



# JOURNAL

Tir–Amرداد–Shehrever 1381 AY (Fasli) • Behman–Spendarmad 1381 AY Fravardin 1382 (Shenshai) • Spendarmad 1381 AY Fravardin–Ardibehešt 1382 AY (Kadimi)

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA (ZAA) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ZSBC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA (ZAC) CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTER (CZC) TRADITIONAL MAZDAYASNI ZOROASTRIAN ANJUMAN (TMZA) ZARATHOSHTI ANJUMAN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (ZANC) PERSIAN ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION (PZO) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS (ZARM) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA (ZAF) ATLANTA ZARATHUSHTI ANJUMAN (AZA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO (ZAMC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON AREA (ZAGBA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAM) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (ZAPA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE & NEW JERSEY (ZAPANJ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC (ZAQ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON (ZAH) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS (ZANT) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, INC. (ZAMWI) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON STATE (ZAWS) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ZSBC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA (ZAC) CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTER (CZC) TRADITIONAL MAZDAYASNI ZOROASTRIAN ANJUMAN (TMZA) ZARATHOSHTI ANJUMAN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (ZANC) PERSIAN ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION (PZO) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS (ZARM) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA (ZAF) ATLANTA ZARATHUSHTI ANJUMAN (AZA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO (ZAMC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON AREA (ZAGBA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAM) IRANIAN ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION (IZA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NEW YORK (ZAGNY) ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (OZCF) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO (ZSO) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (ZAPA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE & NEW JERSEY (ZAPANJ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC (ZAQ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON (ZAH) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS (ZANT) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO (ZAMC) WASHINGTON, INC. (ZAMWI) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON STATE (ZAWS) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA (ZAA) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ZSBC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA (ZAC) CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTER (CZC) TRADITIONAL MAZDAYASNI ZOROASTRIAN ANJUMAN (TMZA) ZARATHOSHTI ANJUMAN OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (ZANC) PERSIAN ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION (PZO) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS (ZARM) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA (ZAF) ATLANTA ZARATHUSHTI ANJUMAN (AZA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO (ZAMC) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON AREA (ZAGBA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN (ZAM) IRANIAN ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION (IZA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NEW YORK (ZAGNY) ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (OZCF) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO (ZSO) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (ZAPA) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE & NEW JERSEY (ZAPANJ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC (ZAQ) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON (ZAH) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS (ZANT) ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO (ZAMC) WASHINGTON, INC. (ZAMWI) ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON STATE (ZAWS)

# FEZANA TURNS



***Congratulations & Warmest Wishes  
to FEZANA on it's Silver Jubilee***

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# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

Vol 26 No 2 Summer / June 2012 Tabestan 1381 AY 3750 Z



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Tir – Amordad- Shehrever - 1381 AY (Fasli)

Behman –Spendarmad 1381 AY - Fravardin 1382 AY (Shenshai)

Spendarmad 1381 AY - Fravardin –Ardibehesht 1382 AY (Kadimi)

**Opinions expressed in the FEZANA Journal do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or members of this publication's editorial board.**

**Published at Regal Press, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada**

FEZANA Journal Vol 26, No 2 ISBN 1068-2376

[www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)

(USPS 021-495) published quarterly by FEZANA 8615 Meadowbrook Dr., Burr Ridge, IL 60527. Periodical postage rate is paid at Oakbrook, IL 60523 and at additional mailing offices. Annual subscription \$25 (US); \$25 (Canada) and \$50 (air) for other countries; details on subscription Form. POSTMASTER: send changes to Fezana Journal, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527.

Photo on cover:



Cover design

Feroza Fitch of Lexicongraphics

**FALL 2012  
PARSIS IN POLITICS  
1857 to 1954  
Guest Editor: Maneck Bhujwala**

# CONGRATULATIONS THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA



The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta



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## A word from the Editor

It is with great joy that I write this editorial for the 25th anniversary issue of the FEZANA Journal. It has been my privilege to be associated with this organization from its gestation, to birth, to early days when it was trying to learn how to walk, finding its feet, through the tumultuous years of its adolescence when member associations were trying to assert their independence and like all adolescents to test how far they can push the parent body to make it bend to their way of thinking. And often the parent looked to the grandparents in India and Iran for guidance, and got mixed messages. But the credit goes to the leadership who like any good parent held steady with flexibility and determination.

Soon it was realized that religion does not operate in a vacuum, but in a social context requiring solid, well grounded infrastructures both internal to the community and external for the greater diaspora. The fruits of the endeavor to create internal structures were the scholarships, the publications, the congresses for adults and youth, the sports events, the regular annual general meetings. The basis of this steady growth was good and ethical governance by like minded people who believed in "give and take" and not in entrenched positions.

For the past 25 years it was exhilarating to see Zarathushtis coming together for the sole purpose of building a community. A community where there is real equality among genders, a community which uses its voice to make choices, a community which tries to inculcate religious scholarship in its young and old, a community which tries to maintain Asha in all its deliberations, a community which reaches out to their fellow Zarathushtis, be they in their neighbourhood or across the seas. In North America there may not have been the financial resources of the Tatas or the Godrejs but our Dabestanis and Zardoshtys and Kheradis, and Tambolis and Bhatenas and Rustomjis, and many others do not lack in largesse and willingness to give either their money or their time. Eleven Dar-e-mehrs have been built or bought through individual and collective vision and financial commitment. Our priests give FEZANA JOURNAL - Summer 2012

exemplary, voluntary services from birth to death, generous with their time and knowledge.

The world of 1987 is not the world of 2012 - much has changed ideologically, technologically, financially, culturally and by default this change has rubbed off on the Zarathushtis as well. Over the years the FEZANA Journal has reflected these changes in the pages of the publication. However, this special 25th anniversary issue brings you articles which showcase the achievements of FEZANA seen through the lenses of different people. It also highlights 25 people and seven events which have left foot prints on the fabric of the North American community in the last 25 years. It highlights Zarathushti authors who have placed the community and the religion on the mainstream map of North America. It highlights the achievements of the next generation and the 1.5 generation i.e. those who were born in North America or came very early in their life and grew up here, their reflections and aspirations. The regular features will be back in the FALL issue.

Over the last 25 years the FEZANA Journal has played a significant role in shaping the North American Zarathushti psyche with its countless editorials and high quality cover features and articles on varied subjects of relevance to the community, always showcasing the younger generation. I thank the publication chair, the guest editors, the graphic designers, the section editors, the copy editors, and subscription managers and contributors for their willingness, diligence, commitment and enthusiasm in participating in this joint venture of producing the publication four times a year entirely on a volunteer basis. And the question still lingers: how long will the journal be able to operate in print before it goes digital?

This is not to say that in the last 25 years I have not seen difficult and tumultuous times. The World Congress in 2000 was the watershed point when the suppressed religious entrenched positions on both sides of the divide were unleashed and the atmosphere became acrimonious.

Dolly Dastoor



Each side jockeyed for what they perceived was right. This was handled with great skill and sensitivity by the leadership, culminating in a very successful congress which left behind a more harmonious community who decided to disagree without being disagreeable.

The first 25 years has sowed the seed of transformation for an emerging North American identity- the catalyst being the merging of the Zarathushtis of Iran and the Parsis from the rest of the world. Does this mean we have stopped being Parsis? Does this mean we will stop working or talking with our fellow Parsis in India? No, not at all. It means we are now starting to take our place as Zarathushtis. And if this evolution of the identity is not palatable or acceptable to the grandparents in India and Iran we would have to part our ways, with heavy heart, and take the long journey into the future alone.

I thank the FEZANA leadership and through them the member associations collectively for their foresight, determination and drive to preserve the religion and nurture the community in their own constituencies and across this continent.

This celebration is a good occasion to reflect on our vision for the future as we toast FEZANA for the next 25 years of growth, harmony and stability.

**Three Cheers FEZANA, Well Done!!**

## Message from FEZANA President

It has been a great privilege for me to serve as the president of FEZANA for the last 4 years. This pleasant journey would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of my Executive, the Chairs of various committees, the Presidents of member associations and the community at large. As I come close to the end of my term, I would like to reflect on what has been accomplished and what I would still like to see happening in the future years.

I took charge as President of FEZANA in May 2008, with a manifesto to: (a) *empower the youth*, (b) *revisit and foster next short and long term Strategic Plans* (c) *build a united North American Zarathushti community, and more.*

I started with encouraging our youth, the future of our community. All committee chairs were asked to include a youth in their committees. The FEZANA youth committee organized a North American youth Congress in Fremont, California in July 2009 after a hiatus of nearly four years. I am sure all those who participated left with fond memories and new friendships. Besides the congress, we also see a lot of youth activities and youth involvement at various local associations. In 2011, ***The World Zarathushti Youth Congress*** was hosted by the youth of Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia. Zain Mavalwala and his team worked very hard for its success.

During the 2011 FEZANA AGM, significant time was dedicated to a brainstorming session as to why our youth were not taking much interest in our community activities. The reasons varied for each association. Although the youth involvement in FEZANA is not high, in my opinion it is a misperception that our youth are not interested in our community activities. They are actively involved in their local communities, which is understandable, as they still have to think about other things such as their studies, career development, etc. As a result, their involvement is more in the local community which is within their immediate proximity and reach. I am confident that when needed and ready, our youth will step forward. Our next

Strategic Plan also involves and encourages youth participation.

I take this opportunity to thank a few youth and young adults actively involved in FEZANA. Shiraz Italia, Nahid Dashtaki, Shiroy Dadachanji, Ferzeen Chappgar, Afreed Mistry, Sherazade Mehta, Freyaz Shroff, Zeenia Kola, Zeeba Kayani, Mantreh Atashband, and Navroz Gandhi. I thank them all for their dedication and service to our community. I also thank other youth and young adults who rose to the occasion and helped in organizing various FEZANA events successfully in 2008 - 2012. The ZSC (Sports) chaired by Niaz Kasravi is a fine example of successful youth activity.

The next long and short term Strategic Plan is in progress; the strategic planning committee has reviewed the working of various FEZANA committees and has tasked prospective ideas to improve the working and awareness of FEZANA. For the XVI North American Zarathushti Congress (NAZC), one of the ideas that the planning committee put forward, is to have a continuity of certain issues/topics until we attain general awareness and consensus and at the same time, try to include new and relevant topics or issues faced by our community in North America. This is an ongoing process and some of the definitive progress and tasks will be put forward to the members at the next AGM. I thank committee Chairs, Maharukh Motafram, Dolly Dastoor, Katayun Kapadia, and Farrokh Mistree for hours and hours of their time and dedication to build this document. I also thank all FEZANA committee chairs for participating and helping achieve our goals.

The 2012 census is being prepared. Roshan Rivetna will be speaking on the numbers at the XVI NAZC in New York. With our community spread widely all over North America and various small cities, and with some towns not having any associations or small groups, this task has been extremely tedious and time consuming.

There are numerous activities being implemented for building a



united North American Zarathushti community. On the international level, FEZANA's active participation in the *Global Working Group (GWG)* has resulted in an alliance and understanding of what FEZANA stands for. FEZANA's identity as a major federation has been recognized, making FEZANA a major role-player in the Zarathushti community worldwide. This alliance has brought together the world regions in playing a joint role for the economic and social betterment of our community.

The UN/NGO membership of FEZANA has further added to our community building worldwide. Our Zarathushti youth have been able to gain a speaking platform at various UN organized international events, thanks to the lead taken by Homi Gandhi, Behram Pastakia and Afreed Mistry.

The new FEZANA Facebook pages, twitter, website and electronic communication methods has brought FEZANA into the world of social media. The FEZANA Bulletin has a free subscription of over 1,850 member of which nearly 15% are from outside of North America.

The FEZANA Journal team has also helped establish the FEZANA identity in North America and abroad. Our Journal is always full of top-notch international quality content and design. People at times even mistake and equate the magazine as being the FEZANA organization. My sincere thanks to Dolly Dastoor and her great team.

I am extremely proud of all the things we have accomplished as a team.

I sincerely thank Firdosh Mehta for his support, dedication and for being an excellent mentor throughout my term. As chair of the External Affairs committee, Firdosh has been an

excellent advisor and has also promoted youth.

I thank Framroze Patel our financial/tax advisor, for keeping us in check with his sound advice. Framroze has been filing IRS returns for a number of years not only for FEZANA but also for many of our member associations.

There is much more to be done. We have often emphasized the importance of youth. I fully agree that "Our Youth is Our Future" but at the same time we cannot forget our elders and our seniors. The baby boomers are now coming to the age of retirement and we do need to think of this group too. The FEZANA Unity and Welfare committee is doing a great job and is helping

people in various ways but is limited by the availability of funds. Every time we have a new need or request, this committee has to go around requesting and collecting funds. My sincere thanks to Houtoxi Contractor, Freyaz Shroff and Hosi Mehta, Co-chairs of the Unity and Welfare Committee. We need to build a corpus so that we can build some infrastructure like fire temples, library and seniors living center for the North American Zarathushti community. The WZO Trust Funds led by Mr. and Mrs. Dinshaw Tamboly are doing an excellent job of maintaining seniors' living facilities in Navsari, India. We need to create such facilities in North America. Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly has

been an advocate and supporter of FEZANA and helps our Unity and Welfare committee for requirements in India. Thank you, Dinshaw.

I once again thank my Executive, Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, Committee members, Presidents, FEZANA Representatives, and the community at large for their support and hard work. I have enjoyed immensely serving as your President and welcome the new 7th FEZANA President.

With warm regards and best wishes.

**Bomi Patel, President**

## A New Zarathushti Identity in North America FEZANA: The next twenty-five years

The Silver Jubilee for FEZANA is a time to celebrate. It is also a time to take stock, to see where we may have fallen down, and if necessary alter course. Not all of what is proposed may come to pass; however should this essay help continue the dialogue as we seek and find common ground, it would have served its purpose.

### IDENTITY

It is now close to fifty years since Zarathushti migrants started settling in North America. What will the Zarathushti diaspora on this continent look like twenty five or fifty years from now? That will depend on the choices we make today. The continued influx of Zarathushtis from Iran since 1979 and the slowing migration of Parsis due to improvements in India's economy are ground realities. We should

proactively bring Zarathushtis from Iran and Parsis to understand each other's culture and stay united on this continent. Right from the age of two or three years, Zarathushti children from all backgrounds could come to religious classes and social events **together** to forge our own unique North American Zarathushti identity.

At the North American Mobeds' Council Seminar in Toronto on 7 April 2012, Erv Gustad M. Panthaki observed that religion is perpetuated by focusing on all three aspects: philosophy, traditions and customs. This vision can be realized through education. Communication innovations such as web-based learning modules and Tele-religious classes, can connect even the most geographically isolated families(1). These continent wide efforts by scholars can be supplemented with local face-to-face Gatha study circles and book clubs. If each one of us were to understand the meanings of just the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*, *the Ashem Vohu and the Yenge Hatham* and put thoughts expressed in these three seminal prayers into practice we would have already come a long way in defining who we are. The traditions we may choose to perpetuate, such as celebrating *NowRuz*, *Sisdeh Bedar*, *Tirgan*, *Mehrgan*, *Yalda*, can act as a cohesive force in our becoming stewards of the environment. *Roos-e-Derehktari*, a day to care for trees, an ancient Iranian tradition could be reestablished. *Gahambars* have an egalitarian appeal bringing prince and pauper to the same table in humility and equality, and can be institutionalized through endowments.

In keeping with Yasna 30.2 where we are enjoined to keep an open mind and think for ourselves, we can do away with traditions which are counter to our philosophy e.g, the competition in Parsi marriage ceremonies in throwing a fistful of rice first to predict who is going to be the dominant partner and replace it by creating our own North American tradition of reciting the Fifth Gatha with its meanings in



Behram Pastakia, (on right with white sweater) with Rev Clark Lobenstine, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Washington DC, and Josh Singer from Casey Trees, a non-profit interested in greening the cityscape, planting a fig tree donated by the Interfaith Center for Advancing Justice of the IFC at St Paul's Parish in Rock Creek, NW Washington D.C. as a memorial to the late Rev Richard Griffis of the United Nations Association of the District of Columbia who shared a vision of creating an interfaith grove of trees in the Nation's capital. Photo credit: Christopher Horn [www.caseytrees.org](http://www.caseytrees.org)

English, where the prophet advises prospective brides and bridegrooms to win the other with truth as equal partners in marriage (Yasna 53.5). At the time of the death ceremony during the recitation of the *Gatha Ahunavaiti*, can we envisage making available a booklet or e-book with its transliteration and translation in English, Farsi and Gujarati so that all in attendance to celebrate the life of the one who has passed, can use the opportunity to remind themselves of the message from the prophet while it is being recited by the priest or mobedyar?

### INFRASTRUCTURE: HUMAN CAPITAL

The Academic Scholarships of FEZANA supplemented by similar programs from member Zarathushti associations in North America are a great way to acknowledge youth who excel in undergraduate and graduate schools. However, the realities are that the sums provided are relatively paltry in light of the extant annual dues in the universities. Our youth should be able to tap into scholarships available in wider civil society which have largely remained out of reach through our own ignorance regarding their availability. We need help from tax accountants in our midst to guide young Zarathushti parents in learning how to access these financial aids. Can we set ourselves a goal that no Zarathushti youth graduating from college is burdened with an educational college loan?

Another crucial aspect of developing human capital is to empower our children with public speaking and writing skills. Accomplished public speakers can deal effectively with the media in telling our story as we step out into the public square. Opportunities to develop this human potential can come through humanitarian outreach volunteer programs. Imagine children in elementary and middle schools asking for gently used shoes from their classmates, that their Zarathushti community is collecting to share with those who are disadvantaged in their city! Such an action program will give Zarathushti children a sense of being proud of their heritage, and a sense of purpose in making a difference in the world with their lives, while honing leadership skills and learning to work in teams. Encouraging the ethos of collective giving and abjuring dependency, are transformative lessons which can accrue from such a program.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: MATERIAL CAPITAL

Now is a good time for us to reflect on our material infrastructure deficit and make a correction by learning from successes elsewhere. The small community of just forty-one Zarathushtis in Sri Lanka maintains its cemetery with paid staff and holds communal prayers at least three times a month, led by a resident priest at its prayer hall. Can we emulate that accomplishment in our own North American small groups with similar demographics and numbers? The small Zarathushti community in Hongkong of about 200, helps with funds not only the home country, (e.g., the Parsi General Hospital in Mumbai), but also the western diaspora in building Dar-e-Mehrs, such as in Sydney, Australia. A more recent example of their munificence was support provided to the

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (Dallas). Can we learn from the example from Hongkong to invest in prime real estate in major North American cities that can generate income to support material infrastructure needs into the foreseeable future? The real estate stalwarts in our midst can make a contribution in realizing this dream.

The far sighted Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe through numerous iterations has maintained its communal premises close to public transport in London. We can learn from the ZTFE example, so that Zarathushti youth, often single and transient in big cities, who choose not to own cars, can stay connected and attend events instead of feeling disenfranchised as is presently the case in North America. Over the last few centuries we have copied architectural models from our Sassanian heritage in building our places of worship. How about going back to Achaemenian times? Shall we consider erecting a replica of the Cylinder of Cyrus as a symbol which stands for the practice of the freedom of religion and human rights in the compounds of our future *atashkadehs*, surrounded by trees (myrtle, cedar, cypress, tamarisk) which remind us of our connections to ancient Iran? How about having a fire altar out in the open, when allowed by laws of the jurisdictions where we live, as was the custom of Zarathushtis depicted on ancient Persian coins?

The Greater Bundahishn (2), tells us which fruit trees (chapter XXVII, Verse 23), flowering plants, shrubs and herbs (chapter Chapter XXVII, Verse 24) our forefathers considered valuable by incorporating them into our scriptures and religious ceremonies. Blessed with a vast range of latitudes on this continent where we are settled, we could grow these plants in the compounds of our *atashkadehs* and even in our own home gardens.

### IMPLEMENTATION

If changes are to take place, they shall come through individuals who have a passion and a devotion to see their dreams realized, even if it takes a lifetime. In formulating plans, consultation with those at the grass-roots will be imperative. Leaders should be ready to change plans after listening to feedback from those who are to be served paying attention to cultural mores and norms. In fundraising, transparency of accounts and timely updates of progress made about projects will be key in assuring continued support from donors. Once started, we stay in for the long haul. Persistence spells success.

*Atha Jamyat Yatha Aafrinaami.*

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**Behram Pastakia is Chair of FEZANA's Publication Committee**





# THE MISSION CONTINUES....

## 25 YEARS LATER

**FEZANA's 25th anniversary is a landmark of deep significance, especially since one may also say it marks a half-century of our presence here in North America. At this significant moment we take a look at our growth in the early decades, and our challenges for the future.**

### **BUILDING A HARMONIOUS, COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY**

Let us first count our blessings and give thanks to Ahura Mazda for the freedoms we enjoy and the opportunities we have for ourselves and our children in North America. Our blessings are many but there is one attribute that distinguishes us, for which we are deeply grateful – the large number of right thinking, hard working men and women who are willing to lay down their petty differences in the larger interest of the progress and preservation of our community. This valued resource has built this diaspora in North America to what it is today -- a well knit, harmonious, compassionate community, with a rich tapestry of philanthropists, industrialists, business enterprises, professionals, with ideologies covering the whole spectrum, and a recognition that diversity is richness.

It is of deep satisfaction to us that the structure of FEZANA, further strengthens these ideals of harmony, balance and togetherness, while yet respecting the autonomy of every Association. There once was rancor and discord and fear, as we strived to

bring the Associations together as a Federation, perhaps a legacy we brought with us in the early days. But that was soon replaced by a recognition that FEZANA sought to harmonize more than unify, and each constituent was free to flower in their own manner, with the ultimate common purpose to move Ahura Mazda's Creation forward.

### **DEVELOPING A NORTH AMERICAN IDENTITY**

As any diasporic community recognizes, there is always a struggle to maintain the centuries-old customs and traditions while also adapting gracefully to changing climes and changing times. The confluence of the two streams -- Iranian and Parsi – in North America, after a separation of a thousand years, adds yet another dimension to this challenge.

Just as Zarathushtis of the first diaspora, in the Indian subcontinent found the right balance to assimilate the Persian and Indian cultures and emerge with the Parsi identity, so a new North American Parsi/Iranian identity, integrated but identifiable, is gradually emerging -- a beautiful blend rich in both cultures, rooted in the North American milieu. FEZANA was conceived out of this wedlock of cultures, and a deep respect for individual dignity. This is the cornerstone that has held together all the disparate ideologies that make up the North American Zarathushti – all working together towards the common goal given to us by Asho Zarathushtra.

This coming together in North America, is indeed one of our greatest achievements, of which we should be very proud. Our next challenge is to Come Together and Work Together with the mother countries and other diasporic regions to build a strong world wide Zarathushti "Community without Borders," while yet guarding the autonomy of each region.

### **ROHINTON RIVETNA**

If there is one wish that we may ask Ahura Mazda to bestow upon our community, it is to grant us in the diaspora, the wisdom to follow in the footsteps of our illustrious forefathers in Iran and India, who built for themselves the brand of 'Industry and Integrity' -- industry displayed by excellence in business and professions, and integrity displayed in their character.

### **THE NEXT GENERATION**

Each generation is built on the shoulders of the one preceding. The new Spring arises from the vestiges of the old, both in form and structure. And so does the next generation form in the likeness of the old, and will inherit the legacies of the one preceding, provided there is a structure to pass it on.

This is what our Associations and FEZANA provide -- an infrastructure to pass on the legacy and continuity with organic growth from one generation to the next. This is so very fundamental that it is often lost sight of in the hustle and bustle of routine essentials. Our next generation, the most valued resource we possess is ready and able to step up to the plate as the first generation fades.

The next generation indeed is our report card. How well are they engaged? Do they feel committed to perpetuate our religion, to maintain the traditions and culture, to come together and stay together? How deeply do they feel the responsibility to carry the torch?

### **ENHANCING OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

If the motivation for the first generation was to establish our presence in North America, and fulfill our communal needs, what will it be for the next generation? Surprisingly, many of the next generation, now well-established in their communities, now

look to the religion for their spiritual growth; spirituality rooted in the practice of the Zarathushti Din.

The question is whether sufficient groundwork has been laid to satisfy this need? The woeful lack of infrastructure to satisfy the spiritual thirst of the next generation is obvious. After 50 years of our presence in North America there is not a single Atash Kadeh with a continuously burning Fire and proper facilities for performing all liturgies. It is time now for our **Mobed Council** to provide much needed leadership and guidance. Progress is not inevitable, every step requires exertion and positive action and success is not guaranteed. *All we can do is the right things to deserve it.*

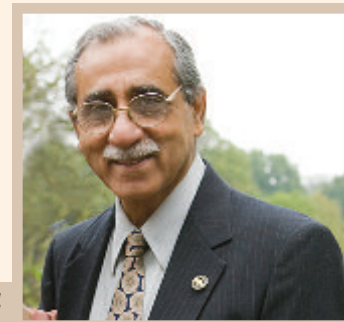
**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

It is time we took a serious look at building infrastructure for our communal and spiritual growth in the next half century. The finger is pointed to a lack of funding but that is only a symptom. The root cause has to be attributed to our interest (or lack of it) to preserve and protect our religion and our culture. The responsibility rests with each one of us. And this responsibility ought not to be taken lightly. We are sustained by our evolving customs and traditions. We have

to look at ourselves not as inheritors but borrowers from our children.

Life indeed is an assignment and our assignment as Zarathushtis is to bring happiness to others and make this world a better place for all human beings. This is the embodiment of all our teachings. Let the word spread that each and every Zarathushti in North America needs to reassign their priorities and make our community rise to the top, as it was a century ago. This is my fervent wish and that of many in North America.

As we pass the torch to our next generation, let us rekindle that embers and fan the flame into a roaring fire.



**Rohinton Rivetna, the Founding President of FEZANA 1987-1994**

**HAPPY SILVER JUBILEE, FEZANA!!!**



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# FEZANA

## Presidents

ROHINTON RIVETNA (1987-1994)

DOLLY DASTOOR (1994-1998)

FRAMROZE K PATEL (1998-2002)

FIRDOSH D. MEHTA (2002-2006)

RUSTOM KEVALA (2006-2008)

BOMI PATEL (2008-2012)



**Salute  
THE ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA  
ON THEIR VISION, DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT  
TO COME TOGETHER TO BUILD THE COMMUNITY,  
MOVING IT FORWARD IN HARMONY AND PEACE**

**FOR 25 YEARS**

MAY NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTIS AND THE MAZDA YASNA RELIGION CONTINUE TO FLOURISH  
FOR YEARS TO COME

**ATHA JAMYAAT, YATHA AAFRINAAMI**

# The Flowering Of Fezana

ROSHAN RIVETNA

Tracing the early growth and flowering of FEZANA, as Zarathushtis of the diaspora take on the awesome responsibility to perpetuate their religion and strengthen their community in Canada and USA. When the venerable Dastur Dhalla came to New York in 1905 for Avestan Studies at Columbia he noted that there were eight Parsi businesses in the US, and the population “does not exceed 12 or 15 at any single period”. It was not until the 1960s, that the trickle of immigrants and students coming to Canada and USA grew to a sizeable stream and Zarathushtis started forming Associations [1].

## COMING TOGETHER AS FEZANA

With the growing number of Associations (17 in the early 1980s) the need for a coordinating body was imperative, for there was no forum, other than bi-annual Congresses, for dialogue and action. An earlier attempt during the 1970s, when Association representatives led by Jehan Bagli and Montreal Zoroastrians charged Lovji Cama to form *UZANA – United Zoroastrian Associations of North America*, did not take root.

The genesis of FEZANA can be traced to the North American Congress, in Los Angeles in 1985. Following a plenary session “*Proposal for Organization of a North American Zoroastrian Body*” chaired by Rohinton Rivetna, with speaker *Homi Minocher Homji*, in the face of much opposition from a vociferous few, perhaps fearful of a ‘big brother’ federation or the financial commitment it might entail, *Farangis Shahrokh* walked onto the stage, and rescued the situation with a straw poll of the gathered assembly. The response was overwhelming - the Congress gave the mandate to Rohinton Rivetna to draft a Constitution and carry the proposal forward. At a Convention in Chicago in May 1986, representatives from nine Associations deliberated long and hard, the Charter subsequently finalized, a parchment copy signed by 16 of the 17 Associations, and FEZANA registered on June 2, 1987.

“*It was like seeing a bud emerge and blossom before one’s eyes*” wrote Rohinton as he described the challenges and early history of the formation of FEZANA [2].



photo: First Executive Officers of FEZANA, 1987: Dolly Dastoor (Secretary), Rohinton Rivetna (President), Homi Minocher Homji (VP), Framroze Patel (Treasurer) and Sabar Balsara (Asst. Secretary).

In his address at the *FIRST FEZANA AGM (Toronto 1988)*

**ROHINTON RIVETNA (Founding President 1987 – 1994) said:**

*“This is indeed a defining moment as North American Zoroastrian Associations gather at one table under the banner of FEZANA, with one single purpose in mind – to preserve and perpetuate the religion of Zarathushtra in North America. This day will be recorded as the beginning of a new chapter in the history of our faith and people ... Let us resolve to stand united, to work steadfastly together, in a spirit of COOPERATION NOT CONFRONTATION ... towards a Zoroastrian Renaissance.”*

Rohinton steered the ship carefully for the first eight years, all the while perpetuating the vision of FEZANA as a ‘coordinating and facilitating’ body, where the power of decision lies solely with the Associations (and thence the broad-based community) and Executive Officers serve with no voting rights, to ensure smooth operation. Great care was taken at all times to safeguard the autonomy of each association. Much effort was spent in developing sturdy Terms of Reference for the Committees, the workhorses through which the Objectives of FEZANA are realized, and drawing upon the best talents to work on welfare, publications, funds and finance, census/demographics, youth (later ZYNA), education, Congresses ... Close working relations were developed with the Mobeds (later NAMC).

Succeeding presidents have led FEZANA with vision and foresight through its first quarter century.

**DOLLY DASTOOR (President 1994-1998)** made FEZANA (which many thought of as ‘yet another Association’) relevant to the people by making it her mission to visit every Association and Small Group across the continent, and hearing their hopes, aspirations and concerns as a first step towards community building. *She gave a face to FEZANA*. A defining moment was when she persuaded the Indian bastion to relax the monopoly of hosting the previous six Congresses between Iran and India, and brought the millennial World Congress to the shores of North America. Masterfully co-chaired by Dolly and Houston’s Homi Davier, with an attendance of over 2300 (the largest ever!) it sent a powerful message to the world that the North American community had come of age.


In 1997, Dolly marshaled the best talents to develop a **10 year Strategic Plan** with goals and a roadmap to give structure to the vision of FEZANA. With committed stakeholders championing each area, much has been achieved, e.g. places of worship, education, publications, scholarships ...

As a gift in appreciation of Dolly’s committed stewardship of FEZANA’s Scholarship Program, members made a spontaneous collection at Dolly’s last AGM as outgoing president, which augmented the nucleus for scholarship funding. The Program has since, received substantial endowments, where last year they were able to allocate \$28,000 in scholarships; and has now become a model for other foundations. The indefatigable Dolly continues to serve, even beyond her Presidency, most notably since 2006, as editor-in-chief, FEZANA Journal and chair of the Academic Scholarship Program.

One of **FRAMROZE K. PATEL’S (President 1998 – 2002)** bitter-sweet challenges was to bring Zarathushti federations together as a World Body. Framroze traveled to Mumbai to seek convergence; representatives of three major regions – India, UK and North America, signed a document of understanding, which would lead, if approved by their constituencies, to the World Body. However, this was later mired in mistrust and misunderstandings and no convergence was reached. Likewise his appointment of the World Body Working Group to evaluate the proposal resulted in a detailed document, but no convergence.

As FEZANA president, Framroze was on the eight-member FEZANA-ZAH team for the 2000 World Congress, that entailed traveling to Houston for mentally-grueling meetings, handling many challenges and making weighty decisions – which eventually led to the most successful Congress.





A memorable moment was when Framroze, along with Kaikhosrov Irani and Lovji Cama, represented FEZANA at a UNESCO meeting at UN Headquarters, New York, as representatives of Cuba, Ireland and India sponsored FEZANA's NGO application. The entire process was handled by Rohinton Rivetna, leading eventually to FEZANA receiving the status of "NGO in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations."

Since the earliest days, Framroze has lent his accounting expertise, set up professional accounting standards and practices for FEZANA, secured tax-exempt status, and served as mentor and guide. That will certainly be his legacy to FEZANA.

**FIRDOSH MEHTA (President 2002 – 2006)** worked with passion on many fronts to take FEZANA to the next level (always injecting his sense of humor into the most dire situations). Firdosh led the Time Capsule Legacy Project for the Millennial World Congress -- from researching and ordering the 5' capsule, and collecting articles of community history to place therein, to orchestrating its ceremonial lowering into the concrete chamber at ZHCC, Houston. He later orchestrated similar Time Capsules for the Dallas and California (ZAC) centers.

Recognizing the multitude of areas beyond academics and welfare, which needed funding assistance, Firdosh supported new funding initiatives e.g. Religious Education, Performing/Creative Arts, Sports, Publications and reaching out world-wide with *Disaster Relief and Critical/Medical Assistance*. He was instrumental in getting board approval for a constitutional change to transform the AD-Hoc Sports Committee into a Standing Committee of FEZANA. He initiated and got board approval during his term for the **Jungalwala Lecture Series**

Firdosh devoted much time and effort to developing a new model and Constitution for the proposed World Body, extrapolating the successful FEZANA model to the global level, stressing that it would be a community service organization and not a pontificating body on matters of faith and belief. Alas, undercurrents of doubt, mistrust and paranoia, notably from segments of the community in India, led to the demise of this endeavor.

Deeply committed to advancing youth leadership, Firdosh served as North American chair of the *Youth Leadership Enhancement Program (YLEP)*, a legacy project of the Dubai Congress, and supported youth participation at World Youth Congresses. He also supported fundraising for the *World Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra* at North American Congresses.

**RUSTOM KEVALA (President 2006 – 2008)**. Deeply committed to building up FEZANA into a viable, well-funded and well-respected organization, Rustom offered a 3-point plan during his term: (1) *Build a unified Zarathushti community*, (2) *Raise the profile of Zarathushtis in North America*, and (3) *Develop infrastructures*.

To increase public awareness Rustom promoted the public celebration of Nowruz, with press releases, even attracting New York Mayor Bloomberg to attend. A growing number of Associations now participate in Nowruz Parades. Rustom launched "*Hama Anjuman Prayers for Naurooz*" by Soli Dastur with the FEZANA Nowruz Committee, and promoted religious education programs: Khorshed Jungalwala lecture series, workshops during AGMs/Congresses, and religious studies scholarships from donations by Zardoshty sisters.

In 2006, in cooperation with NAMC, Rustom arranged for Jehan Bagli to provide testimony in Arizona against the claims of the Church of Cognizance that marijuana is the same as haoma, therefore could be smoked legally. It was a major victory for Zarathushtis when the judge ruled that COC was not a religion, and pointed out the importance of places of worship, rituals, charity work, as underpinnings of an established religion like Zoroastrianism.

Noting that "*sound infrastructure with brick and mortar buildings will not only unify and raise the profile of Zarathushtis, but will also be a valuable gift from the founding generation to the next*", he appointed the Infrastructure Committee (*chair Shahrokh Mehta*). The first steps of this vision were realized with the establishment of the *FEZANA Office* at the dar-e-mehr in Chicago, and the *FEZANA Information Research and Education Systems (FIRES)* at ZHCC in Houston – both truly landmark moments! *An Infrastructure*

*Endowment Fund was established during FEZANA 20th Anniversary celebrations in 2007.*

The vision and financial acumen of Rustom, past treasurer, and later co-chair (with Jerry Kheradi) of the *Funds and Finance Committee*, has contributed significantly towards building up FEZANA funds and endowments many-fold.

**BOMI PATEL (President 2008 – 2012).** As Bomi assumed office his targets were: **(1) Build a unified North American Zarathushti community;** **(2) Empower the youth, and (2) Revisit the Strategic Plan;** for all he worked diligently and achieved successfully by skillful marshaling of resources. On the North American front, Bomi spearheaded the project to revisit FEZANA's Strategic Plan. At a session facilitated by Mahrukh Motafram at the 2011 Montreal AGM, Association representatives reviewed the Plan and mapped the next ten years, based on past successes and future needs.

Bomi has consistently supported youth, encouraged their participation in Association boards, and promoted their organizations - ZYNA and the Sports Committee, and their Congresses, most recently in Fremont, CA (2009) and Vancouver (2011).

On the global scene, at the 2009 Dubai Congress, Bomi (with Rohinton Rivetna) facilitated world leaders to reach consensual agreement on assuming ownership of the *Coming Together Roundtable* – certainly a watershed moment for the world community. At precious meetings of the *CTR (Coming Together Roundtable now called Global Working Group)* in Mumbai and London, he developed good relations with world representatives and worked with understanding and sensitivity to the unique challenges faced by each region. In 2010 Bomi traveled to London for the 150th anniversary of ZTFE and presented a Farohar plaque from the Zarathushtis of North America, to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

With his technical expertise, Bomi has taken FEZANA to the next level, with a new and improved website, an electronic FEZANA directory, a presence on Facebook and Twitter, and improved communications with a monthly FEZANA Bulletin from the FEZANA Office.

#### **QUARTER CENTURY LANDMARK**

At this quarter century landmark, there are now 26 Associations and numerous Small Groups, all federated under the banner of FEZANA, serving a growing population (estimated 17,000 in 2004) all working towards that Zoroastrian Renaissance.

Looking beyond our internal infrastructure, FEZANA has raised the profile of Zarathushtis on this continent, in our neighborhoods, at the UN and in Interfaith and Government circles, bringing recognition and respect for our faith and community.

***One may rightfully say that the bud has bloomed into a beautiful flower!***

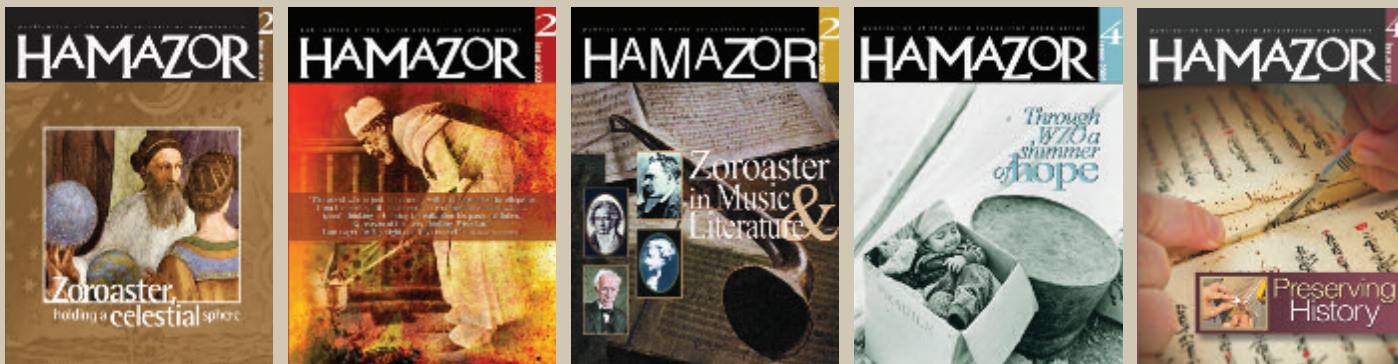
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[1] Roshan Rivetna, Keeping the Hearth Fires Burning [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1996]

[2] Rohinton Rivetna, The Making of FEZANA [FEZANA Journal, Summer 1996]

***Roshan Rivetna is deeply committed to perpetuating the Zoroastrian religion, customs and traditions in the Diaspora. Perhaps she is best known for her stewardship of FEZANA Journal for 15 years, from a fledgling newsletter to a world-class publication. The FEZANA publications The Legacy of Zarathushtra and Zoroastrian Connections with Judaism and Christianity, edited by Roshan, are widely used for showcasing Zoroastrian history, religion and culture. Professionally, Roshan pursued a career in science at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, Argonne National Laboratory and AT&T Bell Laboratory***





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# COMMITMENT TO HELP

## *The Zarathushti Unity And Welfare Committee*

*In celebration of FEZANA's 25th Anniversary, the Zoroastrian Unity and Welfare committee would like to reflect on the role and services this committee has played in the betterment of the community both in North America and in the diaspora. The formation of the committee started with a simple idea to enhance the welfare of our Zarathushti community. The mission was to provide assistance to individuals, families, and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, or help with violence for abused victims. This committee has a track record of being highly visible and functional, one that rapidly recognizes and addresses the needs of the people.*

*The policies, objectives and goals of the committees were defined by the Terms of Reference in 1988. As a registered non-profit religious and charitable organization it's initiatives have targeted a variety of causes and empowered other committees around the world to provide timely assistance. Chairs for this committee, since 2002, are Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (now of California) and Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois. A year later, in 2003, Freyaz Shroff of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, joined the group and provided consistent social, medical, and educational assistance. To give the initial impetus this committee held a fund raiser in Chicago which raised \$30,000. Since then donations have rolled in.*

### **FOCUS ON OPERATION**

In the past 10 years, the Unity and Welfare Committee provided funding to institutions treating Zarathushtis, and in need of medical equipment, helped low income families with sick children with no medical insurance, families facing life threatening illnesses, victims recovering from terrorist attacks, individuals suffering from domestic or family violence, widows without job skills who need to rebuild their lives, and low income families suffering losses of children needing assistance with funeral expenses, to name a few.

When a request for assistance is received, the co-chairs investigate the nature of the need from all available sources. The next step is to engage the local association to determine the best way to keep personal contact with the person(s) in need of assistance. If monetary assistance is required, the committee will transfer the relief funds to the local association, which will then disburse the funds. Help is provided in this manner so that a personal bond or relationship can be established between the parties. The goal is to provide unity along with assistance.

Another problem that society often overlooks, excuses or denies is domestic violence and abuse. Unfortunately domestic violence and abuse takes place regardless of size, gender, or strength. Houtoxi Contractor said ... "before we got involved with this committee we would not have believed that there was domestic violence in our community. To address and help with this issue links were established with Zarathushti professionals in the community who are willing to provide counseling services pro bono".

### **STRICTEST CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Unity and Welfare Committee works within the parameters of strict confidentiality for all issues and more so

in the case of domestic violence issues since this often deals with extremely sensitive issues. A high ethical code of conduct is followed and a promise to those who seek our assistance that their personal or confidential information will never be shared. This code of conduct is required and has served well for those who seek help.

### **STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP**

Although based in North America, the committee has contributed to local and global causes as well. Over the past ten years, the committee has developed very good relationship with Dinshaw Tamboly of WZO Trust in India. Co-chair Freyaz Shroff, who now lives in Mumbai, and Dinshaw Tamboly have become large supporters of our committee undertakings.

In India, we have supported several institutions, such as the *Mancherji Joshi Trust* which distributes food to the needy, *SP Sadhana School for children with special needs*, *Parsi Resource Group of Bombay (PRG)*, which supports health insurance programs for our mobeds, *Young Ratheshtars* who help the needy in villages, *the Parzor Foundation for the Kushti Book Project*, and many others. By supporting organizations that are focused on particular charitable projects, we are able to use our funds more effectively by empowering those organizations so that our impact accumulates over time.

Although most of our work is targeted to our religious community, we have helped those outside the Zarathushti community as well. Some of these projects include working with *Shelter Box* to assist the victims of the earthquake in Gujarat, Haiti and those of the flood and earthquake in Pakistan, and earlier the Bam earthquake in Iran.

## SUCCESS STORIES

What drives the chairs to passionately continue serving and for donors to support the cause are the successes. Highlighting a few: an individual experiencing financial difficulty got back on his feet in the maritime provinces of Canada; medical assistance to a brain cancer patient in India; determining the outcome of fraudulent marriages; Though logistically difficult, the committee has helped a mother with two children whose husband was murdered in Iran; a single mother in the Middle East with two children who was in great financial difficulty, and appropriate intervention with the local Zarathushtis helped this lady procure a job and pull herself up; helped with the tremendous medical bills for a cochlear transplant in a toddler in New Zealand and financial assistance to an elderly couple in the US; and in addition several domestic violence cases were resolved.

One particular story that brought the entire Zarathushti community rooting for her well being was the tale of *Baby Ushta Confectioner*. This four-year-old Zarathushti girl in India was a victim of severe burns on her body. When the Committee learned of her needs, arrangements were made for her US visa, special plane accommodations for a nurse to travel with her from Mumbai to New York, and then a special flight to Boston in a small plane equipped with a stretcher, as she could not even sit. The cause galvanized the local Boston association, which played a critical role in providing the help she needed to heal. Many of us, including those on the Committee, were amazed at how smoothly such a potentially difficult journey turned out. Everyone from the local Boston community, to the medical staff treating her

in Boston felt there was some higher power assisting us at every step of the way. Success stories like these are a constant reminder to us and the entire community that helping those in need really is God's work.

## DONORS AND ENDOWMENTS

But this noble work is not only the outcome of those on the Committee. We have many volunteers and patrons who make all of this possible. While the individual small donor is treasured, the endowments from others help in profound ways. In particular, we would like to extend our thanks to *Firdaus and Jasmin Bhathena of Boston, Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli of Tampa Bay, Hormazdiar Damkewala and the Zardoshty sisters of San Diego* for setting up large endowments to fund our cause and to help economically challenged members of our community throughout the world for years to come. As of December 31 2011, the balance of the endowment funds was \$385,000

In closing, all three chairs, Contractor, Mehta and Shroff, cannot think of anything more important than to extend their gratitude to those who have supported the work of this committee over the past 10 years. *"Whether you are a volunteer lending your wisdom, skills, and guidance or a patron offering financial assistance, THANK YOU for helping us help those in need. It is with the help of all of you and the grace of Ahura Mazda that we have been so successful in helping those in need of assistance. – Dear Zarathushtis you are all contributing to making this world a better place, one person at a time".*

*Ushta-te (may happiness be unto you always).*

*Hamaa zor baad vahaane haft keshvar zamin....  
emaan avaa eshaan, eshaan avaa emaan, hamaa zor ham baher, ham yaared....  
pa ganje Dadar Ahuramazd rayomand khorehmand ameshaaspandaan be rasaad...  
(Aafrin-i-Gahambar 3,4)*

**May we all be in co-operation with the righteous men of all the seven regions (i.e. the whole world)....**

**May we be one with them and may they be one with us.**

**May we all benefit one another, and help one another....**

**May all these (good deeds of ours) be for the Treasury of Ahura Mazda,**

**The Brilliant, the Resplendent, and of His Ameshaspands,**

**(from where it may be re-distributed among all deserving ones.)**



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AND**

**LATE MEHRBANOO BAMASIPOUR**

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*AND APPLAUD ITS CONTRIBUTION  
TOWARDS THE GROWTH OF THE ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY IN NORTH  
AMERICA*

*WE ARE PROUD TO PARTNER WITH FEZANA ON  
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IN THE SERVICE OF THE ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY*

*WE WISH YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS*



*The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario  
Extends its Congratulations and Best  
Wishes to  
FEZANA  
on the occasion of their  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

# ZSC

## A STORY OF SPORTS, VISION AND UNITY

**NIAZ KASRAVI**

This year the *Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC)* celebrates its 24th year as the official sports committee of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). As one of FEZANA's most successful standing committees, ZSC today is responsible for organizing one of the largest Zoroastrian events in the world, bringing together thousands from our community from across the globe. As with any successful venture, the history of this committee can teach us a great deal about *creativity, perseverance, openness and heart as keys to unity and keeping Zoroastrian youth engaged in community events.*

### A SIMPLE IDEA

As with most successful ventures, ZSC has its beginnings in a simple idea conceived by a group of Zarathushti youth at a wedding party. Their main goal was to create a space where they could come together play sports and participate in friendly competition. The year was 1988, and ZSC founder, ***Bijan Khosravani***, was an active member of the Z youth in Southern California. He gathered a group of his friends that special night to discuss planning a sports tournament at the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC). Hence the first Z Games were held in the summer of 1988 at the CZC, with a budget of \$600 – paid for by the volunteers – and about 50 athletes participating.

The tournament drew enthusiastic support from not only the athletes but the community at large and the organizers recognized that they had discovered an important and missing element to the good work that was already being done by Zoroastrian associations throughout the country. They realized that although congresses, religious classes, and holiday celebrations were important, sports tournaments can create an atmosphere where people can let down their hair and use the principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in a fun and engaging atmosphere for the youth in our community.

As the years went on and the events began to grow, the committee began to think about how to create a structure that would allow for expanded outreach and the participation of larger segments of the Zarathushti community throughout North America and beyond. ***Enter FEZANA.***

### A TURNING POINT

By the end of 1988, after discussions about structure and autonomy and accountability, ZSC became FEZANA's official sports committee, enjoying the larger Association's support, and relying on FEZANA's ability to reach Zoroastrian Associations all over North America and the world. Once *ZSC and FEZANA* joined forces, the groups decided that from that point on the Games would take place on the 4th of July weekend of even years, rotating to host committee sites across the country every few years – allowing others a chance to experience organizing an event of this magnitude.

Today, the vision of the group of youth from that 1988 wedding has turned into an event that in 2011 gathered over 2000 Zoroastrians at 12th Z Games, coming from 17 U.S. states and six countries. With the success of the Games, and the support of FEZANA, ZSC was also able to focus on creating another signature event: the *Unity Cup Soccer Tournament*, held on Labor Day weekend of every odd year. Following a similar model as the Z Games, the Unity Cup is fast growing every year and is poised to become a global event of the same scale.

### THE KEYS TO OUR SUCCESS

ZSC events have been able to consistently attract large numbers – particularly large numbers of young people – due to many reasons. Amongst them



1<sup>st</sup> Zoroastrian Games  
1988 Los Angeles, CA





3<sup>rd</sup> Zoroastrian Olympics  
1990 San Jose, CA



5<sup>th</sup> Zoroastrian Olympics  
1994 Domingo's Hill, CA



Peace Prize recipient of 2003, on human rights in Iran and the role of Iranian women in the reform movement.

After graduate school, Dr. Kasravi worked as the Lead Researcher and Associate for the Domestic Human Rights Program of Amnesty International USA, helping build this new program for the organization and focusing on racial profiling, prison conditions, juveniles in the criminal justice system, civil rights and the "war on terror", as well as other domestic human rights issues. Additionally, she has served as Policy Associate for Stop Prisoner Rape - working to end sexual violence behind bars - as well as researcher and advocate at a number of organizations working on human rights issues in the Middle East and domestic issues concerning the Iranian-American diaspora.

is the vision and commitment of ZSC founders as well as ZSC board members over the years. As with other volunteers and organizers, they have cut countless hours, days, weeks and months from their personal lives to ensure that ZSC succeeds. And this not just for the sake of success, but because success means that our kids will have something they look forward to every two years, that they have a Zarathushti network of friends from all over the world, and that they learn the value of healthy and friendly competition.

Additionally, we know that to attract youth, events must also be relaxing and fun. Sporting events have proven a great balance to congresses and Avesta classes. **Faith-based gatherings do not have to be serious and scholarly all the time. The key is to allow youth to feel part of the community, to have friends, and to have role models within the community.** Then bringing them together is not a chore, but something they do willingly.

And last, but certainly not least, has been our openness to accepting those who are new comers to our community. Following in the footsteps of FEZANA and other great organization, we recognize and accept that Zarathushtis come in all shapes and sizes; some are born into Z families, and others have chosen to accept Zoroastrianism as their life philosophy. We have always believed that the progress of our world, our community, and hence a key to our success, lies in openness and acceptance of all those who consider themselves followers of Zarathushtra and of the principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.

ZSC started with a simple objective: to promote unity among Zarathushtis by encouraging and expanding sports among them. We believe we have accomplished a lot thus far but there is a lot more that can be done. We know that with continued support and encouragement from you we can continue to grow and serve our community. But, as the old saying goes, "it takes a village". So we also continue to ask for your support and involvement – all you have to do to be a part of this movement is contact us: [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org).

**And with that, we went on to the 13th Zoroastrian Games in Toronto, Canada on June 29 – July 3, 2012. We hope you were there!**

*Dr. Niaz Kasravi serves as the NAACP's Acting Director of Criminal Justice. She received her Ph. D. in Criminology, Law & Society from the University of California, Irvine. In her academic career, she focused on sociology of law and law and inequality. A National Science Foundation grant allowed her to travel to Iran to work with Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel*





*Congratulations and Best Wishes to  
FEZANA  
for 25 years of service to the  
Zoroastrian Community of North America*



*Zoroastrian Association of California*

ریاست محترم سازمان فزانا اینجانب دکتر مهربان شهروینی سر دبیر مجله  
پیک مهر چاپ و نکوور کانادا از سوی خود  
و دبیران و نویسندگان پیک مهر

بیست و پنجمین سال تاسیس فزانا را به شما و گروه فزانا تبریک گفته و  
پیروزی شما را در راه خدمت بجامعه خواستارم

سر دبیر پیک مهر دکتر مهربان شهروینی وانکوور

**With Compliments Dr. Mehraban Shahrivini, Peyk-e-Mehr**



*Congratulations*  
**FEZANA**  
*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

**THE ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (ZAPA)**

**congratulates FEZANA on an illustrious 25 years of service.**

**ZAPA was one of the founding members of FEZANA when we unanimously approved the first draft of the constitution of FEZANA on August 30th 1986.**

**Founded in May 21st 1982 by Late Meherwan Irani, this year ZAPA also celebrates it's 30th Anniversary. On March 17th 2012 ZAPA organized a combined celebration of it's 30th anniversary along with FEZANA's 25th.**

**ZAPA members wish FEZANA the very best in its future endeavors.**





# THANK YOU! FEZANA IS ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

## NOW WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE



FEZANA coordinates the promotion of Zarathushti religion, culture and fellowship in North America.<sup>1</sup> The affairs of FEZANA are conducted by unpaid elected officers<sup>2</sup> and volunteers. Projects and charitable activities are managed by various committees<sup>3</sup> whose budgets are reviewed and approved by the Members at the beginning of each fiscal year. The federation is financed partly from the annual dues paid by the Member Associations; but the majority of its funds come from voluntary donations.

### THE FIRST 10 YEARS

Five years after its founding, FEZANA's total financial assets were only \$15,000. These assets doubled two years later; and doubled again in the next two years. During this period, FEZANA started to respond to appeals for medical assistance as well as requests for funds to renovate houses of worship and communal facilities in India and Iran; and started giving small scholarships to encourage higher education. Donations were requested through appeals, which always received a good response. In addition, unsolicited donations were received for FEZANA's general, scholarship, welfare and Journal funds so that by the end of 1997, FEZANA's bank accounts totaled a respectable \$98,000.

Annual meetings of FEZANA Member Association representatives and periodic North American Congresses helped to cement the bond between Zarathushtis thinly spread across the United States and Canada. Youth Congresses received strong support from the community as a way for our next generation to experience our culture, come together and find life partners. *Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA)* and the *Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC)* became committees with their own bank accounts and management structures. This turned out to be a very successful formula for encouraging greater collaboration and interchange between Zarathushtis of all backgrounds; and started a period of greater awareness of the need for funds not just for welfare and critical medical assistance, but to also build for the future of our community in North America.

### GROWTH PERIOD

In 1998, Jerry Kheradi M.D. and his wife Celeste decided to start an endowment fund for scholarships in memory of Jerry's father, *Mehraban Kheradi*. From his own

experience, Dr. Kheradi was convinced that higher education is the key to prosperity and life-fulfillment in modern society. Another large donation came soon after, from Yasmin Cumming in memory of her father, *Homi Damkevala*. Homi's lifelong dream had been to help Zarathushtis in their times of need, so the funds were used to set up an endowment for welfare and critical assistance. These donations were in the form of shares of US and Canadian corporations. Dr. Kheradi suggested that FEZANA open an investment account, which made the task of transferring the shares to FEZANA and setting up separate endowment fund accounts easy. The donors received a tax benefit based on the price of the shares at the time they were transferred to FEZANA.

FEZANA started advertising the need for donations on the FEZANA website, through on-line appeals on the Internet and in the Journal. Donations, large and small, started pouring in. After all, Zarathushtis are known for their charity. That is when we realized that we needed a dedicated individual who understood FEZANA's needs and had a firm commitment to help our community grow. Who could be better for that job than someone who had already opened his heart and donated generously? We approached *Dr. Kheradi* and he accepted the chairmanship of the *Funds & Finance committee*. The committee developed plans to establish endowment funds for each of the existing core funds by encouraging the committees to seek donations for their planned activities.

By the end of 2000, FEZANA's treasury had grown to over \$266,000. Now the FEZANA welfare committee also became more active. More and more appeals started coming from India and Iran and we needed to filter them to ensure that they were genuine and deserving. That is when we asked for help from Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, chairman of the WZO Trust, which is registered in India. *In 2006, FEZANA donated \$26,500 to various charities and needy Zarathushtis through the WZO Trust.*

### THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT

The Thousand Points of Light campaign, started in 2001-2002 was an idea developed to showcase the FEZANA funds and bring attention to the need for continued donations. The basic idea was that if 1000 families donated \$100 each, we could raise \$100,000. The Thousand Points

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fezana.org/PublicRecords/Constitution>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fezana.org/AdminActivities/Officers>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fezana.org/AdminActivities/Committees>

<sup>4</sup> FEZANA was founded in 1987

of Light campaign exceeded all expectations. By the spring of 2005 the Thousand Points of Light campaign had received a total of \$352,500. Our goal was to create a healthy total for FEZANA possibly \$1,000,000 within ten years from the start of the campaign.

With a lot of hard work and some gentle pushing, the Funds & Finance committee also succeeded in getting more donors to establish endowment funds to help secure continued sources of income for funding FEZANA's activities. Thereafter, endowment funds were established in their family names by the *Zardoshty sisters (for religious studies and another welfare fund for women)*, *Behram and Silloo Kapadia (academic scholarships)*, *Firdaus and Jasmine Bhathena (welfare/critical assistance)*, *Dr. Hoshedar and Anahita Tamboli (welfare)*, *Panthaky family*, and most recently *Purvez and Aban Rustomji (scholarships in memory of her late husband Purvez)*, *Morvorid Guiv Foundation for academic scholarships*.

## OUR FINANCIAL BASE

Today with the continuing growth and needs of the community, FEZANA has 21 funds including 11 endowment funds <sup>5</sup>. FEZANA has gone from a bank account of less than \$15,000 to bank and investment accounts totaling over \$1,000,000, even after giving out large amount of money over the years for charity, scholarships for higher education, religious studies, sports and performing arts, as well as for all the various activities of the FEZANA committees.

It is not just FEZANA that is being supported by our community. Each of our Associations is working to build their own facilities, meeting halls and dar-e-mehrs. After initial seed money from the Arbab Guiv Foundation, today many donors have come forward. Through these donations

and active fundraising drives, eleven Associations have built or bought beautiful Centers with prayer halls, classrooms, libraries and meeting facilities, where they conduct their activities including ongoing religious education classes; and several others are in the process of building, buying or collecting funds for their own centers. Nor are FEZANA charities limited to helping Zarathushtis only. A large donation for relief of earthquake victims in Pakistan was administered through WZO's volunteers in Karachi. Another donation was earmarked to help fishermen who lost their boats in the tsunami on the Bay of Bengal, as well as for the earthquakes in Bam, Haiti, and Gujarat.

On the occasion of FEZANA's 20th Anniversary in 2007, FEZANA increased its emphasis on planning for a community infrastructure in North America. An *Infrastructure Endowment Fund* was established to start work towards building the brick and mortar infrastructure needed to support FEZANA's future activities. In 2008, FEZANA established an office in Burr Ridge, Illinois and the FEZANA Research and Education Center (FIREs) in Houston, Texas.

## THE FUTURE

We now have a growing financial base and we have a generous and willing donor base. As we grow and spread our roots in North America, we will need to increase our support for developing our "human capital" of educated, far-sighted and prosperous Zarathushtis, which will in turn help us to build the "financial capital" to build and sustain permanent facilities for meetings, administration, and recreation. We need to consider proposals already on the table for retirement homes, a National Worship Center, seminary, and an endowed chair for Zoroastrian studies at a major university.

### LIST OF FUNDS

#### FEZANA FUNDS

- 1 General Fund
- 2 Academic Scholarship Fund
- 3 Welfare & Critical Assistance Fund
- 4 Religious Education Fund
- 5 FEZANA Infrastructure Fund
- 6 FEZANA Journal Fund
- 7 Zardoshty Religious Education Scholarship fund
- 8 Khorshed Jungalwala Lecture Series Fund
- 9 Performing & Creative Arts Scholarship fund
- 10 Excellence in Sports Scholarship fund

#### ENDOWMENT FUNDS

- 11 Mehraban & Morvorid Kheradi Scholarship Fund
- 12 Hormazdiar Damkevala Welfare Fund
- 13 Bhathena Critical Assistance Fund
- 14 Kapadia Scholarship Fund
- 15 Phiroze Dorabji Tamboli Welfare Fund
- 16 Khorshed Panthaky Undergraduate Scholarship Fund
- 17 FEZANA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship Fund
- 18 FEZANA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Infrastructure Fund
- 19 Bamasipour Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund for Women
- 20 Purvez and Aban Rustomji Scholarship Fund
- 21 Morvarid Guiv Academic Scholarship Fund

<sup>5</sup> A current list of the Funds is given at the end of this article

No planning is complete without a clear and realistic financial plan to make it all happen. Future planning should include the exponential growth expected from bequeaths and legacies from the “founding generation” These gifts can take many forms: cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, art objects, book collections, and life insurance proceeds.

***We do have a culture of voluntary service and giving. But it never hurts to ask.***

***FEZANA is on a firm foundation. Let us build on it! Plan boldly -- give generously.***

***Rustom Kevala, Ph.D. and Jerry Kheradi, M.D.***

***Co-chairs, FEZANA Funds & Finance Committee***



***Jehangir (Jerry) Kheradi, MD, FACC***

*Born in Yezd, Iran on 8-12-41 to Morvorid and Mehraban Kheradi. Graduated from Grant Medical College, Bombay, India. Internship Coney Island Hospital, Brooklyn, NY. 1st year residency Brooklyn VA Hospital, NY. 2nd & 3rd year residency NY Medical College/Metropolitan Hospital, NY, NY. 2 years GI Fellowship RI Hospital/Brown Medical College, Providence, RI. Private practice of GI in North Providence, RI. Recently retired.*

*Rustom Kevala was born in Mumbai and studied engineering in Bangalore and Stillwater, Oklahoma. He has lived and worked in Chicago, Boston, New York and Washington DC metro areas, and now lives in a retirement community in Florida. He has served as FEZANA Publications Chair, Treasurer, and President. His special interest today is understanding and empowering the next generation.*



**With appreciation and Best Wishes to FEZANA for  
25 glorious years of service to the  
North American Zoroastrian Community**

**THE ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

*The Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr  
6900 Halifax Street  
Burnaby, BC, V5B 2R5, Canada  
Telephone: (604) 420-3500 [www.zsbc.org](http://www.zsbc.org)*



**WWW.ZAQ.ORG**

## Zoroastrian Association of Quebec

**2012 MARKS THE HISTORIC 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FEZANA AND THE FEZANA JOURNAL. ZAQ SENDS THEIR SALUTE AND CONGRATULATES THOSE THAT BROUGHT FEZANA AND FEZANA JOURNAL TO SUCH A MONUMENTAL SILVER JUBILEE. WE ARE PROUD OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PAST 25 YEARS.**

# Zarathushti Academics

## Fulfill the Promises of the Milk

BEHERUZ N. SETHNA

Here's a quiz question: Identify the chart on your right. Many FEZANA Journal readers will "get it" immediately, but most other people in North America will not. It's a pie chart of the proportion of Zarathushtis in North America. You mean you can't see the slice of the pie corresponding to the Zarathushti population? Well, there's a good reason for that. It's so thin as to be invisible. But, its presence is felt way beyond the size of the slice.

The Zarathushti refugees from Persia did not land in North America, nor did they meet Jadi Rana on the shores of the American continent, but the Parsi legend of the milk may as well apply here. The act of sprinkling sugar in the already full pot of milk sent three messages: that the new immigrants wouldn't cause the vessel to overflow, that they would blend in, and that they would make the milk sweeter. The chart above shows that the first promise has been met in North America, and we know that Zarathushtis don't live in Parsi enclaves, so the second promise too has been met. The rest of this article is devoted to delivering on the third promise: that of making the milk sweeter, particularly in the context of Higher Education in North America.

Other articles in this and previous issues of FEZANA Journal mention details of individual accomplishments, so that will not be repeated here. This article is not about cataloging all the academicians but what they have been able to achieve and the diversity of their contributions.

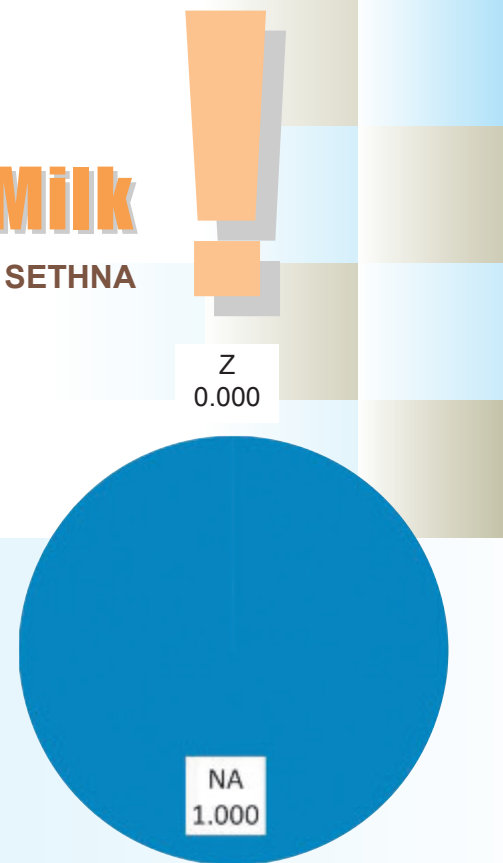
Here, I give credit to several authors who have made my task easier, primarily Dinsha Mistree for his article on Zarathushtis in Technology in Science, and to Parastu Dubash's list of North American Zarathushti Academics. It would serve no purpose to repeat their excellent work here, so I

will simply categorize and group sets of accomplishments and seek forgiveness for not mentioning individual names, except in very few cases.

The two broad categories of contributions I will use will come as no surprise to anyone in academe: the excellent contributions of faculty in their teaching, scholarship, and service in various disciplines, and the equally excellent ones in administration and leadership of schools, colleges, divisions, universities, and systems. In contrast to many faculty all across America who make this dichotomy in a "we-they" sense (none among these are readers of FEZANA, of course?). I am one who believes strongly that each depends on the excellence of the other, and that the sooner we appreciate that we are on the same page, the better it will be for the success of Higher Education in general. I myself "walk the walk" in this regard, since I have taught a sole instructor course for all of the (almost) 18 years I have been President of The University of West Georgia, published more than 25 papers, guided students through their research leading to national presentations, and have consistently used the title of "Professor and President" – in that order.

Zarathushti faculty have reached the top of their professions. We have Ph.D.s from the best universities in the world, Harvard, M.I.T., Columbia, McGill, and the like, and have been faculty members at a wide range of institutions ranging from those mentioned above to other universities who have found their niches and do an exceptional job in teaching, scholarship and service.

In Canada, we have at least 15 faculty members at places like McGill, Concordia, Western Ontario, McMaster, British Columbia, and others, who are doing great work and making contributions in Engineering,



Medicine, Business, Economics, Music, History, Psychiatry, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences.

In the United States, we have over 100 faculty members, including about 10 Chaired or Distinguished Professors! Nine faculty members are at Harvard, including two chaired professors: *Mahzarin Banaji, Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics, and Homi Bhabha, Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities*. And, we have one retired faculty member at Stanford. *Maneck Wadia, Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, CA*

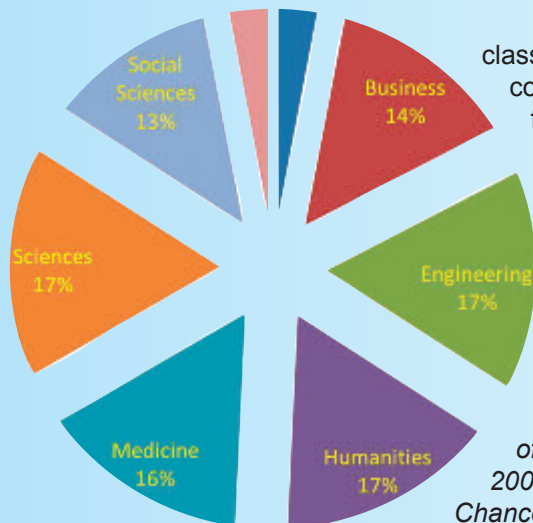
The perception out there is that Indians, in general, and this would extend to Zarathushtis as well, make contributions in Engineering, but not much in other fields. That is not true. I did an analysis on the directory of approximately 130 academics compiled by Parastu Dubash, and this is what I found:

Note that there is a virtual tie for first place among faculty in the fields of Engineering, the Sciences, Medicine, and the Humanities. Business and the Social Sciences are close behind, and

Zarathushtis Academic	
Education	Purely Adm
3%	3%

Education and purely staff / administrative positions complete the picture.

While others who look at the same data might make slightly different classifications, the diversity of disciplines will probably remain evident. I conclude that Zarathushtis make great contributions in a wide variety of fields in North American Academics.



Further analysis of existing data also indicates that we are making contributions in academic leadership and administration as well. I count 11 Zarathushtis in Chair, Director, and Assistant or Associate Dean positions. We have at least one *Dean, Porus Olpadwala, Dale R. Corson Professor and Dean at Cornell, one Provost, Vistasp Karbhari, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Alabama at Huntsville, and two Presidents: Jamshed Bharucha, who has been President since the Fall of 2011 of Cooper Union, and the other is yours truly, having been President of the University of West Georgia since Summer of 1994, and having twice served (1999-2000 and 2006-07) in an interim capacity as Senior and Executive Vice Chancellor of the 35-campus University System of Georgia.*

Not bad for a community which is so small that the size of the slice cannot even be seen in a pie chart!

So, the three promises of the legend of the milk (though not made to an North American Immigration official) have been fulfilled: We have not taken up appreciably more room, we have blended in, and we have indeed made the milk much sweeter with significant contributions all across the academic spectrum.

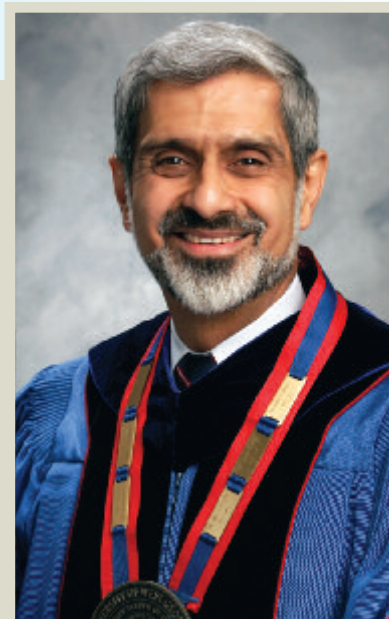
**Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna** is the first known person of Indian origin or of any ethnos origin ever to become President of a University anywhere in America. He is in his 18th year as Professor of Business at the University of West Georgia (UWG) and President of the University.

He has twice served (in 1999-2000, and 2006-07) as Interim Executive/Senior Vice Chancellor for the University System of Georgia with responsibility for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Instructional /Information Technology, and Planning for 35 Research and Comprehensive Universities and Access Institutions, 260,000 students, and 10,000 faculty. Additionally, in 2006-07, he had line responsibility with the Presidents of all 15 Comprehensive Universities reporting to him, accounting for about 40% of the public sector student enrollment in the entire state of Georgia.

Dr. Sethna holds a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology - Bombay, an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management - Ahmedabad, an M.Phil. and Ph.D. from Columbia University in New York, and participated in post-doctoral programs at Harvard and Indiana. He is a Certified Computer Professional and a certified Six Sigma Green Belt.

He has been named among the 100 Most Influential Georgians six times: 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 and has received the prestigious Cornerstone Award from the statewide Board of Regents. He is the author or co-author of a book and 65 academic papers, more than 25 of which have been after becoming President.

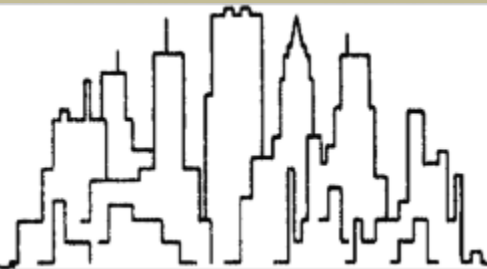
He is married for more than 37 years to Dr. Madhavi Sethna, a faculty member who has earned her MBA, MA, MS, and an Ed.D. They have two children: Anita Sethna, MD, a Facial Plastics and Board-certified ENT surgeon who heads Emory Facial Center, a graduate of Georgia Tech and Emory Medical School; and Shaun Sethna, JD, a Patent Attorney with a major international consulting firm in Houston, who is a graduate of Georgia Tech and Columbia University Law School across the academic spectrum.



**With Best Wishes and  
Congratulations to  
FEZANA  
On its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



***The Zoroastrian Association of Houston***



[www.zah.org](http://www.zah.org)

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America – that name embodies and reflects all the diverse endeavors and achievements of 26 member associations in addition to 11 small groups based in the USA and Canada. Under the FEZANA umbrella, Iranian and Parsi Zarathushtis from a wide range of devotional, social, economic, educational, and other backgrounds have found common cause in a diverse array of accomplishments aimed at benefiting Zarathushtis in the New World and nurturing Zoroastrianism for the future.

Fledgling attempts to create an organization that linked the disparate Zarathushtis of North America began in 1965 and continued into the mid 1970s. Finally, as attendees at community congresses began to fully understand the need for a charitable, communal, nonprofit entity that linked Zarathushtis of North America FEZANA was legally born on June 2, 1987. It was a notable undertaking and one which eventually undertook strategic planning for the community's collective future on the North American continent. Yet it must always be remembered that FEZANA's accomplishments are both those of the central organization and of its member associations.

Here, from the perspective of a scholar of the Zarathushti community, are some highlights of FEZANA's glorious deeds to date and some recommendations of paths to develop in the future.

Worship is central to Zarathushti identity. The establishing of 11 Dar-e Mehrs or fire temples since 1977, with others in various stages of creation, by member associations must rank prominently among the accomplishments of Zarathushtis. From New York to San Jose, Vancouver to Houston, Toronto to Los Angeles, with Chicago in between, Zarathushtis can find spiritual peace in the presence of fellow devotees and radiant flames. The earliest fire temples go back to the Bronze Age of the second millennium BCE on the steppe of Central Asia. Although separated by much space and even greater time, Zarathushtis in the New World still face their God in prayer at fire temples due to the dedication, toil, and generosity of FEZANA members. That noble endeavor must continue wherever there are sufficient numbers of Zarathushtis to create a local community, establish a fire temple, and maintain the religion's tradition.

Human lives culminate, according to Zarathushti belief, with facing judgment based on each person's deeds while alive. As the urvan (ruvan) or soul ventures into the afterlife, the tanu (tan) or body ceases to be. Before the ancient mobeds or magi popularized the exposure of corpses, a practice eventually centered in dakhmas or funerary towers, burial had been practiced, for even the word dakhma originally meant "tomb." As Zarathushti diasporas developed

at places where dakhmas could not be built, communities turned once again to inhumation. As with prayer during life, Zarathushtis can find repose upon death next to one another in burial grounds located across North America – in regions as diverse as Maryland, Illinois, Quebec, and British Columbia. Making accommodations to changing places and times, others can arrange for their ashes to be scattered with coreligionists in locales like Ontario. Once again, the tireless work of a few linked to FEZANA, grants rest to many and must continue to become more prevalent among even smaller groups of Zarathushtis in North America.

A community's existence centers not only on prayer and funerals but even more so on shared interactions. So, under the auspices of FEZANA and through the hard work of both the central organization and its member associations, the lives of individual Zarathushtis are enriched. Youth gatherings, and especially the *Youth Leadership Enhancement Project*, bring together the community's future stalwarts to befriend each other and generate shared experiences which undoubtedly will pave the way for working together for decades to come. *The World Youth Congress and Zoroastrian World Soccer Cup* are two especially noteworthy events among a plethora of similar undertakings. Zarathushtis have always valued cultural activities and not surprisingly the *World Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra* is always a big hit when performing at community gatherings. Perhaps most noteworthy among the large-scale undertakings of FEZANA on behalf of and through its local associations to date has been the hosting of the *Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000* – bringing together members of the community from the far reaches of the planet.

Likewise, since 1987 the *FEZANA Journal* has become the indispensable, widely-read, source of information about the community. Published quarterly, the journal covers a range of topics important to Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis – including scripture, rituals, history, literature, health, cuisine, travel, identity, and local updates. Among the journal's most noteworthy activities has been the worldwide demographic survey of Zoroastrians originally published in the Winter of 2004, with results of the second survey done in 2012 to be presented at the 16th North American Zoroastrian Congress in New York. Given its considerable value to laity, priests, and scholars alike, the journal must continue to serve as the flagship publication of the North American Zarathushti community and be available in both print and online versions. Likewise, Zarathushtis around the globe need the vital statistics and descriptive data provided by the worldwide demographic surveys and so those too must continue to be conducted, preferably on a fixed schedule of every ten years (i.e., once per decade).

Education in religious tenets and for diverse careers in the increasingly-interconnected and constantly-changing



workplaces of the world has been yet another monumental challenge that FEZANA has taken on behalf of its members. Classes and lectures on Zoroastrianism and its rituals, history, and communities are held for children and adults regularly by associations as geographically diverse as Toronto, Washington DC, and Houston. Education in the faith ensures initiation of upcoming generations of laity and priests including mobedyars or lay assistants to the mobeds or priests. Likewise, a range of scholarships targeted at Zarathushtis attending college or university education in fields as diverse as medical research, economics, and art – through funds raised by and endowed to FEZANA – are ensuring the intellectual prowess of the North American Zarathushti community continues to flourish. Zoroastrian associations individually and FEZANA as the uniting organization has been active as well in sponsoring scholarly lectures at North American Congresses and World Congresses. Through those presentations, including those sponsored by the *Jungalwala Memorial Lecture Series* and the *Pavri Religious Education Fund*, Zoroastrians gain glimpses into the finding of university-based scholars who conduct academic research on Zoroastrianism and its societies past and present.

More recently, and after over two decades of constant urging by scholars like professor Richard Frye and myself, Zarathushtis in North America have begun funding research and teaching of Zoroastrianism at the university level – a fledgling attempt is presently ongoing at Stanford University. However, if the North American Zoroastrian community is to gain an intellectual basis for its faith and history in addition to ensuring those are carefully researched, well taught, and transmitted to future generations then the community must do much more. Endowing professorships and scholarships for the study of Zoroastrianism at North American universities is absolutely essential, just as the Jewish, Armenian, and Muslim minority communities on the North American continent do.

All the activities past, present, and future that have been outlined, and many that could not be included for reasons of brevity, have been and will continue to be fundamental to community building, preservation, and enhancement. They are inescapable and crucial aspects of community-building. FEZANA must continue to serve as the community's intellectual and organizational leadership, bringing together those in the diaspora for a vibrant future. "Out of many, one" aptly reflects the spirit of FEZANA, and its noble activities including the journal, now 25 years in the making and with a glorious future ahead.



**Jamsheed K. Choksy (BA, Columbia University; PhD, Harvard University)** is Professor of Iranian Studies, Professor of History, and Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He was nominated by the US President and confirmed by the US Senate as a member of the Council overseeing the National Endowment for the Humanities. Choksy has held fellowships from the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), Guggenheim Foundation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford), and American Philosophical Society. He is the author of three books: *Evil, Good, and Gender: Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2002); *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989). Choksy also is a consulting editor of the *Encyclopedia Iranica* (New York: Columbia University)



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**On this auspicious occasion of the 25th Jubilee for the FEZANA (The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America), the Dastur, Hodge and Simmons families wish to express our sincere gratitude to the organization and its very hard working, forward looking, progressive Presidents, Vice Presidents, Committee Chairs and all the 26 Zoroastrian Associations for putting our mark on the Sands of Time of North America! Thank you for giving a distinct identity to our miniscule community and leading us to higher and higher Community goals and achievements.**

**May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Tolerance burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!  
Atha JAMYAAT, YATHA AAFRINAAMAH! (May it be so as we wish!)**

**Love and Tandoorasti,  
Zain, Taj and Nev Simmons,  
Allison, Anahita, Cristina Hodge, Jo Ann and Soli Dastur,  
Jimbo Hodge, Shirin and Marv Simmons!**



**Congratulations & Best Wishes to FEZANA**



&

**the North American Zarathushti COMMUNITY**

*for*

**The 25<sup>th</sup> Year Silver Jubilee Celebration**

*from*

*The Zoroastrian Association of Florida*



**Congratulations to Ervad Dr. Soli P. Dastur,  
the recipient of the FEZANA Rohinton Rivetna Award  
for Outstanding Zarathushti-2010**

Our deep gratitude to him and his dear wife, Jo Ann, for decades of community service and the ground-breaking initiatives of the North American religious Tele-bridge-classes, fund drive & distribution (with WZO Trust) of food for poor Parsis in Gujarat, sponsoring of young men in India to become Navars, the interactive Jashans, and prayer books in Farsi, Gujarati and English.

The Florida Zoroastrian Community  
Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF)  
Zoroastrian Association of Tampa Bay (ZATAMBAY)  
Orlando–Central Florida Zoroastrian Community (CFZC)

# Fezana

## Journal's Upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:

### A Time for Reflection and Looking Ahead

It is quite possible that more Zarathushtis living in North America are familiar with the *FEZANA* Journal and have been intellectually enlightened from reading the journal than understand the role and function of *FEZANA* (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) as an organization. For 24 years, the *FEZANA* Journal has inspired, educated and engaged the minds and hearts of thousands of Zarathushtis in North America and throughout the world, and has admirably served the social, religious, spiritual and educational needs of its readers. Interestingly, for some, even after 24 years, the *FEZANA* Journal is still often mistakenly referred to as 'FEZANA' as in the often-asked question, **"Have you received the latest FEZANA?"**

*FEZANA*, the Federation, was registered as a non-profit, religious and charitable organization on June 2, 1987 with 16 Zoroastrian associations signing the first and original constitution. Today, it serves as the coordinating body for 26 Zoroastrian associations in the United States and Canada. The creation of the *FEZANA* Journal came about a year later, in September 1988, when Ervad Dr.

Jehan Bagli, editor of **SHAHROKH MEHTA and PARASTU DUBASH Gavashni**, (the newsletter of Zoroastrian Association of Quebec) took over the publication of *FEZANA* Journal. From humble beginnings of ten typed, stapled pages with blurry photocopied photographs, the latest issue (Vol. 25. No. 4, Winter / December 2011) with its glossy color cover, has 104 bound pages and over 100 sharp digital images. Past issues of *FEZANA* Journal (currently going back to 2006) are now archived on *FEZANA*'s website ([www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)).

Four times a year for almost a quarter century, the *FEZANA* Journal has been enhancing and stimulating the educational and spiritual needs of its readers, who eagerly wait for each issue to bring them news not only of what is happening in the Parsi/Zarathushti world, but also to increase their knowledge of Parsi/Zarathushti religion, history, philosophy, culture, traditions, contemporary topics and the pulse of the community. The majority of the journal's readers live in North America and with vast distances between major Parsi/Zarathushti population centers, the *FEZANA* Journal is the "glue" that binds the scattered community by

making them aware of events, information and matters concerning the Parsi/Zarathushti community on the North American continent. The *FEZANA* Journal also diligently covers "news and major events" of religious or cultural interest in other countries of the world with significant Parsi/Zarathushti populations including India, Iran, Pakistan, UK, Australia and elsewhere. *FEZANA* Journal essentially has become the "fabric" of the world Parsi/Zarathushtis and most of its readers, especially the North American Zarathushti community members, wear it with pride.

Every journal issue has been meticulously put together, beginning in the early years with visionary editor Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, then by its legendary past editor Roshan Rivetna (1991-2006) and now, by its energetic editor, Dr. Dolly Dastoor. The role of editor is no doubt a difficult and time-consuming one and the community has been fortunate to have phenomenal individuals who have devoted so much of their personal time in always attempting to improve and exceed expectations of its readers in producing this first-rate magazine. This is accomplished through the remarkable achievements of a dedicated team of community volunteers who are scattered across the United States and Canada. The editors have had the difficult on-going task of requesting and even at times urging appropriate individuals to write particular articles of interest to ensure comprehensive coverage and broad perspectives, while maintaining high journalistic standards. Over the years, the authors and guest editors have been from all over the world and their careful planning and productive collaborations have resulted in coherent publications. Upon the receipt of solicited articles

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and write-ups, the creation of the journal goes through many iterations including editing, formatting, layout, proof-reading, artwork, photography, printing, distribution and mailing, all performed by committed volunteers. Without their diligent services, it would not only be difficult to publish the *FEZANA* Journal on time, it would not be financially affordable for most readers. There are too many names of these fine volunteers to mention individually, but the community has come to know well of their selfless services over the years and is indebted to these unsung heroes for their continued contribution of valuable time, effort and personal sacrifices.

We believe that one of the main reasons for *FEZANA* Journal's success has been its continued attempt to present fresh, fair, balanced and diverse views. The *FEZANA* Journal's editorial approach is bold and straightforward as it is willing to address different and at times contentious issues for its conservative, moderate and liberal readership. In sensitive matters concerning certain aspects of the religion, faith, beliefs, rituals, historical facts and social issues, *FEZANA* Journal has shown its neutrality and therefore readers and writers understand that their perspectives are given impartial and unbiased coverage. *FEZANA* Journal throughout its history has allowed and entertained differing views, no matter how orthodox or liberal. Its policy of disallowing any personal attack, slander or insulting of religious doctrines or rituals has been vital in keeping the *FEZANA* Journal's integrity and thereby positioning itself above community politics.

We believe that an important synergy the *FEZANA* Journal has provided for the North American diaspora in particular, is to educate the Parsis from the Indian subcontinent and Zarathushtis from Iran about each other's distinct customs, practices and rituals pertaining to the Zarathushti religion. This has resulted in narrowing the gap by increasing understanding & awareness, mutual respect and community harmony. For example,

detailed articles about practices such as setting of the haft-seen table for NouRooz have been instrumental in taking an unfamiliar practice to many Parsis and transforming it into one they have adopted and now perform annually in their homes, at their community gatherings, and even present & display in their children's classrooms at school.

*FEZANA* Journal's role in identifying, supporting and promoting the "youth" has been tremendously effective. The scholarship programs managed by *FEZANA* and elaborately covered by the *FEZANA* Journal, each year have been very successful and hopefully will continue to contribute toward the making of the community leaders of tomorrow. *FEZANA* Journal has also been an important instrument in raising awareness for the funding needs of the community and thereby generating donations for *FEZANA*'s many funds including Welfare and Critical Assistance, Religious Education, etc. as well as financial requests from many different associations all over the world. By providing a vehicle for global appeals for worthy projects and financial assistance requests, these appeals reach a broader, global audience of potential donors. *FEZANA* Journal's regular listing of donations received for each quarter helps to recognize donors and inspire others to also give.

As a publication based on the guiding principles of the community, **for** the community and **by** the community, *FEZANA* Journal has diligently and successfully practiced the first two, but in order to increase readership and generate greater interest, the management of the Journal needs to consider working towards sharing the development and ownership of the journal **by** the community. This does not mean that its day-to-day managerial and editorial functions need to be delegated to the broader community, but rather the functions related to development can become more open and accessible – allowing community members to feel a sense of ownership by "*participating and contributing*" towards the

continued success of the *FEZANA* Journal. Currently for many readers, their *FEZANA* Journal experience is passive, but with some proactive, forward-thinking strategies, readers can become empowered and feel a sense of ownership in the creation of journal issues. For example, if community members can be informed in-advance about the "theme" of three to four forthcoming issues, (or even be active in helping to articulate future themes) community members and new authors can volunteer to write articles and contribute artwork and photographs rather than wait to be asked or find out after the fact that a topic of great interest or relevance has just been published.

The role of *FEZANA* Journal going forward will continue to remain crucial in guiding, enlightening and educating the North American Zarathushtis of its culture, history, religion, social, and economic issues impacting their daily lives. With the first, second and third generations of Parsi/Zarathushti well established in North America, technological advancements in internet/publication/media industries, and comparatively lesser degrees of connections of North American Zarathushtis with the lands of their parents and great-grandparents in India & Iran, the role of the *FEZANA* Journal may change and be elevated to new levels and new business models. Whatever the new product-format will look like, *the prime responsibility and rationale of FEZANA Journal will continue to be that of serving, inspiring, showcasing, uplifting and supporting community at-large and in meeting their socio-religious needs.*

Congratulations to *FEZANA* Journal on its upcoming 25th Anniversary and in this challenging and dynamic technological age, may the journal continue to provide relevant and insightful information and education, support and promote young community leaders, and engage minds to higher levels of excellence in the next 25 years.

**Both authors are avid readers of FEZANA Journal and have readily available copies of the entire 24 years of its publication. Over the years, they have both contributed many articles on a variety of topics for the journal.**

**Shahrokh Mehta** is a certified management consultant (CMC) and has assisted over 150 organizations in improving their effectiveness and profitability. He writes for various publications on Zarathushti history, community, and religion; and has conducted community building workshops and has presented at NA Zoroastrian congresses. Shahrokh chaired FEZANA's Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) that resulted in the eventual establishment of a permanent administrative office at Zoroastrian Association of Chicago; and a resource center at Zoroastrian Association of Houston, now called 'FEZANA Information, Research and Education Systems (FIRES).' Shahrokh was born in Karachi, lived in Tehran and now lives and works in Syracuse, New York with his wife Gool.

**Parastu Dubash (nee Mehta)** earned a BA in Psychology from Colgate University and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University. She has taught at a number of colleges in Massachusetts including UMass Dartmouth, College of Holy Cross, WPI, Providence College and Fitchburg State College. Parastu has served as President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA) for 4 years and has been active in other committee positions for over 18 years. In 1998 she was a recipient of the FEZANA Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award. Parastu also initiated the very successful ZAGBA fund-raising and community-building calendar which is in its sixth year. She has a keen interest in the processes and activities that strengthen Zarathushti identity and enhance Zarathushti communities. Parastu lives in Shrewsbury, MA with her husband Jamshed, and their children Zarius (12) and Zinara (9).



**Congratulations to FEZANA for a job well done.**

**With best wish from the Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area**



# CONGRATULATIONS FEZANA

*On working successfully for 25 years to help Zarathushtis throughout North America keep alive our dream of promoting and perpetuating the Zarathushti faith.*

**We have a dream.** To celebrate FEZANA's 25th anniversary, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI) hopes to inaugurate its new Darbe Mehr. Construction is well under way, and we are very close to having a place to call our own. But ...

**We need your help.** Every dollar counts. For further information about our project, the status of our fundraising, or to make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit us at [www.zamwi.org](http://www.zamwi.org) or contact Mr. Kersi Shroff ([kersi.shroff@gmail.com](mailto:kersi.shroff@gmail.com)) or Ms. Parmis Khosravi ([parmis.khosravi@gmail.com](mailto:parmis.khosravi@gmail.com)).

We look forward to seeing you at our Darbe Mehr the next time you visit Washington, D.C.





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The Chairman and the Board of Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, as the apex Trust of our community, extends its warmest wishes to FEZANA, on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

With the large number of migrant Parsis in North America, FEZANA continues to satisfy, their desire to stay connected to Faith and community, so admirably. Your administration and activities are commendable. Your books, publications and the FEZANA Journal are of a very high quality. You have managed to steer clear of debilitating controversy while not shying away from discussing vital issues. As the umbrella body for your member associations, you set a stellar example to follow. However, what really warms any Parsi / Irani Zoroastrian heart are your far reaching philanthropic activities for Parsi / Irani Zoroastrian community worldwide, including rural India. Spreading and promoting the message of our Prophet, through production of quality research on religious issues and dissemination of religious educational material is worthy of emulation by all community associations in India. It gladdens us to note the manner in which FEZANA ensures the active participation of youth in community activities and programmes, despite an alien environment and conflicting choices.

May Ahura Mazda bestow on you and your member associations and all our community members in North America, His Choicest Blessing on your way to your Golden Jubilee.

Warm regards,

**Dinshaw Rusi Mehta**  
**Chairman**  
**Bombay Parsi Punchayet**



# FEZANA

## *In the Diaspora*

Dorab Mistry

Let me at the outset congratulate the team that established FEZANA as a collective body bringing together city based or state based chapters in North America. It must have been a herculean task considering the vast geography of the continent. In the 1980s and the 1990s, the USA in particular was at the height of its global super power status. This self confidence had led those who lived there to frequently tell us *"The future of the Zoroastrian people lies in North America"*. Each Chapter chair felt he or she was a state governor if not the US President himself. So, to bring all these personalities under one roof with a common set of goals and rules must have been quite a task. No wonder there were several false starts before success was achieved. To that extent I salute the efforts of the early pioneers, in particular my dear friends Rohinton Rivetna and Dolly Dastoor.

I have known every FEZANA President personally and many of their officers. They have all worked exceptionally hard and displayed immense qualities of head and heart. They have made a huge impact on the diaspora. After all, North America is the biggest part of the diaspora outside of India. A period of 25 years is perhaps too short but within that time span much has been achieved in terms of bringing together the Zarathushti community spread over such a large continent.

Amongst the contributions that FEZANA can be proud of are the establishment of Dar e Mehrs all over North America, with some help and encouragement from the philanthropic *Guiv and Zartoshty families*. FEZANA's education initiatives for young and adults alike have also been noteworthy. The FEZANA JOURNAL is a credit to its pioneering former editor *Roshan Rivetna* and its current dynamic force *Dolly Dastoor*. Kudos are also due to people like *Rustom Kevala*, the late *Khorshed Jungalwalla* and to *Behram Pastakia* who chaired the FEZANA Publications committee. The bi-annual FEZANA North American congress and the ZYNA congress for youth have set new standards and enable hundreds of the North American diaspora to meet and enjoy the company of each other. The *North American Zoroastrian Olympics* are a great achievement worthy of replication elsewhere in the diaspora. The World Congress in Houston too was a great success. Recent initiatives such as the sponsorship of *Zoroastrian Studies at Stanford University and at Claremont College* are also very creditable.

On the other hand, I believe FEZANA has in some ways been a missed opportunity. North America could have worked closely with the community in India, particularly the *Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP)*, and the much older *Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE)* in the UK and given due weightage to the cause of preserving our ancient Parsi and Irani values, rituals and traditions. FEZANA allowed itself to be hijacked by a vocal minority of members who took it upon themselves to revise and reform and update our ancient religion. Each generation feels the need to do so and perhaps rightly so. However had that been allowed to be done in Iran and in India, would our religion and our ethnicity have survived all these centuries? After all that is what gives us our unique identity. FEZANA could have done more to respect and collaborate with our most erudite and recognized scholarly priests who would not compromise on their strongly held traditional beliefs.

That is my one misgiving about the people who led FEZANA. History may yet pass a different judgment. However, my personal opinion is that they could have done much better to enshrine our more traditional beliefs and practices into our people in North America. Thankfully, the old refrain about the future lying in North America is heard less often these days. This relatively young and affluent community in North America will have to come to terms (just like us in Europe ) with the economic crisis that has unfortunately gripped the West. On this happy occasion of the FEZANA Silver Jubilee, I wish my dear friend Bomi Patel and my fellow Zarathushtis of North America further success, good luck and a most enjoyable celebratory congress in New York.

**Dorab Mistry** was President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Inc from 1997 to 2005. During his tenure, he led the project to acquire and develop the Zartoshty Brothers Hall and the Zoroastrian Centre for Europe in Harrow, London and the sale of the old Zoroastrian House in Hampstead. He was Chair of the 8th World Congress held in London, June 2005. He now represents the ZTFE in Interfaith and External Relations. Since 2007 Dorab has been Vice Chair of the Faith Based Regeneration Network of the UK and since 2002 he is a trustee of the Interfaith Network of the UK. Dorab is a qualified chartered accountant and is regarded as one of the world's leading commodity price analysts. He is invited to speak at commodity conferences all over the world and is interviewed on Bloomberg and CNBC. His entire working life has been with GODREJ at their London office. Dorab is married to Shehnaz for 27 years and they have 3 daughters Tina, Sherie and Roxanne. Tina headed the Young Zoroastrians wing of the ZTFE from 2006 to 2011 and Sherie is currently its co-





## **The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Inc.**

congratulate

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On the 25th Anniversary of your establishment

May you progress further in all your future endeavours.



**The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) was established in the UK in 1861. The ZTFE represents and safeguards the interest of the Zoroastrian Community at UK and European level in religious, social and interfaith matters. ZTFE is proud to be associated with the only chair worldwide for Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) affiliated to London University - thanks to the philanthropy of the Zartoshty Brothers and late Prof. Mary Boyce.**

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## In loving memory of the late Khorshed Jungalwala



who dedicated her life with extraordinary passion, broad vision and with spirit of righteousness to serve the Zarathushti Community.

We wish FEZANA a very happy and successful 25th Anniversary.

May the bright light of Zoroastrianism continue to shine on to forge another 25 successful years of Zarathushti spirit for FEZANA.

Firoze, Ferzin, Jehangir, Rajan and Davin

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It is oft said, that the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. The FEZANA scholarship program seeks to empower the next generation of Zarathushtis by assisting in their intellectual growth and maximizing their true potential. The tangibility of the financial assistance offered has also served to foster, as one scholarship recipient put it, "a stronger connection to the community, which I saw as "investing" in my studies."

I was fortunate to have lived and studied in Canada, where the cost of education was but a fraction of that in the US. Sadly, that too is changing and higher education in Canada is not as affordable as it once was. Equally worrying is a recent study in the US which found that student loan debt has now surpassed credit card debt. With costs rising, new graduates are taking out more and more loans but wages for new graduates are not increasing at the same pace that their debt is. All this to say that the benefactors of the academic scholarships for our community members are making a big difference in the lives of those whose work ethic, academic excellence, and community service are an example to us all.

In 1999 I had the honor of being one of the first two recipients of a FEZANA Academic Scholarship. In the years since, the number of recipients of our local community's generosity has grown significantly, and the amounts being awarded have grown too. Today the scholarship program has five endowed scholarships and six FEZANA scholarships. From an initial two recipients and \$2,000 in 1999, the most recent winners were a group of 11 graduate and undergraduate students who shared \$27,000. To date, over 100 young Zarathushtis have benefitted from the largesse of the FEZANA scholarship program. FEZANA recently received two new endowments, one for \$100,000 and one for \$25,000. Clearly the scholarship program is seen to be a success and an important program to continue with. The process is transparent, applications are received, and evaluated by a panel of independent judges from across the continent according to established criteria. The awards and the certificates are presented where possible by the association near to the recipients. And each year the Spring issue of the FEZANA Journal carries the information on each recipient.

The eclectic mix of educational paths pursued by our youth bodes well for our continued community enrichment. Scholarship recipients have gone on to become leaders in fields as varied as acting and architecture, academics and administration.

The following notes were submitted by a few of the over 100 exceptionally qualified scholarship recipients in response to the question of how the scholarship impacted their professional trajectories.

#### **JIMMY ANTIA (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2008-2009)**

The FEZANA scholarship helped me pursue a degree in international relations, which helped me secure an internship in Banda Aceh, Indonesia with the United Nations. By learning development principles and helping to ameliorate areas riven by conflict, the FEZANA scholarship helped me practice Zarathushti principles in my professional career.

#### **BEHZAD DABU (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2005-2006)**

The Scholarship helped me afford a college education in the Arts which has propelled me to a position as international traveler for the largest Arts institution in the world. I am also a working professional actor in Chicago.

#### **PERINAZ BHADA-TATA (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2006-2007)**

I received the FEZANA scholarship when I was getting my dual Master's in International Affairs and in Environmental Engineering at Columbia University. My engineering thesis focused on solid waste management in Mumbai. After I graduated, I worked for two years at the World Bank in the Urban Development Anchor, working on issues related to urban environment and climate change. For the last two years, I have been doing freelance environmental consulting on urban environment and solid waste. I also established my own environmental consulting firm, Earthability.

#### **MAZIYAR BOUSTANI (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2011-2012)**

I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Geographic Information Science (GIScience) and Remote Sensing at California State University, Northridge, where I am also working as a research assistant. I desire to use the skill and knowledge I learned in school to connect Zoroastrian people all around the world. The

FEZANA scholarship will help me to continue pursuing this goal and it is my hope that I may one day contribute more to the Zoroastrian community.

**ZENOBIA HOMAVAZIR (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2005-2006)**

The FEZANA scholarship helped me at a time when I was financially struggling while in school completing my master’s degree. The scholarship was more than financial; it was symbolic as I really felt that I had the support of my community as I finished my studies. My degree in social work has brought me closer to my passion of helping children and families. Needless to say, my interest in helping others has come from teachings from our religion and the examples I see in our community.

**ZAL KARKARIA (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2002-2003)**

The FEZANA scholarship helped cover the cost of research expenses for my master’s thesis on the women’s policies of the Khmer Rouge. I spent the summer of 2002 based in Phnom Penh interning at the Documentation Center of Cambodia and conducting interviews with former Khmer Rouge cadres in local villages. I joined the Canadian Foreign Service in 2004 and have worked as a Visa Officer on two postings, one in Nairobi and another in New Delhi. I am currently working with Citizenship and Immigration Canada in Ottawa.

**DINSHA MISTREE (MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. THE FEZANA SCHOLAR 2011-2012)**

I am currently using the money I received to support the fieldwork for my PhD. I am in the Department of Politics at Princeton and I am focusing on bureaucratic accountability and corruption in India. With a friend, I am also currently building a website that will let Zoroastrians from all over the world access agiary services ([www.agiaryconnect.com](http://www.agiaryconnect.com)).

**MINOEE MODI (MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. THE FEZANA SCHOLAR 2004-2005)**

Being the 2005 FEZANA Scholar and receiving the accompanying Kheradi Scholarship of \$5,000 meant a lot to me. Besides the funds themselves, made more valuable by the fact of comparatively fewer resources within our small community, the scholarship gave me much needed reassurance that studying Philosophy was not "Foolosophy." My academic work is still incomplete, but I hope to express my appreciation in more concrete terms someday. A current way I work towards that end although still studying is through free online SAT tutoring and academic counseling for Indian students in financial need. Anyone interested can contact me at [973mail@gmail.com](mailto:973mail@gmail.com)

**CYRUS SUBAWALLA (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 1999-2000)**

Cyrus is currently principle at CSA Partners Ltd, a firm established by him in 2010. His design and academic pursuits include being designer for the Exelon pavilions at Millennium Park Chicago, for the McGowan Theater at the National Archives in Washington DC, the published design for a Hindu Temple in California and perhaps most notably, winner of the design for the National Tax Headquarters in New Delhi. His analytical building models of the Chartres Cathedral and Old St. Peters Rome, are on permanent display at the Yale Divinity School.

**MEHERAZADE SUMARIWALLA (FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2008-2009)**

I was the recipient of a FEZANA scholarship in 2008, as I was entering my freshman year at Wesleyan University. Since then, I have been fortunate to have so many distinct opportunities and experiences. I am a Biology and Economics double major; taking my knowledge of Economics and Biology, and using them together in the most beneficial way, is what I aspire to do in the future.

*Dilshad Marolia one of two initial recipients of the FEZANA Scholarship, lives and works in NY*

**Editor’s Note**

***In addition to the Academic Scholarship Program, FEZANA also awards scholarship in the Performing and Creative Arts, in The Excellence in Sports Program and awards a scholarship for the Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Fund***



**THE TRUST OF MORVARID GUIV  
CONGRATULATES**

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**ON 25 YEARS OF DEDICATED & LOYAL  
SERVICE  
TO THE ZARTHUSHTI COMMUNITIES IN  
NORTH AMERICA**

**WE  
thank**

*Marzi Byramjee*

**of Regal Press, Mississauga, Ontario  
for sponsoring the  
25th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE  
of the FEZANA JOURNAL  
and for his help in the printing and publication of  
the Journal throughout the years.**



# WRITER POWER IN AN INFORMATION AGE

**ABAN RUSTOMJI**

*My world has changed. I rarely read a paper book. In the last few years, new media platforms, audio books, ebooks have transformed my reading. In our communities we have neighborhood-based blogs, ethnic news organizations that are collaborating in ways never seen before, and activists use social media to organize important issues facing their community. You may have an ebook open on your iPad, listening to your favorite music, posting memorable lines on Facebook. But whether you are for or against multi-screening the fact remains that the power of a writer has not changed. And over the last 25 years we have our own fair share of Zoroastrian luminaries - writers and authors that need to be lauded not only for their artistic abilities when they remind us of the poetry of our lives and deep souls in our selves, but also because it is through their characters and themes that the reader has learned about Zoroastrianism.*



**BAPSI SIDHWA**, is our “grand dame”, an internationally acclaimed award-winning author of four novels, published in ten countries and translated in numerous languages. In three of her four novels, her characters belong to the Zoroastrian community: Fareedoon Jungalwalla and his family in *The Crow Eaters*, 16-year old Feroza Ginwalla in *An American Brat* as well as 5-year-old Lenny of *Ice-Candy Man*, like the prize-winning author, herself are all Parsis. Bapsi's books, her film adaptations, her plays all reflect her personal experiences. No writer has equaled Sidhwa's capacity to address grim historical realities with both precision and affection. Bapsi lives in Houston, TX.



Toronto-area writer **ROHINTON MISTRY** will receive the prestigious Neustadt International Prize for Literature award in October 2012. An international jury representing nine countries selected Mistry for this biennial prize that is awarded for outstanding achievement in poetry, fiction or drama. Jury writer Samrat Upadhyay said, “Mistry writes with great passion, and his body of work shows the most compassionate and astute observations of the human condition, making him one of the most exciting and important contemporary novelists writing in the English language”. Mistry is the author of 1991's *Such a Long Journey*, which won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. He also wrote the acclaimed follow-up novels *A Fine Balance*, an Oprah Book Selection that made him a household name, and *Family Matters*. Quiet, sharp and keenly observant, Mistry grew up in a Parsi family, and family relationships are at the heart of the community, cultural identity, and the uniqueness of community living. (Photo George Burns(c) 2002 Harpo Products, Inc. All rights reserved)



**THIRYA UMRIGAR'S** home base may be Cleveland, Ohio—where she teaches creative writing at Case Western Reserve University—but she often returns to the settings of her childhood in her fiction. Born and raised in Mumbai, Umrigar has written about India's most populous city of 20 million in her novels, including *The Space Between Us*, *Bombay Time*, and a memoir *First Darling of the Morning*. Her newest *The World We Found* is an Oprah magazine pick, A Boston Globe Pick of the Week, and a BookSense Pick. Her characters Soli, Russi, Armaiti are very real and utterly believable and at the same time, she manages to be entirely universal in the depiction of the human character.



Chicago based **BOMAN DESAI** in *Memory of Elephants* weaves together a tapestry of Parsi history, religion and social change quite well. His keen mind, his elephantine memory (which accounts for the title) and his sharp humor make for enjoyable reading. “I'm a Parsi writer therefore I write about Parsis but I use my Parsi-ism as a springboard into other cultures” said Desai.

**SOHRAB FRACIS'** *Ticket to Minto*, the First Asian Winner of the Iowa Award, is an emotional and intellectual joyride that one does not want to end. Sohrab's fiction found publication in numerous publications that include Other Voices, India Currents, State Street Review, Jacksonville, The Toronto Review, and Slice Magazine, New York. (Photo credit K.Aghoramurthy)





We have another generation of writers that have captured the interest of readers and publishers. **NINA GODIWALLA**, a recognized expert on leadership, diversity, and women in the business world, is author of 2011 bestseller *Suits: A Woman on Wall Street*. The New York Times describes it as 'The Devil Wears Prada' of investment banking. The book is an insider's perspective on Morgan Stanley from an outsider's point of view—woman, second-generation Indian-American and Texan. USA Today chose *Suits* as a top pick, and FORTUNE Magazine calls it a "must read."



**DEENA GUZDER** an independent journalist who has reported on human rights issues across the globe, is the author of *Divine Rebels*, a concise and factual account of individuals who followed their faith to a degree and depth that only few venture to travel. Her articles have appeared in Time, National Geographic–Traveler, Washington Post, United Press International, Reuters, and Indian Express.

**ZAHRA SETHNA**, the author of three guidebooks to New York City, has contributed to publications such as BBC Travel, and is a contributing writer for Diners' Journal, one of New York Times blogs. She lives in Halifax, Canada as a writer and editor with 12 years of experience in print, video and online formats.



**ANOSH IRANI** in *Dahanu Road* recounts the story of a family of Iranian Zoroastrians who immigrated to India before WWII in order to escape their status as second class citizens. By the time we join the story the family are well established land owners and the founder of the family fortune's grandson, Zarios, is now an adult. Zarios has grown accustomed to privilege and leading a life of idleness. While his grandfather may have had to walk from Iran to India, and suffered deprivations and abuse as a child, neither Zarios nor his father Aspi have had to struggle for anything. Anosh Irani was born and brought up in Bombay, India and moved to Vancouver in 1998. "*Author Anosh Irani provides us with a unique blend of fact and fiction, interspersing village life with realities of Irani history. A heart-wrenching chronicle of love and loss, Dahanu Road is one man's search for truth in a sea of deception.*" – The Times of India.



**FARISHTA DINSHAW**, author of *Discovering Ashavan*, a social worker with a Toronto-based non-profit agency COSTI, is originally from Karachi and active in multi-community interactions.



**TEENAZ JAVAT**, an award winning journalist, received the Ontario Premiers Award for her contribution to the Metro Morning team that won the Radio Television News Digital Association (RTDNA) award for the 2012 town hall "*Turning Point: moving beyond stereotypes of family violence in South Asian communities in Canada*".

**We pay tribute to these and upcoming authors in our North American community for raising our profile and in some cases introducing Zoroastrianism to their readers. The ultimate tribute one can pay an author is to read their book in either print or screen format.**



**Aban Rustomji**, a Library Media Specialist, has been a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston since 1979. She is the Chair of FEZANA Information Research & Education Services (FIRES) in Houston whose mission is to serve as the central location, in North America, for the collection of Zoroastrian literature and artifacts, and to promote Zoroastrian education and research by disseminating this information to the public.



# NEXT GENERATION ZARATHUSHTIS:

**“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”  
Mahatma Gandhi**

Our community is certainly not short on inspiration, what we lack is action. One of the fundamental Zarathushti teachings is to give back, to be philanthropic in helping those in circumstances less fortunate than our own. When we pass away, our souls are judged on the contribution we made to the human race in the triumph of good over evil. We take no material earthly possessions with us, just our record of accomplishment in doing good words, good thoughts and good deeds.

While simple in semantics, the practice of good words, good thoughts and good deeds is what we spend most of our lives striving to achieve. The practice of doing good is a continuous work-in-progress and very much the code by which we live our lives as Zarathushtis.

Since the founding generation of North American Zarathushtis migrated to form a new diaspora over the past five-to-seven decades, our focus has been on the struggle to stay relevant. From storied accomplishments and contributions to human history, we have earned a sterling reputation for honesty, industry, charity, bridge building and unity.

Unfortunately, Zarathushtis in recent decades have been distracted, veering toward a more insular focus and dogged by threats of extinction from low population figures and ideological extremism. Issues like conversion, inter-faith

**As we mark the 25th anniversary celebration of FEZANA, the spotlight shifts to a new generation of leaders who are stepping forward to make a difference and define themselves in an age of challenge and change**

marriage and preservation of rituals have stymied efforts to achieve a bigger purpose: to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Last summer at the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Vancouver, two sessions conceived and organized by **NextGenNow** gave birth to an initiative known today as **Zoroastrians Stepping Forward (ZSF)**. The mission: *to promote a culture of giving back to those in need.*

The adopted cornerstone issue: to raise awareness, donations and community unity in giving gently used shoes to those who struggle to keep their feet protected. The project incorporates three key principles into its platform: **unity** – coming together as a community; **service** – mentorship, volunteering and developing leadership; and **awareness** – knowledge and donations.

To rally community associations throughout North America, the group declared May 5, 2012, as the **Zoroastrians Stepping Forward – 1st Annual International Day of Service**. Through its efforts, ZSF was able to generate thousands of pairs of gently used shoes for donation to local homeless shelters, YMCAs, Amvets, Goodwill and other social service

organizations.

Leading the charge, **Behrose Taraporewalla** (left), an Education Specialist in the Los Angeles County school system. Self-motivated, passionate and inspired, Behrose assembled her team shortly after the Vancouver congress and launched the incubator with mentorship and directional guidance of **NextGenNow** founding directors *Mantreh Atashband (Philadelphia)*, *Armaity Homavazir (Toronto)* and *Jim Engineer (Chicago)*.

ZSF differentiates from other micro- or start-up initiatives in its origin as a **NextGenNow** incubator initiative. **NextGenNow** first helped inspire the creation of ZSF by moderating the final session of the congress, entitled: *Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Action! Putting It All Together - What Are We Leaving With?* Led by *Armaity Homavazir*





(left) and Triti Namiranian, the session was a dynamic interchange of participants in a packed hall, with the result of many great ideas coming forth comprising of teams from all over the world committing to work together.

Homavazir observed, *“The ideas that were put forth at this event, along with the enthusiasm generated, proves that the youth and young adults in our community are totally inspired with opportunities for leadership. Our role in NGN, is to support them and maintain the momentum once everyone goes home! ZSF has been a great experience for us all as we deal with the realities of heavy workloads in university, demanding careers, and other responsibilities. Building community and connection has been a great result of this project.”*

For Taraporewalla, NextGenNow’s forum on inter-generational dialogue held last year at the Vancouver congress inspired her to create a project that would bring together the community.

*“I believe firmly in intergenerational dialogue. You don’t necessarily have to agree with everything being said, but having a mutual respect for one another is critical,”* she said. *“People will forget what you say, and perhaps what you do, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel. We have to create more dialogue to understand the perspectives of the elders and youngsters of our community, to build community.”*

The **NextGenNow** team continues to provide guidance, direction and ongoing mentorship to Taraporewalla and her team, helping to grow and make ZSF a reality, including the addition of more players to the ZSF leadership team. The geographic scope of the project focused mainly in North America, but the group cultivated interest and the eventual expansion of pilot programs in Iran, India, Dubai and Sweden.

According to Atashband (*photo page 51*), the Zarathushti community in North America and worldwide has many more emerging leaders in the shadows who are pursuing philanthropic work outside of the Zarathushti community. She said Zarathushti associations ultimately need to do a better job finding and engaging those leaders, encouraging them to step forward and supporting their vision and innovation.

**Come  
together**  
with your association,  
family and friends



and join us on

**May 5th, 2012**

for the First Annual International Day of Service



**ShoeDrive**

Zoroastrians Stepping Forward  
a NextGenNow initiative



*“Mentoring someone like Behrose, who is so passionate and committed, is an easy task. Over the years I have learned a lot about leading initiatives that involve our Zarathushti communities and the politics involved. I try my best to nurture Behrose’s creativity and support her in problem solving,” Atashband said.*

*“I feel it is vital for those who have taken leadership roles to pass the torch and mentor emerging leaders. The same faces and names tend to pop up whenever major initiatives are launched. This creates complacency and hampers creativity and innovation. Current leaders must promote community ownership and encourage active involvement from others.”*

Taraporewalla said an element of leadership missing in the Zarathushti community is the ability to simply step forward and commit to take the lead in a project from start-to-finish.

*“As leaders, it is essential that we work together—one team, one goal,” said Taraporewalla “At times that means working out of your comfort-zone, or completing a task that you are not assigned.”*

In addition to continuing incubator support from **NextGenNow**, and support from numerous participating FEZANA member associations and leadership mentors, an extended hand came to Taraporewalla late last year in the form of **Behram Pastakia**, FEZANA’s venerable ambassador to UN-NGO, interfaith events and mentorship.

*“Behrose is what I call a fire soul. My hope is that Zoroastrians Stepping Forward becomes institutionalized as a legacy of the Silver Jubilee year of FEZANA,” Pastakia said. “Grants available in civil society could provide financial support for programmatic expenses for this initiative to succeed.”*

Pastakia added he is confident and optimistic in Zarathushti youth connecting, collaborating and creating opportunities that bring us together.

By April 2012, approximately 15–20 FEZANA community associations across North America embraced the *Zoroastrians Stepping Forward* initiative, organizing unity walks, generating shoe donations and coming together to support the worthy cause. Successful ZSF pilot projects were launched by fellow ZSF leadership team members: *Farzine Avari (Atlanta), Darius Jamsetjee and Cyrus Pooniwala (Chicago), Tanya Bharda (Toronto), Khushnuma Driver (Miami) and Jerastine Jilla (Dubai).*

*“Shed the Light is a great motto for NextGenNow,” Taraporewalla said. “It is all about cultivating intergenerational dialogue and establishing connective leadership. As a group we set ambitious goals, in a short time frame, and had to work diligently to make ZSF a reality. Ultimately the leadership experience generated a feeling of being more proud than ever to be a Zarathushti.”*

According to NextGenNow’s Atashband, intergenerational dialogue is vital to advancing our community.

*“Each generation acts as a mentor that creates fruitful collaborations. I think NextGenNow, through the ZSF initiative especially, has done a great job harnessing these relationships,” she said. “Over the years we have overcome many challenges and limitations as an organization, which we now use as resources to support and mentor emerging leaders.”*

**For the latest news and information on Zoroastrians Stepping Forward, Google or search “Zoroastrians Stepping Forward” on Facebook, visit the ZSF web site: <http://zoroastrianssteppingforward.weebly.com>, or follow on Twitter @ZsStepping4ward**

**Jim Engineer** is a founding director of NextGenNow ([www.nextgennow.org](http://www.nextgennow.org)). For more than 20 years, Jim has been actively involved in promoting inter-generational dialogue and a better understanding of the socio-religious issues affecting the Zarathushti community. He led a team representing the next generation Zarathushtis at the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions and has advocated and organized inter-generational panel discussions and presentations at North American and World Zarathushti congresses. Professionally, Jim is the founder of e-Rainmaker Public Relations ([www.e-rainmaker.com](http://www.e-rainmaker.com)), a leading high-tech PR practice. In 2011, Jim was recognized by the Bulldog Reporter organization as Media Relations Professional of the Year. He resides in Chicago’s western suburbs with his wife Kiku, two daughters and his English bulldog, Winston. He can be reached at [jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com](mailto:jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com)





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*Congratulations FEZANA on 25 years of serving  
the Zarathushti Community.  
Best Wishes for your continued success.*



*Zoroastrian Association of Michigan*



*Heartiest Congratulations to  
FEZANA on its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
from  
Zoroastrian Association of North Texas*



*Thanks to your 25 years of service in unifying Zoroastrians all across North  
America, you have built the bridge for the worldwide connection of Zoroastrians!*

# SILVER VOICES II: Generation 1.5

*Farishta Murzban Dinshaw interviewed nine Generation 1.5 Zarathushtis about going to school in North America and their hope for North American Zarathushtis in the future. The term Generation 1.5 (G1.5) was coined in the 1970s by Ruben Rumbaut of the University of California, referring to immigrants who come to North America as children and teens. They are the generation between the first generation immigrants who arrive as adults and the born-in-North America second generation. Many of G1.5 immigrants still have close ties to their countries of origin because of their memories of childhood, family and friends, and mother tongue proficiency. A distinctive characteristic of many of the G1.5 immigrants is their student experience in two, often very different, education systems.*



## VISTA NAMDARIAN

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born in Tehran, Iran, and moved to the West Coast of Canada with my family at the age of two-years. Unfortunately, I was too young to ever really experience being involved in the Zarathushti lifestyle in Iran.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** At a younger age, my religion was never really brought up. In the recent years, I've made it a habit to distinguish myself as a Zarathushti whenever my religious traditions and background are questioned. Most of the cases in which I was questioned being Zarathushti were when people inquired about my name. I simply explained that my name had Zarathushti origins and followed up with a little history lesson about our religion. I've found that, for the most part, people are quite willing to spend a few minutes to hear a description of our

principal beliefs.

**THEN AND NOW :** Although I was very young when I arrived here in Vancouver, I do remember quite a bit about our local Zarathushti community at that time. The only real difference I see between now and then is the interconnectedness of the Parsi Zarathushtis and the Iranian Zarathushtis. I remember quite clearly that 10 or so years ago, there was a much greater level of co-operation between the two groups, and there was not even the slightest mention of the existence of any sort of a divide between the two. In the past few years, there seems to be a clear divide and segregation between the Parsis and Iranians, which I feel is more willingly recognized and questioned by the younger generations. From what I see, it's not solely an existence of a divide, but, if I dare say it, even a general reluctance to work together.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** The youth in the Lower Mainland of Canada seem quite persistent about upholding our Zarathushti roots. They are willing to recognize problems within our community and feel a responsibility to find solutions. One of FEZANA's crucial efforts towards holding our community together should be to continue organizing the youth congresses that allow young Zarathushtis to unite. \*\*



## FARZAIN MALBARI

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I grew up in Karachi, Pakistan. I immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1995 with my family when I was 15-years old. I lived in Parsi Colony and played a lot in Jamshed Bagh [a neighbouring Zarathushti apartment complex]. I spent a lot of time at KPI [Karachi Parsi Institute] by the pool and the snack bar in particular. I also attended Friday School [weekend religious classes] for quite a few years, and the songs we sang are, to this day, ingrained in my brain.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** The biggest culture shock was attending school here in Canada. I had gone to a co-ed school in Karachi, but it was still quite different. The schooling was easy, but there were different stresses involved. Since I knew no one in particular, I decided a good way to keep busy was to join the swim team at school. The first time someone saw me change out of my sudreh and kusti was a shock to them. But it was an icebreaker for sure. Initially, they thought I was Jewish. Telling them that I belonged to the oldest monotheistic religion usually made them want to do their own research to disprove that fact. Since



then, I have been quite pleasantly surprised that when the subject of religion has been approached some people actually know about our religion.

**THEN AND NOW :** Zarathushtis have become much more tolerant of mixed marriages now. I remember a very good friend of mine came from one and for the longest time she had difficulty being part of the community. Now, I am married to someone who is not a Zarathushti and I see how accepting our community is of her. Yes, there are things she still can't do, but it's a step in the right direction.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** Thanks to social networking and the internet, our community will become closer to one another and, hopefully, with liberal ideas pervading we may begin to grow in numbers. Educating others about our religion is a great way to show people how tolerant we are and how much our people have contributed towards humankind. \*\*

## SHARLENE BAMBOAT

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and moved to Brampton, Ontario, with my parents in 1996, when I was 12. In Karachi, I lived in Avari Colony, which is a Parsi enclave. I went to agiari usually on holidays and birthdays. I never attended religious classes, but we had regular prayer sessions in the school that I attended for six years, Mama Parsi Girls' High School.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** When I first moved here in Grade 7, the education I received was quite lacking compared to what I had been studying in Karachi. I found myself getting bored in class, but the lack of formal structure allowed me to become more of a creative thinker, which lent itself to developing my love for art and film. I got a lot of questions, and still do, about being a Zarathushti because most people assume that if you are from Pakistan you are Muslim. I usually add a tag line "ancient Persian religion" and that usually satisfies most people's curiosities.

**THEN AND NOW:** My involvement in the Zarathushti community has been minimal since coming to Canada. However, I am very interested in the cultural and historical aspects of our community. I am also interested in critically thinking about traditions and how such traditions evolve. This continues to inform my film and video work, as well as my research.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** I think our community in North America will continue to change as we engage with other communities. It is inevitable with any group that is part of a Diaspora, especially one that is as small as ours. It is important to recognize and accept such changes, while remembering our history and continuing to practice certain traditions. \*\*



## DIANA KATGARA

Scarborough, Ontario, Canada

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I came to Toronto in the late 1980's with my parents. Although, I was born in Mumbai, India, I spent the majority of my childhood in Dubai, U.A.E. A lot of my parents' friends were Parsi, which meant that a lot of my friends outside of school were also Parsi. Weekends were spent at their houses or on day trips with a group of friends to various beaches. We didn't have religion classes like we have in Toronto.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** In Dubai, my peers were not Parsi, but they were mostly of Indian origin so I didn't have to deal with racism. Canada has a strong publicly funded education system that was a shift from the private school I went to in Dubai. School here was difficult; although I had friends, I also faced a lot of racism from other students. However, Toronto and my neighbourhood have changed a lot in the last 25 years; it is now much more diverse.

**THEN AND NOW:** We now have two organizations in Toronto, the Zarathushti Society of Ontario (ZSO) and the Ontario Zarathushti Community Foundation (OZCF), and they have been working on a number of projects collaboratively. Many of my closest friends – friends that I consider as family, are from diverse communities, within and outside of Canada. I have a few good Parsi friends, and a strong network within the community, mainly because of the relationships my parents built and because I am fairly involved with the ZSO. I often contemplate what being a member of the Zarathushti community means to me. 'Our community' is not just some entity out there; it is made up of us, the people within it. It is based on the relationships and friendships we have with each other. The value and strength of being a member of a community really emerged for me when my father passed away suddenly, about four years ago. Friends and family supported us through those difficult days, offering help with funeral arrangements and prayer services. There were also important structural supports available, such as pre-existing relationships with funeral homes and a shared scattering ground.



**LOOKING FORWARD:** My advice to Zarathushtis new to North America is that when you can, participate in events at community centres. These centres are a space to worship, as well as to develop friendships. If you have children enroll them in religious education classes. It's a good place to develop friendships and foster a sense of community. \*\*

## BESTOOR BEHIZADEH

Westminister, CA., USA

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born and raised in Kerman, Iran, and came to the United States when I was 17 years old. My family and I were deeply involved in living a Zarathushti lifestyle. I attended weekly religious classes from childhood until I left Iran. After coming to America, I was involved in most events that took place at the California Zarathushti Center (CZC), and performed at many of the CZC functions. I also played an active role as the Vice President of the CZC Youth Committee for two years.



**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** For me, the school experience was the biggest cultural shock of all. With the exception of my religious classes, I had never been in a co-ed class before. The school system in Iran was very different and strict. In the United States, when I first went to school, it felt like I was in a movie. The first day, the teacher told the class to make sure to bring a bottle of water to class because it might get a bit hot and we might get dehydrated. In Iran, we would have been kicked out of class and our parents would have been called if we had brought water into the classroom. My high school experience was so different from that in Iran, that even today, I can vividly recall the incidents of the first day I walked into school.

**THEN AND NOW:** The Zarathushti community in the US has always been warm and welcoming towards me and that has not changed. However, I feel that due to language barriers, the Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis tend to remain separated, which I find appalling because within a religious community there should not be any separation.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** It is my hope that in the next 25 years, the Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis will unite and organize functions that involve both groups. I see our community as one that will remain strong with the years to come. FEZANA is already doing a fabulous job of holding the community together, but we need to create as many opportunities as possible for both Iranian Zarathushtis and Parsis to participate together and unite. \*\*

## PHIROOZEH ROMER

Bay Area, California, USA

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I grew up in Karachi, Pakistan. I moved to Vancouver, Canada, with my family when I was 11-years old. I wasn't as involved with the Zarathushti community as I would have liked to be. I longed to live in Mehrabad [a Zarathushti apartment complex] where my grandparents and friends lived, but lived in an apartment building up the road. I longed to go to Mama Parsi Girls' High School like all my friends, but was sent to a convent school. I did, however, spend evenings, weekends and summers at Mehrabad, participated in their nataks and other functions. I attended religious classes at Friday School [weekend religious classes] as a child. I visited the agiari at Navroze and routinely throughout the year.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** Academically, I flourished in Canada in a way I had never done in Karachi. Socially, it was a hard adjustment for me and my parents to negotiate foreign concepts like sleep-away camps and high school dances. It was a complicated thing explaining that I was from Pakistan, then correcting people who heard it as Afghanistan, another 'istan'. After that I had to correct their assumption that I was Muslim, but when I said Parsi, they heard Farsi. When I said I was a Zarathushti, I received blank looks.



**THEN AND NOW:** The numbers have increased, of course, as more people from India and Pakistan come to North America. I don't live in a Parsi hub like Toronto or Houston, but I imagine that being there is almost like being home again with the amount of familiar faces one encounters.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** As the Zarathushti Diaspora has continued to spread far and wide over the last few decades, Parsis have continued to find each other in Canada, America, and Australia. It is my hope we continue to do so and keep our culture alive. \*\*

## FEROZA FITCH

Bethesda, Maryland, USA

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born in Mumbai and lived there for 12 years before going to Nigeria with my parents. When the Biafra war broke out, my parents decided to immigrate to the United States. Dad got a job in Columbus Ohio, so we arrived here in February 1970.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** I finished my high school in Nigeria. In the US, I went to a small music college in Columbus for a year, and then transferred to the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The atmosphere was much more casual here. We arrived in the middle of the anti-war and hippie movements. The shootings at Kent State University happened a few months after our arrival, and the Math building in Madison was bombed not long thereafter; classes were disrupted or cancelled, there were streakers on the streets, and protests at every corner.

**THEN AND NOW:** In 1970, there was very little awareness about India, Iran, or the rest of the world. I was asked stereotypical questions about elephants and cows on the streets (really!) but not much about my religion. I must say that since there were so few of us around, I probably made an effort to "fit in" rather than stand out by being different. In 1970, there was only one other Parsi family in Columbus. I remember my mother combing through the telephone directory searching for familiar sounding names and being elated at discovering a "Dastur." Our families became the best of friends, and that friendship continues to this day. Sometimes, we would drive several hundred miles to be with other Zarathushtis. Today, the North American Zarathushti community is much larger, mostly situated in urban, cosmopolitan areas, and there is a greater awareness and pride in its members. The Washington DC community hosts the Iranian and Parsi Zarathushtis under one roof. Our children grow up together, go to the same functions, and learn a lot about each others' cultures and practices.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** The Zarathushti community in the future will probably be similar to what it is now, though much smaller in numbers. Our community here has always relied on immigrants from India and Iran to sustain it. Will our children and grandchildren carry the torch forward? Try as they might, without a constant influx of immigrants, I am afraid the community will shrink, just as it is doing in India and Iran.



## FARAHAD DASTOOR

Orono, Maine, USA

**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born in 1965 in Ibadan, Nigeria. My parents were living there and all three children were born there. We were one of only a very few Zarathushti families in Nigeria and the only one in Ibadan. So growing up, I was not too aware of religion. We lived on the University of Ibadan campus and were exposed to people from many places (Americans, Japanese, British, Indians, and Africans). We moved from Nigeria to Montreal, Canada in 1973. I was eight-years old at that time.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** Primary school in Canada was very similar to what we had experienced in Nigeria. The teachers were just as dedicated and we were just as focused. My schools in Montreal were also multi-ethnic environments so I never felt out-of-place. I do remember often telling people who asked that I was 'Zoroastrian'. I was never shy about explaining to people what the religion stood for, where it came from, etc. People I meet are usually fascinated to learn about it.

**THEN AND NOW:** I think the Zarathushti community is stronger now than when we first arrived in Montreal. From what I see today, the communities are more resilient. There are more regular functions, and religion classes for children are more the norm. I think that this increased awareness to Zarathushti practices might have been introduced too late for me to fully appreciate. I see the group having matured from being "forced" to associate because they were few in number to now wanting to associate due to common interest. The factions that have appeared are the result of "growing pains" of establishing a common identity.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** What I notice from observing friends and family is an inability to practice our faith without bringing in much of other faiths. Everyone I know celebrates all the Christian holidays as well as all the Zarathushti ones. In my opinion, this confuses many children. They learn later of the separation between the holidays. Being tolerant and accepting of other faiths is laudable, but actually practicing parts of other faiths leads to confusion. Many people then wonder why their children are not more "Zarathushti" or are marrying out of the faith. Just as Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews celebrate their holidays without worrying about those of other faiths, Zarathushtis should do so as well. The Zarathushti community should also decide as a whole whether to accept or not accept the spouse and children



of interfaith marriages. There will always be individuals who go their own way, but the community needs to achieve a standard that the majority recognize. We are not there yet. \*\*

## URMEZ DAVAR

Glastonbury, Connecticut., USA



**COMING TO NORTH AMERICA:** I was born in Karachi, Pakistan. My family and I migrated to the United States on August 14, 1981 when I was seven. In Karachi, my family and I were like typical Parsis there. I was taught the language [Gujarati] and the culture starting from Montessori [preschool]. I also went to religious classes. We used to go to the agiari for prayers during Navroze.

**THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:** My schooling in the United States started from third grade. From what I recollect from my school days in Karachi, and more so observed when we used to go back for vacations, is that that the academics up to 12th grade were at least two to three years in advance for math and science in Karachi as compared to the US. In addition, in Karachi the day-to-day routine was focused on completing homework and studying far more than what we did in the US. In school, whenever I was asked where I was from, I would not stop at, "I was from Pakistan." I would take it a step further and describe our faith. People genuinely took interest

in the uniqueness of our religion.

**THEN AND NOW:** I believe the community has integrated quite well over the years. What I have seen from my parents and others is the balance between East and West that has made certain views more liberal such as the attitude towards interfaith marriages. I think our community in certain places, like Canada, is going to be stable and grow just because of the number of Parsis immigrating there. Toronto, for example, has a population of 4,000 – 5,000 Zarathushtis. The Zarathushti population is in pockets all over the States. As a result, it becomes more arduous to interact with the community.

**LOOKING FORWARD:** We need the youth of the community to take an active part in our organizations. I would encourage FEZANA to publish more articles and sponsor more events to give the youth opportunities to take more ownership. What I have truly valued in my background was that I have both Eastern and Western values. I try to impart that to my kids on a daily basis. That is what makes us unique. \*\*

*Farishta Murzban Dinshaw is a first generation Canadian. She works with a non-profit community agency to raise awareness about problem gambling and family violence amongst ethnolinguistic communities in Southern Ontario. She also teaches in the MA program in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University, Toronto, and is interested in issues related to South Asian Diaspora identity.*



The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta

**Congratulations and Best Wishes  
to FEZANA and the FEZANA Journal  
on your 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!  
May you continue with your excellent work  
for many more years to come!**

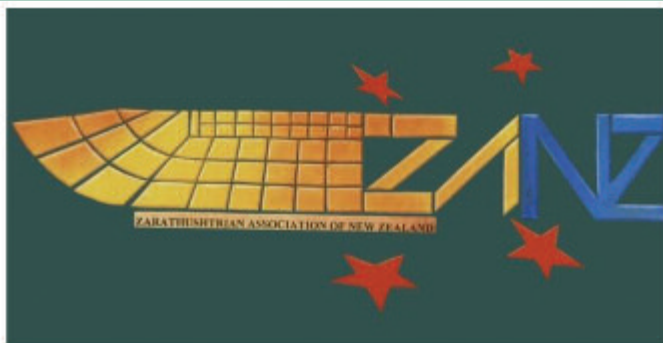


**NORTH AMERICAN MOBED COUNCIL  
COMPLIMENTS  
FEZANA**



**Serving the Zoroastrian Community in  
North America for 25 years**

[www.namcweb.org](http://www.namcweb.org)



The **Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ)**  
and the **Zoroastrian Youth of New Zealand (ZYNZ)**  
(hosts of the 2015 World Zoroastrian Youth Congress)

would like to congratulate FEZANA on the auspicious  
occasion of your Silver Jubilee.



THE PARSI ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIA  
Congratulates FEZANA on its 25th Anniversary



“Zoroastrian House” in Singapore  
83, Desker Road (near Mustafa Shopping Center)  
(open on Sundays from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm)





Happy 25th Anniversary  
FEZANA

May the Zarathushti community in North America  
grow and prosper together in unity and friendship



LET US  
CELEBRATE

## Twenty-five People Who Have Made a Difference.....

To celebrate FEZANA's Silver Anniversary, FEZANA Journal sent out a call to the North American Zarathushti community to nominate people or an event which in their best judgment had made a significant footprint on the fabric of our North American Zarathushti community and made a difference. People could be posthumously recognized as well.

In the last twenty-five years many people have shaped the community, moved it forward, and even transformed it. Several people have brought exceptional credit to the community. Some have been recognized but many have silently and selflessly worked to build and maintain the community at the grassroots level. We salute all.

The nominations had to be written in hundred words or less. We received fifty nominations for individuals and events. These nominations speak to the wealth of talent, integrity, and dedication that we have in our community. A panel of three judges, at arms length from FEZANA, from across this continent, chose the twenty-five nominees of individuals and seven events whose contributions have helped the community grow in different domains - social, cultural, academic and religious and who have brought recognition to the community in North America and worldwide.

This is just the beginning. There are many capable individuals whom we know of in our midst, but whose names were not nominated for reasons of modesty, disinterest or passivity.

As one of the judges eloquently said: *"It filled my heart with joy to see that there are so many worthy Zarathushtis in this great North American continent of ours. I hope present and future generations continue to work for the community just as the older generations have done to ignite the torch. May Ahura Mazda be with us all through challenging and changing times."*

Another judge mentioned *"The twenty-five Zarathushti luminaries featured here are the founding fathers and mothers of the Zarathushti community in North America. Their leadership and community stewardship will be remembered by generations of Zarathushtis in North America"*.

The list is presented in alphabetical order by the last name. We thank you and appreciate the time, thought and effort that you put in this endeavour. We also thank Yasmin Pavri for her editorial assistance.

FEZANA Journal



### **ERVAD JEHAN BAGLI, Ontario**

Ervad Bagli has been instrumental in organizing the Zarathushti community in North America. He was the founding President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (1968-1970). As president of the North American Mobed Council (2002-2008), he initiated the mobedyar program to train laity as auxiliary priests to meet the chronic shortage of priests. An internationally renowned scholar, he has written and lectured extensively about Zarathushti doctrine, raising our profile at community and inter-faith forums. He was the founding editor of North America's first Zarathushti publication, Gavashni (1974-1990) and of the FEZANA Journal (1988-1990). He continues to promote Asho Zarathushtra's universal message.

***Farishta Dinshaw, Ontario***





### **ALAYAR DABESTANI, Washington State**

Alayar Dabestani was born in Iran. His business interests include real estate, renewable bio-diesel companies, and drug addiction treatment clinics. He owns movie theaters in Canada and the US and is a distributor of Indian movies. He was named global businessman of the year in 2002. He served for five terms on the Board of Directors of the ZSBC and is a founding member of the ZSWS in Seattle. He is generous with community causes, has provided financial support to many Congresses, and has also provided tuition to over a thousand Zoroastrian students. He is truly a philanthropic businessman.

***Khosro Mehrfar, California***



### **DOLLY DASTOOR, Quebec**

To say that Dolly Dastoor exceeds the expectations of the Zarthushti community would be an understatement. She serves the Zarthushti community selflessly. As a past president of FEZANA she initiated the first Strategic plan that instituted a blue-print for the community. She was co-chair of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in 2000, received an outstanding Zarthushti Award in 1984, and is currently the Chair of the FEZANA Scholarship Committee and editor of FEZANA Journal. She is active in ZONTA International, a service organization which promotes the status of women worldwide. Dolly makes an impact with her vision, zeal and presence.

***Ed Eduljee, British Columbia***

***Ervad Jal Panthanky, Quebec***

***Jenny Rose, California***



### **ADI DAVAR, Washington D.C.**

Adi Davar arrived in Washinton DC in the 1960s. He became a Director of the World Bank. He was the founding President of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. His study of our religion convinced him that ours is a universal faith. In a presentation at the Montreal Congress in 1981, Adi stated: "the traditions and beliefs ... regarding being born a Zoroastrian and not permitting acceptance into the religion, have little basis in Zoroastrian precepts or scriptures." To me, Adi's study stands out as the starting point in North America of our awareness of the universality of our faith.

***Kersi Shroff, Washington D.C.***



### **HOMI GANDHI, New Jersey**

Homi Gandhi has been instrumental in the increased awareness of the North American Zarthushti community and the tenets of Zoroastrianism in the interfaith community. Additionally, through his involvement with various interfaith organizations, including the Parliament of World Religions, North American Interfaith Network, and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, members of the community now have the opportunity to enhance their spirituality and their identity as followers of the Mazdayasni faith by participating in inter-religious dialogue. As a result, Zarthushtis today play an increasingly important and public role in advancing social justice, religious freedom and world peace.

***Navroz Gandhi, Maryland***



### **ARBAB ROSTAM GUIV (1888- October 7, 1980)**

If there is one person who has made a seminal contribution to the Zarthushti community in North America, it is Arbab Rostam Guiv. A philanthropist from Iran, he came into the life of our community through chance circumstances and through his donations help built the first Darbe Mehrs in USA and Canada followed by 4 others in North America. His great vision and focus helped in a big way to ensure the survival of the Zarthushti community in North America.

***Lovji Cama, New Jersey***



**HOMI MINOCHER HOMJI, Ontario (July 13, 1913 - May 31, 2007)**

Homi Minocher Homji settled in Toronto in 1980, after 15 years in the UN. He wrote 4 books including *"The Pocket Avesta"* and *"Whither Parsis"*. He served as president of ZSO, and was actively involved in the formation of FEZANA. Homi helped to form the curriculum of the 'Religion in Life' badge for the Guides and Scouts of Canada, which is also used for religion education. Homi was a member of the Long Term Planning Committee for many years and was actively involved with the seniors. Homi was an ordained priest and indeed displayed religion in action throughout his life.

*Pulti Mirza, Ontario*



**KAIKHOSROV IRANI, New York.**

Kaikhosrov Irani has the unique distinction of having the K D. Irani Chair of Philosophy established in his honor at The City College of New York through a donation by one of his students. He has received WZO's Award for Service to Zoroastrianism and FEZANA's Lifetime Achievement Award. He has served on the ZAGNY Board, conducted adult education classes at ZAGNY, arranged seminars on Zoroastrianism and the First and Second Gatha Conferences and lectured extensively in the US and abroad on Zoroastrian Philosophy and the Gathas. He has made a tremendous contribution to making Zoroastrianism known to the academic world.

*Mehru Cama, New Jersey*



**DARYOUSH JAHANIAN, Kansas**

Daryoush Jahanian is a founder of the Faravahar Zoroastrian Youth Organization in Tehran, Iran. He served as the first president of the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAKA), is the President of Rostam Guiv Foundation Trust and serves on the board of trustees of the World Zoroastrian Council, Paris, France. He has been a speaker at Gatha conferences and Zoroastrian Congresses. Locally he has spoken on the religion of Zarathushtra in Park University, Leavenworth Military Academy, Interfaith functions and high schools. He has written articles in FEZANA and www.vohuman.org and published a book on *"The Zoroastrian Doctrine and Biblical Connections"*.

*Khosro Mehrfar, California*



**DINSHAW FRAMROZE JOSHI , Maryland, (Nov 5, 1921- Nov 10, 2003)**

When Dinshaw F. Joshi passed away the Zarathushti community lost a great leader. The Awards Committee which carries his imprimatur and was his vision, became the hallmark of his work for FEZANA and an enduring legacy of transparency, fairness, organization, and integrity. Dinshaw was a tireless proponent of FEZANA and its most trusted counselor. Serving the community was part of his Zarathushti creed. He lived simply by the principles of his faith and despite a busy professional career, helped anyone who asked. He devoted himself to the betterment of Zarathushtis and the community is richer today because of his service.

*Shehernaz Joshi Verahrami, Maryland*



**KHORSHED JUNGALWALA , Massachusetts (Jan 11, 1940 – May 12, 2007)**

As a teacher, mother, entrepreneur, activist, and leader Khorshed exemplified Zarathushti ideals and positively impacted many lives. A strong advocate of religious tolerance and acceptance of doctrinal differences, Khorshed worked hard to promote harmony while respecting the diversity of beliefs and cultures within the community. Her work was grounded on a foundation of equality, integrity and the supreme laws of Asha. Khorshed was honored numerous times for her extraordinary service to our North American and Global Zarathushti community including receiving the FEZANA 2007 Outstanding Zarathushti Award. She was truly an embodiment of *GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS, and GOOD DEEDS.*

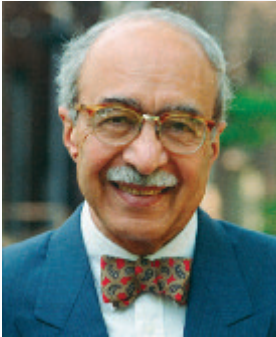
*Meher Amalsad, California*



**ERVAD BOMANSHAW KOTWAL, Ontario**

Ervad Ervad Bomanshaw Kotwal, our longest serving priest, recently retired after 45 years of service to our community in Ontario. Bomanshaw and his wife Silloo started Religion Classes that continue to this day. He initiated our tradition of observing five Gatha days in Ontario. After 29 years it is still the most well attended activity. Bomanshaw's objective was to preserve our Rituals, Prayers and Traditions. He brought the community together through observances of Gambars, Parabs, Zarthost-no-diso, and Dastoor Kukadaru Baj. He has performed hundreds of Navjotes, Weddings, Jashans, and Funeral Services not only in Ontario but all over North America.

Putli Mirza, Ontario



**FARHANG MEHR, Massachusetts**

Farhang Mehr, the ex-Deputy Prime Minister of Iran, stood up for Iranian Zarathushtis at the highest diplomatic levels. At an opportune meeting, he raised the question of rights of the Zarathushtis, left in Iran, with then President Khatami. Mehr is a scholar of the religion of Zarathushtra and has authored several books. He is highly respected by Zarathushtis around the world for his forthright demeanour and his knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. He is regularly asked to speak at Zoroastrian events. Mehr was the motivational force behind the formation of WZO and continues to inspire us.

Darayus S Motivala, UK

Khosro Mehrfar, California



**KHOSRO E. MEHRFAR, California**

Khosro is a trustee of the Guiv Foundation and editor of Peyk-e-Mehr, a Persian periodical that reaches over 147 cities world-wide. He co-founded the Vohuman web site which provides credible information about our religion and is referenced by BBC, VOA, and various universities. He is a co-founder of a non-profit organization to help needy Zarathushti students in Iran. Khosro was co-organizer of UNESCO sponsored 3000th anniversary celebrations of Zarathushti culture. He sponsors the Annual Nowruz Persian Parade in LA. His musical composition of a poem by the late Pour-e-Davood, has become an opening song in Iranian gatherings in North America.

*Dolly Dastoor, Quebec*



**FIRDOSH DARA MEHTA, Alberta**

Firdosh Mehta is a natural organizer, manager, motivator, and leader. He participated in the co-founding of the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta and The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. He served on the Fund raising Committee for the North Texas Community Center and supported the implementation of its Prayer Hall. He has played a leading role in inter-faith and multi-cultural organizations including the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation for World Peace, the Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. His charitable efforts won him the International NRI Visionary Award by the VISION FOUNDATION, Ahmadabad, India, November 2011.

*Neelam Austin, Alberta*



**ERACH MUNSHI, New York**

Erach Munshi is a founding member of ZAGNY and its first President, guiding it through its formative years. He is also one of the initial trustees of the Dar-e- Mehr in New York. Working with Dr. Rostam Sarfeh and Arbab Rostom Guiv, Erach was instrumental in creating the first Dar-e Mehr in North America. Twenty five years ago, he started a fund which collects about \$35,000 each year, for the support of fire temples and mobeds in Udvada, Navsari and Surat.

*Lovji Cama, New Jersey*

THANK YOU TO ALL THE ASHAVANS FOR MOVING THE NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY FORWARD



**FRAMROZE K. PATEL, New Jersey**

Framroze is a founding member of ZAGNY, its first treasurer and third President. He was the President of FEZANA, when FEZANA co-hosted the first World Zoroastrian Congress in North America. He freely donates his tax expertise and time to benefit a number of Zarathushti institutions including ZAGNY and FEZANA. He is one of the founders of the *Good Life Emblem and Good Life Book* and was one of the initial trustees of the New York Dar-e-Mehr.

*Lovji Cama, New Jersey*



**JAMSHED KHURSHEDJI PAVRI, British Columbia (March 20, 1917 - October 14, 1989)**

Jamshed Khurshedji Pavri is a legend among British Columbia Zarathushtis. Born in Bombay, Jamshed, his soul mate and partner, Roda (nee Framroze) and son Yezdi, came to Vancouver in 1958. He founded The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia. In his quiet, unassuming way, he embraced many cultures, befriended and provided hospitality to newcomers, researched and wrote books. He was a historian and community builder. Jamshed was clear about his mission in life and accomplished it. The FEZANA J.K.Pavri Humanitarian Award given at N A Zoroastrian Congresses is named in his honour. He passed away peacefully in Vancouver. We miss you, Jamshed.

*Bella Tata, British Columbia*



**ROHINTON RIVETNA, Illinois**

Rohinton has the rare gift of being both a visionary and a leader. His passion is building: Dar-e-Mehrs, communities, relationships. His dedication and commitment have been an inspiration to all North American Zarathushtis. He is a founding President of FEZANA and the founding President of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. He facilitated the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism. He ensured that Zarathushtis were represented at the World Parliament of Religions. He is currently spearheading the establishment of a lasting Zarathushti infrastructure for North America. We are blessed to have someone with his passion in our Community.

*Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, Illinois*



**ROSHAN RIVETNA, Illinois**

As Editor-in-Chief of FEZANA Journal from 1996 to 2005, Roshan held a mirror before us allowing us to see who we have been, who we are, and who we may become in the future. She made us the bearers of a richly woven legacy. Her work required her to find a diplomatic balance between broaching important subject matter and addressing the concerns of community members who objected to certain articles or lamented the inclusion or exclusion of particular people. Roshan sailed through these choppy waters of dissent with grace and aplomb. Roshan has also produced two books on Zoroastrianism.

*Dinaz Rogers, Oregon*



**BEHERUZ N. SETHNA, Georgia**

Beheruz N. Sethna is in his 18th year as Professor and President at the University of West Georgia. He is the first known person from India ever to become President of a U.S. University. He has twice served as Interim Executive/Senior Vice Chancellor for the University System of Georgia. In 2007, he received the FEZANA Outstanding Professional Award.

*Farrokh Mistree, Oklahoma*



**FARANGIS SHAHROKH, California (May 11, 1916 - February 11, 2010)**

Farangis Shahrokh, the Founder of California Zoroastrian Center, was one of those rare iconic individuals who altered the lives of not just people but whole communities. With the kindness of a mother and the firmness of a leader, she was a lady with an extraordinary vision. It is said that “the purpose of life is to live a life of purpose”. She was a leader with a purpose and a role model who inspired countless women to thrive in various facets of life. Her motto was “Organize to Mobilize” and her mission was to strengthen the fiber of our community.

*Meher Amalsad, California*

**THE UNSUNG VOLUNTEERS, North America**

As we salute FEZANA on its Silver Anniversary, selecting 25 outstanding Zarathushtis, let us not forget those dedicated hard working volunteers without whose involvement and support no function, event or organization could claim success. These are volunteers who sacrifice their time, energy and resources in the service of the Community, their Association or Anjumans. Their love and commitment for Community Welfare & Spiritual Life seems to be planted by unknown forces, nourished by complex reasons that elude understandings. Let us applaud their intense zeal and commitment to life’s noble values and the very important function they play in our society.



*Rusi Sorabji, California*

**SAM VESUNA, Ontario**

Sam Vesuna was elected President of ZSO in 2000 and was re-elected for several subsequent terms. Sam has worked tirelessly for the betterment of the community in Ontario and North America through ZSO and FEZANA. Sam is the ZSO representative on Toronto Area Interfaith Committee as well as Mosaic. He has helped to increase awareness of Zoroastrianism amongst other communities. In May 1986 he reviewed the first draft of the FEZANA constitution and facilitated registration of FEZANA. Sam’s generosity has touched many. He has raised money to help the needy in Canada, India, Iran, Pakistan and many other places overseas.



*Putli Mirza, Ontario*

**MOBED MEHRABAN ZARTOSHTY, CALIFORNIA AND MOBED FARIDOOON ZARDOSHTY, MARCH 18, 1902- NOVEMBER 17, 2000) ARIZONA. (photo right)**

The philanthropy of the Late Mobed Faridooon and Mobed Mehraban is legendary. They have donated to the Atash Behram in Yazd, to schools and institutions in Iran, to the B D Petit Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai and to the Bombay Parsee Panchayat. In North America they have given generously towards the establishment of Dar e Mehra and to several other causes. They have endowed a Chair in Zoroastrian Studies at the School for Oriental & African Studies in London and given us the Zoroastrian Centre for Europe in the UK. They are the greatest Zoroastrian philanthropists of our times.



*Dorab Mistry, England*

*Bella Tata, British Columbia*

CONGRATULATIONS FEZANA AND THANK YOU for all that you do for our religion and Zarathushtis around the world. We are grateful for the support that our ZAKOI community has received from you over the years.

With our best wishes for your Silver Jubilee, Bakhtavar & Fred Desai

# Landmark Events in North America.....

As FEZANA developed over the years, it has become active in many facets of life in North America. Here are some major milestones in its twenty-five year history.

## CREATION OF A FEDERATION

Twenty five years ago, when Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani presented the ZAGNY Board with a proposal to be a signatory in the creation of FEZANA, my first thought as ZAGNY Treasurer was the cost. However, when I realized that FEZANA would be based on the principles of the US federal government by the founding fathers, I did not need to be convinced further. The ZAGNY Board voted unanimously to authorize Prof. Irani to participate in the creation of the Federation. FEZANA is now the coordinating body for twenty-six associations in North America and provides opportunities to create awareness about the community.

*Homi Gandhi, New Jersey.*

## FEZANA PARTICIPATES IN INTERFAITH EVENTS

As the Zarathushti community has matured in North America FEZANA has participated in Interfaith activities on



a large scale. Since 1993, when FEZANA took an active role in the second Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, FEZANA has been involved in all subsequent Parliaments. The invitation to represent Zarathushtis at the Museum of World's Religions emanated from our effective presence at the Melbourne Parliament in 2009. FEZANA's active participation in North American Interfaith Network and Religions for Peace has led to the recognition and involvement of the Zarathushti faith at many local, national,

continental and international interfaith events. (Zarathushti delegation attending an Interfaith prayer at UN Church Assembly Hall, September 2006), (photo: Zarathushti delegation).

*Homi Gandhi, New Jersey*

## FEZANA AND THE ARTS

FEZANA's has succeeded in promoting Zarathushti culture and in educating people on the profound impact our doctrines have played in the development of the Abrahamic religions. However, FEZANA has also led the way in encouraging our cultural well-being. The two most outstanding initiatives have been the Performing and Creative Arts Scholarships and the Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra. (ZSO). Although I may have a vested interest, it is well acknowledged in most cultures that the arts play a profound role in perpetuating and nourishing our civilization. The annual scholarships and the ZSO events are huge stepping stones towards a dignified future. Well-done! (photo Meher Pavri performing with the



Zarathushti orchestra, conductor Farobag Cooper, at the Toronto Congress 2007),

*Parizad Irani*

## FEZANA ARRIVES AT THE UN

FEZANA was registered as a faith-based NGO with the UN in 1997 and the FEZANA UN-NGO Team walked into the UN General Assembly for the first time in 2002. Many NGOs were surprised to learn that Zoroastrianism was a living faith. Since then the team has been invited to make presentations at many CSW (Commission on the



Status of Women) and UN-NGO conferences. The team created interest in many Zarathushti organizations around the world, culminating in partnering with the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, when FEZANA was invited to organize a workshop at the Melbourne 2010 NGO-DPI conference. FEZANA had arrived at the UN. Photo of a Zarathushti participant standing at the Opening ceremony of Melbourne UN Conference, 2010. (photo United Nations DPI/NGO website).

*Homi Gandhi, New Jersey*

## THE FEZANA OFFICE OPENS

Plans for the FEZANA Office were approved to mark FEZANA's 20th Anniversary in 2007. The office was inaugurated on August 31, 2008. This event marks a significant footprint of Zarathushti infrastructure in North America. It is a gift from the founding generation to our next generation, which is getting ready to guide our future.

Rustom Kevala, Florida



The Inauguration



The Next Generation

## FIRST ANNUAL DAY OF SERVICE

As modern day society expands, and the Zoroastrian community begins to integrate into this global world, it has become far more difficult to unite as a community, and spread good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. However, members of Zoroastrians Stepping Forward have taken the initiative, and seek to promote righteousness by helping those in need. By organizing worldwide service projects such as shoe drives, this group represents the rudiments of what it is to be a Zoroastrian. "I am in the world to change the world"--Kathe Kollwitz

Behrose B. Taraporewalla, California



## FELICITATIONS

Following on my 10th and 20th FEZANA milestones felicitations this one is very special. For 25 years Ahura Mazda has bestowed on our community a bond of togetherness with a purpose, determination and zeal that has led to an incredible advancement towards a goal. Gandhiji's advice, "Have purpose..... Means will follow" seems apt. Over time people who live with a purpose become fuller, more expansive, and more able to evolve and contribute selflessly to human values.

Sam Kerr, Sydney, Australia



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# Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Bring Me A Match!!

When I enter my name in Google these days, it is rather amusing to note that the top two results refer to my “matchmaker” role! Maybe Google did -- by chance or by design -- get my priorities right, for there is, truly, no greater gratification than to get a wedding invitation from the ‘nice’ Zarathushti boy and girl or the older gentleman and lady that you helped introduce to each other.

Perhaps it was the quaint, old-fashioned nature of this service that attracted the New York Times to do the story about the “Zoroastrian Matchmaker” in their Valentine’s Day issue. Their camera-man, as he zoomed in on the Matrimonial page, remarked with surprise about the emphasis on “higher education, good job, family values...” and not on “good looks, youth and beauty...”!

Of course, the camera-man would not

understand the serious import of this effort, driven by the imperative to perpetuate the faith, and the awesome responsibility of keeping the community connected when it is spread so thin across the continent. The Matrimonial column has appeared regularly in FEZANA Journal since 1991, with anywhere from 2 to over 20 entries in each issue, plus the many more who choose to remain anonymous in my Matrimonials Folder (I mean the series of 3-inch thick blue folders on my desk). The queries come from young and old, and in recent years, from countries other than USA and Canada. In fact on a recent visit to Mumbai, I was surprised to see the number of young men and women, and their parents who approached this kajwali.

A year after the column was introduced, the Fall 1992 issue happily announced: “First Marriage. FEZANA Journal is delighted to announce the first marriage (of M92-4 and M91-7) through this column, and looks forward to many more happy matches to come!” While the number of matches have not been as large as one would like (maybe about 50 over the 20-plus years), it feels good to know that in this fast world of Google and facebook, this lo-tech mode of match-making continues to play a small part in perpetuating this ancient faith and strengthening the community.

Roshan Rivetna aka Kajwali Roshan

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# NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

## 2009-2011

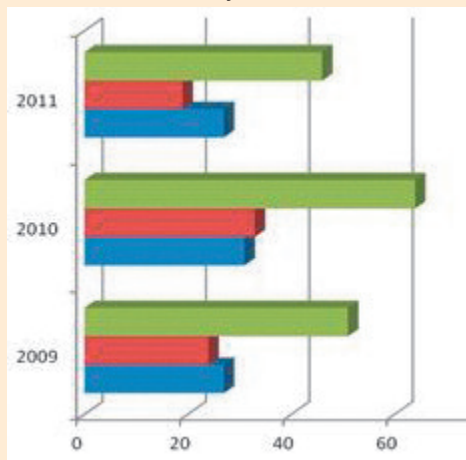
MAHRUKH MOTAFRAM

The information received and registered for the Journal is obtained quarterly through various association newsletters, e-mail and/or mail. It has to be noted that there may be some inaccuracies in the data, given that all the qualifying events may or may not be recorded in newsletters, and the information from families in areas not connected to associations may not have been communicated to the Journal staff. It is to be emphasized that to keep proper demographic statistics, associations and individuals should send information to the milestone editor maharukhm83@gmail.com

### ANALYSIS

#### BIRTHS

Compared to 2009 and 2011, 2010 was a record year for births in



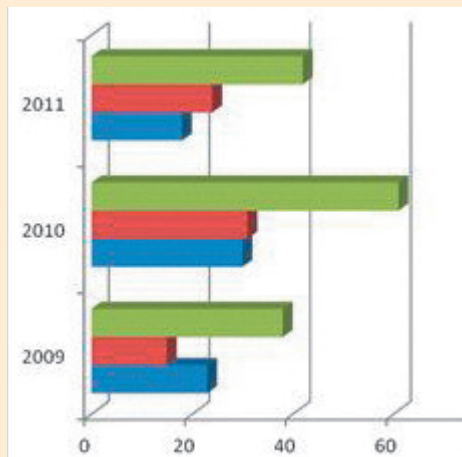
BIRTHS			
YEAR	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL
2009	27	24	51
2010	31	33	64
2011	27	19	46

North America, with almost an equal number of boys and girls being born in the North American Zarathushti community. However in 2011 there was a 28% decrease in births compared to 2010 and 9% decrease compared to 2009.

#### NAVJOTES

The total number of navjotes recorded in 2011 decreased by 31% compared to 2010. But was slightly

higher (11%) than recorded in 2009. It looks like 2010 was a record year for navjotes as well with almost equal

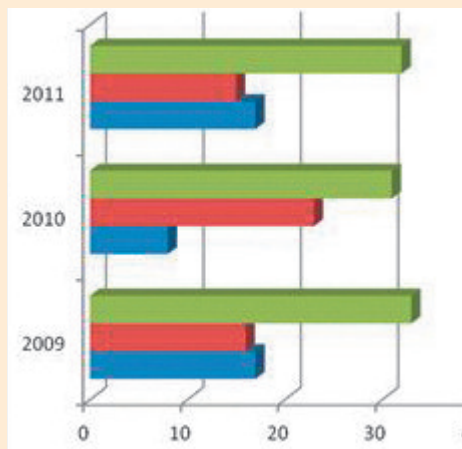


NAVJOTES			
YEAR	BOY	GIRL	TOTAL
2009	23	15	38
2010	30	31	61
2011	18	24	42

number of girls and boys initiated into the Zarathushti faith.

#### MARRIAGES

The total number marriages recorded were more or less steady in numbers over the past 3 years. Between 2009 and 2011, a decrease



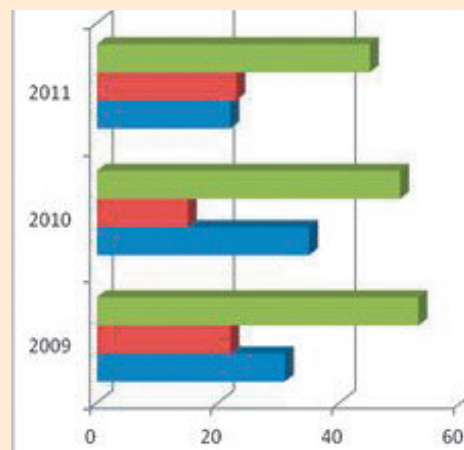
of 3% in number of marriages were recorded, with almost an equal split between marriages within the Zarathushti faith versus inter-faith. The total number of marriages recorded in 2010 was more or less the same in

MARRIAGES			
YEAR	INTRAMARRIAGES	INTERMARRIAGES	TOTAL
2009	17	16	33
2010	8	23	31
2011	17	15	32

2011 with a slight 3% increase in 2011. It is obvious from the data that the number of inter-faith marriages in 2010 was definitely on the rise.

#### DEATHS

The total number of deaths recorded in North America over the past three years 2009-2011, has been on the decline. It must be noted that only those deaths occurring within the North American continent are included in this data. There have been several deaths of family members (especially parents) that have occurred outside the continent that have been excluded from this data. In 2011 there was a 10% decrease in death from 2010 and 15% decrease from 2009.



DEATHS (NA)			
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2009	31	22	53
2010	35	15	50
2011	22	23	45

Legend:  
■ BIRTHS TOTAL  
■ BIRTHS GIRL  
■ BIRTHS BOY

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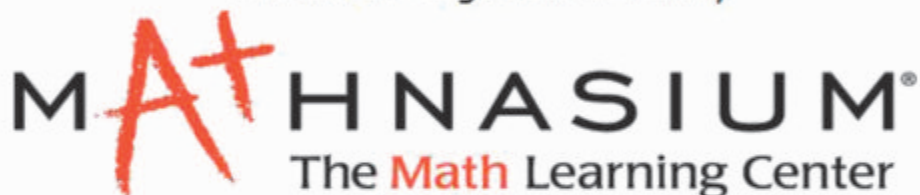
THE PARDIWALA FAMILY

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Best Regards,

Dr. Kobad Bugwadia & Family



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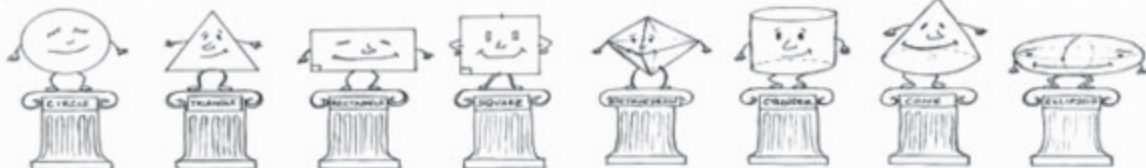
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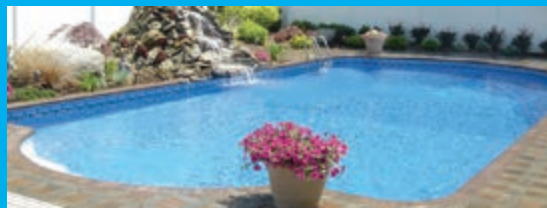
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ZAGNY MEMBERS AT THE "JAMVA CHALOJI" GALA, NOVEMBER 12, 2011

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