into its fold, as another example of the Parsi-Irani divide dissipating as the next generation of Zarathushti youth mobilize and organize to sustain Zarathushti communities and organizational infrastructure.

"I strongly believe that it is the younger generation that will advance our community and keep us united."

For one, this must be their calling, if they don't do it, it won't happen. And two, they know the needs and desires of their own generation and they must take charge. That's why I have so much faith in NextGenNow's leadership, vision, and mission. They have recognized this calling."

Kasravi believes that only Zarathushti youth can play the critical role of ensuring a smooth transition from one generation to the next. *"What makes us (ZSC) a success is being open-minded about making people feel welcome," she pointed out. "It's for the participation of all Zarathushtis, and we want everyone to feel welcome. Many young kids get turned off by strict definitions – and while there is a time and place for strict adherence to rules and customs – there also is a time to relax rules and truly be all-inclusive. We listen to young people and know what they want."*

And what of her future? What's the next chapter in the life of Dr. Niaz Kasravi?

"I want to concentrate on areas where I'll have the most impact, and my focus will always remain on humanity – whether I decide to write a book, form my own organization, or go back to teaching," she said. "The fast-paced cut-throat world takes away from our humanity, decency, equality and kindness. It's my calling to help reintroduce that humanity."

Kasravi's current project focuses on issues of police accountability, police brutality, and excessive use of force, racial profiling and other criminal justice issues. To her, they serve as reminders that we still live in a world where people's humanity is largely taken for granted.

Jim Engineer is the founder and Chief Public Relations officer of Chicago-based e.Rainmaker Public Relations and a director at NextGenNow (www.nextgennow.org)



The Importance of Interfaith Service

By Kamalrukh Katrak Karkaria

Some Zarathushtis, like Trity Pourbahrami of California, define "interfaith service" as "peace-building initiatives." "The first and most important role I play in interfaith settings is to listen without judgment and prejudice to what is being said," she says. "The second role I play is to share experiences and understandings about my religion that enhances peace-building efforts and promotes interfaith dialogue."

Others, like Rohinton Rivetna of Illinois, say that "interfaith" is simply "the interaction with faiths." "An individual who is steeped in interfaith matters has the benefit of a very wide perspective. He or she has a better understanding of others; motivators and likewise the demotivators," he explains.

My personal journey with interfaith started in the streets of Mumbai, India, where our idea of interfaith was the festivities that surrounded the different celebrations and the holidays marked in red on the yearly calendar. It was great! I loved it! Since we did not all believe in the same method of celebration of light and color or the victory of good over evil -- or for that matter the changing of the seasons -- we got to doing it more than once a year and got to take extra days off from a routine week. As children, we were accepting of one another's differences without question. We were overwhelmed by the beauty of the environment as well as the transitional beauty created temporarily through color and sound, rhythm and movements, by the eloquent expression of affection amongst people and of their deep religious faith.

The Zarathushti household that I grew up in did not restrict any of this development -- in fact, it was encouraged. On Our "Dadaji ni table" (table for God), we had imagery and iconic elements from various other religions and beliefs and photos of different saints and gurus. and of my husband telling me stories of how he watched his grandfather -- a practicing Zarathushti priest -- providing comfort through conversation and prayer to the merchants and vendors of varying faiths and religions who lived in his neighborhood.

This helped me develop my appreciation of different beliefs and also of the study of humanities, in the acceptance of the iconography of different cultures and beliefs, of the subtle adaptations of general practices. I

have always been overwhelmed by the beauty of what the knowledge of interfaith brings.

These packages of experiences and thoughts came with me to America. Before then, my association with religions had been one of acceptance. That soon changed, however, to one of questioning and verification. Some of the questions arose from the people around me. Some arose from the desire to understand one's existence so far away from home. I was fortunate to involve myself with the Parliament of World's Religions celebration, Chicago (1993) -- a centennial celebration of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, and the first recorded attempt to create a global dialogue of faiths. The initial declaration for this event spoke about commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, of solidarity and a just economic order, of tolerance and a life of truthfulness and of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

What I wanted to get out of it was most eloquently explained by Dr. Steven C. Rockefeller, a member of the religion department at Middlebury College, in "A Source Book For Earth's Community of Religion": "Each is inspired by a unique vision of the divine and has a distinct cultural identity. At the same time, each perceives the divine as the source of unity and peace. The challenge is to preserve their religious and cultural

uniqueness without letting it operate as a cause of narrow and divisive sectarianism that contradicts the vision of divine unity and peace. It is a question whether the healing light of religious vision will overcome the social and ideological issues that underlie much of the conflict between religions."

For me interfaith service has included my mother following the rituals associated with almost all the festivals of every other religion, of neighbors coming to my grandmother to have her say a prayer to a saint from another faith on their behalf,

I came away with two other important elements that made a difference in my life: making people realize that the Zarathushti Community was not just a religion described in history books and the speech by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his message to the people, the idea that religious beliefs need to be adapted to the times in which they are being practiced. These two very strong facts led to my involvement with the Council for the Parliament of World's Religions (www.cpwr.org) that was formed following the Parliament. Its annual fund-raisers, the events that it organizes at different community centers and the different vigilances that are organized to spread tolerance and understanding, all help create a holistic



understanding of deep religious faith and examples of interfaith collaboration and understanding.

My cultivated belief is that one's relationship with faith will remain as a history of humanity's relationship with the natural world and the five senses. Words like "religious tolerance" are not part of my interfaith belief; I prefer "religious exchange" and "understanding." As explained in the Vedas, "Reality is one. Those who know call it in various ways." In my professional practice being fully conversant with contemporary technology and international developments, I like to develop or have an approach towards developing projects with a deep understanding and feeling for vernacular traditions and faith in humanity.



Kamalrukh Katrak Karkaria was born in Bombay, India, and traveled to the US after earning a Bachelor's degree in order to further her studies in architecture. She lives and practices architecture in Connecticut.

Permaculture: A Zarathushti Perspective on Service to the Environment

By Rashna Ghadialy

In the last hundred years, North America has played a dominant role in world political and financial affairs. Yet today it seems to be rethinking its strategy of leadership in the 21st century. It's a continent abundant in natural resources – including the most fertile plains in the

world, deserts, the Great Lakes, Rocky Mountains, Mississippi River; and miles of coastlines. Wildlife, forests and woodlands, rich minerals deposits, reliable sunshine, and strong winds all contribute to our economy. In short, we are blessed with Ahura Mazda's Creations. However, we have taken them for granted.

Tall prairie grass once covered the Midwestern region in what we refer to today as the fertile plains. Crystal clear

water flowed in the rivers, our coastlines were pristine, and land was devoid of landfills and toxic waste. Today, the tall prairie grass is nearly but all gone. The majority of our waterways are polluted; and people dwelling in our urban areas breathe unclean air. We have exploited these natural resources to the extent that they won't be around for the next generations unless restored immediately.

As Zarathushtis, it is our imperative to be part of, if not leaders of, in the environment movement on this continent, which advocates limiting our carbon and water footprints, behaving as responsible consumers, and lobbying for environment and climate reforms and legislation at local, regional and global levels. Zarathushtis historically have led frugal lives in the Old World. Following principles of conscious thoughts, good words and good deeds, we practiced preservation and conservation in everyday life aiming at sustainable living. Assimilation and integration in the larger North American society has led us astray from old beliefs and practices. We need to relearn our basic beliefs and put them into practice.

I believe that today, sustainable practices such as Permaculture are the answers to our environmental restoration commitment. Permaculture is a concept based on the principle of leaving behind the world in a better condition than we found it when we opened our eyes. It is a design approach to creating living systems that mimic patterns found in nature. The idea is to integrate surrounding natural areas with our homes, apartments,

Useful websites:

lazyenvironmentalist.com

greenyour.com

triplepundit.com

11thhouraction.com

Recommended books:

"The Lazy Environmentalist on a Budget," by Josh Doorman

"The Edible Container Garden: Growing Fresh Food in Small Spaces," by Michael Guerra

"Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture," by Toby Hemenway



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and other buildings to produce an abundance of food, shelter, energy, and other services – with a minimum of work. I believe that Permaculture works well within the framework of our Zarathushti beliefs.

Essential sustainable living practices include

☆ **Rethink: Think long term** – at least one generation (20 years or more) and ideally up to seven generations – the impact of our daily actions on Ahura Mazda's Creations. Our current use and throw-away mindset needs to stop immediately.

☆ **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:** We must reduce consumption, reuse what we currently own, and when we can't use it anymore, make every effort to recycle. We need to minimize contribution to landfills and garbage dumps. Composting organic materials is essential for sustainable living communities.

☆ **Conscious Consumer Behavior:** As consumers we have the power of the purse. We can demand that goods we purchase are manufactured, packaged, marketed, transported, and sold in an eco-friendly manner. In other words, put your money where your mouth is. An educated eco-consumer should beware of companies engaged in "green washing."

☆ **Know Your Food:** Know what you are eating, where your food is grown, and what is added before it reaches your plate. People dedicated to sustainability and eco-consciousness emphasize eating local foods. Those interested in eating locally-produced food not moved long distances are called "locavores." As interest rises, the locavore/localvore movement is becoming increasingly important in North America. Some consider food grown within a 100 mile radius local, while others have differing definitions. In general, local food is thought by those in the movement to taste better than food shipped long distances.

☆ **Triple Bottom Line:** The triple bottom line (TBL, 3BL, or "people, planet, profit") captures an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organizational – and societal – success: economic, ecological and social. TBL is an ethical capitalism model which should be adopted by all Zarathusti organizations and businesses.

☆ **Build Alliances:** Build networks and alliances with other Zarathushtis and faith-based people at local levels to share knowledge, pleasantly evangelize, and proselytize sustainable practices. These alliances will serve as building blocks to create sustainable communities at regional and global levels.

☆ **Political Activism:** It's not everyone's modus operandi, but political activism is the key to passing legislation that mandates sustainability practices for businesses and people. An activist can attend rallies, organize boycotts of companies that are green washing or producing environmentally harmful products, support environmental lobby groups, and most importantly, vote for eco-friendly legislation and demand that our governments implement those laws.

The present and future of our universe lies in our hands. It is our present thoughts, words and actions that will shape humankind's future. We can make a conscious choice to adopt a Permaculture solution to rejuvenate our planet so a prosperous economy, happy and healthy people, and a clean environment thrives. May we Zarathustis have the wisdom to be among those who rejuvenate the universe.



Rashna Ghadialy is a demographer, Reiki practitioner, and environmentalist. She actively participates in interfaith activities, and promotes Permaculture in Chicago and beyond. As a Chicago Conservation Corps volunteer, she has organized sustainability-related projects in her neighborhood. She is working with a sustainable living group to convert urban and suburban toxic brown fields into organic farms.

***This I ask Thee, tell me truly O Ahura;
Who so balanced the earth and heavens to keep them apart ?
Who created the water and the plants ?
Who yoked swiftness to the winds and motion to the clouds ?
Who is the creator of the Good Mind, O Mazda ?
Yasna 44.4 Gatha Ushtavaiti (Translation by D.J. Irani)***



Going Global – Tales from Sri Lanka

By Shirin Kiani

Like many of my friends, I have always wanted to work abroad, spread my wings in other cultures and contribute what I could to this planet. Two short-term experiences in Guyana and Cameroon prepared me somewhat for the long journey that I have now embarked upon. When I got the blessed phone call from a French organization called 'Handicap International' early in 2008 offering me a position as project manager of a disability resource centre in the North East of Sri Lanka, I was thrilled at the opportunity yet also cautious. I had worked in developing countries yet never formally as a 'manager' of local staff. Also, I had never worked in a conflict-affected country and my friends and family were a bit worried by the Canadian media coverage, thinking the worse would happen to me. After e-mailing some humanitarian workers in the part of Sri Lanka I was to go work in and getting a fair report from them, I decided that the risk existed but it was minimal. I was correct. Safety-wise my time in Sri Lanka (Trincomalee) was uneventful. Though there were military check points about every 100 meters and frequent bombings in other parts of the country, I was unaffected. Plus, my organization took good safety measures.

My work in Trincomalee aimed to capacity build the local disability resource centre. By the time I arrived, the centre had not had a manager for about 8 months and the staff were managing independently yet not optimally. Also, the centre was about half staffed. During my 8 months in Sri Lanka, I hired 3 new staff members, trained them and helped them conduct our work as best as possible. The goal of our centre was to identify people with disabilities in the area and be a focal point for linking them with other resources whether medical or social. We had an accessibility engineer who trained other local engineers on how to build accessible buildings post-tsunami as this was a great opportunity to ensure reconstruction was done to include the needs of person with disabilities. Reconstruction was focused not just on needs of those with physical limitations, but also making modifications for persons with visual and hearing impairments too. Our centre offered sign language courses to local government and NGO workers so that they would be able to interact with persons who are deaf. We also helped start and strengthen a few 'disabled people's organization' (DPOs). These are self-help groups that register with the government and advocate for their equal rights. One DPO we helped start was for people who were blind, we linked them with the national DPO for the blind and invited the national organization to our little town to offer mobility and orientation sessions (white cane training) for our group.

The other HUGE request from people with disabilities was to help them find work and livelihood options. Many persons do not want to be dependent on charity and want to be self-sufficient. We tried to link these people with other INGOs and micro-finance groups to see if persons with disabilities could be included in their schemes, this is the mainstreaming approach instead of creating separate programs for the disabled. Oftentimes, there is stigma from the part of loan groups/organizations who think persons with disabilities cannot pay back loans or will mismanage their money. This is a false generalization and often, the disabled are more determined, responsible and hard-working than able-bodied persons.

The other main concern of Handicap International was of the sustainability of our work. We were considering our 'exit strategy' constantly. This means how a humanitarian organization will slowly transfer its skills to local authorities and wean itself out and enable local authorities to carry on the work. The plan for the disability centre I was managing was to have it become a local Sri Lankan NGO by 2011. Before leaving, I hired and trained a fantastic Sri Lankan woman to take my place as Project Manager and work towards this process of independence in 2011. I left Sri Lanka in December 2008. As some of you might know, the conflict intensified notably in Sri Lanka in 2009. The disability resource centre continues to operate and has huge demands now with many persons with new disabilities who are displaced as a result of the conflict. Handicap International has other projects in the country, such as emergency projects in the North helping those who were in the midst of the war; I was not involved in that work but have heard that they cannot keep up with the hundred of thousands of people displaced, many with disabilities.

All in all, my time in Sri Lanka was memorable and complex. It impacted me in great ways and I am happy to have worked with an organization with foresight and a sustainable approach in mind. Since January 2009, I have been working for Handicap International in Nepal as a Disability and Empowerment Coordinator helping train, monitor and support ~60 community disability workers all over the country. The project and situation here is unique and I hope to tell you more about it next time!

***Warm regards from beautiful
Kathmandu, (Nepal)
Shirin Kiani June 2009***



From Roots to Wings



Showing a video clip to members of a local DPO on the rights of persons with disabilities



Speaking with one of my colleagues while we were organizing a 'inclusive sports day'





One Leader's Hope for the Future

Decades after he fled from Iran, Dr. Farhang Mehr, former deputy prime minister of Iran, is still driven by his hopes for the unity of the world's Zoroastri communities. In his biography, "Triumph over Discrimination: The Life Story of Farhang Mehr," he describes these dreams in his own words:

Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians are undergoing a tumultuous intellectual and spiritual voyage: An effort by Zoroastrians in diaspora to preserve their cultural identity. Knowledge about one's religion and culture, one's history and heritage, are some of the tools needed in order for this odyssey to be successful. Other tools required for the journey are freedom of choice, protection of human rights, protection of the environment, global solidarity, and cooperation with the democratic process. Zoroastrians must be dedicated to good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; tolerance and inclusiveness are essential to achieving our goal of maintaining a strong and solid community. We must hold fast to this dream...

I dream of the preservation of Zoroastrianism's teachings, which make up the core of Zoroastrianism, and the preservation of the meaning behind our rituals and customs. The core of our religion is the beliefs and doctrines contained within the Gathas. They are everlasting and unchangeable. They give us the strength to undertake our mental quests. The rituals are described in the literature accompanying the Gathas. The actions of the rituals appeal to our senses. Imbued with meaning, the rituals are a manifestation of the faith, a reminder of our devotion and commitment. Without meaning, rituals become empty motions, devoid

of significance. The core and the rituals together are necessary in order to maintain faith.

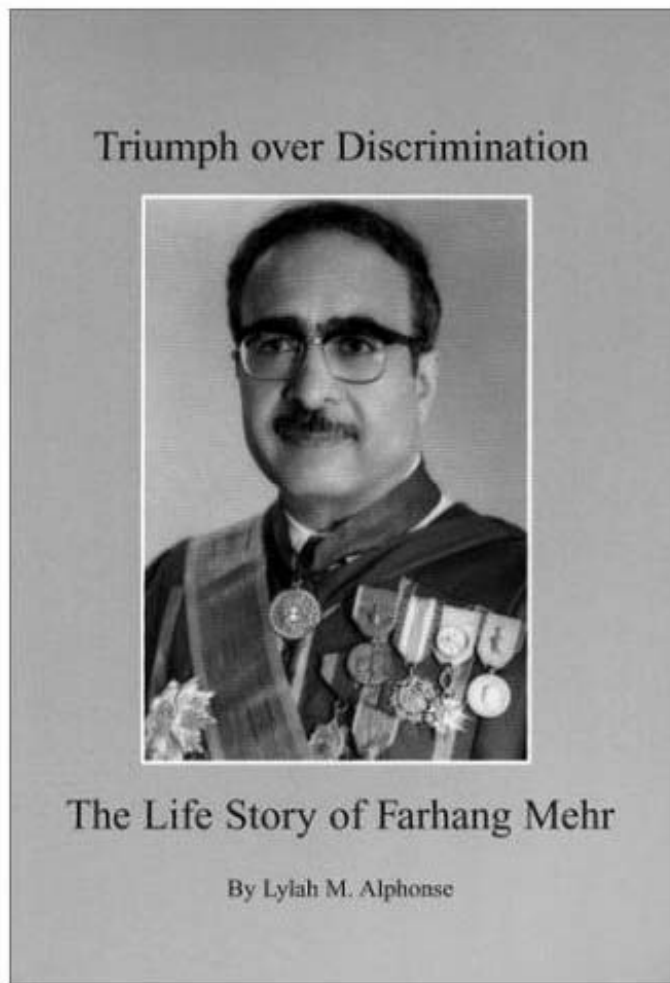
It is possible to be open-minded and acquire new and different political identities without sacrificing one's religious identity. In the ever-changing, ever-expanding global community, religious minorities are not assimilated into the more powerful majority groups. They are encouraged to exist, allowed to flourish through

cooperation, understanding, free interrelation, and tolerance. To encourage this is in the best interest of humankind, because it promotes peace and prosperity. Religion is a large part of this....

I dream of the formation of a large and flourishing Zoroastrian community. A living religion must also have a vibrant community rich in real religious commitment. Without a community of practicing believers, a religion becomes nothing more than a museum, an artifact, a relic to be viewed by the curious and studied by historians and scientists. We should maintain a community of Zoroastrians in mind and heart, treading together the path of truth and righteousness. As a single entity we should be showing love, upholding justice, exercising compassion, working for peace, engaging

creatively in constructive work. Together we should be practicing good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in order to reach a community-wide goal of enlightenment and unity with Spenta Mainya and Ahura Mazda.

These goals cannot be achieved with the current social and religious attitudes of our fractured community. The core of Zoroastrianism as laid out in the Gathas is immutable; the traditions and practices not based in





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Gathic principals may be modified. Liberty is the most precious of Ahura Mazda's gifts to humankind. It is a component of divine law. The right to liberty is so undeniable that Ahura Mazda does not curtail humankind's actions, even in regard to one's choice of religion.

Intolerance is not a tradition sanctioned by the Gathas. A tradition of non-acceptance has established itself within the Zoroastrian community, and manifests itself in our attitude toward people who, though not born to Zoroastrianism, are devoted to Zarathushtra's teachings and desiring to embrace our faith. This tradition owes its existence to historical, not religious, facts... Though at times difficult, some traditions can – and should – be modified as social conditions demand change. In a civil society, issues can be resolved through discussion and the application of reason, good will, and compromise. Compromises should not be confounded by hypocrisy, but should come through constructive confrontation and a willingness to work toward the greater good....

I dream of a revival of our ancient glory, this time in terms of culture, not politics or power.

In the modern world, political entities and natural independence are giving way to cultural entities and international interdependence. With our members so scattered around the globe, it is unrealistic to dream of Zarathushtis forming a political entity.

As a cultural entity, however, Zoroastrianism can be formidable. I dream that the Zoroastrian community will rediscover its history and culture, the lofty and well-

regarded traits that enabled Cyrus the Great to present and promote humanitarianism to the world and Darius to produce a profoundly efficient judicial system. The powerful influence Zoroastrianism has had on humankind was well known in ancient times; Zoroastrian ideology influenced Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and a host of agnostic faiths as well as ancient philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Pythagoras.

The Gathas, once regarded as a compendium of ethical rules, can once again be a beacon of light in a vast sea of moral darkness and decline, providing guidance and answers to modern ethical dilemmas. It is my dream that Zarathushtis so excel in their chosen professions that they once again influence the global community, entering into the uppermost echelons of honor and achievement in society as a whole.

I dream that the spirit of Zarathushtra will live on in our youths. It is up to you, especially those of you living outside of Iran and India, to prove that Zarathushtis have the talent, motivation, strength, and benevolence needed to flourish in the next millennium. You must lead the way. You must do what is right for righteousness' sake. You must be vigilant, working hard to protect and promote Zoroastrian values, and to keep the eternal flame alight.

**Excerpted from
"Triumph over Discrimination: The Life
Story of Farhang Mehr," by Lylah M.
Alphonse. Reprinted with permission.**



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Three Points of View: Tolerance and Acceptance

A Conservative Point of View

By Roshni Kharoliwalla



"Intermarriage." This word brings up what may be the most important and the most controversial issue the Zarathushti community faces today. Should intermarriage be accepted and promoted? This question baffles many and in some cases even tears families and communities apart.

After the fall of the Sasanian empire, some Zarathushtis, to escape Arab persecution moved to

China, Central Asia, Punjab and even as far as Europe. Over time they intermarried and lost their distinct religious and ethnic identity and faded away. The only group that survived was the Parsis, which came to Sanjan on the Gujarat coast. Though they compromised on certain social and cultural issues -- such as giving up the Persian language (Farsi) for Gujarati, laying down weapons, adopting Indian dress, etc -- they refused to compromise on religious issues, such as wearing sudreh kusti, Atash parasti (reverence for fire), marrying only within the fold and not converting others to the Faith, and Manthravani (praying in the original language of the Avesta). The Parsis not just survived in India, but actually flourished because they decided not to tamper with the fundamental ground rules they had laid down for their survival as a religious and ethnic community.

Although intermarriage may be the best way for some religious communities (such as Christians, Muslims, and Hindus) to raise their numbers, we need to remember that there are some differences between these communities and the Zarathushti community. The Zarathushti community is very small compared to these others. When you combine two communities by marriage, the smaller will always mix into and become a part of the larger, never the other way around. That is, if you mix 300,000,000 Christians with a few thousand Zarathushtis, the

"There is nothing weird or 'ultra-conservative' in respecting scriptures and trying to follow them as faithfully as one possibly can."

Zarathushti community will mix in and disappear. When you begin intermarrying, large communities grow at the expense of smaller ones.

The Parsi aversion for mixed marriages should not be confused with "racial superiority" or "communal prejudice." For Parsis, marrying within the community is important from the point of view of self-preservation. Parsis are torchbearers of a rich culture and heritage. Intermarriage leads to a dilution of faith and weakening of cultural bonds.

In religion, nothing stands higher than the sanctity of the scriptures, and there is nothing weird or "ultra-conservative" in respecting scriptures and trying to follow them as faithfully as one possibly can. Besides our scriptures, there are other sources of religious doctrine that Zarathushtis are expected to follow, one of which is the oral traditions that have come to us through history for the last thousands of years. These traditions are timeless and time-tested and if we fail to respect these Religious Laws with faith, discipline and humility, we do not deserve to survive and shall surely cease to exist.

Intermarriages are increasing at an alarming rate. Within a generation or two, it looks as if our community will be all but wiped off the face of the earth on the account of intermarriage alone. The real point to note is that the writing is already in large letters on the wall. Sooner or later, if the escalation of intermarriages remains unchecked, hardly a mirror in the world will be able to reflect an authentic Parsi face.

Parsis do not claim racial superiority. Conservative Parsis seek to treat all humans as equal, but would prefer to remain separate from them in some ways; marrying only those of our own faith is one way for us to do this. Being a Zoroastrian is more than just confessing a religion, it means that we belong to a particular historic group and it is every Zoroastrians' duty to adhere to the fundamental customs, traditions and percepts laid down by our religion. Religion is man's method of worshipping



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God, so it must be followed as God wants, not as man wants. What is religion if it can be changed by man? Therefore, it is our moral obligation and duty as staunch Zarathushtis to strictly adhere to this important tenet of marrying within our community and strive to increase our dwindling population so that our religion and community survives.

Our forefathers adhered to the tenants of our religion unwaveringly; their strong faith and ethnic identity helped keep the community together even during trying times. Moreover, in spite of hardships, they prospered, making our lives pleasant and worth living till date. And today the responsibility of our future generations lies in our hands. It is our duty to conserve our religion and make sure that our future generations have enough ground to grow and prosper and also to tend our holy fires! Let us give our children a better life and a fair chance to one of the oldest religions in this world.

Roshni F. Kharoliwalla was born and raised in Mumbai, India. For 160 years, her family has published and distributed Zoroastrian prayer books. She lives with her husband in Madison, Wisconsin.

A Centrist Point of View

By Diana Damkevala Gazdar

Our religion has long been sustained by genealogy and cultural tradition. Genealogy can be a source of inspiration, promoting feelings of family, identity, community; and connection to something larger. But genealogy cannot be a religion's soul, which lies in the spirituality of its followers.

We Zarathushtis entangle ourselves with genealogy, so it's unsurprising that interfaith marriage is among our most polarizing topics. Whether these unions defy tradition, whether the children "dilute" the religion, or whether acceptance is necessary to counterbalance ever-decreasing numbers, I can find no right or wrong, as both viewpoints share the same fear: the slow demise of our religion.

We cannot blame the languishing of our religion on interfaith marriages alone; rather we should acknowledge its place in the larger discussion of our future. Fewer

marriages and children, uneven definitions of "who" is Zarathushti, and often uninspired religious identities are our challenges. Our next generation must address these, while continuing to build connections with Zarathushti communities, and encouraging knowledge and spirituality in our children. Then we can empower future generations.

ENCOURAGING MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, AND CHOICE

I believe one can be both pro-Zarathushti partnership, and pro-acceptance of interfaith partnership, as both entail a cycle of faith that guides and supports young Zarathushtis' choices.

As worldwide Zarathushti population declines, we find that too many Zarathushtis are unmarried and/or childless. Many long-married Zarathushtis truly underestimate today's challenges in finding a partner – especially one who is mutually attracted and interested, shares similar values, is within age range, and is willing to relocate. Too often, faced with onslaughts of "helpful" comments like "You should settle down now with a nice Zarathushti girl"; "Don't you want marriage, children, and to feel fulfilled as a woman?" and "You're being too picky," young adults feel attacked, blamed, and truly turned off. Additionally, community intolerance of non-Zarathushti spouses adds to stresses of finding a Zarathushti partner.

Our young adults may attend university and build careers into their 30s. But once ready to look for a partner, it's often very difficult to meet other Zarathushtis and initiate relationships. Our vast diaspora necessitates reliance on attending Congresses or finding unconventional ways to meet. Although the internet – including dating sites, social media sites, and instant messaging – is helping Zarathushtis communicate, face-to-face interaction is crucial to sustain long-lasting relationships. Quality time together can result in successful partnership. But if a relationship doesn't work, the investment spent can be most disheartening.

We must actively encourage Zarathushti marriage and children by creating more local and global connection opportunities. But we must not lay guilt, and risk driving youth away from not just marriage, but religion.

Encouraging Zarathushti partnership starts with creating positive connections from early on. Growing up, my sisters and I had strong attachment to our religion and dynamic Chicago Zarathushti community. We saw many examples of successful Zarathushti marriages, demonstrating love, mutual respect, and shared reverence for our religion. We also learned that interfaith marriages, with shared values and tolerance for differing opinions, make for happy marriages and children.



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Our sense of connection made us deeply committed to at least try to find Zarathushti partners, though we knew that odds were very much against us. Our family and community showed bias toward marrying within the faith, but also understood that statistically, one or more of us may not find a Zarathushti partner. It was comforting to know that no matter what, our spouses and children would be welcomed and considered Zarathushti.

My sisters and I beat the “Zarathushti odds”. We went down different paths to meet our spouses – through mutual friends, attending Congresses, and reacquainting with old friends. That they are all Zarathushti matches is an added bonus. We put effort into finding Zarathushtis, but the result – marrying within our faith – was luck. We all agree that strong community attachment motivated us to take the leap of faith required to pursue relationships with Zarathushtis.

While marrying other Zarathushtis sounds great, it’s not enough. The real work of propagating our faith begins now, as we transition from newlyweds to parents, and lead the next generation.

REDEFINING “WHO” IS A ZARATHUSHTI

Interfaith couples face additional challenges of being truly open with religious attitudes from the beginning. These families find they are further encumbered by constrained, un-egalitarian definitions of “who” is considered Zarathushti. With no worldwide consensus, it’s left to individual communities.

With approximately half of North American Zarathushti marriages being interfaith, we must acknowledge that these unions and children are an irrevocable part of our tapestry. Children of interfaith marriages should be Zarathushti by birthright, whether their father or mother is Zarathushti.

We must actively welcome interfaith families’ participation in Zarathushti communities. If we do, we may inspire their children to choose Zarathushti spouses or raise their children as conscious Zarathushtis. But if we make interfaith couples feel unwanted, we guarantee their children will be unwilling to perpetuate the religion. I have seen many personal examples of both. The loss of these families is a great tragedy.

Once together, many couples, both Zarathushti and interfaith – even young ones – are unable to have children. Although rarely discussed, adoption and egg and sperm donations are becoming more prevalent. We must support couples’ decisions and allow their children to be part of our community. Caring for another human being is a very Zarathushti act, and should be treated as such.

CONTINUING THE CYCLE OF IDENTITY

Children begin the cycle of empowering another generation. Despite much fervor about preserving religion, many parents don’t know how to convey religion and spirituality to their children. Interfaith couples additionally face connecting children to two faiths, or prioritizing one. Many Zarathushti communities have religion classes, but classes are not enough to connect children to religious identity, community pride, or an intangible sense of spirituality.

To pass on identity and spirituality to our children, we must educate and empower our own understanding. Religious information and people-connection is at our fingertips – the internet, libraries, and knowledgeable dasturs – we merely need to seek it. Our generation is creating better coalitions of educators, dasturs, scholars, and parents to enhance age-appropriate, engaging religious information. But every parent has personal responsibility to expose their children while young to religion and community involvement; instilling knowledge, curiosity, and spirituality. We need to savor our religion. If we can’t do this for ourselves, how can we expect the next generation to want connection with each other?

Our religion has adapted through cultures and centuries; embedded are seemingly modern concepts of social justice; hard work; charity; and equality for all regardless of race, religion, or gender.

Our next generation must feel there is nothing wrong with encouraging Zarathushti marriage and children, while accepting and embracing interfaith marriages, and redefining “who” is a Zarathushti. We must inspire both knowledge and much-needed spirituality in our children. If we do this while furthering the first generation’s efforts to build community at all levels, we allow natural adaption of our beautiful religion, empowering the average Zarathushti.



Diana Damkevala Gazdar is VP, Corporate Strategy and Business Development, and a Managing Partner of HINGE Inc., Sales and Marketing Solutions. Diana lives in Toronto with husband Rohinton, daughter Natasha, and baby #2 on the way.



From Roots to Wings

A Reformist Point of View

By Lylah M. Alphonse



Zoroastrianism is known as "The Religion of Good Conscience," built firmly on a foundation of good words, good thoughts, and good deeds, its followers encouraged to exercise free will and accept responsibility for their actions. A devout Zarathushti is supposed to progress toward enlightenment by consciously choosing to do good.

With all of the emphasis on choice and free will in our religion, I cannot understand the push to exclude those who truly want to share our faith – or worse, to reject children born to a Zarathushti parent who decided to marry outside the religion.

How were the first Zoroastrians brought into the fold? Whom did the first Zarathushtis marry? How did the faith evolve into a powerhouse in Persia? Conversion. Acceptance. Tolerance.

How are our numbers falling so rapidly now? How many Zarathushtis choose love over faith and leave the fold? How has our once-powerful community dwindled to the point where it is being considered for cult status? By clinging to the idea that purity is paramount and that "self-preservation" is best achieved by inbreeding and isolation.

The irony is that Zarathushtis have always been known to be socially progressive. We embrace equality between men and women. We champion entrepreneurship and education. But when it comes to growth and survival, we cling to the past, hiding behind a

“Without accepting the children of intermarriage and allowing conversion, we will indeed preserve our culture – as a chapter in the history books, not as a thriving and progressive community.”

fear of assimilation rather than embracing the opportunity to welcome new members.

Without accepting the children of intermarriage and allowing conversion, we will indeed preserve our culture – as a chapter in the history books, not as a thriving and progressive community.

According to Chapter 36 of the Menof-i-Khrad (part of the larger Avesta texts) (<http://www.avesta.org/pahlavi/mx.html#chap36>), there are 30 terrible sins. The sacred text ranks them in order of severity – killing a "water beaver" is a more serious sin than worshipping outside of the religion. There are 33 "good works" that ensure entry into heaven. Marrying your "next of kin" – your first cousin – is number 12 on that list. But "liberality," "truth," and "thankfulness" are the top three. Being open-minded and accepting of those who truly seek to follow our faith embody the ideals of liberality, truth, and thankfulness, and can only lead to a stronger future for Zoroastrianism.

Lylah M. Alphonse is a journalist based in Boston and the Consulting Editor for FEZANA Journal. She writes about work-life balance at Workitmom.com and blogs at WriteEditRepeat.blogspot.com.

GAHANBAR CEREMONY AT 3000 YEAR OLD AZARGOSHASB FIRE TEMPLE

On 27 Shahrivar (18 September) the sound of Avesta filled Azargoshasb Fire Temple where Mobeds Sohrab Hengami and Mehrab Vahidi led Zarathushtis to recite the Avesta, retie their kustis and pray for a strong unity and cooperation of Zarathushtis of the world. This ceremony has been organized annually since the last 6 years by Yatha Ahu site. Azargoshasb is one of the largest and most renowned fire temples of the Iranian plateau, situated in West Azarbaijan, 49 km on the northeast of the city of Takab. It is located near the Urumieh Lake (Chichest Lake) and was surrounded by magnificent buildings in earlier days. A huge crowd of Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis participated in the ceremony, which is held once a year and attracts many eager people from all over Iran, to this world heritage site in Takhte Sulieman area in Takab.

Translation Rowshan Lohrasbpour. AMORDAD New



From Roots to Wings



Why my Navjote is important to me

By Jeh Mory

The Navjote is a ceremony in which a Zarathushti child is initiated into the Zoroastrian religion. It is usually performed when the child is above 7 years old. During and after one's Navjote, the child should keep the sudreh, which is the sacred shirt, and the kusti, which is the sacred thread, on. The word Navjote is commonly used by the Parsis and means "new worshipper." Zoroastrians of Iran call it Sudreh-Pooshi.

I felt most important on the day of my Navjote. Everyone was silent and was looking at me as I recited my prayers. I also feel closer to Ahura Mazda, just by reciting my prayers every morning. After my Navjote ceremony, I gave a little speech thanking everybody who came for my Navjote. Then, I greeted everyone, and entered the Agiary and started praying. After a couple of hours, we had a grand dinner.

Nine-year-old Jeh Mory lives in Princeton NJ, with his mom Dilnaz, dad Zubin and younger brother Zaal. He is a big fan of President Obama and follows football and cricket on TV.

SEDRH POOSHI-NAVJOTE CEREMONY IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA 3747 (JULY 2009)

On Saturday 18 July 2009, a number of Iranians and a native Austrian lady were confirmed into the Zarathushtian faith, when they participated in the Sedreh Pooshi-Navjote ceremony. The Navjote ceremony was sponsored by the Bozorg Bazgasht Organization of Norway. The ceremony took place at the Park Inn Hotel and was performed by two Iranian Mobeds.

GROUP NAVJOTE IN TEHRAN

Eleven young Zarthushtis, six girls and five boys had their Navjote in Tehran, Iran.

GROUP INITIATION NAVJOTE CEREMONY HELD IN MOSCOW, RUSSIA

For the second time a group initiation ceremony was held in Moscow, Russia on 14th of December 2008. New behdins from Iran and Russia (native Russians) attended the ceremony to join the Zarathushti Religion. The ceremony was performed by an Iranian Mobed.

Bozorg Bazgasht Anjuman and Zoroastrian Association of Norway in cooperation with Zoroastrians of Moscow organized a spiritual program for a group initiation ceremony and Zoroastrian marriage ceremonies (GAVAH-GIRAN) for two couples of new Russian Behdins in Moscow.

On 15th of December a religious dialogue was also organized by University of Moscow. First Mobed gave a lecture about Gathas in the Department of Philosophy and Religion. His speech was translated from Persian to Russian by Professor Vladimir. B. Ivanov who is head of the department at University of Moscow. On 16th of December another meeting was held at the department of Iranian Studies in University of Moscow.

Kourosh Aryana-Norway



Religious Education and the Future of Young Mobeds in North America ... and Beyond

“In North America it is a different story all together. Being a priest here is even more challenging.”

By Arzan Sam Wadia

My earliest memories of going to a fire temple are of seeing a bearded man dressed in all white sitting all alone, greeting us when we entered. Feeling awed and scared at the same time, it took a while to understand why this man looked so similar to the ones in photographs on the wall. It took patience and effort on my late grandfather's part to make me understand that this was “aapra dastoorji.” The man in question was the revered head priest Dasturji Hormazdji of the Batliwala Agiary in Tardeo all those years ago. Since then I have had numerous friends and relatives who are priests and that has led to a deeper understanding of what they stand for and what they mean to our ancient religion.

In a religion as ancient as ours, the center of our spiritual physical being lies with these very priests. The dasturs, as they are known, are the custodians and implementers of all matters pertaining to religion, customs, ceremonies and the overall conscience of the religion. Zarathushti priests have over the centuries been the guiding force in the interpretation of our ancient texts, performing ceremonies of happiness and sadness, and being the silent custodians and arbitrators of our religious ethos.

However in today's day and age, one of the many issues facing Zarathushtis both in the Old Country and in the new lands is the scarcity and access to these priests. Parsi priesthood is by familial lineage and whichever way you dice it, the numbers of priests are dwindling. In cities like Bombay, it is not as endemic a problem as it is in other cities with smaller Zarathushti populations. And in North America it is even more evident. Larger centers of Zarathushti population like the Greater New York or Metropolitan Chicago have a reasonable number of priests, however; away from these few centers the priests are few and far in between.

All Zarathushti priests, even those born and brought up in North America, are ordained into priesthood back in India and Iran. This is because of the lack of a consecrated fire in North America, one of the major prerequisites in the ordaining process. Fathers who are themselves priests get their sons ordained as priests at a young age. However with the other social structure lacking in North America, especially the Atash Kadeh, young priests find it very difficult to understand the symbolism of their role as priests and the special position they now have in their own religion. Jimmy Antia and his brother Mazda, both born in USA, were ordained priests in the footsteps of their father Kersy. For Jimmy, “Being a mobed means continuing in the tradition of family and my ancestors. It is a way to connect spiritually to the community.”

One of the biggest challenges to these youngsters is to find the real meaning and role of this newly ordained priesthood. When this question was posted to Dr. Jehan Bagli, one of the senior most priests in North America, he says “To me being a priest is a commitment. It is assignments to do all the things that help perpetuate the Religion of Zarathushtra. A Zarathushti priest is duty bound to fill the spiritual needs of the members of Zarathushti community. It is incumbent upon the priest to find time to learn and understand the prayers that he recites. It is the responsibility of a priest to impart the knowledge of the Zarathushti tradition to the laity and to participate whenever possible in the ritual performances for the community and for individual family when requested.” This is indeed a monumental task for a youngster usually no older than 12 or 14 years at the time of ordainment.

The social structure exists in Bombay for priests to ease into their roles. Young priests are regularly under the tutelage of senior priests at the local Agiaries and Atash Behrams. They perform prayer ceremonies, especially during the Mukta prayers just before the Parsi New Year. However the days of full time priesthood are all but gone. The income they generate is in most cases not sufficient to take up priesthood as a full time profession and raise a family. To a young boy, all the pressures of school, college, and other things compete with the time they would spend in their priestly duties. And in most cases the latter takes a back seat -- and this is in Bombay, with one of the largest concentration of Zarathushti populations in the world.



From Roots to Wings

In North America it is a different story all together. Being a priest here is even more challenging. Most priests here perform a few jashans and even fewer other prayers. The difficulty quotient of being a priest in North America is many fold. And the meaning of what it means to be a priest also differs. Kobad Zarolia, a very senior priest in North America, feels that the meaning of priesthood also changes with age. He writes "...being a priest means different things at different age to me. When I became a priest it was to keep the family tradition going. To keep my parents happy. When I came to Canada it was helping other Zarathushti to keep up with our rituals. At my older age it is more dispersing religious knowledge to the community and to non Zarathushti community."

Priests in North America have also been the major force behind the prayer classes that local Zarathushti Associations hold. Generations of children have learnt what it means to be a Zarathushti at these classes taught by priests and parents. Children learn their prayers for their navjote ceremonies and later on about the values of their religion.

Beyond that, the involvement of priests within the religion in the traditional sense is limited. This may primarily be due to the lack of Zarathushti population to sustain priesthood symbolically. Dr. Kersy Antia, a senior priest from Chicago, says that in the future the traditional role of priests as knowledge-bearers may be lost forever. Dr. Antia feels the ever increasing need for priests to answer the enormous amount of questions that face our religion today. Dr. Bagli sees two possibilities for priests in the coming years. "There are two ways one practices the religion (a) through living it and (b) through devotional practices. In my view, the two are inextricably intertwined. I have noticed young members of the community sincerely trying to practice the Faith by living it, but are not always party to devotional and ritual practices."

The future of the Zarathushti community in North America is very much dependent on the active participation and guidance of its priests. Kobad Zarolia sees "a bright future for Zoroastrian community if we follow the example of our fore fathers when they started establishing in India. They built Fire Temples first when 20 to 30 families got established in a village or city. Building of wedding halls always took back seat to Fire temples. In

North America we have reversed the trend and that what worries me. "

The onus of the success of the priesthood lies primarily with the parents and the community in general. Parents need to take the extra step in making their children understand their religion and culture beyond just the prayers they recite and the ceremonies they perform. As they grow older, a wider understanding of theology, rites and ceremonies, and the deeper meaning of our scriptures. And the community in general needs to give the respect and encouragement due to the priests to do what they do best. Dr. Bagli is optimistic in his outlook on this issue. "I see a lot of young talent coming up as lawyers, doctors and social workers, and also in the extracurricular fields. However somewhere along the line people have to come to grips with the fact that Spirituality is a reality and making it a part of their life can only bring greater benevolence to the community".

There is a need for a deeper awakening and understanding of our religion. The will and knowledge to tackle the problems and issues of a modern diasporas can lead to the ultimate redefining of the role of priests as the keepers of this most ancient religion. This will be the challenge and the legacy of the coming generation of young priests in North America.

*Atha Zamyat yatha Afrinami
(May it be so as I say it).*

Arzan Sam Wadia is an architect and urban designer currently residing in New York City with his wife Shirrin. He runs Parsi Khabar (www.parsikhavar.net) an online portal about Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India. Arzan is an avid blogger, motorcyclist and an active member of the Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group.





WZSO: Harmony for the Generations

by Farobag Homi Cooper

“It is our character, individually and collectively, which will help define our heritage towards its rightful place in society.”

The World Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra (WZSO), founded by Farobag Homi Cooper and Cyrus Mehta, made its debut at the 2000 World Congress in Houston. Featuring a unique mixture of young and seasoned professionals, the WZSO is now a regular highlight at Congresses.

The World Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra's performances at FEZANA and World Congresses are always proclaimed as highlights. Although we are pleased, I believe its entertainment value – much desired and appreciated – is a by-product.

More than simply an ensemble of Zarathushtis, the WZSO's aims are somewhat loftier. It strives to enhance the cultural atmosphere during Congresses; but also serves as a conduit for amateurs and aspiring professionals to gain unique experiences and perceptions that develop only through performing with a professional orchestra. After all, where else can our Zarathushti musicians have the opportunity to sit side-by-side with members of the Houston Symphony, Chicago Philharmonia or Toronto Philharmonic?

For more advanced participants, another advantage is the possibility to perform as a concerto soloist. Few young musicians of any religious affiliation have the privilege to be accompanied by a professional symphony orchestra. The WZSO is not only a showcase for introducing talented Zarathushti musicians to the community, but is now also a springboard for gaining the added confidence requisite for success.

Indeed, I am particularly delighted and proud to hear that Mahfrin Santoke, who performed with the WZSO at the World Congress in Houston at the tender age of 13, is now completing her B.M. requirements for a double major



in flute performance and music education. Other Zarathushti soloists with the WZSO who have emerged within the music profession include Jamshed Turel, Dinyar Vania, Sorab Wadia and composer Parizad Irani.

Although it is gratifying, the WZSO does not set its sights on producing professional musicians. Yet the orchestra certainly embraces the ideals that contribute towards excellence – and not just success – which can be ever so fleeting. Music – alongside medicine, law, and theology – is one of the cornerstones of the Western intellectual tradition. Exposure to music builds strength, discipline, perseverance, and ultimately creativity, which is the hallmark of excellence. These attributes are the building blocks of character. It is our character, individually and collectively, which will help define our heritage towards its rightful place in society.

As an ardent supporter of the performing arts, I cannot belabor the need to establish similar ventures in literary and creative arts as well. We need to lobby constructively for all Zarathushti artists to gain wider acknowledgment and support through FEZANA, WZCC and other Zarathushti cultural institutions, associations and publications; and to foster collaboration amongst ourselves. Ultimately, the choice will rest with these organizations: either to be emboldened and forge ahead, paving a path for future generations of Zarathushtis via exemplification; or to be content with our glorious past and merely create room for nostalgia.

Farobag Homi Cooper is music director of the Chicago Philharmonia, the Chicago Performing Artists Series and the WZSO. An educator, motivational speaker and a Reiki master, he believes in creating abundance from the inside out, and has given his heart and soul to assist FEZANA and other Zarathushti causes.



Zoroastrianism, Judaism and the Next Generation

By Levi Fishman

I first learned about Zoroastrians in the spring of 2007. I had heard the word, I was familiar with Thus Spake Zarathushtra, but I didn't know anything about the religion. That spring, I came across a flyer for a fire jumping ceremony that was taking place in the South Bronx section of New York. No one there was Zoroastrian, oddly enough. The guy hosting it was Iranian and simply enjoyed the meaning of the ceremony – to rid oneself of what's holding you back and focus on the future.

A couple of years later, as a graduate student at Columbia University's Journalism school, I needed to pick a topic for my Master's project. Thinking back to the fire jumping ceremony, and the cursory research I did into Zoroastrians, I felt like there was an interesting story to tell. As a Jew, I know what it's like to live in a community negotiating religious continuity. There are fewer Jewish families today engaged in the Jewish community, and many are working to find out how to reach those who are unaffiliated and get them to "choose Jewish."

As I started to look deeper into the Zoroastrian community, I realized they shared many of the same issues as Judaism – only more so.

Going up to the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, I found a set of folks who are dedicated to raising children who identify strongly with their heritage. But something was quickly pointed out to me: this works well in a large metropolitan area. It doesn't work so well in area's where there is literally only one Zoroastrian family. It's impossible for me to put myself into a situation where I can understand what it's like to be the "last" of something. And I can see how it would be so easy to assimilate, forget about your past and move forward.

That's what makes the work of groups like NextGenNow so remarkable.

Finding, engaging youth and trying to grow a religion that is often written off – nearly every major news article about



“As I started to look deeper into the Zoroastrian community, I realized they shared many of the same issues as Judaism – only more so”

Zoroastrians written in the last couple of years focuses on their decline – is a Herculean task. But my impression as an outsider looking in, is that there innumerable people willing to accept that challenge, willing to figure out how to educate and inspire today's generation and equip them – beyond religious classes – to lead Zoroastrians in the future.

Note:

You can read Levi's full thesis on Zoroastrianism online at nextgennow.wordpress.com.

Levi Fishman is a freelance writer living in New York City. A recent graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, his work has appeared in the New York Press, the Chicago Tribune, the Albany Times-Union, and the New York Jewish Week.

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My Brother Riyad

By Roy Wadia

I clearly remember the day my brother Riyad, barely a week old, came home from Breach Candy Hospital on a hot and wet September day in Bombay. The monsoon had lingered late in 1967, and the Arabian Sea waves still washed over the parapet on the Worli Sea Face promenade across from the bungalow that my grandfather the filmmaker Jamshed “JBH” Wadia had built in the 1940s. I had anticipated Riyad’s arrival for many months, and the miracle of birth made an impact even then on a five-year-old. I viewed the new arrival at first with awe, and then, upon closer inspection, with a surge of protective love tinged with the realization that I no longer had the roost to myself, that a new chick had hatched, breaking the shell that I had constructed around my hitherto unchallenged dominion.

Riyad was beautiful from the outset. No ugly duckling phase for him whether he was one week old, or 10 years or 20. Raised largely by our adoring grandparents in an amazing, eccentric world of film and media, it was no surprise that both Riyad and I expressed a flair for the arts and humanities rather than the sciences and mathematics (despite our father being an organic chemist by training). Having been constantly compared to me by everyone from relatives to school teachers, and initially found wanting in academic and extra-curricular skills, Riyad had lived in my shadow for years. At first he tried desperately to be more like me, the younger sibling striving to reach the standards set by the older brother. But the more he did that, the more I would put him down – scornful of his attempts.

It was only after I left for the US that Riyad finally came into his own. Not only did he flourish in school and then college, attracting a huge circle of devoted friends, he ventured into the realm of theatre and the arts, acting in plays and musicals, writing poetry and short stories, making a name for himself in the Bombay scene. All of this gave Riyad the courage to do what he had long wanted to – become a filmmaker just like our grandfather. The true heir of our grandfather JBH in so many ways, Riyad went to a prestigious film school in Australia, winning awards for his student work and returning to India ready to revive Wadia Movietone.

Just like me, Riyad had been harboring a secret for years. Devastatingly handsome in his teens and early 20s, Riyad had many girls pining for him. He even dated



Riyad Vinci Wadia
Bombay, India
1967- 2003.

some of them in college. But the truth was that Riyad, like me, was gay. Unlike me, however, he was torn about his sexuality. In school, Riyad actually displayed an overt homophobia towards classmates who were teased for their effeminacy. But in Australia, Riyad finally came to terms with who he was. Being away from home gave him the chance to be himself, to not only accept himself but decide to be open and truthful about it even when he returned to conservative, homophobic and hypocritical Bombay and India.

In countries like India, and indeed even in the so-called “open” West, a majority of gay men grow up as self-hating individuals, absorbing the corrosive stigma and discrimination that exists towards homosexuality. Many gay men end up getting married, having children and leading “normal” lives because that is what they are expected to do, pressured to do. On the side, of course, they lead a double life, having sex with men in secret. This in no small part has helped fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India and around the world; there are far more

Note: To read an expanded version of this story, please visit nextgennow.wordpress.com. For more information about Riyad’s work, visit www.wadiamovietone.com.



From Roots to Wings

men who have sex with men than one would imagine, an issue that is seldom acknowledged and discussed, with devastating consequences for individuals, families and ultimately societies at large.

When Riyad returned to India, he was determined to shatter that mould at least as far as he went. Not only did he come out swinging, his openness was all the more vocal and dramatic after years of suppression. Riyad truly became one of the most prominent gay rights activists in Bombay, indeed in India. There had been others before him, such as the illustrious Ashok Row Kavi who was fearlessly out even when I was in college. But Riyad took his advocacy to a new level.

Even as Riyad made the rounds of the international film festival circuit with his smash hit, "Fearless -- The Hunterwali Story," he was preparing his next project. It was the early 1990s, barely a decade after a dreaded virus -- HIV/AIDS -- had emerged across the globe. Riyad wanted to explore an overtly gay theme on film, a first for India. The fiction and poetry of Poona-based R. Raj Rao came to his notice. Rao's work spoke of the gay subculture that existed at the time, one imbued with suffering and self-loathing, where stigma and discrimination by society make it impossible to live a normal life, a world where family support is usually non-existent, forcing one to build a new family among one's gay friends. Birds of a feather flock together, shielding one another from the harsh realities of the real world around them, and it is this message that resounded with Riyad as he embarked upon what was to be a seminal work, a 13-minute film based on six hard-hitting poems, "BOMgAY." Starring Rahul Bose and with cameos by many of Riyad's close friends and Riyad himself, "BOMgAY" perfectly encapsulates what it was like to be gay in urban Bombay. And, for a film that was never screened to a mass audience (the Indian Censor Board would not issue a certificate for a film like this), it has acquired near-mythical status -- I still get requests from people all over India for a DVD copy, and "BOMgAY" is still in high demand at gay film festivals across the world, 13 years after it was made.

Just as Riyad was about to embark on "BOMgAY" however, a spell of ill health led to a round of medical tests the results of which were life-altering. When he received the diagnosis through our family doctor in Bombay, Riyad collapsed in our mother's arms and wept. She was the first person he told. When I received the call from my mother, I knew what she was going to say even before she uttered the words. Even though I had been living with this fear for so long it still seemed so unreal.

The irony was that Riyad refused to take any medication, despite the fact that he could have easily accessed the best health services through our family's considerable contacts in the pharmaceutical and medical world. One part of Riyad would not believe that he actually had been diagnosed. He read websites that discounted such a diagnosis, denying that such a condition existed. On the other hand, Riyad from time to time would undergo blood tests to determine his latest counts, the results of which were truly discouraging.

Eventually, Riyad was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the stomach. He was in great pain, and began losing weight fast. The tuberculosis had spread rapidly, ravaging his once beautiful body. In November 2003, as he became weaker and weaker, he was rushed to the hospital, where his situation slowly stabilized. Even then, he refused to tell most of his many devoted friends what was going on. One of them who had

heard the news called him, fearing the worst, and when Riyad confirmed the diagnosis asked Riyad why he hadn't told him all those years. To which Riyad replied, "I didn't want you to see me as my disease, but as myself. You believed in me for the person I was, not out of pity but out of love. Why would I risk losing that love and replacing it with your pity? That, more than any disease, would have truly killed me."

After months of suffering, the end was swift and painless. In perhaps the most supreme of ironies, at a memorial for Riyad in Bombay just days after he passed away, a young Gujarati man approached me and broke down. In between sobs, he told me how Riyad had not only helped him after his own diagnosis by ensuring he



Riyad truly became one of the most prominent gay rights activists in Bombay, indeed in India. There had been others before him... But Riyad took his advocacy to a new level.



From Roots to Wings

had access to medication, but that Riyadh had also met this man's parents and helped him tell his family that not only was he gay but that he had been diagnosed positive as well. I was to learn that this was not an isolated story. Riyadh was instrumental in counseling many gay men in Bombay after their diagnoses, helping introduce them to doctors and health providers and, in many cases, supporting their families as well.



It took a long while, but I was able to cast off my grief bit by bit until I found myself in Bombay on November 30, 2004, for the prayers on Riyadh's first death anniversary. I arose early that morning, before the rest of

the household. It was a beautiful day, with rare blue skies. From the window I could see the water sparkling, Riyadh's beloved Arabian Sea that had called to him just a year ago. I sat at the table where my mother usually recited her prayers and talked to my baby brother as though he were there. "My darling Riyadh," I said, "Forgive me for holding you back with my grief. I will always miss you..."

At the table where I sat and prayed was a portrait of Riyadh taken when he was about five years old. Shot by our Dad, an excellent photographer, the picture shows Riyadh, who was such a beautiful child, in soft focus standing behind a gorgeous red rose. As I finished my prayer, and before I opened my eyes, an amazing aroma of roses wafted across the room, delicate yet powerful, lingering in the air for several seconds before fading away. Whenever the pangs of loss are especially sharp, when the urge to hug and hold him is stronger than ever, all I have to do is think back to that moment to know that my brother Riyadh is here with me, always and forever.

Roy Wadia is Communications Director at the BC Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver, Canada. Earlier he served as Communications/Advocacy Officer for WHO in China. In a previous incarnation Roy spent 12 years at CNN, helping launch and produce much of CNN's Asia-Pacific news programs. Roy was born and raised in Bombay, a place he still calls his true home.

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More details are available at <http://tinyurl.com/zorostimulus>. If you have additional questions, feel free to email zorostimulus@fezana.org. This effort is being organized as part of the WZC's Youth Leadership Enhancement Program by Jasmine Dadachanji (Victoria, BC), Eric Engineer (Dallas, TX), and Carl Irani (Orlando, FL).



From Roots to Wings



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If you have any questions/concerns or if there isn't a chapter in your area,
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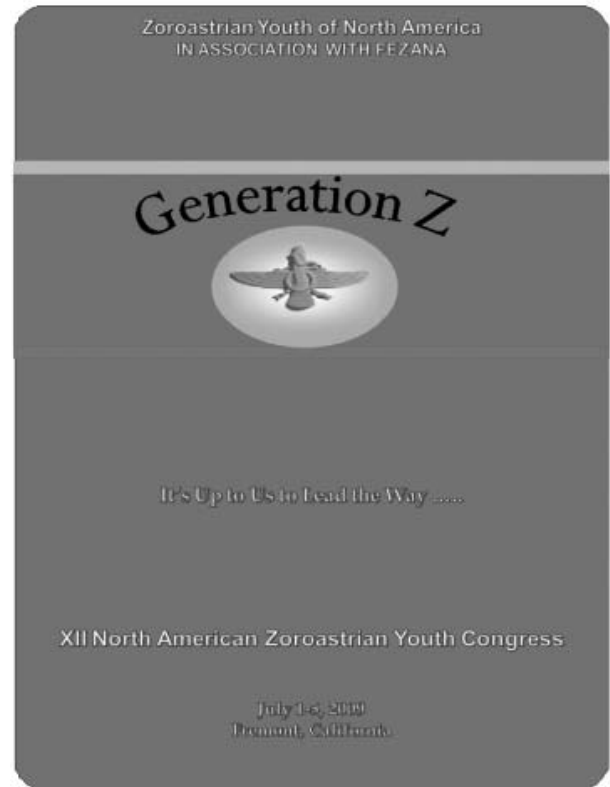
ZYNA Report: the 12th North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress

By Nahid Dashtaki

After months of preparation and conference calls by the planning committee (Ferzin Chapgar, Ava Afshari, Carl Irani, and Susan Kaboly with assistance from FEZANA president Bomi Patel), the 12th North American Youth Congress began on July 1, 2009 in San Jose, California, at the Fremont Marriott.

150 attendees came from United States and Canada, ranging in age from 16 to 37. (photo below participants arriving)

DAY 1: Opening events included speeches, dances, and musical talents by many attendees. Looking around the room, it was encouraging to see that many participants had already created new friendships that first evening. During the show, we ate a delicious three-course dinner, followed by an impromptu dance party – a great way to end the evening.



DAY 2: After a night of intense dancing we woke up to relaxing meditation sessions by instructor Shiraz Kanga – which continued each morning. After breakfast, Congress keynote speaker Dr. Jenny Rose, who teaches at Stanford and Claremont Graduate University, discussed her travels and findings on Zarathushti influences throughout the Middle East. “Dr. Rose’s presentation was fascinating,” said ZYNA Co-Chair, Ava Afshari. Part of the Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series, Dr. Rose’s enlightening talk showed us how our religion had greater cultural influence than many were aware.

Following that impressive presentation, Shirin Abadi, a specialist at Vancouver’s BC Cancer Agency, spoke about Cancer Prevention and Treatment. Although a heavy topic, Shirin’s information was eye-opening and really got us to think about cancer’s effects on our population.

During lunch, attendees interacted and built on new acquaintances made the night before. After lunch, several dynamic speakers led seminars on Leadership and Career Development. Cyrus Mistry, Enterprise Product Manager at Google, (photo page 69) engineer/entrepreneur Arya Goudarzi, and yoga instructor Camille Patel held sessions loaded with humorous anecdotes, valuable information, and practical applications for our careers and lives. Their creative



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minds made the sessions “interesting, original and valuable,” according to Jasmine Dadachanji of Vancouver, Canada.

Later, new FEZANA initiatives were presented by Eric Engineer, Afreed Mistry, and Zubin Mistry. Attendees learned about the Youth Leadership Enhancement Project, the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, and NextGenNow; and networked based on career interest. Listening to questions and contacts exchanged, I saw that attendees felt inspired. I enjoyed these session because it shows that an organization as big as FEZANA makes efforts to promote youth-run activities and projects. The day ended with dinner and the Beatles Swing Band, bringing us into the mood for the DJ party into the early hours.

DAY 3: Before heading to check out San Francisco, listened to breakfast talks by Armaity May and Nirvanna Anosheh. Nirvanna spoke on the Gathas, based on her personal quest to understand how “Asha” applies to daily life. Armaity – a veterinarian – gave a fascinating talk, “Vegetarianism in Zoroastrianism,” offering links which many of us were not aware. And interestingly, it didn’t deter many from a second helping of bacon and eggs!

Our day continued with a bus tour of San Francisco – including the Golden Gate Bridge, Twin peaks, Fisherman’s Wharf, and Ghirardelli Square – before heading back. Dinner and an easy night of games and karaoke wound down a busy day. We were going to need energy for the next fun-filled day.

DAY 4: The day’s sessions began with a bang. A business-savvy seminar by David Smith offered strategies applicable to all aspects of business and everyday life. Ironically, that event was followed up by a much-needed,

appealing session on “Coping with Stress” by marriage and family therapist Jim Arjani. It was great planning by the organizers!

That afternoon, we boarded buses to the San Jose Zoroastrian Center.(photo below) We attended the Jashneh Tirgan celebration, sponsored by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization, the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California and FEZANA. Tirgan is a water celebration, held in mid-summer. Congress attendees enjoyed themselves with water slides, dunk tank, and buckets of water all over the outdoor court. Those who



wanted to enjoy festivities from the sidelines stayed in designated “dry zones” – but were not always so lucky!

After everyone had exhausted themselves in the biggest water fight I’ve seen, we boarded buses back to the hotel for the final gala night. It was impressive to see everyone go from damp clothing, shaggy hair, and





From Roots to Wings

exhausted looks to elegant gowns, charming suits, and energetic attitudes. Everyone was ready to enjoy the last night to the fullest. With a dazzling performance by Ballet Afsaneh – a Bay Area professional Persian and Central Asian dance ensemble – and an exquisite dinner, followed up by even more dancing, the night was a wonderful finale.(photo page 69)

wouldn't be truthful if I said that there were no faults or incidents. Events did unfold that caused some dramatic effect; but the organizers did their best to deal with them, ensuring the best experience for attendees. It takes a lot of effort, time, frustration, and compromise to pull off an event of this magnitude. In my view the event was a success, as all congresses are.



DAY 5: We got up early, with difficulty, for the final ceremony. As we looked around and saw the scarce turnout, it was obvious we weren't alone. My main suggestion to the next Youth Congress planners is to start morning events after 10 am, to receive the attention they deserve.

So with a jashan by local mobeds, followed by presentations on upcoming Congresses: the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in summer 2011 in Vancouver, Canada; and the 9th world Zoroastrian Congress in winter 2009 in Dubai, UAE; and a closing farewell by ZYNA Co-Chairs, the congress came to a close. It was a fantastic end to a wonderful week.

My simple conditions for Youth Congress success are: building new friendships, exploring new values, and the ever-essential discussion between youth and the larger community. Overall, this was a very satisfying congress. I



*In 2005 **Nahid Dashtaki** received a Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations as well as Comparative Literature from the University of California, Irvine. She has international work experience in India and Iran. Currently, Nahid is working to complete her master's in both Dispute Resolution and Public Policy at Pepperdine University. As Assistant Secretary with the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, Nahid is dedicated to serving the community.*



The PhD

Nauzad Tantra

A PhD sounds like a daunting task. But with a bit of advice, you could arm yourself with the knowledge of what to expect and how to go about your doctorate.

So let's start with what research is all about. In a sentence, it is about knowing more and more about less and less. Bachelor's and Master's courses teach you a wide range of subjects and impart knowledge on what people before you have done. But research is all about moving in to the unknown. It is about finding out what has not been discovered or recorded yet. How do you prepare for that?

You would usually start with what is known: the rights and wrongs, the in's and out's of the subject. And as you go through literature, you will see the facts and fallacies that researchers have accepted and debated. You might discover areas which no one has explored before. At times you may find that a "fact" is not necessarily a fact, but has been accepted as such, without due diligence. For instance you may have heard that a duck's quack does not echo. It was not until recently that a group of engineers at Salford university put the "fact" to the test and found out that in reality a duck's quack did echo!

At the end of your PhD, you would have created knowledge (and not merely implemented or invented things) for the rest of the world to use. And if that doesn't excite you enough, you need to have a long hard think about whether you really want to go ahead and do a PhD.

I came to UK for a Masters with the aim of doing a PhD after the course. While doing my Masters I spoke to researchers and academics to find out the best way of applying for a PhD. Here are some tips which might help:

- o **A PhD is not about the university or the department.** It is about you and your supervisor. Look up the website of the university, look for academics that interest you and go through their work.
- o **Academics are busy people.** So contact their researchers first. Make sure that the academics' style of working matches yours. Also try and find out if the academic has funds or projects that can sponsor your PhD.

- o **Be very clear of what you want during your discussions.** It makes no sense to finalise the project only to find there is no funding for it later on, or vice versa.
- o **Try to get more than one offer.** Apply for your best project / supervisor / funding option.
- o **Always have a plan "B":** Very often the project you accept does not take off or does not go the way you planned.
- o **Get your plan accepted** by your supervisor, funding organisation and any other stakeholders.
- o **Negotiate:** S/He's your supervisor, not God!
- o **Do not multi-task, but work in parallel.** It would be futile to read literature and do experiments at the same time. But there are times at which you are waiting for the machine to be free (or get fixed) or times at which you are waiting for results to be obtained, use that time to catch up on literature or get going with reports, presentations and the like. There are always some small, non-urgent tasks that can wait and fill the gaps when you have little work.
- o **Work hard and work smart.** There's no PhD research office in which you don't hear moans about monotonous, brainless tasks. Collating data, making graphs and sorting through loads of data are some of them. But guess what! You have a computer, which excels at doing just that! Use it effectively! If you don't know how to exploit its capability, learn how to in the first few months of your PhD.
- o **Write, when the iron is hot.** There will be times at which you are waiting for your analyses to finish, your machine to do its job and you are tired of reading what others have said. That's the time to start writing your own piece of work. Plus you get in to the habit of writing.
- o **Standardise your work** - Imagine I had 12 odd reports when I sit down to write my PhD thesis, and all 12 of them in different fonts, with different style headings, different referencing styles and different graph styles. When you write, standardise your style of writing. Same fonts, same sizes, same types of headings. Going through 40 odd graphs just to change their units is not a pleasant task when you are faced with a deadline. And believe me, it happens more than you think!
- o **Your priority is finishing your PhD,** not winning the Nobel prize. Often, researchers try to perfect their research, and perfection works by the law of diminishing returns. Keep track of your project plan. Ask your supervisor if your current results would be acceptable and move on to the next bit of work if they are. Don't lose focus of your primary goal.
- o **Don't listen to the 99 who say you can't do it,** listen to the one who says you can!



From Roots to Wings

- o **Advertise your targets** – It is difficult to motivate yourself. More so if your goals are only known to you. But if you've shouted out your targets from the rooftops at the start, there's no looking back.
- o **Network!** Time spent with friends from different backgrounds in a relaxing environment is a great stress-buster. Attending a course or a lecture also gives you time to relax your mind and gain knowledge at the same time.
- o **Stay active** - Go for a walk, cycle, play an active sport. It gives you much needed exercise and takes your mind off work.
- o **How about lecturing** - Be an academic. Try to give your students what your academics didn't give you. It is both satisfying and a great morale booster.
- o **Enjoy life as a student** - This is your last chance to enjoy life as a student. Get those freebies! Enjoy those parties. After all, there are no free lunches outside the university!

Note:

The full article, can be read at
<http://zoroastrians.net/2009/02/16/phd-experience>



Nauzad Tantra holds a bachelors, and masters in manufacturing and has recently completed his doctorate from the University of Nottingham. During his PhD he worked with Rolls-Royce to develop waterjet and electro-discharge machining technologies for aero-engine turbine manufacture. Currently he is working with IMI plc as a global graduate and his technical interests include low cost automation, mechatronics, green technologies and non-traditional machining. He is a keen student of technology and knowledge management. His hobbies include sports, cycling, trekking and tinkering around like a typical engineer!

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Understanding History

A Road Map For The Future

Rashna Writer

There is not much debate that the study of history is not just for the historians. Rather, being ignorant of one's antecedents has come to be seen as leaving a people rather ill prepared to meet the future. As arguably one of the world's smallest community, the Zoroastrians – because of their chequered history – are possibly among the more complex. Coming to grips with the complexity can be given a helping hand by understanding the past.

It is not overstating the point to suggest that it is vital to know and understand one's history: because where we come from and what we have been through is what defines us. The story of any peoples is, in fact, much like a living entity. It includes everything from traditions to governmental structures, which, being dynamic is subject to change. The reason why even a cursory grasp of one's history is so important is because historical awareness helps societies to exist despite these inevitable changes. Societies lacking a historical awareness often end up as mere shadows of themselves.

The study of history, for the non-historian, ought not to be about the mastery of the minutiae of dates, kings/queens, wars, et. al. Rather, it is an attempt at understanding the overarching story. The importance of historical awareness is not just the remembrance of great kings and victorious (or otherwise) battles, but that the collective experience helps bind the community. As importantly, a

shrewd reading of historical events alerts us to

the errors made by our forbears: history ought not just to be about winning battles and extending the empire. It ought to help chart the road map for the future.

Quite simply: being ignorant of one's past could leave one rudderless.

From the Zoroastrian point of view, the millennial separation of the two major constituent branches of the Zoroastrian family tree, Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrian, who have met and re-acquainted themselves since the mid/late- 20th century in the Western diasporas has raised questions about the perceived differences between the two groups. This presents a double bind: a minority community relocating itself in an overwhelmingly Judeo-Christian environment, in which the one occasionally, fails to fully comprehend the other. This in itself is a product of the vagaries of the history of the Zoroastrian peoples.

In the West, the Zoroastrian need not absent himself from participating in the social, economic, political life of his adopted country. This in turn, implies the possibility of rapid assimilation into the host society. Nevertheless, there appears to be an overwhelming desire to integrate into their new domiciles without relinquishing their intrinsic Zoroastrianness, which could be immensely helped by the study of their history, which, in time, becomes the cement that helps bind the community; cultivates a sense of awareness -- 'who I am' and 'where I come from' – and gives one a sense of 'rootedness' which the individual carries with him regardless of where he might then find himself. As

important, it enables the American/Canadian Zoroastrian to explain 'who' precisely he is, given that the world overwhelmingly, suffers from a collective amnesia about the Zoroastrian peoples.

For the Zoroastrian domiciled in the West particularly, the re-affirmation of one's identity in a setting where the external forces are capable of exerting such influences as to divest one of one's older traditions requires a greater effort on the part of the individual and group.

Certainly, a cursory understanding of the history of Zoroastrian Iran up to and including the Parsi settlement in India and the most recent event, the creation of a global diasporas, ought not to be undertaken in isolation. The Zoroastrians are, above all else, a religious group whose self-perception and the perception of the world of them is, in fact, defined in religious terms. All I am suggesting is that alongside an understanding of the message of Zarathushtra, we, as his followers, should also understand the history of his peoples. The joy of studying ancient Persia, besides its role as one of the greatest empires in world history is the discovery of the extent to which the infrastructure of that empire was underpinned by the Zoroastrian ethos. The sense of discovery is worth the effort of study!

An awareness of the composite of 'our' story – from the greatness of Empire to our current status as a minority community spread thinly around the world – would help us locate ourselves in the world in which we find ourselves and, as importantly, help us chart the future.



Dr Rashna Writer is the author of *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation*, and co-author of *The Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh*. She is Teaching Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London University where she lectures on Persian history; and has lectured at Birkbeck College and Richmond College and was a Research Assistant at Manchester University where she undertook research on the Zoroastrian community in the UK. She has participated at international conferences and lectured in the UK, USA and the Indian sub-continent. Rashna holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics; and runs a political risk consultancy.



In July 2008, the ZSO invited Zarathushtis to participate in an essay competition to address the theme Vision 2020: A Vision for our future.

The focus of the essay was to cover topics such as contemporary issues and matters on religion, history, culture and society and their relevance to the state of the Zarathushti community in Ontario and Zoroastrianism today. We are pleased to announce that Putli Mirza is the proud recipient of the first prize (\$1000). Putli has asked that we donate her prize money to the ZSO Religious Education Program for the children for which we are very grateful. The second prize (\$500) has been awarded to Farrahnaz Bulsara. Putli Mirza's winning essay is on ZSO website, www.zso.org. ' The competition was sponsored by the long term planning committee of the ZSO. "ZSO Newsletter"

Looking Back, Marching Forward

Putli Mirza

This essay is written by observing the Zarathushti community since I came to Canada in 1976. I can make these observations having been involved with the children's religion classes, serving on the religious subcommittee and based on my involvement with the Mukhtad observances for 26 years. I look back with pride at all that we have achieved in Ontario in educating the community and most of all the children of our Zarathushti faith. Every project was taken up with a lot of hope and enthusiasm to preserve our great religion on the North American continent. I felt that North America would be the place where Zoroastrianism will thrive and flourish. As the years went by, one could observe that there was no apparent religious revival, the children accepted the knowledge of the religion as it was given to them. Most of our kids had no interest in researching or reading to gather more information or knowledge. There was no spiritual connection to our faith. The limited sessions our classes provided were no substitute to be in constant touch with your religion and your community.

As I look back at my own upbringing in India, I had absolutely no knowledge of the religion but we went to our own neighbourhood Agairy everyday and paid our homage, believing completely that we were bowing to the spirit of Ahura Mazda within the fire. A faith was developed

not only to the sacred Atash but also to the prayers that we were taught to recite. We attended the various rites and rituals that were followed by our family, once again without understanding anything. We also had no interest to find out more about our religion or look into why so many rituals were followed. We did it all under the influence of faith fully believing that through the prayers recited by the priests and our personal prayers we were able to get the comfort and security of Ahura Mazda. We also lived in 'Baug's' or colonies in close proximity with our community members. We had friends and family around us who constantly enforced our beliefs and values of our religion.

In view of the above experience, I felt that a consecrated Fire in our midst would imbibe the younger generation with the faith and zeal to protect our prayers, rites and rituals. Our efforts to collect the funds for a consecrated Fire didn't meet with much success. Also the nagging question remained that if we did have a consecrated fire, would we be able to allow non Zoroastrians to enter the premises. The children being born and brought up in North America were increasingly marrying outside our faith. If we do not allow their spouses to come to our Fire Temple it would be a source of conflict within the family. Thus the vision of having an Agiary, meaning a consecrated fire did not materialize.

Our priests who were born and brought up in India became the stalwarts of our religion. They have preserved our crucial prayers of Navjote, Jashan, Marriage and Funeral. With the introduction of Mukhtad observances the children are able to see and feel some other prayers. I credit all that to our first generation of priests from India. They gave hours and days of service to the community and have kept our Rites and Rituals in the forefront. Today many of our younger Navars, who have been initiated in India, have come back with just the basic requirements of becoming priests. Having not lived in the Agiary or staying for any length of time in India they lack the same devotion and zeal to continue these Rites and Rituals. Already we are feeling the shortage of priests in parts of North America where the Zarathushti population is limited. Some of the newly initiated Navars choose not to practice at all. The fact that it is completely a volunteer service in North America, the young priests find it difficult to juggle their work schedules, family obligations and then put in some time to partake in the prayers.

The trend in the Zarathushti population is leaning towards interfaith marriages. The possibility of children born of these marriages, coming into our fold is entirely dependent on which partner has more fervor of raising the child in a particular faith. Once again we find that our children lack that zeal to raise their children as Zarathushtis. Our priests are willing to do Navjotes of children of these mixed marriages and perform the Ashirwad ceremony of interfaith couples but to what end and purpose. The spouses of these couples seldom



identify with our religion or their children follow the religion or its rites and rituals. Even the children of Zarathushti couples have done away with the Sudreh and Kusti. The children do not even recite the basic prayers or take up a prayer book and try to pray. The way things are going, one wonders what we are trying to preserve? We would in the near future have 2 big community centres. There would be prayer rooms in both and we will have fires where ceremonies will take place, but in the next 20 years will we have priests to recite the prayers? Will we even have the congregation to attend those prayers and believe in them? The prospect for our prayers and our Rites and Rituals looks bleak.

Considering all the above factors, I feel that the practice of Zoroastrianism as I had known it in India is no longer possible here. As we 'March Forward', I see the future generations coming together for social functions at both these Centres. They will keep the name of Zoroastrianism alive through various organizations like the Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce, Zoroastrian Cricket Club, Zoroastrian Scout groups etc. That would give the community a chance to work and play together. As we are doing now, we should continue to organize Zoroastrian Congresses especially in North America, India and Iran in order to keep an intellectual interest in Zoroastrianism alive. A continuous dialogue must be maintained amongst the people who are interested in the welfare of Zoroastrianism. Both Zoroastrian organizations must actively strive to encourage youth and young people to take up studies in Zoroastrian history, philosophy, rites and rituals. We should encourage trips to India and Iran to keep our historical roots alive. We have been pro active in these measures to keep the community in contact.

The most important and necessary change will have to come from the parents of young children to make an earnest and honest attempt to imbibe the religious tenets in the children. Expose them to as many rites and rituals as possible. They have to encourage their children to wear their Sudreh and Kusti as much as possible. All this can be accomplished if the parents themselves would set good examples for the children to follow. It would help tremendously if the children were exposed and encouraged to learn more than their Kusti prayers. They could pray from the book or with their parents. Following as many traditions in the home would keep the children's interest alive. Religion Classes at both the centres must continue and parents

should play a more active role in their children's religious education. The scouting activities help keep our children together and they can work towards their 'Religion in Life' badges at every stage in the scouting movement.

The community, through the ZSO and the OZCF, could sponsor two Mobeds from India to be available to perform various prayers in case our volunteer Mobeds are not available. These Mobeds can have regular jobs but should be given extra allowance by the community every month to ensure their availability and also give their expertise. At the moment, through the Mobed Council it should be arranged to call all the young Mobeds or as many as are willing to come to be mentored by senior Mobeds as to the recital of various prayers and all the steps that need to be practiced while doing the Rituals. The young mobeds need to practice how to say all the names that need to be recited during the Mukhtad prayers. All the young Mobeds should be encouraged to partake in as many prayers as possible.

Finally, it is imperative to have and continue with Darbe Mehrs as symbolic Agiaries where we continue to pay homage to the fires and draw solace from our ancient religion. Our faith must continue and that is only possible if we preserve our Rites and Rituals, continue to believe in our Sudreh and Kusti and embrace the power of our prayers. Our intellectual knowledge will not keep Zoroastrianism alive, neither will our social activities. We need to experience our faith, believe in it and be passionate to preserve it for many more years to come.

Above are just a few ideas which might work to preserve our Zarathushti spirituality in North America. My greatest fear is that if we do not continue with our Rites, Rituals and our prayers we will be assimilated by various other religions on the North American continent. My incentive for writing this essay is my observation during the Mukhtad observances of how well the community comes together to pray, to mingle, and to be like one, in their belief and love of our faith. It feels miraculous. Our community is growing as we have new young migrants from various parts of the world coming here and raising their children. Our goal should be to keep these children in our fold and provide them with a spiritual link to our religion so that they would find it in their hearts to preserve this great faith as we have known it.



Putli Mirza holds a Masters degree in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India. She immigrated to Canada, 33 years ago with her husband Noshir and 3 children. She has been actively involved with the Zoroastrian community for many years, as a teacher and then a chairperson of the Religious education classes sponsored by the ZSO for 10 years and served on the Religious Sub Committee for many years. She has coordinated the Mukhtad observances in Ontario for 27 years. In Canada she trained in ESL (English as a second language) and taught for 20 years as a full time teacher to new immigrants for the Peel Board in Mississauga.



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FEZANA On Children

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Your children are not your children.
 They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
 They come through you but not from you,
 And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

FROM ROOTS TO WINGS
 For they have their own thoughts.

The Next Generation of Zarathushtis
 You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
 which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,
 but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
 as living arrows are sent forth.



The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
 and He bends you with His might

that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let our bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

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 ZAGBA's 25th Anniversary Celebration
 My Faith Restored
 By Khushnum Kermanizadeh

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For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
 so He loves also the bow that is stable.

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In The News

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GAINS TWO PROFESSORS FROM ATLANTA, GEORGIA: FARROKH MISTREE AND JANET K. ALLEN



Janet K Allen was named the John and Mary Moore Chair and Professor in the University of Oklahoma, in the school of Industrial Engineering, of the College of Engineering, Farrokh Mistree, has been named the L.A. Comp Chair and Director, in the University of Oklahoma College of Engineering's School of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering.

Janet Allen's continuing research interests include simulation and modeling in engineering design, robust design, decision-based design, and design pedagogy. She has co-authored one monograph and more than

225 technical publications. Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and Janet Allen serves as an associate editor of the ASME Journal of Mechanical Design. She is a Senior Member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and an honorary member of the mechanical engineering honor society Pi Tau Sigma. From 2001-2007 she was the director of Georgia Tech's Systems Realization Laboratory.

In accepting her appointment, Allen said she is intrigued by the opportunities for experiential education that the new Engineering Practice Facility offers. She has considerable experience with experiential education, having developed and taught courses in design at the freshman and junior levels and capstone design as well as design for sustainability. Having earned her bachelor's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and her doctoral degree in biophysics from the University of California at Berkeley, she has a strong interdisciplinary background and experience that she looks forward to putting to good use by helping the college in general and School of Industrial Engineering in particular to achieve the education goals embodied in both of their strategic plans.

Farrokh Mistree goes to Oklahoma University with more than 30 years of experience in academia, beginning as a lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, as associate professor and professor at the University of Houston and as professor of the Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering. He worked with Professor Ward O. Winer, chairman of the Woodruff School from 1988 to 2007, to start the Woodruff School Savannah and served as the associate chairman for the Woodruff School from 2005 to 2008.

Farrokh has taught courses in engineering design, naval architecture, solid mechanics, operations research, computer science and professional development. His research accomplishments are embodied in the scholarship of integration and the scholarship of education. His current interests include strategic engineering; distributed, collaborative, robust design multi-scale systems and simulation-based systems realization; and engineering education.

Farrokh Mistree has co-authored two textbooks, one monograph and more than 325 technical publications. His distinctions consist of recognition for research and teaching in 1999 and 2001, namely, the ASME Design Automation Design Award in 1999 and the Jack M. Zeigler Woodruff School Outstanding Educator Award in 2001. He has served as an ABET reviewer and the national secretary-treasurer for Pi Tau Sigma mechanical engineering honor society for 13 years. He is a Fellow of ASME, an associate fellow of the AIAA, a Life Member of Phi Kappa Phi, a member of ASEE and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers.

Mistree earned his bachelor's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur in 1967 and his master of science degree in engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1970, and a doctorate in 1974.

For additional information, visit

<http://www.srl.gatech.edu/Members/jallen> <http://www.srl.gatech.edu/Members/fmistree>.

THE FEZANA JOURNAL CONGRATULATES PROFS MISTREE AND ALLEN AND WISHES THEM MUCH SUCCESS IN THEIR NEW POSITION. WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE THEM AS MEMBERS OF THE FEZANA FAMILY.

In The News

WILMETTE LIFE ROTARIAN TURNS SMALL GIFT INTO \$2.5 MILLION

April 16, 2009

By Kimberly Fornek, kfornek@pioneerlocal.com

A Winnetka resident and 27-year member of the Wilmette Rotary Club has split his time between his life on the North Shore and his hometown in western India, and has been successful in both places.

Godrej (Billy) Billimoria earned law and accounting degrees in India, before he and his wife, Avan, moved to Chicago in 1965. He received a master's degree in business from Roosevelt University and his wife earned a doctorate in psychology from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Longtime residents of Kenilworth, as well as Wilmette and Winnetka, Avan became president of Chicago State University before retiring, and her husband owned an accounting firm in Glenview for 22 years. But his success in India has given him a deeper satisfaction, as well as benefiting the people who live in Bilimora, India, where he grew up.

Billimoria, 72, (whose relatives changed their last name to resemble their birthplace) has worked with the Rotary organization to get a water treatment plant built to provide safe drinking water for the city of about 100,000 people.

Purification plant

"The water was so dirty," Billimoria said. He sought the help of his fellow Rotarians to raise the money for a water purification plant. "We started from scratch ... about 10 years ago," Billimoria said.

"He energized the Rotary Club of Wilmette," which raised \$12,500 for the project, said Rotarian Richard Brill.

The Bilimora Rotary Club matched that amount and Rotary International, based in Evanston, and contributed \$300,000.

The plant was completed last year at a cost of about \$207,000. It supplies the town with potable water for 45 minutes each day. To Americans, that doesn't seem like much, but it is a marked improvement over having nothing but contaminated water to drink.

But Billimoria still had about \$120,000 remaining in Rotary grants, so he expanded his plan.

"We decided to build a pipeline from a dam which is about 3 or 4 kilometers away on the Ambika River to the purification plant," Billimoria said.

The pipeline will cost at least \$2 million. Enticed by the Rotary grants, the Indian and Bilimora municipal governments agreed to pay the difference. The pipeline, which is scheduled to be completed next March, will provide clean drinking water six hours a day, Billimoria

said. "Through his efforts, \$12,500 (from the Wilmette Rotary) turned into \$2.5 million," Brill said.

A lasting project

"The Gujarat state (where Bilimora is located), the India government and the two Rotary Clubs have all worked very hard," Billimoria said. "This is a very unique project. It will last forever."

The Rotary Foundation and 70 Rotary chapters in the north and northwest suburbs honored Billimoria with their 2009 Citation for Meritorious Service at a luncheon ceremony

yesterday.

Cooperation between governments and humanitarian organizations is key to such plans reaching fruition. Billimoria said he tried to initiate similar public projects in Pakistan and Bangladesh, "but the other Rotaries are not cooperating. We have written to them and they have not replied."

In the meantime, with the help of Rotary grants, Billimoria has participated in more than 30 smaller-scale projects throughout India, including buying medical equipment, such as a dialysis machine, setting up a pathology and physical therapy lab, paying for inoculations and cataract operations and providing low-cost housing.

"If I die, I have achieved what I wanted to achieve," Billimoria said.

In June 2009, Godrej Billimoria was selected to receive "The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service." On October 31 he will be speaking at the Seventh International India Development Coalition of America Conference in Chicago. The Conference theme: Finding Innovative Strategies to Alleviate Poverty and Mitigate Climate Change in India.



Godrej Billimoria (left) and Praful Bhatt, Past District Governor (right), stand outside a water filtration plant in Bilimora, India which was built with donations from the Rotary Club of Wilmette, Rotary International, the local Rotary in India and the municipal government.

In The News

ONTARIO ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (OZCF) COMPLETES PHASE 2 OF THEIR BUILDING PROJECT

Since 2002, the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF) has moved forward in leaps and bounds and continues to build upon its vision. The purchase of a pristine piece of 10 acre land located in the town of Oakville, Ontario, just 20 minutes from Toronto, was the foundation where the community members' dream would be built. The land came with a house, workshop and farm land that provides an abundance of opportunity and growth to sustain the growing Zarathushti community of the Greater Toronto Area and beyond.



The OZCF membership, coupled with their friends, have provided support and encouragement throughout the organization's short but successful history. Each black tie gala has raised in excess of \$100,000 and the various functions and fund raising events such as the nataks and youth variety program continue to flourish in participation and success.

In 2007 the members agreed to renovate the workshop to transform it into a congregational hall that could accommodate 170 people. Philanthropists, Behram & Rena Baxter had initiated the fundraising in August 2007 whereby they matched the fundraising to allow the project to be completed within two years. Without generous people such as the Baxters and the OZCF members, the realization OZCF vision would be that much harder. OZCF received its occupancy permit for the hall recently and the hall has already been used for events and is in great demand. The 1800 square foot hall is adorned by an 1800 square foot patio that looks over a field which has been worked on to provide playing and picnic areas. The hall is ideal for religious events and classes as well as for small to medium size gatherings.

The hall was completed with the help of monetary donations as well as volunteered time by members of the organization who oversaw the work and were on site daily throughout the cold Ontario winters, ensuring the work was carried out as per the plans and if any cost savings could be carried out without jeopardizing the plans or permit. The Galati Brothers were the construction company and worked to help keep costs down and donated some of their services to this project as well. A special mention of the people who have been involved in the planning and execution phases of this project; Phil Sidhwa, Farshogar Jasavala, Dhunji Surti, Jal Panthaky and Cawas Patel.

The OZCF now continues to build upon its success with the members looking forward to using the new facility and working towards their next project. Phase 1 was the purchase of the land, phase 2 was the renovation of the workshop and phase 3 is the paving of the driveway and part of the parking lot. Phase 3 is estimated to cost in the region of \$40,000 which will allow the members to walk easier and also provide safer access for wheel chairs and for the elderly who park and walk into the hall.



In The News

We are in the 'we did it' stage and when we embark on any project we do it with foresight and energy. On August 8, we embarked on a fundraising mission for phase 3 and decided to approach it differently. We had a plan of the area to be paved and divided it into 400 squares where each square represented \$100. We encouraged members to donate a square at the event and we instantly raised \$7,500 (used 75 of the 400 squares). We hope to attract more people who could afford to donate one square and raise the money quickly to get the paving completed prior to the Canadian winter!. You can follow the progress of this fundraising project on our website at (<http://www.ozcf.com>) and we will report our success in the next issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL .

I would like to end by thanking everyone who is involved in the OZCF, here in Ontario and abroad and especially for working as a team to achieve our vision and also make each project we embark on a success.

REPORT BY RUMI JASAVALA, PRESIDENT, OZCF

Ahura Mazda, Science and Art in Washington



Did you know that Zoroastrian heritage is sculpted into the bronze doors of an official U.S. government building? I didn't either. The main entrance of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), a society of scholars dedicated to furthering science and technology research in the United States, was designed by artist Lee Lawrie in

1923. The doors are reminiscent of Lorenzo Ghiberti's famous low-relief bronze doors at the Baptistery of St. John near the Duomo in Florence, however, Darwin and Aristotle replace Adam and Eve in this masterpiece.

The NAS facade emphasizes great scientists who have furthered human understanding of earth, space, and self throughout history. *Euclid, Pasteur, Galileo, Newton, Lyell, Darwin, and Aristotle* all have prominent panels showcasing their discoveries. Lawrie dedicates his doors to these greats, however, smaller medallions also pay tribute to legendary predecessors and cultures which fostered the philosophy of science. Among these depictions are *Confucius, Hammurabi, Emperor Charlemagne, Romulus and Remus, Hercules, and an image of Ahura Mazda under a large Farohar*. Goodhue, a collaborator of Lawrie, suggested that the doors should represent "the history, lore, and contemporary role of science."

Constructed by Lawrie in the traditional manner of cast plates over a wooden core, the building is also decorated with images of earth, sky, water, and creatures

culminating into the apex of the sun. The relief is a gem, in a city famous for its bureaucratic buildings. Visitors can view the doors throughout the year; *NAS is located on Constitution Avenue and 500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC. Read more about the NAS and the bronze doors on their website: www.nasonline.org.*

Submitted by Aysha Ghadiali

Photos Aysha Ghadiali, Photo of door National Academy of Sciences Website:

http://www.nasonline.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ABOUT_building_doors





In The News

Art Show

Avan Bhathena

Avan Bhathena held a one-woman art show on June 7, 2009 at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston. She had an excellent turn-out with almost two hundred guests stopping by to admire her original works and to purchase giclées, high quality prints that reproduce the original colors faithfully.

Avan studied Textile Design at the Nirmala Niketan Institute in Mumbai and worked with fabrics for several years before migrating to Houston, Texas. Over the years, she has refocused her artistic talents and energy to paper and canvas and expresses herself in multiple mediums – watercolors, oils, acrylics and charcoal.

Avan has infused methods used in textile design into her work. She was introduced to batik as a young girl and now uses hot wax and other resists on watercolor paper to create multi-layered images in vibrant colors with dyes, watercolors and gouaches.

Every painting is a labor of love and treated like a masterpiece.

Avan's interests naturally gravitate towards nature, humanity and spirituality. Horses, with their sublime grace and form, are a frequent subject of her work. Her vibrant paintings of irises, chrysanthemums, and calla lilies are alive with color and pay homage to the Supreme Artist who created them. She is also captivated by the human face and her portraits vividly capture the essential qualities of her



subjects on paper



In The News



and canvas. She was commissioned to do a Presidential portrait and was the official artist for one of the Inaugural Balls in Washington DC

.Avan's work has been displayed in art galleries in Houston and can be viewed on her website, www.artbyavan.com.



Nina Wadia

Nina Wadia was named "The TV Personality Of The Year" at Political and Public Life Awards, presented on Feb. 26, 2009 at the House of Commons, Palace of Westminster, London.

Nina is currently starring as Zainab Masood in the long running British series "East Enders". Some of the other shows in which Nina has starred include the Emmy nominated "Goodness Gracious Me", "Perfect World", "Chambers" and "All About Me".

She has also starred in movies such as Code 46 with Tim Robbins and the Bollywood hit "Namaste London". Nina is married to Rayomand Mirza and is the mother of two small children,



In The News

Tristan - Javid Khanizadeh plays at the Montreal JAZZ FEST

The 30th Edition of the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal the world's #1 jazz event, presented by General Motors in collaboration with Rio Tinto Alcan, offers a program of incredible diversity. Montréal hosts 3,000 musicians & entertainers from 30 countries, more than 650 concerts, and a total of 2.5 million attendees. The sheer amount of live music includes in excess of 450 free shows on 10 outdoor stages, plus more than 150 indoor concerts at 10 different concert halls, showcasing jazz and music in all its forms, inspired by every style including pop, rock n' roll, '80s gypsy music, Afrobeat and other genres from around the world.

The jazz group of the Collège Sainte-Anne de Lachine, auditioned and was invited to play for a whole hour on the big Alcan stage on July 6. Our very own Tristan-Javid Khanizadeh, trumpeter, was part of this wonderful experience. They attracted a huge crowd and we were very proud of the whole group. Congratulations all!



In The News

Daisy Daver

of Harry Ainlay High School, Edmonton, Canada wins in Outstanding Comic Performance by an Actress in a Musical

The Edmonton Journal Cappies Award is a program through which high school theatre and journalism students are trained as critics, attend shows at other schools, write reviews, and publish those reviews in local newspapers like The Washington Post, Cincinnati Enquirer, Dallas Morning News, Kansas City Star, and The Philadelphia Inquirer. At the end of the year, the student critics vote for awards that are presented at a formal Cappies Gala.

There are 7 mentions on Daisy Daver by each different critic, which won her the Cappies Award 2009 as the outstanding COMIC performance by an actress in a Musical. She performed the role of CHA-CHA DIGREGORIO in the school version of the all-time favorite Grease. Some comments on Daisy

“Daisy Daver as Cha-Cha, sparked some laughter with her hilariously obnoxious and annoying personality, but also portrayed a delightfully stylistic tone as one of the '50s radio singers.”

“Daisy Daver had her own little comical twist to her annoying character Cha-Cha. Once Daisy was onstage it was hard not to pay attention to her high pitched almost squealing voice and the blank I-don't-care attitude that was hilarious. The comic character Cha Cha played by a devout Daisy Daver, stole the stage during Born To Hand Jive.”

Daisy is the daughter of Dinyar and Sanobar Davar of Edmonton, Canada

Photograph by: Shaughn Butts, Edmonton Journal



Board of Trustees elected for the Grand Fire Temple of Tehran, Iran.

Abadian elected as President and Yeganegi as Vice President

TEHRAN (Amordadnews): According to Khosraviani, Director of Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman, the board of Trustees of the Grand Fire Temple, Tehran, had their internal elections, where **Rostam Abadian was elected President and Rostam Yeganegi as Acting and Vice President, Dinyar Khosraviani as secretary and Karen Vafadari as the Treasurer.** This Board has written a set of internal regulations and has clarified the extent of duties.

Parviz Varjavand, Iranpour, Allahyar Dabestani, Rostam Yeganegi, Ardeshir Khorshidian, Rostam Abadian, Shahrokh Mizanian, Dinyar Khosraviani, are members of the Board of Trustees.

This Board is made up of well known members and donors of the Zarathushti community and, according to Khosraviani, they are involved in the programs for the Grand Fire Temple, and the community has trust in these members.

By Amordad correspondent Mitra Dehmobed

Translation by

Rowshan Lohraspour

In The News

COOKING CLASSES FOR TEENS

It may be summer, but for a number of our Houston kids school is still in session. COOKING SCHOOL, that is. Tuesday evenings in June, July and August, tots and teens gather at the ZHCC to learn cooking and have a fun time learning.

To focus on delicious and healthful eating, the Balsara ladies, Zarine and her daughter-in-law Diana, volunteer to provide hands-on kids cooking class sessions while learning Parsi and American recipes. The young students are informed in advance as to what dishes are being cooked and the recipes are distributed to help them try at home. The Golden Group ladies also plan to demonstrate their favorite recipes and a surprise Persian cuisine is also planned. And though *dhan-sak* is not on the menu as yet, kids are mastering the use of kitchen tools and gadgets while learning valuable food handling and measuring skills. And we hope to add many new young Parsi chefs soon. Anybody for Parsi pora? Come on over.

Aban Rustomji Houston, TX



In The News



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Hosts a Breakfast Reception in Honor of Immigrant Heritage Week 2009
Gracie Mansion, New York
April 20, 2009



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City, hosted a Breakfast Reception in Honor of Immigrant Heritage week 2009 at Gracie Mansion, New York, April 20, 2009

Mr Homi Gandhi, past president of ZAGNY was an invitee.

Michael R. Bloomberg

ZAKOI GARA DRAW

And the Winner is.....Sanoo Katrak of Columbus, Ohio!

Congratulations, Sanoo! Enjoy your Gara!

The winning ticket of the Gara Raffle was drawn at the ZAKOI Navroze Picnic in Fairfield, Ohio, on August 15, 2009. The Gara Raffle was one of the successful fundraisers of 2009 with 230 raffle tickets sold and a total of \$2,051 collected for the Center Fund. This is to further our ZAKOI community dream of having our own Zoroastrian Center some day, ZAKOI needs about half a million dollars to achieve this dream.

ZAKOI is very thankful to everyone who bought the raffle tickets and those who helped spread the word around, making their families and friends aware of the Gara fundraiser, which tremendously helped them in selling the raffle tickets. A special 'Thank-You' to FEZANA and the following associations/people that helped support us in many different ways and for selling our Raffle tickets in their communities: ZAPA (Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania), ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago), ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of California), ZAF (Zoroastrian Association of Florida), Gool Baria of ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York), and Yasmin Bhungara of ZAGBA (Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area). Last but not the least, our special thanks to everyone within our own ZAKOI community who helped make this such a successful Fundraiser.

Donations for our Center Fund will be greatly appreciated and checks can be made out to **ZAKOI Center Fund** and mailed to *Bakhtavar Desai, President, ZAKOI, Jamesfield Court, Fairfield, OH 45014.*

***Submitted by Armin Daroona,
Gara Raffle Coordinator, ZAKOI (Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana)***

In The News

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON FUNDRAISER

As part of the fundraising efforts for ZAH interior and exterior repairs as well as to promote and preserve our cultural heritage ZAH has an exciting raffle. Here is hoping you will participate and buy a winning entry.

Raffle Item #1

Deep Dark Red Gara-Like Embroidered
Saree, Blouse and Petticoat Piece



Cost of Ticket for Item #1
\$10 each (A pack of 3 tickets for \$25)

Raffle Item #2

Dark Blue Gara-Like Embroidered
Saree, Blouse and Petticoat Piece



Cost of Ticket for Item #2:
\$10 each (A pack of 3 tickets for \$25)

Tickets: For tickets please contact Arzin Italia at (713) 932 6629 or email her at sorabitalia@yahoo.com. Mail checks for ticket purchases (made payable to ZAH) to Arzin Italia, 12407 Rip Van Winkle, Houston, TX 77024.

Drawings: Saturday, November 7th, 2009 at Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center. (You do not have to be present to win)

Proceeds: All proceeds from this raffle will be used for Interior and Exterior ZHCC Repairs

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (ZAPA)

Board - 2009 - 2010:

President: Lily A. Dastur

Vice President: Sarosh Sepai; Treasurer: Khushru Kadwa

Secretary: Farhad J. Cama Asst. Secretary: Shikha Sepai

Directors at large: Zarin Balaporia, Freny A. Dastur, Cyra Contractor, Jeroo Kadwa, Behram Kapadia, Tanaz Balaporia

CONGRATULATIONS

IS INTERFAITH S INTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Students Together In Tackling Child Hunger

The S.T.I.T.C.H Project

By: Deena Guzder

The soul of the Universe complained, O Ahura Mazda . . . upon me has fallen wrath, plunder, violence, evil, outrage, aggression and oppression. There is no protector for me other than you, therefore, teach me good industry whereby I may be rid of such calamities.

Ha 29.1, from Gatha-ba-Maani, translation by Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga



My interest in understanding, exposing and reducing poverty stems from early childhood, when I accompanied my parents on their myriad travels and was exposed to startling scenes of hardship. My nomadic upbringing made me painfully aware of the economic disparities between the world's richest and poorest inhabitants.

One-third of all human deaths are due to poverty related causes such as starvation, diarrhea, pneumonia, tuberculosis, malaria, measles and perinatal conditions, all of which could be prevented or cured cheaply through food, safe drinking water, vaccinations, rehydration packs or medicines. We live in a resource rich, scientifically advanced, and technologically savvy world easily capable of providing for all its inhabitants; however, the world's wealth is unevenly distributed. If the developed Western countries had their proportional

shares of gratuitous deaths, severe poverty would kill some 3,500 Britons and 16,500 Americans per week.

If the US suffered from the abject poverty endemic in other nations, the tragedy of 9/11 would occur every other day in terms of the number killed.

United Nations food officials recently reported that the global financial crisis has pushed the ranks of the world's hungry to a record 1 billion, a grim milestone. War, drought, political instability, high food prices and poverty all contribute to the startling fact that one in six people go to sleep hungry. Compared to last year, an additional 100 million people went hungry this year. As Nobel Prize laureate *Joseph Stiglitz* notes, "Despite repeated promises of poverty reduction made over the last decade of the twentieth century, the actual number of people living in poverty has actually increased by almost 100 million. This occurred at the same time that total world income increased by an average of 25 percent annually." Some economists estimate that a mere 1% of the United States' GDP would help eliminate malnourishment across the globe in three years.

As another Nobel Prize-winning laureate, *Jeffrey Sachs* notes, "*Extreme poverty can be ended, not in the time of our grandchildren, but our time.*" Yet the enormity of a problem such as global poverty can paralyze even the best-intentioned individuals. While growing up, I came to realize one way to reduce poverty is by searching for meaning beyond the world of consumption and sharing one's disposable income. Another way to help the world's poorest is by redirecting money away from the richest towards the poorest to create a more egalitarian playing field. Before entering college, I noticed that many trendy, ethnic shirts sold in U.S. stores were made in India; more importantly, these beautiful shirts were sold for five times the amount they cost in Mumbai. I had an epiphany: what if I transported similar tunics from India to the U.S. and sold them for more than the original price, but gave the money back to the world's poorest rather than American corporations?

The summer of 2001, I flew to India to pilot a nongovernmental organization called "**Students Together in Tackling Child Hunger**" (S.T.I.T.C.H) that seeks to reduce economic disparities. The fledgling organization buys hand-embroidered, georgette shirts wholesale from local retailers, who uphold ethical labor practices, and sells them for quadruple the price online. All of the profit goes to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) so children, instead of stores, benefit from economic inequality. UNICEF is mandated by the

¹ Pogge, Thomas W. *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002 p. 98

I NTERFAITH NTERALLA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. The S.T.I.T.C.H Project strongly believes that poor people, not lucrative Western companies, should profit from global commerce.



S.T.I.T.C.H shares the spirit of the fair trade movement, which promotes protecting international labor, environment, and social standards for the production of traded goods and services. The movement

focuses in particular on exports from developing countries to developed countries in contrast with "free trade," which is often protectionist in favor of wealthy nations. "Make Trade Fair" is a campaign by Oxfam International and its 12 affiliates, calling on governments, institutions, and multinational companies to change the rules so that trade can become part of the solution to poverty, not part of the problem. We know that real change will only come when large numbers of people demand it—in rich countries as well as poor. Zarathushtis hold goodness, righteousness, and social responsibility in high regard. The convictions behind Fair Trade are deeply compatible with our religious teachings.

S.T.I.T.C.H alone cannot solve the grisly problem of acute poverty, but it will help a few more people have the food, medicine and shelter they need to enjoy a more fulfilling life. Purchasing a tunic to help reduce poverty is very simple. Please visit <http://deenaguzder.com/stitch> to view the online catalogue and buy a fair-trade tunic. The tunics are loose and flowing, "one-size-fits-all". Instead of enriching a department store with \$25, you will help a

child have a better chance of a healthy life for the same price.

To date, the S.T.I.T.C.H project has sold hundreds of tunics and raised over a thousand dollars for UNICEF in an effort to reduce global poverty.

I agree with my former Columbia University professor—Nobel Prize winner Jeffrey Sachs—that the United States should have redirected its resourced from military expenditure to poverty reduction in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. "By showing our abiding concern for the plight of . . . millions of children who are at risk of death from disease [and] in honoring the sanctity of the lives of the least among us, we have the best chance to defeat the ideologies of hate," wrote Sachs in the New York Times. Economists estimate that the U.S. has squandered three trillion dollars on occupying Iraq.

We Zarathushtis can show "good industry" by helping the world's most impoverished people as well as contributing to world peace through conscientious consumerism. One stitch at a time, Zarathushtis who make consumer decisions based on their conscience can help mend the world.

Photos Deena Guzder



Deena is a freelance journalist in New York City with a dual degree from Columbia University's School of Journalism and School of International and Public Affairs. She is working on a book, *A Higher Calling* (Chicago Review Press, 2010), about religious activism for progressive causes. Deena is modeling the stitch shirt in the photo.

Deena Guzder received a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting to extensively cover sexual exploitation and trafficking in Thailand. Visit Pulitzer site: www.pulitzercenter.org to view Deena's project page which will have articles, photography, videos, audio slideshows, etc.

² Alessandra Rizzo – "UN: World Hunger Reaches 1 Billion Mark." Associated Press. June 20, 2009.

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

The Ivy Gandhi Youth Camp 2009 or ZCamp

as it is affectionately called was off to a rip rollicking start on the week end of June 26th. There were 18 campers from 6 to 16 years who enjoyed a yummy dinner prepared by all the parents. The next day after an early breakfast, we were off to Bear Mountain for our annual

hike. We are proud to say that this was the first year when all the campers climbed all the way to the summit. It was a hard climb but a great pleasure to see the older ones helping and encouraging the younger ones along the way. Great team work!! . A reward of a hot pizza lunch was appreciated by all. After chilling in the late afternoon, we gathered for an informal discussion on our religion, what it means to each of us and how we can apply it in our daily lives. The relevance of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds brought out some interesting insights with each camper willing to do one good deed the next day and also at home. After dinner, we had a roaring bonfire with smores being consumed at a rapid pace. The next morning we started with some old fashion fun – tug of war, relay races, soccer and even some cricket. The camp was adjourned at lunch time with many friendships being strengthened and a close feeling of comradeship between the entire camp.

Our thanks to the parents for the Friday night dinner and to the chaperones; *Shiroy Ranji, Dinaz & Minoc Bengali, Imroze & Percy Kavarana and Friaan Hakim.*

Hopefully next year we can have a combined camp with some of our other FEZANA associations.



YOU TELL US

From Sunnu Golwala, Karachi, Pakistan

Two days ago we received our copy of Summer 2009 FEZANA Journal and my husband Farrokh who is from Quetta was delighted with the write up on the city of his birth. The two pictures therein also generated great interest and nostalgic memories. Aban and Purvez with their children have given such a fine account of the city we love, that our family now also in other countries read it with rapt interest when we sent them scanned copies by email. Thank you, the Rustomjis and Farishta for making us all feel so good.

From Godrej Randeria, Houston

All the best wishes to FEZANA magazine for ever and ever. May it continue to enlighten the present and future generations, the true dreams and values of our great Zarathushti religion

INTERFAITH INTERALLA

Mahatma Gandhi's Appreciation of Parsis who helped him

(Part II)

Maneck N. Bhujwala

Leaving India to do Law Practice in South Africa

Not liking to continue work in that atmosphere under that British officer's jurisdiction, Gandhi was not happy, so when an opportunity came to get out of there, he took it to go to Africa: "In the meantime a Meman firm from Porbandar wrote to my brother making the following offer: 'We have business in South Africa.....If you sent your brother there, he would be useful to us and also to himself.....' I closed with the offer without any haggling, and got ready to go to South Africa."

Brief Trip to India

After working for 3 years in South Africa, Gandhiji goes to India for a brief trip to get his family, etc.: "...By now I had been three years in South Africa. I had got to know the people and they had got to know me. In 1896 I asked permission to go home for six months, for I saw that I was in for a long stay there. I had established a fairly good practice, and could see that people felt the need of my presence. So I made up my mind to go home, fetch my wife and children, and then return and settle out there. I also saw

that, if I went home, I might be able to do some public work by educating public opinion and creating more interest in the Indians of South Africa...."

On his brief visit to India he again meets with several leading Parsis for whom he had great awe and respect: "I certainly wanted to see Sir Pherozechah Mehta, but the fact that these senior men advised me to act according to his advice gave me a better idea of the immense influence that Sir Pherozechah had on the public. In due course I met him. I was prepared to be awed by his presence. I had heard of the popular titles that he had earned, and knew that I was to see the 'Lion of Bombay', the 'Uncrowned King of the Presidency.' But the king did not overpower me. He met me as a loving father would meet his grown up son.

Our meeting took place at his chamber. He was surrounded by a circle of friends and followers. Amongst them were Mr. D. E. Wacha and Mr. Cama, to whom I was introduced. I had already heard of Mr. Wacha. He was regarded as the right-hand man of Sir Pherozechah, and Srijit. Virchand Gandhi had described him to me as a great statistician. Mr. Wacha said, 'Gandhi, we must meet again.'

These introductions could scarcely have taken two minutes. Sir Pherozechah carefully listened to me. I told him that I had seen Justices Ranade and Tyabji. 'Gandhi,' said he, 'I see that I must help you. I must call a public meeting here.' With this he turned to Mr. Munshi, the secretary, and told him to fix up the date of the meeting. The date was settled, and he bade me good-bye, asking me to see him again on the day previous to the meeting. The interview removed my fears, and I went home delighted. ..."

"In accordance with Sir Pherozechah's instructions I reported myself at his office at 5 P. M. on the eve of the meeting. 'Is your speech ready, Gandhi?' he asked. 'No, sir,' said I, trembling with fear, 'I think of speaking extempore.' 'That will not do in Bombay. reporting here is bad, and if we would benefit by this meeting, you should write out your speech, and it should be printed before daybreak tomorrow. I hope you can manage this?'. I felt rather nervous, but I said I would try. 'Then, tell me, what time should Mr. Munshi come to you for the manuscript?' 'Eleven o'clock tonight,' said I.



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On going to the meeting the next day, I saw the wisdom of Sir Pherozezshah's advice. The meeting was held in the hall of the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Institute. I had heard that when Sir Pherozezshah Mehta addressed meetings the hall was always packed - chiefly by the students intent on hearing him - leaving not an inch of room. This was the first meeting of the kind in my experience. I saw that my voice could reach only a few. I was trembling as I began to read my speech. Sir Pherozezshah cheered me up continually by asking me to speak louder and still louder. I have a feeling that, far from encouraging me, it made my voice sink lower and lower.

My old friend Srijit, Keshavrao Deshpande came to my rescue. I handed my speech to him. He had just the proper voice. But the audience refused to listen. The hall rang with the cries of 'Wacha,' 'Wacha.' So Mr. Wacha stood up and read the speech, with wonderful results. The audience became perfectly quiet, and listened to the speech to the end, punctuating it with applause and cries of 'shame' where necessary. This gladdened my heart. Sir Pherozezshah liked the speech. I was supremely happy.

The meeting won me the active sympathy of Srijit. Deshpande and a Parsi friend, whose name I hesitate to mention, as he is a high-placed Government official today. Both expressed their resolve to accompany me to South Africa. Mr .C.M. Cursetji, who was then Small Causes Court Judge, however, moved the Parsi friend from his resolve

as he had plotted his marriage. He had to choose between marriage and going to South Africa, and he chose the former.

But Parsi Rustomji made amends for the broken resolve, and a number of Parsi sisters are now making amends for the lady who helped in the breach, by dedicating themselves to khadi work. I have therefore gladly forgiven that couple. Srijit. Deshpande had no temptations of marriage, but he too could not come..." Gandhiji's attempt to take barristers to South Africa (including another Mr. Tyabbji) did not succeed...."

Gandhiji also met two other Parsis, Pestonji Padshah and his brother Barjorji: "In this connection I remember Mr. Pestonji Padshah. I had been on friendly terms with him ever since my stay in England. I first met him in a vegetarian restaurant in London. I knew of his brother Mr. Barjorji Padshah... he was a vegetarian, though a Parsi..... Pestonji was famous for his erudition even in London. The common factor between us, however, was vegetarianism, and not scholarship, in which it was beyond my power to approach him. I found him out again in Bombay. He was Protonotary in the High Court. When I met him he was engaged on his contribution to a Higher Gujarati Dictionary. There was not a friend I had not approached for help in my South African work. Pestonji Padshah, however, not only refused to aid me, but even advised me not to return to South Africa.

'It is impossible to help you,' he said. 'But I tell you I do not like even your going to South Africa. Is there lack of work in our country? Look, now, there is not a little to do for our language. I have to find out scientific words. But this is only one branch of the work. Think of the poverty of the land. Our people in South Africa are no doubt in difficulty, but I do not want a man like you to be sacrificed for that work. Let us win self-government here, and we shall automatically help our countrymen there. I know I cannot prevail upon you, but I will not encourage anyone of your type to throw in his lot with you.' I did not like this advice, but it increased my regard for Mr. Pestonji Padshah. I was struck with his love for the country and for the mother tongue. The incident brought us closer to each other. I could understand his point of view...."

"

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Preparing to Return to South Africa - adopting Parsi dress

"Sir Pherozechah had made my way easy. So from Bombay I went to Poona. Here there were two parties. I wanted the help of people of every shade of opinion...." After meeting other Indian leaders in Poona, Madras, Calcutta, etc., Gandhiji went back to South Africa with his wife and children.

On the matter of proper dress for himself and family, he decided to dress like the Parsis: "I believed, at the time of which I am writing, that in order to look civilized, our dress and manners had, as far as possible, to approximate to the European standard. Because, I thought, only thus could we have some influence, and without influence it would not be possible to serve the community. The Parsis were then regarded as the most civilized people amongst Indians, and so, when the complete European style seemed to be unsuited, we adopted the Parsi style. Accordingly my wife wore the Parsi sari, and the boys the Parsi coat and trousers. Of course no one could be without shoes and stockings..."



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



SOONNOO MAROLIA

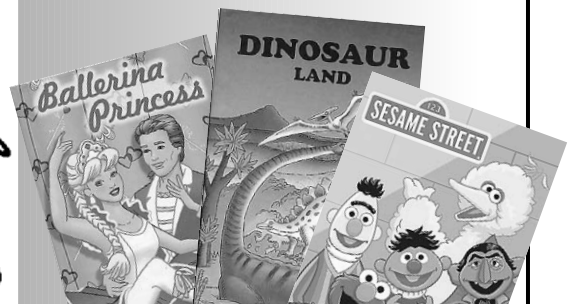
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INTERFAITH INTERALIA

TAKE A RISK

The U.N. Secretary General Ban ki Moon advises students at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC.

In May 2009 I was given the honor of representing FEZANA Journal at the John's Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies Commencement at the historically famed DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. The ceremony was particularly special because of the high profile chief speaker of the event-- Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. He gave a poignant and realistic outlook on the current state of affairs around the world. The speech was targeted towards the students and provided a sense of empowerment to those of us that may be overwhelmed by the immense conflict and turmoil throughout the world and start to believe that we cannot make a lasting positive impact on it.

The speech started off with Mr. Ki-moon's bold take home message of the afternoon—"take risks". These are not words of advice that a student often hears, in fact we are more often told that structure, order, and planning are the keys to success in one's life. The U. N. Secretary General then recounted a monumental moment in history, the falling of the Berlin Wall. The wall was the physical embodiment of a grim and dangerous era, splitting the globe among ideological lines—East versus West, the Free versus the un-Free, Them versus Us. Then abruptly the unthinkable happened when the wall fell, and the world was transformed. He paralleled this with the dramatic change that is at hand now. A financial crisis has shaken the foundations of the global economy, climate change threatens our way of life, and transnational threats have become more prevalent than ever. In essence, the world has changed and now we must be willing to change our fundamental ideologies if we are to progress forward effectively.

Mr. Ki-moon thus called for a new multilateralism. This new world that we live in calls for a special brand of leadership—global leadership. We need new vision, bold action, and powerful partnerships for enduring peace and prosperity. The economic crisis has demonstrated our interdependence in the most visible way. He went so far as to say that most important for him as U.N. Secretary General is that leaders and people of all countries embrace the principle of global solidarity. The time for action is now which is why Mr. Ki-moon is beefing up

peace-building and conflict prevention efforts. These efforts can be seen in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Darfur, among many other grief stricken places.

The U.N. Secretary General then took a few moments to reflect on his experiences with the U.N. at a young age. During his boyhood in Korea, he experienced first-hand what it is like to be hungry, afraid and alone. After the Korean War, he went to a school with no walls, but only rubble remains. The U.N. helped feed and defend his people, and rebuild the country. The symbol of hope that the U.N. was to Ban Ki-moon years ago remains a beacon of light to millions around the world today. The point is to be a part of something larger than yourself and invest your energy and passion into changing the world for the better. He concluded with a statement that we youngsters

should be able to confidently say to ourselves while looking in a mirror 50 years from now: "I did everything I could to make a difference."



Jasmine Dukandar is a junior at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She is a Psychology Major and is enrolled in the Seven Year Integrated B.A./M.D. Medical Program. Jasmine volunteers

as an EMT for her college community and is also on a Persian Dance Team. She hopes to become a compassionate and successful doctor. Jasmine is a member of the UN-NGO FEZANA Team.

PARSI ZOROASTRIAN

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIA, SINGAPORE NATIONAL HARMONY CELEBRATIONS

Imagine an evening of fun, fanfare and throbbing with culture. That was exactly what we experienced on the 18th of July 2009, when we celebrated an evening dedicated to National Harmony, an annual fund-raising event, organized by the Inter-Religious Organization (IRO). The Cultural shows are arranged by various sponsors and religious organizations.

Groups of people young and old danced in rhythmic harmony to the beats of that which is unique to their own typical culture and yet so well-blended into our modern local society. There were costumes and masks, face paint and jewelry, fashion and fiesta. **Apru Parsi nu tolu** was the talk of the evening. Particularly our little creative geniuses under the auspices of Mrs. Daisy Subaiah, who directed them in

an enactment of the 'famous landing in Sanjan'. They were just beyond compare.

Not far behind were our lovely ladies in their finest garas sashaying the ramp and flooring the audience.

To top off all the excitement was an exclusive chance to meet one-to-one (even if only for a minute) and have a photo-op, with our very own President Nathan, (President of Singapore) who presided as the Chief Guest of the evening.

Such fond memories will last with us for a lifetime and we hope we have many more creative talents from within the community joining us in future performances.



Singapore China Religious Artifacts And Cultural Exhibition

from Dec 16 – 23 2009 at Suntec, Singapore.

The Inter-Religious Organization (IRO), Singapore is organizing the Singapore China Religious Artifacts and Cultural Exhibition at Suntec Singapore from Dec 16th to Dec 23rd 2009. 5 religions from China (Buddhist, Taoist, Catholic, Christian, Islam) are arranging to bring the artifacts. They will also be supported by the 10 religions in Singapore. The ZOROASTRIAN religion as one of the 10 religions will also take part. As time is short, they may not be able to bring the artifacts from the Alpaiwalla Museum, Mumbai as they did the last time. The Singapore Association is requesting the community in Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong, Australia, New Zealand to check if they have any old artifacts, books, paper cuttings, paintings, garments, objects which they can loan us to exhibit. The items will be insured door to door as per the assessment of the curator from Asian Civilization Museum. IRO will issue a receipt for any item taken on loan. Please inform by e mail or phone Rustom Ghadiali russighadiali@yahoo.com or Minaz Kanga or Dilnawaz Zaveri at the earliest and oblige. **Submitted by Rustom M Ghadiali VP IRO SINGAPORE.**

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

S YMPHONY OF PEACE PRAYERS (SOPP)

NEW YORK CITY, May 17th, 2009 Queens Unisphere Gallery, Flushing Meadows Park

Homi Gandhi

The Symphony of Peace Prayers in New York City on May 17th, 2009, was an extremely moving and memorable event. It took place in the Queens Museum in the Gallery overlooking the magnificent Unisphere globe that was dedicated to Humanity in 1964 as a symbol of human unity, peace and understanding. It was the perfect location for a ceremony for peace in New York City.



Extraordinarily profound and heartfelt prayers for peace were offered from eight interfaith representatives including Bahai, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian Hindu, Jewish, Sufi, Zoroastrian. .

About 40 people attended the ceremony and by the end more and more members of the public as well as museum workers joined in because they were so moved by the energy of peace.

Monica Willard of the United Religions Initiative of the United Nations was the Master of Ceremonies. She impressed all the attendees with her warmth and skill in introducing the mission of the occasion to help spread the spirit of peace to New York City and the world.

Mr. Narinder Kapoor, Vice President of the Gita Ashram of New York mesmerized the audience with his deep and melodious recitation of the Gayatri and other ancient Sanskrit mantras and prayers from the Hindu tradition.

The Honorable Madhavi Patale arrived with many of the sisters of the Brahma Kumaris tradition all dressed in white and led the participants in a deep meditation on peace to the accompaniment of flute music. Her graceful presence was like that of an angel.

Rabbi Ross, Executive Director of the Interfaith Seminary was also in white, as were most of the interfaith leaders. He moved some of the participants to tears during his prayer for peace where he shared the wisdom of the

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



Jewish tradition in a way that everyone could appreciate. His deep understanding of unity, justice and peace emanated from his prayer.

Lama Tsewang Rinpoche, from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, explained that we cannot have peace unless we look deeply within and are continually mindful of how peace begins in our own minds and that we must be watchful to maintain it. He shared a very powerful purification mantra to uplift the whole area.

Swamini Sri Lalitambika Devi, the sweet representative of the hugging saint shared a beautiful prayer that she recites every day on the subway celebrating the feminine aspect of divinity. Her sincere connection with this prayer emanated a beautiful atmosphere.

Ms. Caity Cook, of the Bahai faith, exquisitely sang the famous Unity prayer by Baha'U'llah, the founder of the Bahai faith. *"Oh God, Unite the Hearts of thy servants and reveal to them Thy Great Purpose."* The Bahais' major tenet is that unity and one world are part of the human destiny. They believe that it is inevitable that we will eventually be spiritually completely unified as one human family.

Representatives of Sufi Order International, Isa Pyle and his wife Una, ministers of the Universal Worship Service, shared a beautiful prayer written by Master Hazraat Inayat Khan, which affirmed; *"Send Thy Peace, which is perfect and everlasting, that our Souls may radiate peace and that we may think, act and speak harmoniously."*

Then Mr. Homi Ghandi, Past President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, shared a Zoroastrian prayer affirming great harmony in nature and in the elements. This tradition *"is the oldest revealed world religion and has probably had more influence directly or indirectly on mankind than any other faith,"* according to religious scholar, Mary Boyce.

After the interfaith prayers a welcoming message from Mrs. Masami Saionji was read by Nanamaru Christine. Tonia Shoumatoff introduced the World Peace Ceremony with some thoughts affirming that this was the uniting practice for all religions to come together as one. The Blue Spirit Satellite group of Byakko Shinko-Kai, led by Reiko Kamosawa, performed the uplifting "In"s including the Jinrui Soku

Kami Nari, affirming the divinity of humanity, the Anchoring of the Universal Light affirming peace especially in the United States of America.

Many of the very kind members of the Byakko group set up a table and welcomed all those who arrived with gifts of dolls and cranes and lovely photos of past peace events. Jim Dugan of the World Peace Prayer Society did an extraordinary job of setting up and taking down the flags with volunteer support. The flag bearers even included Gabriel Roldos from Ecuador who is the Events Coordinator for the Museum.

Chris Ruhe and Alvin Bell from the Baptist Church in Beacon sang a rousing set of songs about peace, including *"This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine"* which got everyone up and dancing and hugging each other at the end of the ceremony. Chris said he really appreciated the efforts of Byakko to bring everyone together around the world.

A lady from Columbia came up to one of the organizers after the ceremony and said: *"This is a message that I want to teach my grandchildren and great grandchildren. Thank you so much for doing this prayer in New York City today."*



UZYEIRIN GAH

Ervad Gustad M. Panthaki

(part 4 of 5)

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

A day in Zoroastrian theology is divided into five sections known as Gahs. beginning with midnight, These are addressed as "Masters of Righteousness", because these periods, if spent in good acts, good words and



good thoughts lead to Righteousness. The fourth section, 3 p.m. to sunset, is Uzyeir or "turning out". Dastur Dabu compares every change of Gah to the change of watch on a ship, or change of guards at a castle, when temple-bells are rung to warn the colony that it is the time for prayer.

These five "Masters of Time" are associated with five Ratus, "Spiritual Masters". Uzyeir goes with "Fradat-Vira", advancement of human beings, and "Dakhyuma", lord of the land. A notable feature of these associated powers is the ever increasing scope of the benevolence of human race in the world. The five lords; of the house, of the village, of the province, of the country, and finally the Master of Religion; the Teacher of the World are noteworthy in the gahs. This succession symbolizes the grades by which a human being can rise through loving service in ever increasing circles of usefulness, up to the stage of "the Holiest Zarathushtra", whose love would embrace the whole of humanity.

A QUICK GLANCE AT THE TRANSLATION: In revering, Uzyeir and the eight classes of clergy - Zaoatar, Havanan, Atervakhsi, Fraberetar, Aberetar, Asnatar, Rathwishkar and Sraoshavareza - are invoked and remembered.

It is reasonable to surmise that when Gahs were composed, ritual practices had undergone

changes. The liturgical ceremonies, like Yasna, at that time, did not require eight priests.

In the following verses, the Lord of the country who renders prosperity to his people, and The Stars, Moon and Sun which provide light to sustain life are invoked.

There is also reverence paid to the Divine Doctrines which enlightens sinful persons. The creation of Ahura Mazda and later religious laws along with all sources of cosmic waters are respectfully invoked.

In its esoteric significance, Dastur Dabu suggests, the Gah is a token of the spiritual evolution of a soul. Like Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, these five Gahs may be epoch marking the progress of man, life after life.

Another notable Avesta scholar Sorab Bulsara notes: To consider the External Nature of the Soul, it is necessary to take the account of the Life Eternal and its Five Stages as profoundly conceived in the Later Avesta. The Soul reveals itself in Matter, but being infinite in its nature it has no material limitations, and is Unlimited in Space and Infinite in Time. So it is expected to approach Hauravat (Perfection) and Ameretat (Immortality) which constitute the Bliss of Universal and Eternal Consciousness by consistent and progressive righteous living, alongside other Divine Perfection.

This Eternal Progress is distinguished into five stages which are known in Avestan theology as the gahs.

Finally I like to acknowledge and thank the sources of my references: K. Kanga, M. Kanga, Dastur Dabu and Sorab Bulsara.

Gustad Panthaki was born in 1940 at Udvada, India. Immigrated to Canada in 1967. Retired from work in 2005.



MY FAITH RESTORED

Khushnum Kermanizadeh, San Ramon, CA



Over the years, I must confess I have been one to have concurred occasionally with the growing jaded opinion amongst many within our faith that the Zarathushti community is dwindling and unsustainable. I am here to tell you today about what has now led me to think otherwise. I am here to tell you about what makes me hopeful of the robust sustenance of our faith.

The two pivotal spiritual events in every Zarathushti's life are the

navjote and wedding ceremonies. Every parent takes pride in the spiritual initiation of their offspring into their faith and my own children, Arman and Ariyana, went through their Navjote ceremonies in Walnut Creek, CA, in early July 2009.

But there is another gratifying and more hopeful reason for my pride – because my children's navjote ceremony was conducted by four priest, all of whom are from my family. Three of them, happen to be my children's own cousins, aged 13, 15 and 18!!

For *Ervad Darius Bhadha*, the youngest of the priests, (13 years old and in middle school in Los Angeles, CA), it is perhaps a few times officiating at a Navjote ceremony. Ervad Darius completed his Navar/Martab ceremony under the guidance of *Dasturji Aspandiar Dadachandji* at the Vaccha Gandhi Agairy, in Mumbai. His martab ceremony was completed in December 2008. Ervad Darius has also participated in performing several jashans under the supervision and guidance of *Mobed Zarrir Bhandara* of Los Angeles, CA. Darius' father, Ervad Farhad J Bhadha also officiated at the navjote ceremony.

This was the first navjote ceremony that *Ervad Karl Khambatta* performed. He initiated my daughter Ariyana. Karl is 15 yrs old, and a sophomore in Ridgewood High School, Ridgewood, NJ. Karl completed his martab ceremony at Patel Agairy, Mazagoan, Mumbai in December 2006. Both the Navar/Martab ceremonies were performed under the supervision and guidance of *Ervad Nariman Dalal* of Patel Agairy, Mumbai.

Ervad Poruz Khambatta, 18 yrs old, completed his martab ceremony also at the Patel Agairy Mazagoan, in Mumbai, December 2003. at the age of 12 years. Poruz performed the first Navjote ceremony of his brother Karl, in December 2000 (immediatly after his navar ceremony) So far, he has performed a total of three Navjote





ceremonies, including his younger brother Karl and my son Arman. All the ceremonies (navar/martab and the navjote) were performed under the guidance and mentorship of Ervad Nariman Dalal of Patel Agairy, Mumbai.

Poruz graduated from high school, Bergen County Academies, Hackensack, N.J. in 2009 and will be joining UC Berkeley, California in Fall 2009 as a freshman.

Both brothers, *Ervad Poruz and Ervad Karl* are actively involved in ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York). They perform several jashans throughout the year and recite muktad prayers. Following the example of his brother Poruz, Karl has been instrumental in teaching young kids at the religious classes in Pomona, N.Y., held on the first Sunday of every month and in assisting with the performance of the Boi ceremony held during the religious classes. Their involvement with ZAGNY has been under the leadership and mentorship of *Ervad Pervez Patel and Dr. Lovji Cama*.

All of these young priests are born in the United States, whose parents had the good sense and strong spiritual conviction to have their children go through the demanding preparation for and successful completion of the navar and martab priesthood ceremonies in India. And I consider myself singularly fortunate to have been a recipient of their investments.

What a tremendous honor it has been for my children to have been initiated into our faith by their own cousins, and even more so by priests so young. This fills me with hope for the new generation of Zarathushtis and in a small but significant manner restores my faith. Let us all do whatever we can to encourage the new practitioners of our spiritual faith, and their parents for guiding them through the priesthood ceremonies and ensuring the perpetuation of our religion through future generations.



From Left, Ervad Farhad Bhadha, Ervad Darius Bhadha, Ervad Poruz Khambatta and Ervad Karl Khambatta with the new navjotees Arman and Ariyana



SIX YOUNG MOBEDS, ALL FROM THE TORONTO AREA, PARTICIPATE IN THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY ZAGBA JASHAN IN BOSTON, JULY 25, 2009



From left Freyhan Daruwalla, Rayomand Antia, Rushad Bharda, and brothers Kamran, Arman and Farhan Panthaki.



YOUNG MARTABS JOIN THE RANKS OF MOBEDS IN NORTH AMERICA.

Ervad Darius Farhad Bhadha, son of Afrid and Ervad Farhad J. Bhadha, grandson of Yasmin and Ervad Jehanbux Bhadha of Los Angeles, CA, and Meheru and Homi Bulsara of Mumbai, India under the mentorship of Dasturji Aspandiar Dadachandji had his Martab ceremony at the young age of 12 years at the Vatcha Gandhi Agiary in Mumbai on December 27, 2008. At 9 years of age he had his navar ceremony and since then was kept on undergoing his Martab. The day after the ceremony he participated in his sister Sanaya's navjote in Mumbai (photo left) and since then has participated in Navjotes in Los Angeles, CA. He has been participating in jashans and gambhars at ZAC functions and has also sat for navjotes in LA.



HAMAZOR TO OUR RESPECTED MOBED BAHRAM SHAHZADI *Head Priest, California Zoroastrian Center, Westminster, California, USA*

By: Meher Dadabhoy Amalsad, USA

"Today when the Zarathushti community honors Mobed Bahram Shahzadi, we at the North American Mobeds Council, wish to convey our sincere felicitations to him for his dedicated, persistent, and selfless service to our glorious Faith and to the members of our congregations."

The above sentiment by Kobad Zarolia, President of North American Mobeds Council; echoed the CZC Hall when it was read by the moderator Susan Bakhtari at this very special gathering of Southern California Zoroastrians on July 25, 2009.

Bahram Shahzadi, the younger brother of the Late Mobedan-e-Mobed Honorable Rostam Shahzadi – the High Priest of Iran, was born and raised in Yazd. He received his Bachelor's degree from Tehran University in English Language and Persian Literature. In Iran, he was affiliated with the Zoroastrian Youth Association, Kankash-e-Yeganegi and the Ancient Cultural Association of Iran. In 1979, after the revolution, he relocated to United Kingdom with his family for two years.

In 1981, he migrated to Chicago, USA and became an integral part of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. During his 6-year stay in Chicago he wrote a book titled: "Message of Zarathushtra", which was so well received that the book was republished in Southern California years later.

The dedication of his religious and communal service to the Chicago Zarathushti community is aptly articulated by Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna (Founding President, FEZANA & WZCC) in their message which states:

"We could not help to reminisce over the numerous services you and your family provided our community when you, Mahin Banou, and your dutiful son and daughters were here in Chicago. In life, everything comes to pass, only the memories and the good that we do remains. Some of us the old timers in Chicago remember those good and valuable services you and your family so willingly offered. Hope that you will continue your silent support for our community worldwide in your own inimitable way."

As you have noticed his respected wife Mahin Banou has also been credited above, a sentiment I like to personally reaffirm because her selfless support has always been attested and appreciated by Mobed Shahzadi. She has truly been the icing on the cake of services we have benefited over the years from our Mobed.



Photo By: Ardeshir Baghkhonian



In 1987, Mobed and his family moved to Orange County in Southern California, where he became the official Head Priest of the California Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, California. Besides providing full-time religious services at CZC, he was in charge of the Arbab Keikhosrow Shahrokh Library and served as the director of the "Chehre Nama" publication.

The function started with a Benediction prayer and blessing by Mobed Dr. Rostam Vahidi, which was followed by presentations/messages from Mehraban Zartoshti, Dr. Jafarey, Mobed Kamran Jamshidi, Dr. Zartosht Azadi, Dr. Mitra Dinyari, Dr. Khosro Mehrfar, Dr. Mehrafarin, Rashid Mehin, Kobad Zarolia, Bomi Patel, Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna, Ardeshir Jamshidi, Arman Ariane, Parvin Rostami and Meher Amalsad.

To add flair to the program, a special poem by Farideh Ghaibi was read by Shireen Manochehri along with music and Persian dancing by the CZC Youth. Furthermore, the near full capacity audience enjoyed a short presentation about Mobed Shahzadi's life prepared by his dedicated daughters Behnaz and Mernoosh. (in photo below, from left Mobed Shahzadi, wife Mahin Banou, daughters Behnaz and Mernoosh)

"As we proudly hold a recognition day to honor our Mobed Bahram Shahzadi, we truly appreciate him for his selfless dedication and service to our community, and wish him and his family the very best in the future," said Ardeshir Jamshidi in his message on behalf of California Zoroastrian Center.

"Our dear Mobed Bahram Shahzadi was introduced to me by his elder brother, the Late Mobedan-Mobed (High Priest) Rostam Shahzadi, a very close friend of mine. I was impressed to know that he was an English teacher in 1950s, when there were hardly any English-knowing Iranians in Tehran. When I started my Avesta Language Class for the second time in Tehran in 1970s, he joined and proved a bright student. However, in the late 1980s, he succeeded me as the Managing Director of the California Zoroastrian Center, and proved that he has improved my job in management, teaching, librarianship, officiating at religious ceremonies, editorship of the CZC's Bulletin and community relations. And he has his life-partner Mahin Banou as his best support in his successful services to the Zoroastrian Community," said Dr. Jafarey in his pre-recorded video message that was televised at this event.



I have had the distinctive honor of knowing Mobed Shahzadi and his family for over 22-years. He was the presiding Mobed for my marriage and for the Sedreh Pushin ceremony of my daughter Anahita. Over the years, I have had unique opportunities to tap on the gift of his wisdom. During which, we have had agreements, as well as, some disagreements on various philosophies; but what I find admirable about him, is his congenial spirit and his willingness to listen with an open mind.

The above sentiment is endorsed in this message from Mobed Kamran Jamshidi:

"Since the beginning of our Zoroastrian history, 'Mobeds' have always been one of the preserving and progressing foundations of Zoroastrian societies, each according to their abilities. Mobed Bahram Shahzadi has undoubtedly



North American Mobeds' Council

been one of our more knowledgeable and wise mobeds, who offered the best years of life to us through his service to the Zoroastrian community. One of his best characteristics has been his true understanding of Zarathushtra's Mantras, which served as the guiding light in his cultural and religious services at the California Zoroastrian Center. We at the World Zoroastrian Community, express our gratitude with best wishes for many more years of health and tranquility in his life."

In March of 2009, after 22 years of service Mobed Shahzadi retired. During this tenure, as Head of the Religious Affairs at the California Zoroastrian Center, he has provided guidance to the members of our community with integrity. His peaceful and loving nature, make others feel comfortable in his presence. He has been a ray of hope and inspiration to all, through his exemplary service to the community in the role of a spiritual and religious leader. He has also been instrumental in representing the Zarathushti faith at Inter-Faith celebrations; in which he has enlightened the non Zarathushtis with his scholastic and religious knowledge.

And, he has been extremely gracious to the members of our Parsi community. Now, for those who don't know, our respected Mobed, is also a gifted artist.

In North America, we depend on priests like Mobed Shahzadi to fulfill the religious, social, and spiritual needs of our community. As a result, many see Mobeds as "RULE MODELS". But, I see Mobed Shahzadi as a ROLE MODEL. Not just a Role Model but an exemplary ROLE MODEL OF DIGNITY AND GRACE.

It is said that: People who achieve greatness are not the ones who give great speeches but the ones who perform selfless actions. Our hats off to you Mobed Shahzadi, for you have achieved greatness in our books.

Zarathushtra said: Make others happy and you will also be happy. Mobed Bahram Shahzadi, YOU have been a staunch believer of this philosophy for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart and spirit.

I will leave you with this message from our FEZANA President Bomi Patel, which was read on his behalf by our FEZANA VP Rashid Mehin.

"Dear Respected Mobed Bahram Shahzadi: As the California Zoroastrian Center recognizes your exceptional community service today, FEZANA would like to show our gratitude for your selfless service, priestly dignity and deep sense of religiosity. On this auspicious occasion, we pray to Ahura Mazda to bestow His Divine blessings on you and wish all success that life has to offer to you and your family. Thank you Mobed Shahzadi for your exemplary community service, and thank you CZC, for felicitating and honoring a man who dedicated his life towards serving humanity."

In short, "A legacy is not what you leave for others but what you leave IN others".

Mobed Bahram Shahzadi, as a token of appreciation for your selfless dedication, I wish you a life blessed in the service of Ahura Mazda & pray that you will continue to inspire our future generation to serve our community with dignity and humility.

***The FEZANA JOURNAL TEAM thanks MOBED BAHRAM SHAHZADI
for his years of dedicated service to the community and wishes him all the very best on his retirement.
Dolly Dastoor Ed.***

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

KNOW YOUR ZARATHUSHTI SCRIPTURES.

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS IN LIST B AND USE THEM TO ANSWER THE QUERIES IN LIST A.

LIST A.

- A. Songs composed by Prophet Zarathustra.
- B. This Dynasty ruled Persia 2500 years ago.
- C. This portion of the Avesta contains the prayers used when performing rituals.
- D. This book contains a list of all the Avestan & Zand texts.
- E. Today the oldest Avestan manuscripts are found in this European city.
- F. What happens to good & bad people after they die is found in this part of the Avesta.
- G. The word Iran comes from a people who called themselves _____.
- H. Avestan is an Indo European Language related to this Indic Language.

LIST B.

1. NYAAS.
2. RADKIND.
3. DEVIDVAD.
4. TGHASA
5. NARAYS.
6. TIARSNSK
7. MINNAEAEACH.
8. NEGAPENHOC.

H. 6. SANSKRIT.
G. 5. ARYANS.
F. 3. VIDVAD.

E. 8. COPENHAGEN.
D. 2. DINKARD
C. 1. YASNA.

B. 7. ACHAEMENIAN.
A. 4. GATHAS.
ANSWER KEY.

Personal Profiles

Parastu and Jamshed Dubash: Building bridges one stint at a time.

By Teenaz Javat

You must be the change you want to see in the world. *Mohandas Karamchan Gandhi*, the Indian political and spiritual leader may have said this several years ago, but Parastu and Jamshed H. Dubash are putting it to good use. As first generation Americans, they both came to the US from Iran and India respectively, and like most immigrants are living the American dream.

A house in a pleasant neighborhood, a well-paying job, throw in two adorable children and an educated stay at home mom who has put her career on hold, they seem to lack nothing.

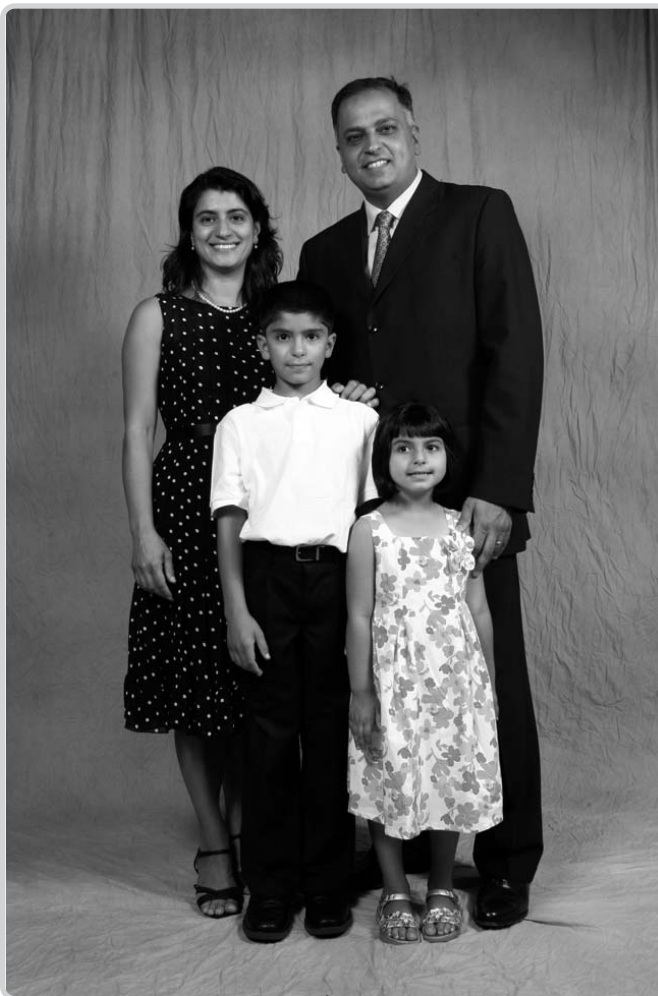
But having achieved all this, the Dubash's wanted to give back.

"It was one thing to be successful, but there is quite another to get involved in your community and reach out," say Parastu a 40 going on 20 mother of two.

With a doctorate in psychology from Carnegie Mellon University, Parastu who was teaching in several area colleges, had an exciting past life, before she decided to put her career on hold to concentrate on bringing up her two children, Zarius 10 and Zinara 6.

Her involvement in Zoroastrian associations pre-dates her stint as past-President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area, (ZAGBA). She came to the U.S., as a teenager in 1979 and ten years later was front and centre of the Zoroastrian Association in Pittsburg. *"I started working as a volunteer in the Newsletter committee and have not looked back since then."* she says.

In 1993 when she moved to the Boston area with husband Jamshed, it was only natural that she got involved with what ZAGBA had to offer. From president to secretary to newsletter editor, Parastu has done it all.



Ervad Farhad Panthaki who has known the family over the past 17 years quite aptly sums it up, *"Parastu is the tireless worker in the background, being the driving force and in most cases the only person doing numerous things like our Newsletter, our Community Calendar, all external communication and coordination with FEZANA and other organizations, besides numerous other things."*

As a fairly active board member and the go-to guy for Children's education and Religious services, Farhad and his wife Firoza take pride in having this young couple lead the association that forms such an integral part of their lives.

"Parastu has also served on the ZAGBA board in years past for a total of eight years and rightfully earned The Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award from FEZANA a few years ago. Ever since I've known them, they have been extremely welcoming to new people, friendly, fun loving, inclusive, always thinking of others, and tirelessly serving the community. Jamshed has been the President of ZAGBA for the past three years and has infused new energy and enthusiasm with numerous initiatives that have been implemented and continue to be. The ZAGBA website summarizes some of the vision that they have brought to the organization," Panthaki adds.

Originally from India, Jamshed has been one of the pioneers in the evolution of Radio Frequency

Personal Profiles

Identification (RDIF) technology. On moving to the U.S. in 1982, from New Delhi, India, he attended a year of high school in Syracuse, NY., before going to college. Armed with a BSEE degree in Microelectronic Engineering from Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY and a High Technology MBA from Northeastern University in Boston, MA (1997), Jamshed is currently an independent consultant and is working with XIO Strategies.

Despite a job that entails some traveling, when at home Jamshed divides his time between family and community work. *“What we are striving for is to get our youngsters involved in community work not just for the Zoroastrian community in particular, but also in the community at large. We raise money for cancer research; do out-of-the-cold programs for the homeless, coordinate food drives for the local food banks and organize clothes drives for the clothing banks. What goes in our favor is that even in a community of about 200 members, we have at least 50 members under 15, so the level of energy is quite high,”* says Jamshed.

The almost 200 families that make up ZAGBA are quite passionate about the association, as was quite evident during the 25th anniversary celebrations they had last month. (page 35) Jamshed continues “The success

of the event could not have been possible without the heavy lifting done by my colleagues Rajeev and Tanaz Yadav. They volunteered their time and efforts over ten months to make the event a phenomenal success. The Zoroastrians in Boston are as well-knit as they are dispersed. And what we are aiming for is to have a place of our own where we can meet and congregate. Currently, the community is working to realize their dream of having a Zarathushti Center of Boston (ZCB), a place for worship, learning, cultural celebration, and community events.”

The four initiatives central to ZAGBA are:

- Community building
- Community education
- Community service
- Community centre

“And it is in this order of importance that we continue to build and nurture for future generations to reap. Although my term as president ends next year, I do not think there will be any major drop in my commitment to the organization, as Parastu will continue with what she is doing and honestly, she is so involved that she is the force that drives me. Living with her, one cannot just disengage and leave.”

“From mice to men, it has been a long journey for Tanya Hansotia, Ph.D.”

By Teenaz Javat

Unassuming, with her hair tied up in a pony tail and a blue backpack, which had seen better days, slung over her shoulders, Tanya Hansotia saunters into my back yard as we fire up the BBQ.

The backpack may be old, the jeans faded, the shoes well-worn but what Tanya has achieved in her young life may be the envy of several around her.

Clearly not at ease with people, Tanya Hansotia, Ph.D., tries her level best to put me at ease, as I try to grapple with a subject I have no clue about.

As we undertake the onerous task of trying to understand why she does what she does, in the company of more mice than men, Tanya takes me back several years in trying to explain how her scientific journey began.

Having come to Canada from Karachi, Pakistan 16 years ago, she knew exactly what she wanted by grade 11.

Sitting across from her, I get the sense that Tanya is not one to talk much about what she is doing, or her past achievements. I will have to pry the information out of her.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

TJ: Why science and not anything else?

TH: I was inspired by my grade 11 biology teacher who kind of set the ball rolling. She elevated the study of the human body to an art form. In fact, it became such an obsession with me that every Saturday morning for the next four years I volunteered at the Credit Valley Hospital pharmacy just so that I could be as close to the medical community as possible. I knew then what I know now, that the human body and its functions fascinated me enough to want to dedicate my life to learning more about it.

Having completed my Bachelors in Science from the University of Toronto, I knew I had to take my studies to another level. All I wanted to understand was how the

Personal Profiles

human body worked at a normal level and how it functioned in a diseased state. It's just that it took me 66 months to do so. At the end of it I realized that a Ph.D., which in itself is an extensive body of research, is but the tip of the iceberg.

TJ: What are you working on now?

TH: I work as a scientist in Dr. James Woodgett's lab at the Simon Lunenfeld Research Institute, which is the research wing of the Mount Sinai hospital in Toronto. My current research, to put it very simply revolves around understanding the pathology behind breast cancer. I have been at this for over three years, which research-wise is not a very long time.

TJ: Can you share with us a moment when you thought all this was worth it?

TH: My doctoral thesis was on elucidating the novel biological actions of the incretin hormones, by trying to establish the importance of two peptides in the control of glucose. It was when part of my research was approved and used for controlling diabetes in human beings that I was thrilled. It is the logical conclusion for a researcher than the body of knowledge they have worked to develop be applied towards enhancing the human life form. That said, with most science-based research you never know when you are going to finish. It is so time consuming that you can very easily remain a student past 40.

TJ: What drives you on?

TH: It is incredibly frustrating when you are two years into your research, and you realize it is going nowhere. The end result that most researchers are looking for is to add value to what is already known. I have seen in my short career, several scientists dropping out. It has not happened to me yet, but I cannot rule out that possibility. In my case it is my obsession and support from my husband Nadir that drives me. Also, by nature, I am extremely comfortable in a lab setting and do not miss the social circuit at all. I love my mice as they are integral to our research at all levels.

TJ: What does the future hold for you?

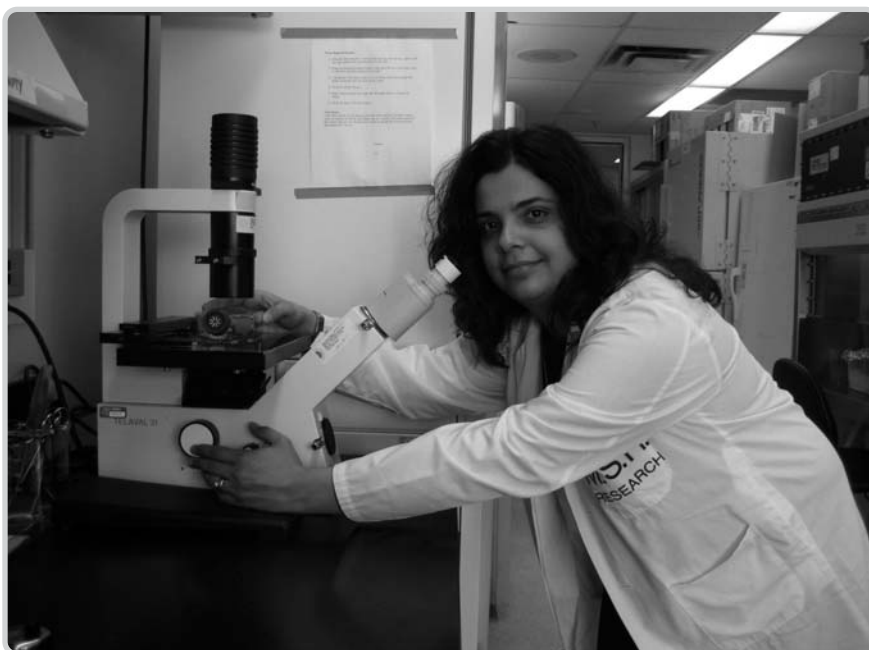
TH: Under ideal circumstances, in the next ten years I hope to have my own lab. But if that does not happen, my other option is to do industry-based research. I see it as a good way to achieve a life-work balance. Academic research can at times be very daunting, as you always have to prove your productivity in order to access year-to-

year grants. Sometimes, to be honest this instability gets to you.

So from a female perspective, and I am not being sexist here, I see myself working "real" hours in an industrial lab as opposed to the "crazy" hours I put in now. When that will happen, I cannot say.

TJ: Other than having a sharp intellect, what does one need to succeed as a scientist?

TH: You do not have to be a genius to do what I am doing. What is required is sheer dedication to purpose. According to me, science-based research be it academic or otherwise cannot be done part time. Either you are



present or absent. There is not much wiggle room. I know of several colleagues who after several years on a project find out that it was not leading them anywhere and they had to start all over again. It is at this point that we lose scientists.

Tanya Hansotia has published papers in several Academic journals over the past nine years.

Endocrinology	July 2002
Journal of Biological Chemistry	February 2003
Journal of Clinical Investigation	March 2004
Diabetes	June 2004
Regulatory Peptides	July 2005
Cell metabolism	November 2007
Diabetes	March 2008

M I L E S T O N E S as of September 1, 2009

BIRTHS

Jazmine Kadkhoda, a girl, to Shirin Jangi and Kikhosrow Kadkhoda in Vancouver, BC on February 19, 2009.

Shanaya Shroff, a girl, to Dilnaz and Malcolm Shroff on February 25, 2009.

Sanaya Din, a girl, to Sherri Treasurywala and Cyrus Mistry, sister to Sarosh in New Port Beach, CA on March 2, 2009.

Aliza Dubash, a girl, to Roxana Dubash, granddaughter to Nergish and Kayomars Mehta and Jeroo and Nozer Dubash (Dubai) in Naperville, IL on March 20, 2009.

Darcy Ethan, a boy, to Riyaz and Jennifer Deshmukh in Vancouver, BC on March 22, 2009.

Arshan Forughi, a son, to Sunita Khambatta and Goshtasb Forughi, grandson to Farida and Sarosh Khambatta (Orland Park, IL) and Perin and Sohrab Forughi (CA) in Menomonee Falls, WI on April 4, 2009.

Xerxes Wadia, a boy, to Heather and Cyrus Wadia, grandson to Arnavaz and Noshir Wadia (Morgan Hill, CA) in Berkeley, CA on April 14, 2009.

Artin Irani, a boy, to Arianne and Rayomand Irani, brother to Anushe and Christa in Palo Alto, CA on April 19, 2009.

Kylan Blake, a boy, to Raina and Nick Blake, grandson to Farida and Rohinton Shroff and Bonnie and Robert Blake in Chicago, IL on May 18, 2009.

Zivan Kerawalla, a boy, to Samara and Kywan Kerawalla, grandson to Viloo and Purosshup Kerawalla (Houston, TX) on May 22, 2009.

Sophie Appoo, a girl, to Zavera and Farshad Appoo, sister to Sasha in Mississauga, ONT on May 28, 2009.

Sabrina Mehta, a girl, to Delna and Kairas Mehta, sister to Maya, granddaughter to Dolly and Soli Mehta (Mississauga, ONT) and Behroze and Adi Anary (Markham, ONT), great granddaughter to Mehli Mehta and

Khorshed Jobani in Mississauga, ONT on June 3, 2009.

Ava Dumas, a girl, to Niloufer and Vincent Dumas, granddaughter of Thrity and Soli Dastur and Marie and Guy Dumas in Montreal, Que, on June 29, 2009.

Nya Marisa Yasmin Castiel Vajifdar, a girl, to Annette and Hoshi Vajifdar, sister to Darius, granddaughter to Cora and Phil Torres and Aban and Pesi Vajifdar, niece to Delnaz and Neville Vajifdar, Victoria (Dallas) Wilson, and Phil (Donita) Torres, cousin to Avalyn Torres and Isabella and Sebastian Wilson in Chicago, IL on July 19, 2009.

Aiden Kalra, a boy to Teenaz and Vikas Kalra, grandson to Kety and Vispi Patel (Toronto) and Achla and Avinash Kalra, in Richmond Hill, ONT on August 6, 2009

NAVJOTES

Sanaya F Bhadha, 7, daughter of Afrid and Ervad Farhad J Bhadha,



granddaughter of Yasmin and Ervad Jehanbux Bhadha (Los Angeles, CA) and Meheru and Homi Bulsara (Mumbai, India) at the West End Hotel in Mumbai, India, on December 28, 2008. (Photo below)

Kyle Jensen, son of Venessa Behrana Jensen and David Jensen, grandson of Zenobia and Mehelli Behrana, in Houston, on April 25, 2009.

Zubin and Arman Mehrabadi, sons of Roozbeh Mehrabadi and Farah Shroff in Burnaby, BC on May 16, 2009.

Cyrus Wadia, son of Dr. Minoo and Kayomin Wadia (Tennessee) at the Chicago Darbe Meher on June 20, 2009.

Arta Fan, daughter of James and Shirin Fan (Dallas, TX) in Iran on June 25, 2009.

Zal and Rushad Daboo, children of Roxana and Behram Daboo at the Chicago Darbe Meher on June 30, 2009.

Arman (9) and Ariyana (8), children of Khushnum and Kamyar Kermanizadeh, grand children of Mrs Nergish, and Late Rustomji Bhagwagar, and grand children of Keykhosrow and Zarintaj Kermanizadeh at Walnut Creek, California on July 1, 2009.

Cyrus and Sima Kootar, children of Aspi and Mahrukh Kootar in Toronto, ONT on July 17, 2009.

Rohan and Ashish, children of Tannaz Machhi and Debasish Chakraborty in Houston, TX on July 25, 2009.

Daztar Pagdiwala, son of Neelam and Keki Pagdiwala, brother of Yolancia in Bolton, CT on August 3, 2009.

WEDDINGS

Jennifer Vaid, daughter of Bapsy and Hoshang Vaid (San Jose, CA) to Homyar Dastoor, son of Silloo and late Noshirwan Dastoor (Secunderabad, India) in Secunderabad, India on January 9, 2009.

Nazneen Jamal, daughter of Mohammad and Aziman Jamal (Fiji) to Farhad Vaid, son of Bapsy and Hoshang Vaid in San Jose, CA on April 5, 2009.

Dinyar Kalwachwala to Karishma Contractor on April 21, 2009.

Dixie Kadva, daughter of Nilufer and Neville Kadva (Modesto, CA) to Kaizad Cama, son of Mehru and Lovji Cama (Tenafly, NJ) in Lodi, CA on May 9, 2009.

Farhad Gheyara, son of Dr Kelly and Pilloo Gheyara to Bianca Chimisso Piacek, daughter of Maria & Jean Pierre Sauval, in Montreal, Canada on May 17, 2009.

Varun Shetty, son of Drs. Behroze and Sugandh Shetty (Novi, MI) to Nikita Gohel, daughter of Bharati and Dr. Narendra Gohel of Troy, MI at the

Shenandoah Country Club in West Bloomfield, MI on June 27, 2009.

Gulshan A. Bharucha, daughter of Aspi and Nergish Bharucha (Cincinnati, OH) to Yohan M. Banaji, son of Roshan and late Mehernosh Banaji. Wedding was officiated by Ervads Jamshed Antia and Jimmy Ravji of Chicago, in Cincinnati, OH on July 5, 2009. (photo below)



Jenny Bhandara, daughter of Dali Bhandara to Hamish Whitefield, son of David Whitefield and Rosemarie Fall, in Montreal, on July 10, 2009.

Jenny Bamboat, daughter of Tanaz and Kewmars Bamboat to Birav Shah in Merrillville, IN on July 18, 2009.

Behram and Dinaz Contractor in Dallas, TX on July 19, 2009.

Persis Damkewala, daughter of Bachi and Bomi Damkewala (Woodridge, IL) to Burjis Sidhwa, son of Pervin and Maneck Sidhwa (Houston, TX) on July 25, 2009.

Fawaz Rustomji, son of Dinaz and Shahrokh Rustomji (Toronto, Canada) to Pooja Vig, daughter of Shukla Vig and late Bal Khrishan in Fantasy Farms, Toronto on August 3, 2009.

DEATHS

Minoo Daruwala, 78, husband of Bakhtawar, father of Percy Daruwala (Burnaby, BC) and Kashmira in Mumbai, India on February 5, 2009.

Hoshang Unvala, father of Shiraz Antia and Zarir Unvala in Maine on February 12, 2009.

Bomansha Ghadailly, father of Viraf and Toni Ghadailly in Mumbai, India on February 25, 2009.

Dosabhoy Engineer, 85, father of Zarina Bankim Kaji (Los Gatos, CA),

Arnavaz Jamshed Gandhi (Martinez, CA) and Dilnavaz Burt Mooney (Oregon), grandfather of Sejal, Shilpa, Rashna, Shirin, Shanaz, and Cyrus in Los Gatos, CA on March 24, 2009.

Zomorod Hormazdi, 68, wife of late Fereidoon Firoozi, mother of Farhad (Tehran, Iran) and Faranak (Majid) of Montreal, in Tehran, Iran on April 9, 2009.

Shiraz Cooper in Houston, TX on April 17, 2009.

Tehmi Adi Irani, mother of Shahnaz (Phiroze) Marolia, grandmother of Natasha and Parzan (Markham, ON) on April 18, 2009.

Tehmurasp Boatwalla, 72, father of Niloufer Minoo Mehta (Houston, TX) in Mumbai, India on April 19, 2009.

Soonu Jahina, 76, daughter of Burjorji and Dinamai Jahina, wife of Dr Rusty P. Dastur, sister of Dr Ronni and Kaio, Dhun, Mehru (Lovji) Cama, Gool R Thakavar, sister-in-law of Naju P. Dastur, in San Diego CA. on April 23, 2009.

Homi Neku, father of Pourichisti and Farokh Hirjibehdin on April 25, 2009.

Kekobad Pavri, father of Persis and Arshis Pavri on May 3, 2009.

Minoo Daruwala, husband of Soni, in Montreal on May 8, 2009

Homi Rustomji Billimoria, husband of Lily Billimoria, father of Rukshana Porus Dinshaw and Binaifer David Archibald, grandfather of Darius and Rayomand in Mississauga, ONT on May 7, 2009.

Dorab Tarapore, 101, father of Erach Tarapore (Lafayette, CA), grandfather of Phiroz and Shenaya in Mumbai, India on May 12, 2009.

Banou Behizadeh, 90, sister of Zomorod Shahriari, aunt of Shervin Shahriari in North Vancouver, BC on May 16, 2009.

Hoshang Nariman Master, husband of Shirin Master, father of Parichey and Yasmin in Toronto, ONT on May 23, 2009.

Mehran Yazdani, husband of Shahnaz Yazdani, father of Shawn and Shanaya in California on June 3, 2009.

Perrin Phiroze Engineer, mother of Kelly Engineer (CA), Dinaz (Ken) Weber (IL), and Prochi Engineer (CA), grandmother of Jessie, Kelly Jr., Joshua, Michelle, Katie, Ashley and Jessica, great grandmother of Angelina, Jessie Jr., and Phiroze, sister of Nader, Pilu, and Nariman (India), Tehmi, Sheroo, and Nergish (India), sister-in-law of Roshan Erach Guard, Sheila Vishwash More, Dhun, Katy, Rusi and Pervez Engineer in Hayward, CA on June 8, 2009.

Mani Lovji Doctor, mother of Ruby Cyrus Tampal and Nergish Doctor, grandmother of Burzin and Cumbysis in Toronto, ONT on June 22, 2009.

Meher Bhupinder, sister of Denny Vakil (Oakville, ONT) in Mumbai, India on June 24, 2009.

Rohinton Jasavala, husband of Nargis, father of Rayomand, Farshogar, Jehanbux, Yesna, and Hutoxi in Ontario, Canada on June 24, 2009.

Yasmin Soli Magra, wife of Soli, mother of Ferzin Navroze Katrak and Roshni Keki Bapuna, sister of Ervad Pesi (Aban) Vajifdar (Chicago, IL) and Gool Homi Madon, grandmother of Hoshi (Annette), Neville, Delnaz and Darius Vajifdar in Mumbai, India on June 28, 2009.

Homayoon Yazdani, mother of Sohrab (Tehran, Iran), Meherdad (Dallas, TX), Yasmeen (Iran), Keki Jarrah (Markham, ONT) and Jehanghir (Karachi, Pakistan) in Markham, ONT on July 7, 2009.

Shahriar Darabian, father of Shirin, Mahsheed & Mahnaz Darabian in California on July 20, 2009.

Katy Kerawala, mother of Huty (Farokh) Billimoria, Gev (Armaity) Kerawala (Mumbai) grandmother of Jim and Eric, and Benaifer and Perzan (Mumbai) in Mumbai, India on July 22, 2009.

Firoz Nentin, husband of late Camal, father of Gev (Aban), Armin (Jal) Surti, in New York on August 12, 2009,

Noshir Patel, husband of Maneck Patel, father of Hutoxi Cooper (New Jersey) and Bapsy Mehta in India.

CORRECTION

Jasper Patel, a boy, to Armaity and Viraf Patel, brother to Zain in Belmont, CA on February 4 2009

(It was previously stated February 9, 2009)

Matrimonials

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna rrrivetna@aol.com.

Male, 33, Ph.D. in Physics, originally from the US, currently running a Physics lab and teaching in London. Enjoys politics, current events, listening to podcasts, movies, going out to eat, exercising and traveling. Contact zashmin@gmail.com. [M09-29].

Female, 36, Ph.D., professionally well-placed in USA. Attractive, well traveled, kind and caring. Seeks confidential response from eligible bachelors. Contact smb1941can@gmail.com. [F09-30].

Female, 26, B.Com., studied French at Alliance de France, working as Quality Assurance analyst at a BPO in the Travel and Hospitality sector in India. Enjoys flower and candle making, reading, music and traveling; religious with a respect for elders. Looking for a partner who is loving and caring, from a good family. Contact Mumbai 011 91 22 2679 5526. [F09-31].

Female, 30, college education in Design, working in Bangalore applying Design thinking to the needs of urban waste. From a happy, well educated, well traveled family, with a love for living with animals, growing plants, travel, hiking. Looking for a gentle and emotionally mature man, deeply connected with his work, and has a deep sense of compassion and humility. Contact dd9878@yahoo.in. [F09-33].

Male, 30, BSc, worked as sales manager for construction company, and recently started his own residential building construction company near Pune, India. Father invites correspondence. Contact d_bobinmaker@hotmail.com, or call Pune 2613 4546. [M08-24].

Male, 36, B.Sc. in Physics, diploma in software technology from Mumbai, working as programmer analyst in New York. Contact ruzhere@yahoo.com. [M08-27].

Female, 31, B. A., preschool teacher in California. Currently taking physical therapy training. Call 408 732 4187. [F09-39].

Female, 26, M.S (Electrical Eng) from Purdue, working in Indiana. Contact 765 212 7017. [F09-40].

Female, 26, 5'4," pursuing her Ph.D. in Psychology in the U.S. would like to correspond with well- educated Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian men with character and good values. Contact sapatel1@sbcglobal.net. [F09-41].

Male, 27, 5'9," born and educated in the US, currently a resident in Neurosurgery, would like to initiate contact with self confident, pleasant looking, educated women. Contact fsbahr1@msn.com. [M09-42].

Female, 54, Masters in Health Science, working as Speech Pathologist in Canada. Divorced with grown children. Contact keneezee@hotmail.com. [F09-43].

Looking for a Soul Mate?

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<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com>

www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com

**Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai,
goolpesi@gmail.com**

CORRECTION

The arab invasion happened in the Seventh Century ACE and not in the Tenth as reported on Page 96, Vol 23 No2

FEZANA JOURNAL regrets the error

Founding President of Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand

Yazdi Mistry, born July 1, 1928 in Ahmedabad to Temulji & Motibai Mistry died in Auckland, New Zealand on August 3, 2009. He leaves behind his wife, Thrity, and children Zenobia, Mahrukh and Tehmus and their spouses Kersi Aspar, Tom Stazyk and Jarafshan Mistry (nee Mobed from Houston, Texas) and five grandchildren: Cyrus, Anahita and Binaifer Aspar and Yazdy and Xerxes Mistry.

Yazdi had a long and distinguished career in India and Malaysia with Godrej & Boyce, Ltd., and as an independent entrepreneur in Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand. Rather than his career, Yazdi's two passions were his family and community service and he made significant contributions to the Zarathushti as well as the wider communities in all the places he lived. He was kind, loving and generous and enjoyed meeting and helping people everywhere.

In Kuala Lumpur where he went in 1969, he was a charter member of the Bharat Club, a social and professional organization for Indian expatriates, serving on the management committee for fourteen years, president for five years and was made an honorary life member in 1988 when he left Malaysia.

As a charter member of the Rotary Club of Damansara, Kuala Lumpur he served in various capacities with Rotary Clubs in Malaysia and New Zealand. He achieved 100% attendance over a 22 year period and was named Paul Harris Fellow in recognition of his distinguished service.

Since 1969 he was a Freemason with the Deolali Lodge (Bombay), Klang Lodge (Kuala Lumpur) and Eden Lodge (Auckland) and in 1997 became the first Asian to be elected to the Eden Lodge Master's chair in its 120 year history. He was active in the Lodge until health issues prevented him from continuing. Yazdi inspired his son Tehmus to join the Eden Lodge where he, too, has served as Master.

One of Yazdi's most enduring legacies is the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ). In 1988 Yazdi moved to New Zealand when there were only a handful of Zarathushtis he saw the need for an organization to serve the spiritual and social needs of the community and in 1996, with Yazdi as the driving force, ZANZ was established. He served as president for the first five years of the organization's life and continued to actively serve the community. In 2004, in recognition of his long service to the Zarathushti Community in New Zealand, Yazdi was named ZANZ's first ever Patron *"in appreciation of his vision, leadership, dedication and*

guidance as a founding member of our association and its first President."

Over the years, ZANZ has grown in strength and Yazdi played a key role in interacting with other similar associations internationally and sharing ZANZ's achievement to other associations around the world. Yazdi's vision was for a close knit, caring and supportive community. He took the lead in fostering community and he and Thrity frequently opened their home to new immigrants and helped newly arrived families to settle into New Zealand.

His devotion to community service extended beyond the Zarathushti community. Till 2004, when health issues prevented his further involvement, Yazdi was an accredited member of Auckland Age Concern, a voluntary organization whose members visit lonely elderly people in their homes every week and was a volunteer driver for the Auckland Red Cross' Meals on Wheels program, delivering food to disabled elderly in their homes.

Till 2004 he was a committee member and the Zoroastrian representative in the New Zealand Chapter of the World Congress of Religions for Peace (WCRP), an organization devoted to peace through cooperation, understanding and dialogue among religions.

In 1994 Yazdi was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and in January 2000 he underwent a quadruple bypass surgery, His doctors advised him to cut back on some of his social/volunteer activities but he would not let illness slow him down and kept busy until May 2004 when he had a fall and broke his hip. He underwent three further surgeries on his hip and knee in 2007-2009, but despite the pain, he never lost his smile and sense of humor.

Yazdi lived life to the fullest and despite his illness, continued to be active as long as he could. He loved to travel and with his wife Thrity he went around the world, and in 2000 even climbed a section of the Great Wall of China. In July 2008, he celebrated with family and friends his 80th birthday. In December 2008, Yazdi was overjoyed to be able to leave the hospital for a day to attend the Navjote of his grandsons, Yazdy and Xerxes and celebrate with family and friends.

As his ultimate act of service to others, Yazdi bequeathed his brain to the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand Human Brain Bank for research in the hope that a cure could be found for an illness that he so bravely battled for almost 15 years.

***And in the end,
it's not the years in your life that count.
It's the life in your years.
Abraham Lincoln***





کتاب "مзда خدا نیست - بنیان آفرینش است"

نوشته کیخسرو کشاورز

چالشی است در شناخت اندیشه های زرتشت در گاتها.

گاتها مجموعه سرودهایی است که از خود زرتشت به یادگار مانده است. بر ما پوشیده است که آیا این مجموعه تمامی سرودهای زرتشت است یا سرودهای دیگری نیز بوده است که در دالان های زمان گم گشته است؟ و یا چنانچه در این کتاب بیان شده است اضافه بر سرودها، نثر هائی نیز وجود داشته است که ما از آنها بی خبریم؟ و اینکه این گونه باشد بسیار محتمل است. بنابراین گاتها موزائیکی راماند که اجزائی از آن در دسترس نیست و شایسته است با شکیبایی اجزای موجود آن را در کنار هم چید تا بن مایه **اندیشه زرتشت** را باز سازی نمود. این کوششی است که کیخسرو کشاورز در کتاب خود بدان همت گمارد.

در بخش " آنچه پیش از خواندن این کتاب باید دانست " به نکته های بسیار مهمی اشاره شده است:

" واژه های بکار رفته در گاتها معانی و مفاهیم گسترده و گوناگون داشتند زیرا زبان های آن دوران هنوز مراحل تکامل را نپیموده و مانند زبان های امروز از لحاظ واژه غنی نبودند. " و " با گذشت زمان معانی و مفاهیم واژه ها بتدریج تغییر یافتند و امروز به دشواری می توان فهمید که معنی و مفهوم دقیق برخی از واژه ها چه بوده. "

بدین ترتیب ما با ترجمه های گوناگون از واژه های گاتها روبرو هستیم. برای نمونه از واژه **اشا** ۷۵ ترجمه و از واژه **آرمنیتی** ۶۷ ترجمه و از واژه **خشترا** ۵۵ ترجمه وجود دارند. کیخسرو کشاورز نتیجه گیری می کند که پژوهشگرانی که در ترجمه و تفسیر گاتها همت گمارده اند ترجمه هائی را بر می گزینند که با نظر و برداشت و اعتقادات شخصی آنان هماهنگ باشند و این امری طبیعی و اجتناب ناپذیر است.

کیخسرو کشاورز پژوهش خود را از این اصل مسلم آغاز می کند که زرتشت در گاتها **پیامی مشخص با اندیشه ای به هم پیوسته و در رابطه ای معین** مد نظر داشته است و مسلماً سخن های پراکنده اندر زگونه در باره اخلاق و راستی و درستی و شهریاری خوب و غیره که هرکسی برداشتی دلخواه از آنها را داشته باشد مورد نظر وی نبوده است. پس جا دارد روشی برگزید که از لابلای ترجمه های بسیار مختلف و مفاهیم بسیار گسترده، خط قرمز فکری زرتشت را بازسازی نمود.

روشی که در این کتاب برای کاوش در ساختار اندیشه نهفته در گاتها به کار رفته است در بر گیرنده دو رهیافت زیر است.

۱ - رهیافت واژه شناختی.

۲ - رهیافت تحلیلی.

بر طبق رهیافت واژه شناختی، پنج مفهوم عمده که در کتاب " **واژه های کلیدی** " نام می گیرند مشخص می گردد، و نویسنده برحسب رهیافت تحلیلی در پی انتخاب ترجمه ای از واژه های کلیدی است که بتواند یک ساختار فکری همگون و نا متناقض در سرودهای گاتها باز یابد. و کتاب به خوبی از عهده این وظیفه بر آمده است.

انتخاب نام "مزدا خدا نیست - بنیان آفرینش است" گویای نتیجه گیری از ساختار فکری و اندیشه نهفته در گاتها است.

آماج زرتشت در تمام سرودهایش یکی است و برای دستیابی به این آماج فرازهای مختلفی را در نظر دارد. هدف نهائی او

آرامش و رسائی جاودانی بشر است

و آرامش و رسائی میسر نیست مگر در پرتوی دانش بر نظم جهان هستی و رفتاری هماهنگ با این نظم.

زرتشت به وجود این نظم یقین دارد، اما بر آن آگاه نیست. او شناخت این نظم را در گرو دست یابی به دانشی فراگیر می داند و آن را دانش بزرگ یا "مزدا" می خواند. او مزدا را امری جهان شمول و قابل دسترسی می داند.

از این رو زرتشت در سرودهای گاتها از مزدا پرسش میکند، از اوتوانائی طلب می کند و از مزدا یاری می خواهد.

هماهنگی بشر با نظم جهان هستی و چگونگی دستیابی به این هماهنگی از طریق دانش در گرانیگاه "آموزش اساسی زرتشت" است و از آنجائیکه این هماهنگی بر اساس اندیشه و کردار انسان آگاه باید انجام گیرد (اندیشه نیک و کردار نیک) علاوه بر دانش، باور به اصالت فرد، باور به اندیشه و خرد آدمی، باور به آزادی و کارائی اندیشه و باور به مسلط بودن هرکس بر سرنوشت خود درکانون این آموزش قرار دارد.

کار بزرگ و منحصر به فرد دیگر این کتاب طرح و مقایسه دو فرهنگ مزدائی و و فرهنگ اوستائی است و برای روشن نمودن این مهم نویسنده به حاشیه نمی رود و بصورت فرهنگ نامه ای کلیه مفاهیم مطرح در این دو فرهنگ را با یکدیگر مقایسه و توضیح می دهد. در پایان کیخسرو کشاورز به این گفته زرتشت مراجعه میدهد که :

"گفته ها را بشنوید، در باره اش بیندیشید، درست و نادرست را با کمک دانش بشری خود تشخیص دهید و با اراده آزاد آن را بپذیرید یا نپذیرید".
گاتها - سرود ۳۰ بند ۲

و گرچه این مضمون بعد از زرتشت از طرف دیگرانی نیز مطرح و یاد شده است ولی فرق بزرگ بین گفته زرتشت و دیگران در این است که این گفته با کلیه نکات آموزشی او هماهنگ است و هیچ تناقضی بین این گفته با اندیشه های دیگر او در گاتها وجود ندارد.

کتاب "مزدا خدا نیست - بنیان آفرینش است" نخست در سال ۱۹۹۶ در آلمان بچاپ رسید و به همت زنده یاد منوچهر فرهنگی در سال ۲۰۰۷ برای سومین بار تجدید چاپ شد.

برای تهیه کتاب به کتاب فروشی های ایرانی ویا مستقیما به انتشارات موسست با آدرس زسایر مراجعه فرمایید.

“Mazda is not God,
it is the foundation of creation”

Is a challenge in learning Zarathushtra's
thoughts in the Gatha.

BOOKS

ARTS



Reviewed by Soheil Keshavarz
Review translated by Fereydoon Keshavarz

No of pages 120, Publisher MOST
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The Gatha is a collection of hymns that have come to us from Zarathushtra

himself.

We do not know if this collection is Zarathushtra's complete set of hymns or whether there were other hymns that have been lost in the tenebrous corridors of time? Or, as questioned in this book, were there, in addition to these verses, a collection of Zarathushtra's prose whose content has been entirely lost. It is quite possible that the latter is true. Therefore the Gathas can be likened to a mosaic with missing parts and stones. For this reason it is imperative that the surviving parts be patiently put together in order to reconstruct the foundation of Zarathushtra's thoughts. This is what **Keykhosrow Keshavarz** has devoted himself to in this book.

In the section entitled “What one needs to know before reading this book”, very important points have been addressed:

“The words used in the Gathas had wide and diverse meanings because languages of those eras were not as developed as modern languages and whose vocabulary was not as rich as modern languages of today” and “With the passage of time the meaning and interpretation of words gradually

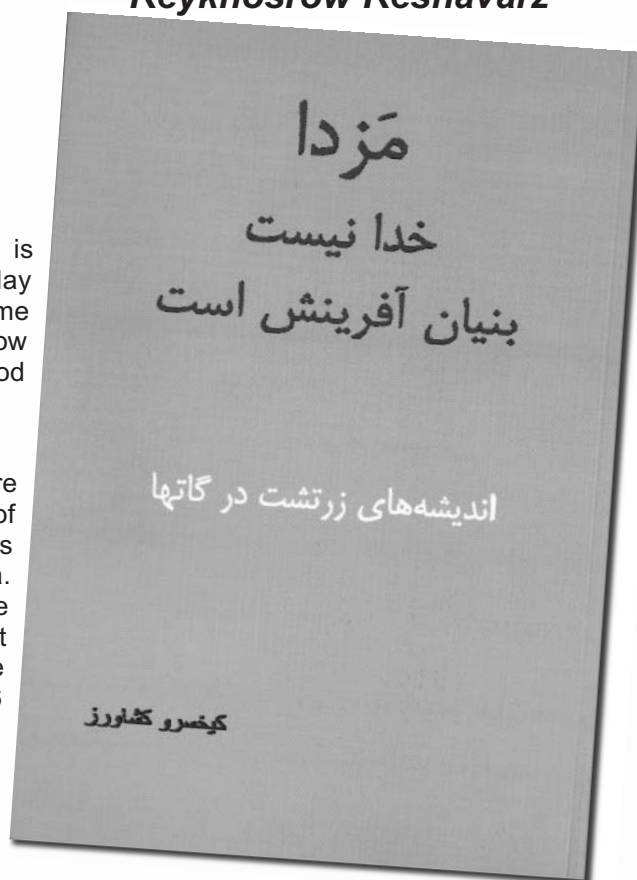
changed, hence it is difficult to know today precisely what some words meant and how they were understood and interpreted.”

Therefore, we are faced with a variety of translations of words used in the Gatha. For example, there are 75 different translations for the word Asha, 76 different translations for the word Armaity, and 55 different translations for the word Khashatra.

Keykhosrow Keshavarz concluded that the scholars who have endeavored in the translation and interpretation of the Gatha have chosen to translate and interpret words such that their translation best fits their preconceived beliefs and understandings. This phenomenon is natural and inevitable.

Keykhosrow Keshavarz starts his research with this irrefutable premise that Zarathushtra had a clear message with a well organized thought process and well defined purpose; and he has assuredly wanted to avoid discrete tips and

Keykhosrow Keshavarz



advice on ethics, righteousness and goodness, and just-kingship, all of which are open to personal interpretation. It is, therefore, appropriate to devise a way to reconstruct the redline of Zarathushtra's thought process between the many different translations of the Gatha and their diverse interpretations.

The method used in this book, to research the structure of the embedded thoughts in the Gathas, embraces two approaches as follows:

1. *Linguistic/Etymological approach*

2. *Analytical approach*

Using the linguistic/etymological approach five main interpretations that are referenced in the "Key Words" section of the book are identified.

Using the analytical approach, the author searches for a translation of the key words in order to find a harmonious, consistent and non-contradictory thought process in the Gathas. This book does an

exemplary job of it.

From this point of view this book is unique.

The choice of the title "*Mazda is not God, it is the foundation of creation*" speaks to the conclusion reached from the thought process and embedded thoughts found in the Gatha. Zarathushtra has a single message in all of his verses. He expresses different means to get his message across. His ultimate goal is: **Mankind's eternal serenity and maturity**

Serenity and maturity are not possible without the knowledge of the world order and a behavior that is harmonious with this order.

He knows that the recognition of this order is comprised of securing access to a vast knowledge and he called it "Great Knowledge" or "Mazda". He knows that Mazda encompasses the world and is within reach. Therefore, Zarathushtra addresses Mazda in the verses of Gathas, and asks for strength and guidance from Mazda.

As this harmony has to be based on the thoughts and deeds of the conscientious man (good thoughts and good deeds), in addition to

knowledge, believing in individual genuineness, believing in the ideas and wisdom of humankind, believing in the freedom and efficiency of thought, and believing in how everyone is in control of their own destiny, are all at the center of his teaching.

Another great and unique aspect of this book is that it brings to light and compares the Mazdaie culture to the Avestaie culture. In order to clarify this important point, the author does not digress; in the form of a dictionary, he compares and explains all the main concepts of these two cultures. At the end, Keykhosrow Keshavarz refers to this saying of Zarathushtra:

"Listen to what is said, reflect on what is said, with the help of your own human knowledge discern what is right and what is not right, and with that free resolve, accept or reject what is said." **Gathas, Verse 30, 2**

And even though others have since mentioned and referred to this saying of Zarathushtra, the major difference between them is that this saying is in total harmony with all points of Zarathushtra's teachings and there is no contradiction between this saying and any of Zarathushtra's other reflections as expressed in the Gathas

The book, "*Mazda is not God, it is the foundation of Creation*" was first published in 1996 in Germany. Through the efforts of the late Manuchehr Farhangi, a limited third edition was printed in 2007.

At the time of this printing, the book is only available in Farsi. To express an interest in an English translation please contact Fereydoon Keshavarz at: (301) 926-6394 or Fereydoon.Keshavarz@comcast.net

Keykhosrow Keshavarz was born in 1914, in Taft, attended school in Yazd and completed his graduate studies in 1936 in Tehran at the "Danesh Sara-ye Aali". After

-serving his mandatory military term, he was employed by the Department of Education, and till 1947 held teaching posts in Ghazvin, Kerman, Mashhad, and Tehran. In 1948 he published the *Pashutan Magazine*, and in 1949, as the deputy in the department of Higher Education he was sent to England and the United States for cultural studies. Upon his return, he was made principal of *Firouz Bahram school* and also accepted a post on the board of the *Zoroastrian Association of Tehran*. He organized the first 2 month education trip to Europe for the students of *Firouz Bahram school* and was then nominated to head the *Office for Sending Iranian Students for Studies Abroad*. Two years later he was sent on a six year mission as guardian of Iranian students studying in Austria. Upon his return to Iran in 1966, he retired from the Department of Education and spent his time in providing social, cultural and religious services for the *Zarathushti community*. He co-founded and was a board member of the *Hadaf Scholastic Establishment*, was *Manager of Interior Affairs of the College of Social Communication Science*, established and presided over the *Zoroastrian Association of Taft-o-tavabe*. He accepted the posts of editor in chief of *Fravahr publications*, board member of the *Association of Zoroastrian Youth*, board member of the *Zoroastrian Association of Tehran*, and was in charge of publications, library and bookstores of *Zoroastrian Association of Tehran*. It was in this period that he organized his research in the grammar and language of *Zarathushtis of Yazd*. He died April 4, 2008 and this book was his last research work.

Soheil Keshavarz

سهیل کشاوَرز

Fereydoon Keshavarz

فریدون کشاوَرز

Keykhosrow Keshavarz

کیخسرو کشاوَرز

Bapsi Sidhwa at Literary Festival of South Asian Readers and Writers

BOOKS
ARTS &

Bapsi Sidhwa was a Guest of Honor (along with writers Amitava Kumar and Romesh Gunsekera) at the Kriti Festival at Chicago's Roosevelt University, in June. The Kriti Festival, organized by DesiLit (visit www.DesiLit.org) is a literary festival bringing South Asian and diaspora readers and writers together.



Bapsi's five novels: *Water*, *An American Brat*, *Cracking India*, *The Bride*, and *The Crow Eaters* have been translated and published in several languages. Her anthology: *City of Sin and Splendour [aka] Beloved City: Writings on Lahore*, was published in 2006. *Cracking India* (a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and a Quality Paperback Book Club selection), was made into the film *Earth* by Canadian director Deepa Mehta. Her latest novel *Water* is based on Mehta's film of the same name. Sidhwa's play, *An American Brat*, was produced by Stages Repertory Theater in Houston March 2007. Her play, *Sock'em With Honey*, played in London in 2003.

In photo above Bapsi Sidhwa is seen signing her books for Chicago area Zarathushtis at the Festival, from left, Kayomarsh Mehta, Rohinton Rivetna, Chicago author Boman Desai and Roshan Rivetna.

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The Weight of Heaven

Author: Thrity Umrigar

Published: 2009, by Harper (An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers) pp 365;
\$25.99 ISBN 978-0-06-147254-1

BOOKS

ARTS



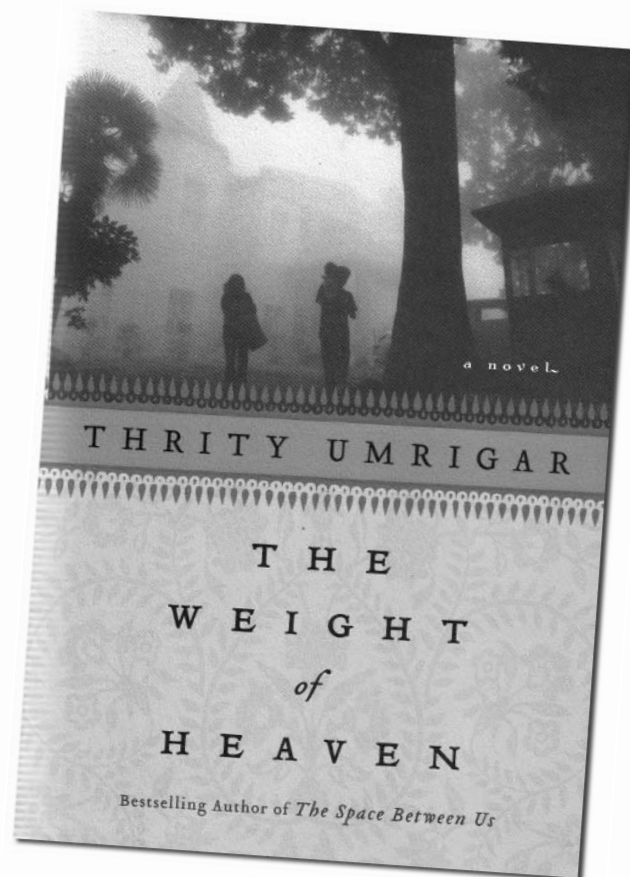
Reviewed by: Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Thrity Umrigar's latest novel, *The Weight of Heaven*, tells the story of Frank and Ellie Benton, a young American couple who relocate to India after the death of their seven year old son, Benny. The Bentons hope that this new adventure will help them put their life back together. But in the small town of Girbaug, their marriage – already under stress from the tragic circumstances surrounding Benny's death – is further challenged when Frank takes great interest in Ramesh, the intelligent nine year old son of their housekeepers, oblivious to the envy and rage this evokes in the boy's own father.

Furthermore, Frank must deal with the challenges of answering to American bosses and managing a third world work force, while Ellie makes inroads with the impoverished locals who are greatly impacted by every decision her husband makes. One of the interesting aspects of the book is how Umrigar shows that their mere existence as Americans in India puts their liberal ideals to the test.

The idea to write *The Weight of Heaven* first occurred to Umrigar when she met a woman who confided the tragic story of her son's death and how she found solace and comfort traveling to Thailand, interacting with local people and learning about Buddhism. Umrigar says once her imagination took over, it became obvious what issues she wanted to tackle in her book: "One, I wanted to write about grief and how different people, even in the same family, react differently to a tragedy. One can be enlarged by grief or diminished by it. Two, I was interested in exploring the workings of the new India of the 21st century. I wanted to see what would happen to a rural, indigenous place like the fictional Girbaug, when an American company opened a plant there."

Umrigar succeeds on both accounts. Her nuanced portrayal of grief and how it is dealt with makes one feel like they are experiencing it along with the characters. Using the voices of different characters, Umrigar is able to lay bare their perceptions and motivations and masterfully shows how the same event can be interpreted differently by different people. She also captures the subtle emotional shifts in relationships that



can happen in a split second. And with her journalistic background, Umrigar is able to show the impact of globalization on its masters and its victims in unflinchingly honest terms.

Despite the tragic premise, the novel is punctuated by poignant and humorous episodes, which make it hard to put down. The very dramatic ending might seem straight out of a Bollywood movie, but coupled with the insightful storyline, it may also bring movie producers to Umrigar's door.

All in all, *The Weight of Heaven* makes for a very worthwhile read.

Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi is a lawyer and a free lance writer.

FIRES, the online catalog of FEZANA Information Research & Education Systems is up and running! Our collection has titles of books in languages other than English, Gujarati, Farsi, Spanish and an occasional book in Chinese and Russian. You will also see sample of a recent seminar that was held by NAMC. Digital holdings are being added to the online catalog. At present the collection reflects materials available at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston and it holds even greater promise as it seeks to grow and add collections of other associations.

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The FEZANA Information Research & Education Systems (*FIRES*) is a centralized collection of Zarathushti books, manuscripts, literature, magazines, and scholarly research.

FIRES is located at the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) library at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Texas. With a centralized venue and an online catalog, *FIRES* provides reference materials to facilitate research related to the Zarathushti religion and its history, culture, and community. The online catalog, which currently has 700 titles, contains books and visual media available in the ZAH library. We plan to catalog and link collections from libraries located at other FEZANA member associations.

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GETTING STARTED WITH *FIRES*...

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- *FIRES* in Houston is at the ZHCC Library, 8787 West Airport Boulevard Houston, Texas 77071.

Work is in progress to add Zoroastrian Association of Chicago's valuable collection. We hope this resource will provide opportunities to teachers, students and researchers as it provides an opportunity for people to learn about Zoroastrianism.

FIRES can be accessed through the FEZANA website by clicking on the list of committees and subsequently clicking on the *FIRES* subsite. Another way to access it is through www.libraryworld.com. Click on *FIRES* and then click on OPAC on the top right hand corner.

BUSINESS

WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Central Florida Chapter – Orlando Meeting
Sunday, May 24, 2009 - 2.00 to 4.00 pm*

The Central Florida Chapter of WZCC held its quarterly meeting in Orlando upon conclusion of FEZANA-AGM meeting on May 24, 2009. Mez Birdie, as Chair welcomed FEZANA member associations and guests. The meeting was attended by approximately 70 persons and lively discussion followed by debate was held on the following subjects:



Mez Birdie, chair of the session welcoming delegates Porus Sagar sitting

Update on WZCC activities by Rohinton Rivetna, Behroze Daruwalla, Firdosh Mehta and Sarosh Collector who stated that Chapters worldwide and in the United States are growing with keen interest from the membership. Mez Birdie reported the Central Florida Chapter is less than 2 years old and has 25 members including youth. The AGM was a wonderful event to host as it gave the Chapter a cause and challenge. Another goal for 2009 is to start a "micro financing" project and see it grow.

Evaluating Investments in Today's Stock Market was moderated by Porus Sagar, a registered investment advisor, of Sagar Investments in Orlando. Porus made a presentation on Financial Planning. and some of his theories really rocked the imagination of many in the audience It was interesting to note that over the past 35 years, bonds had outperformed the stocks due to highs and lows in the equity markets. Needless to say, no one is able to predict the future of the stock market.



Kerman Afsari assisted with technical support

BUSINESS

Poras Sagar
of Sagar
Investments
making a
presentation



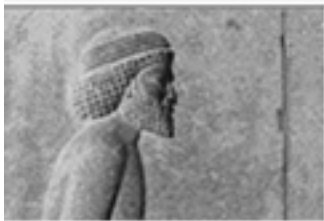
A Book Reading, plus writing as a Vocation was talked about by Sohrab Homi Fracis (photo above right) based in Jacksonville, FL. Sohrab did a reading on his upcoming book "Man of the World" which was enjoyed by all. Sohrab also discussed how Zarathushti youth interested in writing as a vocation could form a group which could be supported by FEZANA. Those interested could reach Sohrab on his website <http://www.fracis.com>

Both speakers generated a lot of questions which created a lively exchange among all. The meeting ended with thanks and invitation for all to attend future WZCC-CFC meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Mez R. Birdie, Chair, Central Florida Chapter.

Photos courtesy Ervad Soli Dastur



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The Fifteenth North American Zarathushti Congress NAZC-2010
Houston, Texas

December 29, 2010 - January 1, 2011

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



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



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For registration and details, please visit the ZAH website: www.zah.org, or
Email Arnavaz Sethna at asethna@comcast.net, or
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