

# JOURNAL

Fravadin – Ardibehesht – Khordad 1382 AY (Fasli) • Avan – Adar – Dae 1382 AY (Shenshai) • Adar – Dae – Behman 1382 AY (Kadimi)

**NOROOZ PIROOZ BAD NOROOZ MUBARAK**



## Scouting and Guiding: The Zarathushti Connection

**A Century of Excellence in  
Scouting: The Sethna's 18th  
West Bombay**

### Also Inside:



**140 Years Old:  
Meherjirana Library**



**WZCC Excels in  
Singapore**



**Avesta Performers:  
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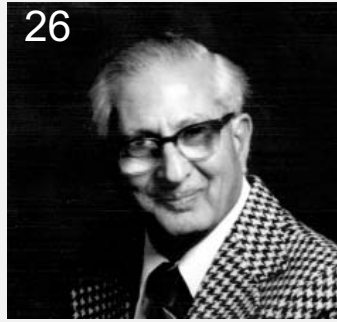
**At the United Nations  
General Assembly**



# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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**Editor in Chief:** Dolly Dastoor, editor@fezana.org

**Technical Assistant:** Coomi Gazdar

**Assistant to Editor:** Dinyar Patel

**Consultant Editor:** Lylah M. Alphonse, lmalphonse@gmail.com

**Language Editor:** Doug Lange

**Graphic & Layout:** Shahrokh Khanizadeh, www.khanizadeh.info

**Cover design:** Feroza Fitch, ferozafitch@lexicongraphics.com

**Publications Chair:** Behram Pastakia

**Columnists:** H. Shroff: dunbarhoshang@gmail.com; Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi: rabadis@hotmail.com; Teenaz Javat: teenazjavat@hotmail.com  
Behram Panthaki: behrampanthaki@hotmail.com; Behram Pastakia: bpastakia@aol.com; Mahrukh Motafram: maharukhm83@gmail.com

**Copy editors:** V Canteenwalla, Y Pavri

**Subscription Managers:** Arnavaz Sethna: asethna@yahoo.com; Kershaw Khumbatta: journalsubscription@yahoo.com

Fravadin – Ardibehesht – Khordad 1382 AY (Fasli)  
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**Special Edition Summer 2013**

**Cyrus Cylinder**

**Guest editor**

**Dolly Dastoor & Aban Rustomji**

**Fall 2013**

**The Zarathushti World**

**A 2012 Demographic Picture**

**Guest Editor Roshan Rivetna**

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

# Editorial...

## “SPRING IS THE TIME FOR PLANS AND PROJECTS” Leo Tolstoy

Spring is a happy season to work in, with the snow melting, trees budding, flowers blossoming, the earth rejuvenating. But there is another reason why I like this season. I get to prepare for the Spring issue of the Journal which is always full of promise for the future. It carries the list of all the scholarship winners, their achievements, their hopes, their dreams and their aspirations for the future. It carries information on the young adults who excel not only in their academic work, but also in their non-academic work, in their careers and in their devotion to the community. The Avesta performers of ZAMWI are a fine example of showcasing their talents to promote the community (pg100).

While compiling the list of scholarship winners of FEZANA, of the Chothia Foundation, the Vakhshoori Foundation, the Legacy Scholarships of Houston, the ZSBC scholarship, the good life emblem ZAGNY scholarship, I am filled with pride as to the varied and diverse fields our students are branching into with many working for their doctorates. It augers well for the community that the academic status is rising, The pool of young professionals is growing which we hope will serve the community in the immediate future. We need to develop a data base of different disciplines to facilitate professional interaction.

Two young adults, Dinsha Mistree and Rosheen Kabraji are concerned enough about nurturing community identity that they have developed the **Return to Roots** program, which behooves our support (pg 8). Spring reaffirms my confidence in the young adults as beacons for the future of the Zarathushti community on this continent.

The cover story of this issue is the Scout movement and Zarathushti values, very ably guest edited by Arzan Sam Wadia, of New York, himself a Rover, and an architect by profession. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that four of our FEZANA presidents were in the scouting movement and three have written articles (Framroze Patel, Bomi Patel and Katayun Kapadia). The cover story traces the scouting movement since its beginning in India and Pakistan, then carried over to USA and Canada. The tie to the movement is so strong that the Rovers and Troop leaders formed their own troops on this continent to carry on the tradition of “Be Prepared”

You may recognise some of your friends and neighbours in the almost antique photographs, which people dug out of their basements for the cover story. So please excuse the quality of reproduction. But from all the articles, the feeling of service and giving back to the community is



palpable and infectious. As one of the authors wrote, that “*because of all the self reliance and be prepared training he received as a scout, he was better able to adjust as a new immigrant.*”

The International conference “Celebrating a Treasure, 140 years of the MeherjiRana Library ” was a resounding success. Read the account of Ervad Soli Dastur who attended all 5 days (pg 63). It was exciting to read so many new names of international academicians interested in the study of our religion.

2013 will be an exciting year for Zarathushti presence on this continent, and in the diaspora with so many exhibitions planned to showcase our heritage and culture, starting March 9th with the exhibit of the Cyrus Cylinder and culminating in the exhibitions at the Prince of Wales Museum and the National Art Gallery in Mumbai at the time of the World Congress 2013.

I wish each and every one of you Nowrooz Piroozi Bad, wherever you may be in the diaspora.

# Editorial...

## A Message from FEZANA President

### **Dear Zarathushtis**

Navroze Mubarak & Nourouz Pirouz from the FEZANA Family to Your Family!

The beauty, meaning and symbolism of Navroze or Nourouz can best be experienced by sharing in our traditions and understanding the depth and breadth of Navroze/Nourouz as more than just a religious holiday, but a celebration of a New Day, and a resolve to work for a brighter year ahead.

One of the most iconic objects in human history – the Cyrus Cylinder, which is on permanent exhibit in the British Museum – is touring the United States this year. It will be the first time the Cylinder, a replica of which is enshrined at the United Nations as the first charter of human rights, will be on display in the U.S. It will be on exhibit, along with several other significant objects of Persian antiquity, including one depicting a Zarathushti priest, at five major museums across the U.S. beginning in spring this year.

We at FEZANA are very excited about the tour, which we see not only as a cultural milestone but also as an opportunity to celebrate our ancient and remarkable Zarathushti heritage. We encourage our fellow Zarathushtis across North America to visit the museums that will host the Cylinder and its accompanying cast; to participate in discussions and other events linked to the tour; to bring it to the attention of local news media; to e-mail friends about it; to blog about it; to inform and enlighten our fellow North Americans about a history that lies at the roots of human civilization but is not well-known here, and to link its relevance to current world events

The Cylinder will be displayed on the East Coast at the Smithsonian in Washington and the Metropolitan Museum in New York; and on the West Coast at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and the Getty Villa in Los Angeles. It will also make an appearance in Texas at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts. For dates & locations refer to the monthly FEZANA Bulletin on [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).

In anticipation of this exciting event FEZANA's coordinating team led by Homi Gandhi, Vice President, FEZANA and local representatives encourage FEZANA association members to offer programs, tours, resources, and materials that would teach and engage adults, children, and educators and neighbors about the modern relevance of both Cyrus and the Cyrus cylinder. We are currently working on a list of resource materials (books, websites, and images), and it will soon be shared with member associations. In addition, the FEZANA Journal is planning a special edition to commemorate Cyrus Cylinder exhibit. Look for this special issue this summer. For those of you who are attending the FEZANA AGM in May you may want to plan a trip to Houston to catch the exhibit that starts May 3.

At present, the second ten-year Strategic Plan (2011-2021) is being worked upon by various FEZANA committees. The second ten year plan is a continuation of the first ten year plan, written in 1997. The plan consists of 5 major goals with a given set of action items under each goal to be implemented in the next decade by identified stakeholders.

### **GOALS**

1. Increase awareness of FEZANA domestically
2. Foster HAMA ZORI (harmony) by building strong relationships between various Zarathushti entities/groups
3. Advance religious education, cultural awareness, and interfaith dialogue
4. Ensure economic stability through fund raising and prudent investments
5. Showcase FEZANA successes around the world

A spreadsheet was created for each of the FEZANA committees by the Strategic Planning (SP) team to assist committee chairs to complete their own individual plan for the next ten years. The plan needs to be flexible enough to accommodate changes over the ten years.

The purpose of this entire plan is to



encourage team work, to have committees interact with one another and work together along with the Executive to reach the goal. The main SP document has the member associations and corresponding members engaged as well as the complimentary organizations like NAMC, WZCC, and others.

On Friday, May 3 a special session for the FEZANA Strategic Plan is scheduled for discussion. At that time, the member associations will be informed of the developments, thereby moving forward to approve the plan at the AGM. Looking ahead, the Executive with the help of the SP team and interested individuals will help implement and monitor the progress of the plan.

I request that all of us continue to follow these 5-STAR Guiding Principles for FEZANA: Teamwork, Respect Diversity, Innovation, Empowerment & an Optimistic 'Can Do Attitude' (refer to Fall 2012 Journal for details). Let us continue to work individually and collectively for a unified, healthier Zarathushti community in North America. The FEZANA Executive looks forward to continue working with Member Associations, Corresponding Members and Committee Chairs collectively in harmony and with an optimistic can-do attitude and to support FEZANA's goals & activities in 2013.

Thanks & regards

**Katayun Kapadia**

**FEZANA President**



# Editorial...



## NORTH AMERICAN ZARATHUSHTI SCHOLARSHIPS

This spring issue of the Fezana Journal, as in past years, highlights achievements of Zarathushti youth through scholarships that acknowledge the accomplishments of our up-and-coming leaders. The recipients are not only beneficiaries from the FEZANA scholarships funds but from individual member associations and small groups. The hope is that alumni of this largesse from community coffers will coalesce and perpetuate this legacy for future generations.

Our hope also is that by putting a spotlight on academic scholarships, elected representatives of every member association of FEZANA will find it within their hearts to start a scholarship for Zarathushtis on their own turf. Dispensation to worthy individuals could be local as is the case in Houston, New York and British Columbia or could encompass the entire North American Zarathushti demographic, modeled along the lines of the Fali Chothia scholarship trusts, and the Vakhshoori Foundation. Experienced hands are available to guide those who wish to embark on this satisfying adventure. With wealth created by the first generation of

Zarathushti immigrants to underwrite such programs through endowments, we can aspire to a time when twenty five Zarathushti associations in North America give out ten scholarships each to deserving students every year. It would be an important milestone in securing our future with a well educated, knowledgeable base of young professionals and entrepreneurs.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of FEZANA celebrated at the North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) in 2012 brought forth apparently conflicting visions of where academic scholarships on this continent should be headed and we need to address these issues: two in particular.

First, whether all scholarships should have a component of assessing financial needs before a selection is made from the competing applicants, as was mentioned during the 25th FEZANA Annual General Body Meeting on 3 August 2012. Or should we embrace the vision of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata that the best and most promising young men and women, irrespective of the financial wherewithal of their families and friends be recognized through monetary support to study and advance themselves? I would humbly submit that the latter vision not be forsaken in favor of the former.

Second, whether scholarship recipients should be required to give

back to the community coffers the financial aid they received during their days in college. In other words, to make scholarship awards a transactional process. The outpouring of gratitude by Erv Parvez Patel, for the institution and individuals who had nurtured him with financial and educational support, when the honor shawl was bestowed upon him for having given a life time of service to the community, at the 16th NAZC made it amply apparent that the transactional approach is short sighted .

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and a healthy mix of multiple approaches will be our best bet. While transparency in the selection process is essential in running a well reputed scholarship program, ultimately it will be up to the donors to define the way scholarships are designed and administered. The purpose of writing this piece is for them to think through the long term ramifications of their decisions so that we get the maximum bang from the donated buck.

***“What advances a community is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members, but to lift up the best and most gifted, so as to make them of greatest service to the community.”***

**Jamshetji N. Tata**

***Behram Pastakia is Chair of the Publications Committee of FEZANA***



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## FUND\$ AND FINANCE REPORT

In his latest book, "Risky is the New Safe – the Rules Have Changed", motivational speaker and prosperity guru Randy Gage says that when you want to contribute to charity, three conditions should be met:

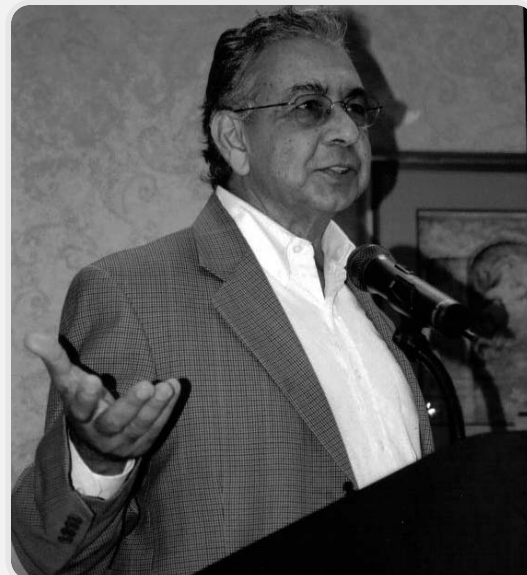
1. The person or organization is worthy of your support.
2. You can afford to do it, and
3. It brings happiness to do it.

According to him, you are giving to charity because it makes you happy! Your highest moral purpose must be your own success and happiness.

Mother Teresa said: "To be able to give, you must have." It simply means that you must be well adjusted and sensible enough to meet your own needs first. Then, and only then, giving away some of your wealth and belongings to charity will add rather than subtract from your happiness. One of the hallmarks of a Zarathushti is charity. This is something that does bring happiness.

In the last quarter of 2012, FEZANA received \$19,086 in donations to the Welfare & Critical Assistance Fund. This was significantly higher than donations to this fund received during all previous years. The difference was that in 2012, FEZANA received \$7,000 for helping victims of Hurricane Sandy and over \$4,500 for helping poor Zarathushti farmers in Gujarat. These were critical needs and North American Zarathushtis responded generously. Thank you.

FEZANA is now preparing its Strategic Plan for the next 10 years. The Funds and Finance committee will be looking into the financial aspects of this plan. You will be hearing more about this in the coming months.



**Rustom Kevala Ph.D    Co-chair, Funds & Finance**

<b>FEZANA DONATIONS RECEIVED - JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012</b>	
<b>FEZANA WELFARE &amp; CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND</b>	<b>43,897</b>
<b>25TH ANNIVERSARY</b>	<b>17,052</b>
<b>BANOUBAI &amp; MANEKSHAW KAPADIA SCHOLARSHIP</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>11,995</b>
<b>ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND</b>	<b>6,363</b>
<b>ZOROASTRIAN STUDIES PROGRAM-STANFORD UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>4,500</b>
<b>25TH ANNIVERSARY INFRA STRUCTURE ENDOWMENT FUND</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>U.N NGO</b>	<b>1,716</b>
<b>CREATIVE &amp; PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>NAVAR SPONSORSHIP</b>	<b>501</b>
<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>FEZANA JOURNAL FUND</b>	<b>497</b>
<b>PRAYER BOOK FOR JAMSHEDI NAVROZ</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>HERITAGE PRESERVATION</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>PHEROZE DORABJI TAMBOLI WELFARE FUND</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>KHORSHED JUNGALWALA FUND</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>\$105,697</b>



# FEZANA UPDATE

## FEZANA 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN DALLAS, MAY 3-5, 2013

FEZANA is pleased to announce that the 2013 FEZANA Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in Grapevine, Texas, hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT).

The Zoroastrian Center of North Texas celebrates its 2nd Anniversary that same weekend.

Details and agenda will be circulated in the coming weeks.

***Prior to the AGM, on Friday evening discussions will be held on The Strategic Plan 2011-2021 and the Infrastructure Development Proposal.***

**Do plan a side trip to Houston to visit the Cyrus Cylinder Exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston May 3, 2013 – June 14, 2013.**

**AGM Dates:** May 3-5, 2013

**AGM Location:** Hyatt Place Dallas/Grapevine  
2220 Grapevine Mills Circle  
Grapevine TX 76051  
(972) 691-1199

<http://dallasdfwnorth.place.hyatt.com/groupbooking/dfwzdfagm2013>

To ensure the special group rate (\$109+taxes per night) at the hotel, please book before April 18, 2013.

***For more information, contact Sherazade Mehta  
(sherazadem@yahoo.com) or Zenobia Damania (admin@fezana.org)***

## THIRD GLOBAL WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD Friday, 11th January 2013 at 10 AM IN MUMBAI.

The 3rd meeting of the GLOBAL WORKING GROUP (GWG) hosted by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of India, took place on January 11th 2013 at the offices of Della Tecnica, courtesy of BPP Trustee Jimmy Mistry. All the trustees of the Federation were present with Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna and Bomi Patel representing FEZANA, Malcolm Deboo, Dorab Mistry and Rusi Dalal representing ZTFE of UK, Rusi and Shirin Ghadiali of Singapore representing South East Asia, Meher Bhesania representing Middle East, Pervez Dubash of Australia. At this one day meeting several topics were discussed

**MOBED UPLIFTMENT PROGRAM** Chair Dinshaw Mehta gave an update on the Mobeled Amelioration Scheme. He highlighted a two pronged approach, which was a change from the earlier proposed scheme. BPP Trust would spearhead the Programme of the Minimum Living Wage for full time practising priests and retired priests as well as priority in Housing Programme through a Sub-Committee of the High Priests and Scholar Priests. A

minimum earning of . Rs 25000/ p.m. was the benchmark and the difference was to be reimbursed by BPP. Rs. 75 million was required of which BPP would contribute Rs. 20 to 25 million to start the project and hope that the rest would come from the community and the other Trusts.

Annually deaths of 13 to 14 priests are reported as opposed to only 1 young boy joining the profession. Philanthropist **Mr Nusli Wadia** is to spearhead a programme to provide Educational Scholarships to young mobeds, including for studies abroad for higher liturgical ceremonies to improve their knowledge and education.

**YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM** This project has not taken off due to discrepancies in school holidays across the diaspora. It was decided to discuss this at the 10th World Congress in December 2013.

**DEMOGRAPHICS** Roshan Rivetna led a discussion on the demographics of the community. In India it was reported that every year there were approx. 800 to 900 deaths whilst births were only about 200 to 250. Late or no marriages, increasing incidence of inter marriages were a real problem which were reaching alarming proportions.





BPP's Matrimonial Get togethers as well as ZYNG initiative are making an all out efforts with some positive results but it is still not enough. BPP was requested to hire a consultant to find possible solutions for low birth rate, late marriage, lack of motivation for young people to wed and procreate at an early age and how to Brand and Market our community in various ways. More Youth Congresses were also suggested with parents taking a more active role to find life partners for their children.

**ALPÄIWALLA MUSEUM REFURBISHMENT.** The long cherished project of the Restoration and Renovation of the Alpaiwala Museum at Kharegat Colony was presented by Pheroza Godrej and Feroza Panthaky Mistree. It is hoped that this will be ready in time for the Congress in .2013. and become the Enduring Congress Legacy project. Mrs Godrej and BPP Trustees, in particular Chairman Dinshaw Mehta were congratulated on providing the funding and support for this landmark project. Donors for the project include the Godrej family.

Two other exhibitions to coincide with the Congress were also described by Mrs Godrej 1) at the Prince of Wales Museum and 2) at the National Gallery of Modern Art (formerly the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Art Gallery ) These exhibitions would showcase the textiles and garments associated with our community. The Cyrus Cylinder was also expected to travel to India around the same time.

Dorab Mistry gave details of the major exhibition *The Everlasting Flame* being organised in London from October to December 2013 by three major bodies – SOAS, British Museum and British Library with major funding being provided by ZTFE. He thanked Mrs Godrej and Mrs Mistree who are assisting SOAS with artefacts and items to be sourced in India and transported to London. It would be one of the most high profile events in the diaspora in recent times.

**10th WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS (10th WZC)** Chairman Mehta and BPP Trustee Khojeste Mistree gave details of the proposed Congress program and events. The strong financial support extended to the Congress by philanthropist **Dr Cyrus Poonawalla** was acknowledged. The GWG members requested that flyers be sent to all diasporas informing the delegates of the Congress dates and its programme as airfare for December travel would be sky-high. After the grand success of the Dubai Congress of 2009, Mumbai had a high bar to cross but looked like it was on its way to doing so.

It was agreed that from now on GWG will decide on the hosts for future World Zoroastrian Congresses with every 3rd WZC to be held in India preferably Mumbai as a majority of our community resides here and with BPP being the apex Trust.

GWG decided to accept the invitation extended by the Zoroastrian Association of South East Asia based in Singapore to host the 11th World Congress. Mr and Mrs

Ghadijally thanked the GWG for their support and mentioned that they had the full support, cooperation and active participation of the HongKong Association. Colleagues applauded this spirit of cooperation between Singapore and Hong Kong.

It was mentioned that from time to time GWG should issue White Papers on community matters of interest.

**ROOTS PROGRAM :** It was decided to encourage the ROOTS initiative under which 25 youth would come to India in December 2013 and spend 9 days (4 in Mumbai and 5 outside Mumbai). This is a youth led initiative and will remain so with assistance to be provided only if requested so as to preserve its unique youth-led features.

Chair Dinshaw Mehta was thanked for his handling of the meeting with humour and candour.

*The meeting ended on Friday 11th to enable some participants to travel to Navasari for the conference at the Meherjirana Library.*

**The next GWG meeting will be held in Mumbai to coincide with the 10th World Congress, in December 2013.**

A dinner was hosted by Mr and Mrs Jimmy Mistry that evening at their residence at Della Towers, Dadar Parsi Colony.

**Report prepared by Dolly Dastoor based on the Minutes supplied by Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of India.**

Doug Lange, a retired publisher/editor, and a friend of FEZANA, has recently offered his services to help us create a library of Zarathushti educational materials that could be shared outside our Community; for example, to civic groups, religious press, educational institutions (K-12 and higher education), and the public. We are interested in any content (documents and images) and programs that you have developed that have proved effective, interesting, and motivational--especially to young audiences. The content and programs will be "polished" to Fezana style standards, posted online, and distributed through appropriate channels. If you have copyrighted the content, we will need your permission to create derivative works or republish the content. Digital content (for example, PDFs, Word documents, text files) are preferred, however, if you have good quality content on paper, we may be able to scan and convert your content. Please e-mail digital content to fezanalibrary@earthlink.net. If you have non-digital content, please send an e-mail to fezanalibrary@earthlink.net that describes the type of material you want to contribute.



## Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program

**Rosheen Kabraji**



### THE IDEA

Over the last two generations, Zarathushtis have spread across the globe to a degree that is unparalleled in our 3,500 year history. This presents a pressing challenge for our tiny community: how do we pass along a strong, cohesive identity to future generations when we are so diffuse?

The Zoroastrian Return to Roots (RTR) Program is designed to address this challenge. Through this program, our community's youth will travel together in small groups for two weeks to Zarathushti landmarks in India, and eventually Iran. Modeled on similar programs run by the Jewish community (Taglit-Birthright Israel) and the Taiwanese community (Overseas Compatriot Youth Formosa Study Tour), we plan to bring together Zarathushti youth from all over the world in order to help them recognize the commonalities amongst themselves, from their shared ancestries to the similarities in their everyday lives back home. Activities will be educational and community-service oriented, along with time for participants to get to know one another.

The program aims to offer a variety of experiences and to be inclusive of the diversity that spans the

### THE IDEA

diaspora. As such, at this stage, we have developed two different tracks which will run at different times of the year i.e. summer and winter. One is open to all Zoroastrians (i.e. at least one parent/grandparent should be Zarathushti. This will be launched in the summer of 2014. Due to the more historical and religious focus of the other track (i.e. visiting Atash Behrams in Gujarat and Agiaries in Mumbai), it will be open to those Zarathushti who meet the entry requirements of these religious establishments. This track will be launched in January 2014 following participation in the World Zoroastrian Congress in Mumbai.

The RTR youth representatives are seeking to build bridges and strengthen ties between all those who wish to discover their Zarathushti roots in India and Iran. It is envisioned that further tracks will be developed to serve the diverse needs of the community.

### THE GROUP

The RTR Program is a youth-led initiative with volunteers currently spanning three continents across five countries. Its institutional home is the UNESCO-PARZOR Foundation, an apolitical non-profit organization with over ten years of experience in promoting Zarathushti identity and culture in India and abroad. The RTR Program was officially launched at the North American Zarathushti Congress in New York in August 2012. Subsequently our youth representatives have been working with local associations in North America and Europe and are seeking to work with representatives in other diaspora hubs including (but not limited to) Hong Kong, the Middle

East, Iran, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand.

### NEXT STEPS

We are currently seeking to institutionalize this Program so it will perpetuate: it is not envisioned as a one-time affair. The long term goal is to make this an inclusive project to the extent that we want all Zarathushti youth to be able to participate, regardless of their financial situations. To this end, we are setting up a Foundation under the UNESCO-PARZOR umbrella so that all Zarathushtis can return to their roots.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are currently searching for individual and institutional sponsors. If you are interested in learning more about the program or becoming a sponsor, please contact your North America Representative: North America/Oceania – Dinsha Mistree (dmistree@gmail.com).

**Rosheen Kabraji** was recognized in 2012 as one of the "Top 99 Most Influential International Professionals Under 33" awarded by the 'Diplomatic Courier', an international affairs analysis magazine based in Washington, DC focusing on the latest ideas in diplomacy, conflict resolution, international affairs, and peace-building. Rosheen grew up in Karachi, Pakistan, but now lives in London, Britain, working for the Royal Institute of International Affairs. She received a BSc in Anthropology from University College, London, and an MPhil in International Relations, University of Cambridge.



## Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra



The **WORLD ZOROASTRIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (WZSO)** is now accepting participants for a proposed performance at the World Zoroastrian Congress this coming December in Mumbai.

Any and all Zarathushti amateurs or aspiring professionals who perform an orchestral instrument are encouraged to participate. There are no auditions or age limitations as long as participants can endure a rigorous professional setting sitting side-by-side and/or sharing a stand with an experienced professional.

For more advanced participants, pianists, or vocalists, another option would be the possibility to perform as soloists. Few young musicians of any religious affiliation have the privilege to be accompanied by a professional symphony orchestra. The WZSO is not only a showcase for introducing talented Zarathushti musicians to the community at-large, but acts as a springboard for gaining the added confidence requisite for success.

All inquiries and/or intent to perform may be addressed to Music Director, Farobag Homi Cooper, at [f\\_homi\\_cooper@yahoo.com](mailto:f_homi_cooper@yahoo.com). by August 1, 2013. Please include all relevant musical data, experience and current repertoire to ensure proper placement within the Orchestra. Potential soloists should also include audio/video performance samples for consideration. Those who may be unfamiliar with WZSO standards may visit its Facebook site and view a sample video under the Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra page.



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# FEZANA UPDATE

## CALENDAR OF FESTIVALS-MARCH 2013 TO SEPTEMBER 2013

<b>FRAVARDEGAN/PHANJEH/HAMASPATHMEDAYEM Gahambar</b>		
<i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Sunday March 16 - Wednesday , March 20	(F)
<b>CHAR-SHAMBE SOORI (Heralding the New Year)</b>		
<i>Tuesday Prior to Naurooz</i>	Tuesday, March 19	(F)
<b>NAUROOZ or JAMSHEDI NAUROOZ (New Year)</b>	Thursday, March 21	(F)
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Friday, July 19	(K)
<b>NAUROOZ</b>	Sunday, August 18	(S)
<b>AVA ARDVISOOR NU PARAB</b>	Saturday, February 23	(K)
<i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Monday, March 25	(S)
<b>JASHNE ARDIBESHTGAN</b>	Monday , April 22	(F)
<i>Mah Ardibesht, Roz Ardibehesht</i>	Tuesday, May 20	(K)
	Thursday, September 19	(S)
<b>ATASH-NU-PARAB</b>	Sunday, March 24	(K)
<i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar,</i>	Tuesday , April 23	(S)
<b>MAIDYOZAREM GAHAMBAR</b>	Tuesday, April 30 - Saturday, May 4	(F)
<i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Dae-pa-Meher</i>	Wednesday, August 28-Sunday, September 1	(K)
	Friday Septemebr 27-Tuesday October 1	(S)
<b>ZARATHUSHT-NO-DISO (Death anniversary of Asho Zarathushtra)</b>	Thursday, April 25	(K)
<i>Mah Dae, Roz, Khorshed</i>	Saturday, May 25	(S)
<b>DAE MAH NU JASHAN</b>	Friday, May 3	(K)
<i>Mah Dae, Roz Fravardin</i>	Sunday, June 2	(S)
<b>MAIDHYAREM GAHAMBAR</b>	Tuesday, April 30 - Saturday, May 4	(K)
<i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram</i>	Thursday, May 30 - Monday, June 3	(S)
<b>PIR-E-SABZ Festival</b>	Friday, June 14 - Tuesday, June 18.	(F)
<i>Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>		
<b>PIR-E-BANU Festival</b>	Thursday, July 4 - Monday, July 8	(F)
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Bahram</i>		
<b>MAIDYOSHEM GAHAMBAR</b>	Saturday, June 29 - Wenesday, July 3	(F)
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Dae pa-Meher</i>		
<b>JASHNE TIRGAN</b>	Monday, July 1	(F)
<i>Mah Tir, Roz Tir</i>		
<b>FRAVARDINGAN/MUKTAD/HAMAPATHMEDAYEM Gahambar</b>	Sunday March 16-Wednesay, March 20	(F)
<i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Sunday, July 14 - Thursday, July 18	(K)
<i>Five Gatha Days</i>	Tuesday August 13 - Saturday, August 17 (Pateti)	(S)
<b>KHORDAD SAL (Birth anniversary of Zarathushtra)</b>	Tuesday, March, 26	(F)
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad</i>	Wednesday , July 24	(K)
	Friday, August 23	(S)
<b>FRAVARDIN JASHAN</b>	Monday, April 8	(F)
<i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Tuesday, August 6	(K)
	Thursday, September 5	(S)

S=Shenshai; K=Kadmi; F=Fasli)

**HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FEZANA JOURNAL**

**BE INFORMED OF THE ZARTHUSHTI WORLD  
GIVE A GIFT OF THE FEZANA JOURNAL  
TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**



# Scholarships

## FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS - 2012

*“Education is one of the most important predictors in fact the most important predictor, of many forms of social participation—from voting to association membership, to chairing a local committee, to hosting a dinner party, to giving blood, in short, education is an extremely powerful predictor of civic engagement” R. Putnam.*

Education and training continue to fuel the engine of social mobility and contribute to social cohesion and integration in our ever more diverse societies and cultures. The benefits of education go beyond the economic returns---contributing also to better health, citizenship, lower crime rates. Investment in our youth is the investment in the future of the Zarathushti community. The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason to hope. You have given hope to our youth, and your faith and trust in the FEZANA Academic Scholarship program by establishing endowment funds is much appreciated. Thank you.

Your continued financial support in this economically difficult period and your encouragement is of utmost importance to maintain this program and sustain the hope of the next generation.

*Dolly Dastoor Ph.D*

*Chair, FEZANA Academic Scholarship program*

### **MEHRABAN AND MOROVID KHERADI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP—THE FEZANA SCHOLAR (\$10,000)**



**DINYAR PATEL, HARVARD  
UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORY, PH.D Candidate in  
Modern South Asian History.**

I am a Ph.D. candidate in history at Harvard University. I was born in Houston and grew up in Bakersfield, California before attending Stanford University. For quite some time I've had a deep interest in the history of our community and how it relates with aspects of both Indian and Iranian histories. Although a part of the diaspora, I feel a deep sense of attachment to India and I do think that

many others in my generation find it very meaningful and rewarding to maintain and strengthen ties between India and the west.

I feel extremely honored for being named the FEZANA scholar for 2012-13, and additionally for being awarded a FEZANA scholarship for a second time. I am deeply grateful to FEZANA and the Kheradi family for their generous financial support and their continuing commitment toward helping Zarathushti students. This scholarship will be of great help to me as I continue to research and write my dissertation on Dadabhai Naoroji. I owe a very large moral debt to FEZANA and I hope to pay this off through continued involvement with the community.

I have been conducting research on Dadabhai Naoroji in India and the United Kingdom for the past two years. In addition to collecting and processing material for my dissertation, I have been co-editing (along with S. R. Mehrotra, a well-known historian of the Indian nationalist movement) a volume of Naoroji's edited correspondence and writing and speaking on issues of historical preservation in India and in the Parsi community. In my research

and travel across India it has hit me quite strongly how we, as a community, have in some cases done a commendable job of preserving our heritage and in other cases have failed miserably in this responsibility. It is my hope that, by speaking and writing about such issues, I can contribute some ideas for improvements.

My vision for the community is one of less polarization and a little more modesty. Although the North American community has, overall, displayed a great deal of unity, we continue to be defined by far too many controversies and debates that, in turn, cause much disaffection, especially among the youth. The term "debate" implies give-and-take, reasoning, and listening to the other side -- and these qualities are too often absent in the Zarathushti community as we address issues ranging from intermarriage to laying down infrastructure for future generations. We need more discussion and fewer shouting matches. At the same time, I think we will gain from more modesty and introspection. We Zarathushtis have, over the past century, tried very hard to convince ourselves that we were "first" in many things: the first monotheistic religion, the first people

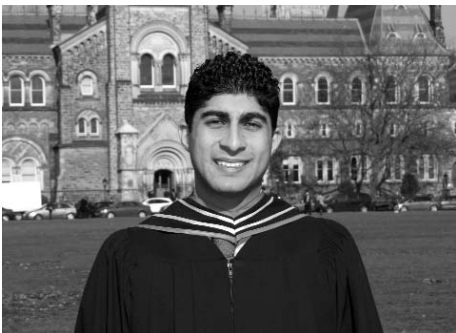


# Scholarships

to recognize human rights, etc. Not only are these claims now open to contestation by scholars, but they also reek of a sense of superiority that I personally find quite undesirable. We have enough to be proud of, given our rich and complex heritage in Iran and India, and we would be best to study and celebrate these instead of centering our identity around claims that can be quite difficult to validate.

Lastly, I do hope that FEZANA and the North American community pay more attention to youth and youth issues. I deeply worry that many in my generation will grow up cut off from the community and religion; indeed, I've seen it happen far too often and far too close to home. We need to establish much stronger links between youth in cities in the US, Canada, and abroad, and also increase opportunities for them to meet and establish their own sense of community, identity, and sense of belonging. This is a very achievable goal.

## **FEZANA 20th ANNIVERSARY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (\$3000)**



**RAYMOND DINSHAW, QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY, CANADA,  
JURIS DOCTOR PROGRAM**

I am honoured to have been awarded the 20th Anniversary FEZANA Endowed Scholarship for Excellence. The generosity of the

FEZANA Scholarship Program has allowed me, along with the other recipients, the ability to pursue higher education while minimizing the financial burden that this entails. This scholarship will help me fund my studies at the Faculty of Law, Queen's University as I pursue a Juris Doctor degree.

Prior to starting my Juris Doctor studies at Queen's University I completed a M.Sc and Honors B.Sc at the University of Toronto. During my M.Sc I worked under the supervision of Prof. Gregory Scholes to understand the photophysical processes underlying photosynthesis. My research resulted in multiple publications and awards, including an Ontario Graduate Scholarship, University of Toronto Fellowships, and a Chemical Institute of Canada Grant.

As stated in my application I believe the next decade will be a crucial time for the Zarathushti community. How we shape our long term future and survival depends on what we accomplish in the immediate future. In North America we are observing a turning point for the Zarathushti community; established older generations are able to contribute financially to building community centers and places of worship, yet younger generations are disconnecting with our faith. Zarathushti youth must get involved in our community and make lasting connections with other Zarathushti youth and play an integral part in shaping the our common future if we are to ensure that the foundation the older generation has created can be built upon.

I was born in Ontario, Canada and I am a member of the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation where I served on the Youth Committee, and was actively involved in mentorship programs and volunteering at a local hospital.

## **MORVORID GUIV ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (\$1000) GRADUATE STUDENT**



**ROSHNI KAPADIA: MIT Sloan  
School of Management; MBA  
Strategy and Marketing**

I am honored to receive the Morvorid Guiv Endowed Scholarship and hope to apply the leadership skills I am learning in business school towards helping my Zarathushti community. Over the years, I have received tremendous help, advice, and active encouragement from members of the Zarathushti community. This scholarship award will serve as a reminder to me of their support, for which I am truly thankful.

I am currently a first year student at the MIT Sloan School of Management in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Before starting my MBA, I worked on economic analysis for healthcare litigation as a Senior Analyst at Greylock McKinnon Associates. I earned my B.A. in economics from Wellesley College in 2006. At MIT Sloan, I contribute from my five years of consulting experience examining marketing strategies for blockbuster drugs and analyzing diverse healthcare data. My coursework focuses on advanced business concepts in the areas of economics, data modeling, accounting, finance, organizational processes, communication, marketing, and strategy. Outside the classroom, I





# Scholarships

work on a team as Marketing Director for the annual MIT Sloan Bio Innovations Conference.

I have realized that other North American church communities have a tradition of doing charity work on a larger scale than does ours. My vision for our community is to increase the scale and degree of our collective charity efforts in order to give back to our larger non-Zarathushti community. I hope to do so by establishing an annual event that will enable us to collaborate together as a unified North American Zarathushti community.

## FEZANA SCHOLARS (\$2000) GRADUATES



**PARMIS BAHMARDY** *University of Toronto, Master's Degree in Information Program*

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to FEZANA and the Academic Scholarship Program Committee for their support and generosity.

I am currently studying at the University of Toronto and completing a Master of Information program specializing in Information Systems & Design and Knowledge & Information Management. Prior to graduate school, I studied Political Science and Commerce at the University of British Columbia and graduated with distinction. My academic endeavors have also been complemented by a variety of extracurricular activities and

diverse professional experiences in the government, corporate, non-profit, and academic sectors.

I strongly believe in community service and have always done my best to give back to my community. This has included serving as the past President of the Zoroastrian Youth of BC, assisting with the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, and acting as a community representative for different multicultural and multi-faith groups.

As a young Zarathushti, I am immensely proud of our heritage and inspired by those who have taken initiative and drawn on their experiences to demonstrate leadership in our community, which I believe has been fundamental to ensuring our collective progress. I also believe that our community's success relies heavily on participation from all Zarathushtis. Through my past experiences, I have seen how much we can accomplish together and this is why I have been a strong advocate of encouraging my fellow Zarathushtis to get involved, to collaborate, and to share their knowledge so that our community can continue to flourish.

**ALBORZ ZAMYADI, UNIVERSITY de LAVAL; CANADA, PH.D Candidate in Geomatics**

I was born in 1983 in the city of Tehran, Iran and graduated from the distinguished Alborz High School of



Tehran. In 2006, I received my bachelor degree in Civil-Surveying (Geomatics) Engineering from the Civil-Surveying Department of the

College of Engineering of the University of Tehran. As of 2005, I am enrolled in various professional careers from engineering positions to project management in several projects of geo-informatics and land surveying. In 2009, I came to Canada and enrolled for a Master's degree program in Geomatics at the Geomatics Department of Laval University in Quebec City, Canada where I am now continuing at doctorate degree level.

I have managed to be an active member of my local community in addition to my professional and academic life which includes several leadership experiences in student networks, youth groups, and professional events at local and national scales in Quebec and Canada as well as the international level. I am a fan of nature and the dialog between civilizations. As a member of the International Community of Couch Surfing for travellers where, I have had the privilege to host many international travellers in Quebec City including number of Zarathushti youths in 2011. Camping out in nature, playing basketball in open fields in summer, professional alpine skiing in winter, reading, and enjoying international music are among my major interests. As of couple of years, I have been blogging to express my ideas about life, society, and wisdom. Currently I have two blogs where I frequently write about my social and professional experiences.

**BAHMAN ZOHOUR** *University of California, LA; PHD Candidate Chemical Engineering*

Seven years ago, I moved from Iran to the United States. Despite many challenges, I knew that if I studied hard, I would have the chance to attend one of the best universities in the world in the United States. I enrolled at De Anza College, taking prerequisite courses in preparation for a four-year university program. After a



# Scholarships



few years of college I was able to transfer to UCLA for a Chemical Engineering major. I received my B.S. from UCLA engineering department in August of 2012. I was honored to receive prestigious scholarships for my high academic standing such as UCLA Recognition Scholarship award in 2010, Lena De Groff Scholarship award in 2011, Rhone Poulence Scholarship award in 2012, and Khorshed Panthaky Endowed Scholarship from FEZANA in 2011. I am currently a PhD student in Chemical Engineering major at UCLA. It is my great honor to be the recipient of the FEZANA academic scholarship for the year 2012-2013.

Besides studying, I have a great passion for sports and extracurricular activities. I have always been volunteering for tutoring math, physics, and chemistry during my college and university. This gave me a great opportunity to interact with different students and exchange ideas.

Being able to apply my ideas and create something new has been my biggest dream. My goal is to advance my research, and offer innovative designs to make significant changes. I am also very passionate about teaching and I definitely want to teach and inspire our younger generation and show them the right path to achieve the very best in their life.

I strongly believe that it is our good thoughts, good deeds, and good words that makes our Zarathushti

society successful and one of a kind. We shall always be the best Ahura Mazda's believers and Ashu Zartosht's followers in life and continue to spread the greatness of our religion every day of our life.

I want to thank FEZANA, and the committee for recognizing me and giving me the honor to receive this prestigious scholarship.

## **UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS PURVEZ AND ABAN RUSTOMJI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$5000)**



### **BEHROZE DALAL Good Samaritan College of Nursing Cincinnati Master's Degree in Nursing**

I am Behroze. I live with my mom & sister in Fairfield, OH, where I grew up. It has always been my dream to be in the medical field, but it wasn't until high school that I realized that nursing is the field I would like to pursue. I am now enrolled in Good Samaritan College of Nursing in Cincinnati, OH and am pursuing a Bachelors' and Masters' degree in Nursing. My goal is

to become a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner.

This scholarship awarded to me by the Purvez and Aban Rustomji endowment will definitely help me with my college tuition and books. Hopefully some day, in keeping with Mr. Rustomji's philosophy, that to give is to receive, I will also be able help students, who like me, may be in need of money for college. I am extremely proud to be a Zarathushti, and I hope to give back to my community the same kindness that I have received time and again. Although my primary focus has always been my studies and to be an honor roll student, as and when I could, I have tried to give back to the community I live in and have enjoyed giving my time. During my high school years, I volunteered at Mercy Hospital Fairfield, and also at the Baltimore-Washington Medical Center, when I was visiting Baltimore in summer vacation, where I helped the nurses and the hospital staff in various non-medical tasks, which freed up some of their time, so that they could concentrate on their other important tasks. In my earlier years, I have volunteered at the local soup kitchens and the Ronald McDonald House in Cincinnati to serve ice-cream to children during Christmas or Thanksgiving. I have also loved spending time after school babysitting and helping my school district's elementary school children with their home work.

Along with my passion for nursing, music has also been a huge part of my life. I play the piano and the clarinet and was in my middle and high school band program as well in the marching band. I was given the opportunity to play my instruments in front of judges and earned many awards and trophies. Some other awards that I earned were the Foreign Language Award for French, for the most outstanding student; was selected for leadership camp, which I attended; was part of the National Honor Society



# Scholarships

and was nominated for the National Youth Leadership Forum in Nursing but unfortunately could not attend due to financial reasons.

I have worked very hard to be an honor student throughout my school years, therefore, for me, receiving The Purvez and Aban Rustomji Scholarship, is not only a great honor, but a constant reminder of my mom's teachings, that hard work combined with honesty always pays off. I am so grateful for having been selected for this prestigious scholarship, out of so many other applicants.

I express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to The Purvez and Aban Rustomji Scholarship and to FEZANA for considering my application and granting me the scholarship.

## **KAPADIA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND ACADEMIC STANDING FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT (\$2000)**



**Firoozeh Roointan , Houston Community College, Petroleum Engineering.**

I moved to the US about two years ago from Iran, and I am currently attending Houston Community College. My desire is to pursue a degree in Petroleum engineering. I have completed my Associates

education in two years to be able to transfer to a four year university program. I have achieved great accomplishments in my studies and as a result I am a member of honor programs like Phi Theta Kappa and National Society of Collegiate Scholars. This Scholarship will help me better focus on my education and future plans without having to worry much about my college expenses.

Besides my studies, I have a great passion for helping people and doing volunteering work, I have worked at the travel agency as a senior ticketing agent in Iran and I have volunteered at Amordad newspaper to write an article about the Zarathushti community in Iran. I am constantly looking for volunteering opportunities in my college and community. At present I am volunteering with Lighthouse to help blind people.

The scholarship will also encourage me in becoming a more active member of our Zarathushti society. Zarathushtis are well-known as honest, hardworking and reliable people. However, most people in countries other than Iran and India have very limited knowledge of this great religion. I believe that we will be able to more actively participate in building a better world, if we get the opportunity to introduce ourselves and spread the words of our great religion around the world. Zarathushtis will keep being successful by following the message of our Asho Zarathustra and helping other people in need. Nevertheless, all future achievements require our young society to know their religion and to keep it alive. This also calls for parents and leaders to learn how to maintain the culture and language by participating in classes and encouraging younger generations.

I would also like to thank FEZANA, and the scholarship committee for giving me the honor to be the recipient of the Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment scholarship

## **PANTHAKY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (\$3000)**

**RAMIN ZOHOUR: CIVIL AND**



**ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING , UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA , DAVIS (SPECIALIZATION IN STRUCTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION)**

I would like to thank the Panthaky Endowed Scholarship and the FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program for the honor of choosing me for this year's Scholarship award. Also, I want to thank my family for being there for me and giving me the opportunity of living the better life here in United States. This prestigious scholarship means a lot to me and my family and it will greatly assist me in achieving my academic goals.

I am a senior student in Civil and Environmental Engineering at University of California, Davis, graduating in June 2013 with a specialization in Structural and Transportation. My goal is to continue my education and to be able to achieve both M.S. and PhD degree in structural design. I'm currently enrolled into both The American





# Scholarships

Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and Concrete Canoe organizations. Both groups give me the ability to provide and apply my knowledge to real life experiences and also the ability to gain hands-on experience with what I love the most.

I am blessed to be part of Zarathushti community filled with people who really care about helping one another, and teach one another about the importance of life. I always find it very important to be actively involved in Zarathushti youth groups because that is one of the ways we can keep one another close and keep the Zarathushti community stronger than ever.

Once again I want to thank FEZANA, and the committee for recognizing me and giving me the honor to receive this scholarship.



**FREYA SHROFF**, *University of Missouri, St Louis, Pre-Med, Biology Major, Neuroscience certificate.*

I would like to start by saying thank you for giving me this opportunity. This scholarship is very helpful to me and will help carry me through to my undergraduate degree. I am attending the University of Missouri, St. Louis and currently am a sophomore. I am a biology major and working for a neuroscience certificate. I am also working towards attending medical school. One of my achievements is receiving a Junior Leadership award and I am projected to be on Dean's list this semester. I have an assortment of hobbies and extra-curricular as well! Some include

volunteering at St. Luke's hospital with patient care and transport and I also work at a bakery at the moment. I am part of my Pre-Med society and a part of the biology major club at my school. Because I am pursuing a neuroscience certificate, I am soon planning on doing some research pertaining to cognitive functions of the brain. Lastly, on the few days I have off, I make sure to spend some time with family and friends as I think it is always important to do so.

The definition of a scholarship is easy: financial aid given to those with good merits. However, when I received the letter stating that I had won, it meant so much more than its lackluster definition. It meant that I have opportunities and it meant that I must take those opportunities and do my best. The scholarship means that I have the ability to work diligently for what I want and by winning the scholarship, I know that I shall.

Stress with managing funds is a reoccurring theme for many in our community and for society as a whole. The scholarship means to me what it would mean to many, a tool to push towards our goals with less stress, and therefore be more efficient. Thank you and God bless.

## **MORVORID GUIV ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1000) for undergraduate**

**CYRUS PATELL**, *University of Pittsburgh, Computer Science*

I am majoring in computer engineering at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford campus. With the scholarships I have received, college is less of a financial burden for me and my parents. While in high school I helped my school's robotics team get eighth place in the world championship. I have helped fundraise for numerous groups and clubs by organizing concerts, food sales, and even ad creation. Due to all my hard



work in fundraising, being president of a club, and my time spent as a student athlete for both the football and bowling teams, I was awarded the Certificate of Excellence and the plaque of Leadership from my high school. I hope to become a research project leader for either Microsoft or Intel.

I am grateful to the people who donated the money for these scholarships, and hopefully I will be able to return the favor one day. I would like to obtain a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University. I hope to give back to the Zarathushti community, as they have done so much for me and have helped me to develop into the person I am today. I see the Zarathushti community creating a network for single Zarathushtis, to meet other single Zarathushtis to help repopulate our community. I also hope to see us build more Dar e Mehrs so that we all have a place to worship.

## **FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (\$2000)**

**Neville Dusaj**, *University of Pennsylvania, Biochemistry*

I graduated as the salutatorian of my class at Montville Township High School. While there, I put a large emphasis on taking science classes. Outside of school, I was an active participant on the debate and tennis team, and I played in an orchestra as well. This year, I started college at the University of Pennsylvania, studying biochemistry in the Vagelos Scholars



# Scholarships



becoming more accepting of all who follow our religion's teachings.

**NIKITA ENGINEER** *Lee University, TX, Biology major and a Psychology minor on the pre-medicine track*

This scholarship means a lot to me and my family. College is not easy to pay for when you are an international student and the FEZANA scholarship has definitely helped with the financial load. When I received the email about being one of the recipients of this scholarship, I was beyond ecstatic. I had the same feeling when I received a letter from Lee University that informed me of my

sickness and disease and the return of health can only be brought about by someone who is qualified; you can help someone emotionally only to a certain extent, but being a doctor will help me go further. I believe it is our duty as human beings to help each other through hardships.

Even in high school I was part of many clubs and organizations such as student council, key club, green club, stage crew, Students Take A Right Stand, National Honor Society, Science National Honor Society and Habitat for Humanity. During the summer I volunteered at the public library, shelving books and working events. I was also part of the summer program at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in the outpatient lab and helped music therapy sessions with veterans who had mental disorders. In college, I volunteer at the tutoring center to help little children from poor families with their homework and I am a part of the Student Leadership Council which helps organize and set up various events on campus. I am involved in Small Group which is a spiritual bonding session with the girls on my hall and in my dorm. Getting involved in different activities has always been important to me.

Program in the Molecular Life Sciences. I also hope to attend medical school after graduating.

Receiving the FEZANA scholarship is a true honor for me, as I have always been very involved with my Zarathushti community, the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York.(ZAGNY). The Zarathushti faith has influenced my life greatly, both in my day-to-day life and in my long-term goals. As a result, I intend to remain involved with the community throughout my life, and I hope to contribute to it as best I can.

Moving into the future, the Zarathushti community needs to become more progressive. While I recognize the importance of traditions and customs, some beliefs that our community holds tightly are, in my opinion, causing the decline of our great religion's presence and population. For instance, being half-Hindu myself (I do try to reconcile both religions in my life), I have witnessed more orthodox individuals claim that I should not be considered a true Zarathushti. Additionally, I hope to see the Parsi and Irani communities come together, rather than acting as separate entities. After all, when it comes down to the core beliefs of Zoroastrianism—Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds—factors like ethnic background do not alter a person's ability to exemplify these characteristics. Thus I believe that some of the community's outdated traditions must be put aside for us to continue to flourish in the future by



reception of the Centennial scholarship which included free tuition for my four years at Lee. I am currently a Biology major on the pre-medicine track. The plan is to go to Medical School after I graduate to take the next step toward my goal of becoming a doctor. This was not always my plan. When I was young, I wanted to be a chef even though I never actually entered the kitchen and cooked. The only reason I chopped vegetables and made tea for my parents in the evening was so that I could procrastinate with my homework. But now I am more determined than ever to actually pursue this career so that I can help other people overcome their physical pain and suffering. To me that is an amazing thing. The eradication of

As we all know, our Zarathushti community is dying and it makes me sad every time I think about it. We may be known in India but here in America, hardly anyone knows we exist. This is why I want to spread awareness about our community and include other people in our events so they can understand the true essence of being a Zarathushti. Also, fire temples are not present in places other than India and Iran, and it becomes difficult to practice religion if we can't do it in our place of worship. I think building a few would be a good idea. When I was in

India, I was part of this one month long program called Holiday Program for the Youth organized by the Parsi Panchayat. We had fun and at the



# Scholarships

same time helped the people around us. We visited orphanages, old age homes and animal hospitals and helped in any way we could. I am also part of ZYNG (Zoroastrian Youth for the Next Generation) which was founded a few years ago but sadly I could not continue as we moved to America at around the same time. I am not part of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston youth group but I plan to help in any way I can because this community has been a true blessing to me.

## **PARDIS GHEIBI; University of California, Berkeley, Mechanical Engineering**

My name is Pardis Gheibi, I was born and brought up in Iran and I am currently a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, perusing a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. I am also looking forward to taking a number of classes in the field of political science, more specifically international



relations to expand my field of studies and become more academically diverse.

The scholarship will help me financially by covering a portion of my college tuition and allowing me to spend more time academically and study more rigorously. Aside from my studies, I plan on continuing on the path of leadership by being an active member of UC Berkeley's Leadership Awards Scholars Association. I also

plan on remaining an active member of project EDGE (Engineering, Design, Graphics, Excellence), an original non-profit organization founded and led by me that introduces middle school students from low socio-economic backgrounds to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Throughout high school, I was an ambitious member and the captain of our high school speech team. I earned numerous awards in many prestigious tournaments including 6th place at the 2011 National Stanford University Speech Tournament and later I became the first student from Westmont High School to qualify to the California State Speech Tournament three years in a row. As I had throughout my high school, I plan on continuing to stay involved in the San Jose Zoroastrian community by offering free SAT tutoring workshops and helping organize events and celebrations.

## ZAGNY AWARDS THE GOOD LIFE EMBLEM TO NEVILLE DUSAJ



An exemplary youth, Neville Dusaj was awarded the "Good Life Emblem" at a function held at the Darbe Meher on November 24th 2012. Neville was involved actively in a variety of community programs, over a dozen projects in ZAGNY for more than four years and completed the Good Life work book requirements successfully for this award. (Photo left, Viraf

Ghadially, coordinator of Good Life Program presenting the award to Neville Dusaj)

Amongst the community projects that Neville was recognized for were:-

- \* Volunteer at UMDNJ to assist in cancer research
- \* Volunteer as an assistant instructor for the ZAGNY religion classes for two years.
- \* Volunteer to video-record and preserve religious lectures given by esteemed professors to adults in order to preserve them for future generations.
- \* Volunteer at Lincoln Park Nursing home.
- \* Playing a leading role in several program activities at the North American Zoroastrian Congress

Neville, recently graduated from Montville Township High School

(MTHS) Class of 2012 where he achieved the number two spot in his class of 352 students and was recognized as a Salutatorian. Besides excelling in academics he enjoys extra-curricular activities such as playing the viola and piano, tennis, skiing, forensics debates, and volunteering wherever he can. Neville is now pursuing a Biochemistry major at the University of Pennsylvania, where he has been invited to join the Vagelos Scholars Program in the Molecular Life Sciences and looks forward to continuing on to medical school.

The award was presented by Lovji Cama, Dean of Religious studies in ZAGNY and Viraf Ghadially (*in photo with Neville*) who coordinates the Good Life Program. ZAGNY encourages other youths to follow the example of Neville and complete the Good Life Program.



# Scholarships

## **FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS (2013-2014)**

**Applications are invited for the  
FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS**

**MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI (MMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP  
FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE - THE FEZANA SCHOLAR.**

**FEZANA 25th ANNIVERSARY ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP  
MORVORID GUIV ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

**PURVEZ AND ABAN RUSTOMJI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP  
BANOObAI AND MANECKSHAW KAPADIA (BMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP**

All scholarships are open to Zarathushti applicants who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

Scholarships for the academic year 2013-2014 will be awarded in September 2013.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

**Applicants must complete the application form and provide documentation for:**

- (1) proof of USA or Canada citizenship. (For non citizens a minimum of one year or two semesters residency in USA or Canada academic institution is required)**
- (2) past academic records and accomplishments (attach documentation of the past four years only)**
- (3) program of study**
- (4) annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice**
- (5) other financial assistance available from family and friends**
- (6) community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations**
- (7) three reference letters**

**AWARD CRITERIA:** Applicants will be rated on Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Need (40%), Extra-curricular Activities (10%) and Community Service (10%).

The Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship of \$5000 and the 25th anniversary FEZANA Scholarship will be awarded to post graduate students for scholastic excellence

The Purvez and Aban Rustomji Endowed Scholarship of \$5000 will be awarded to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need and academic achievement

The Morvarid Guiv Endowed Scholarships of \$1000 will be awarded to one graduate and one undergraduate student who demonstrates financial need together with academic excellence

The Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment Scholarship of \$2000 will be awarded for undergraduate studies to a student with good academic standing who demonstrates financial need.

**Application:** Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) or from Dr Dolly Dastoor ([dollydastoor@sympatico.ca](mailto:dollydastoor@sympatico.ca))

***Completed application forms should be sent electronically by August 1, 2013 to  
[academicscholarship@fezana.org](mailto:academicscholarship@fezana.org)***



# Scholarships

## Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship

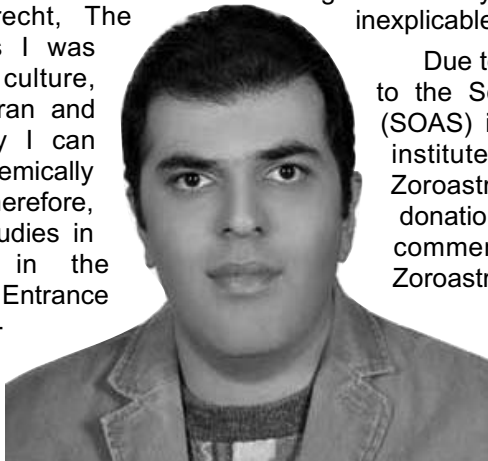
***This FEZANA scholarship, set up by the daughters of Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty and administered by the FEZANA Education, Scholarship and Conference Committee is awarded to any Zathushti student studying for a graduate degree in Zoroastrian Religion at a credited university. The award is renewable for three years.***

### The recipient for 2012-13

*Mehrbod Khanizadeh*

I obtained an admission to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in their MA program in the field of Religions, concerning Zoroastrianism, allowing me to upgrade my studies to a 3-year PhD program subject to my success in the first year.

I already have a Doctorate Degree in Veterinary Medicine (DVM) specialized in Animal Pathology (MSc) from the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. But since many years I was interested to explore the ancient culture, history, languages and religions of Iran and finally, I realized that the only way I can contribute to this area is to study academically and dedicate my life to this field. Therefore, after eight years of undergraduate studies in Iran and postgraduate studies in the Netherlands, I attended the University Entrance Exam for Master degree to the well-established University of Shahid Beheshti. and was admitted in the field of Ancient Culture and Languages of Iran.



Due to the threat of extinction of Oral Zoroastrian Literature, I chose my MA thesis on "Investigation in the Oral Literature of Iranian Zoroastrians and Its Comparison with the Middle Persian and Zoroastrian Persian Texts" under the supervision of Professor Katayun Mazdapour. During my research, I tried, as much as I could, to collect the still-living Zoroastrian undocumented issues such as poems and stories from our elders, living in Kerman, Tehran and Yazd. After my MA graduation, I continued this project in Iran with Professor Mazdapour and her research-team, with the result, that the research from this project will be published soon in Iran as a book which is being edited. At the same time, I began collaborating with the scholars in the UK, Professor Almut Hintze, and in Spain, Professor Alberto Cantera, regarding the Corpus Avesticum Project.

The latter project is designed quite intelligently and hopefully it will be able to fill many missing areas and gaps in Avestan Studies. As the first step, it aims to collect as many manuscripts as possible, especially Iranian Sade

Manuscripts. On the other hand, it investigates the manuscripts from different aspects e.g. the investigation of Colophons can reveal the history of scribes, priests and different religious schools. It becomes more important when we take into account that there are very few documents available describing the Post-Islamic History of Zoroastrianism. The revision to the arrangement of the Avesta and its order is another feature of the project providing many details which are still vague to our knowledge. For example, how and when did priests start changing their oral tradition to document the sacred hymns, proses and rules. In addition, it provides opportunities for researches to pose more convincing theories both grammatically and semantically, regarding the inexplicable parts of the Avesta.

Due to the above mentioned factors, I applied to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London which is the only academic institute in the world to have a chair in Zoroastrian studies thanks to the generous donation of the late Zartoshty Brothers. I have commenced my studies concerning Zoroastrians working on Avestan manuscripts under the supervision of Professor Hintze who is one of the prominent experts in this field. I wish this project helps us obtain a better understanding of our history, ancient languages and society in future.

*"Students interested in applying for the scholarship should contact Dr Lovji Cama to obtain the necessary application form. Applications may be made any time during the year and the scholarship approval process will take about two months".*

*Dr. Lovji Cama,*

*Chair, FEZANA Education, Scholarship and Conference Committee,*

*ldcama@gmail.com 201-569-7359*





# Scholarships

Dr. Minoo Battiwalla,

## FEZANA PERFORMING & CREATIVE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS 2012 WINNERS

#### Malcolm Cooper:

Malcolm hails from Cherry Hill, NJ and is currently studying at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. He is pursuing a Master's degree in Vocal Performance. Malcolm is a classically trained Tenor, sings choral music, opera and art song. He is multi-lingual and is able to sing in over 8 languages. Congratulations Malcolm.

#### Dina Lalkaka:

Dina is married and lives with her husband in Hayward, CA. She is enrolled at San Jose State University, where she is taking courses in Jazz Studies (music) towards a graduate degree. Dina's ultimate goal is to teach voice at the college and professional levels. Congratulations Dina.

#### Darius Vazifdar:

Darius is one of our youngest recipients. Living with his family in Plainfield, IL Darius is currently an elementary school student enrolled in multiple dance classes. His long term goal is to pursue a career in the arts/dance. At such a young age, Darius has already competed in many regional competitions, winning anywhere from 1st to 3rd overall. Congratulations Darius.

### APPLICATION FORM - 2013

#### OBJECTIVES

The FEZANA Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship (P&CAS) provides financial support to Zarathustis who are performing artists in music, drama, etc. or practice other creative art forms like literature, poetry, fine arts, sculpture, painting, etc. The purpose of the scholarship is to enable the recipients to study with experts in their field and thus fine tune and enhance their talent and capabilities, BUT NOT FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN THE ABOVE FIELDS.

#### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must (1) profess and practice the Zarathushti faith (2) be high school graduates (3) be legal residents or citizens of USA or Canada. Foreign students holding legal status in USA or Canada may also apply provided they have been in North America for at least one year. Awards will be determined on an annual basis by the judges chosen by the P&CAS Committee. Applicants will be eligible to receive a maximum of two awards, which may or may not be in consecutive years.

#### SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be judged on their academic

preparation, and past record in their program of study, their commitment to pursue the chosen art form, their annual financial need, the assistance pledged by other sources, extra curricular activities and services performed for the Zarathushti community.

#### APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Application forms will be available on the FEZANA website or from the members of the P&CAS committee. However, applications cannot be submitted electronically as examples and proof of the applicants work (portfolio) will be required. For direct link to form download go to:  
[http://www.fezana.org/files/drupalfiles/FEZANA\\_PCAS\\_FORM\\_2013.pdf](http://www.fezana.org/files/drupalfiles/FEZANA_PCAS_FORM_2013.pdf)

Five (5) copies of this application form with all attachments (including portfolio items) must be submitted by June 30, 2013 to

**SHERAZADE F. MEHTA**  
**Chair, P&CAS Committee**  
**5400 Preston Oaks Rd, #3048**  
**Dallas TX 75254 (U.S.A.)**  
**Tel: (972) 385-4847**  
**e-mail: [sherazadem@yahoo.com](mailto:sherazadem@yahoo.com)**



# Scholarships

## FEZANA EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP (EXISS)

The FEZANA Excellence In Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund is now accepting applications for 2013.

The objective of the Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund is to provide financial support to young Zarathustis (between the ages of 10-30 years living in North America) who are performing exceptionally and at highly recognized levels in any sport. The purpose of the scholarship is to enable the recipients to get world-class training and/or study with experts in their field and thus fine tune and enhance their talent

and capabilities. The deadline for applications is Thursday, August 1st, 2013.

If you or someone you know may benefit from this scholarship, we encourage you to apply. For more details, please visit <http://www.fezana.org/exiss-fund> or contact Shiroy Dadachanji at [exissfund@fezana.org](mailto:exissfund@fezana.org)

## 8th Zoroastrian UNITY CUP GAMES

**ZSC and San Diego Board of Directors** in cooperation with **San Diego Sports Committee** proudly present the 8th Zoroastrian Unity Cup Games in beautiful beach city of San Diego.

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND  
2013**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** and **expect to spend two fun filled days** in a park setting with plenty of activities for the whole family.



# Scholarships

## British Columbia, Canada has two scholarship funds both of which are meant for the local students

### 1- ZSBC SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is for students who have completed their grade 12 and are going for higher education and is funded from donations made to the ZSBC Scholarship fund.

The members of the committee are *Homi Italia, Bella Tata, Fariborz Rahnamoon, Dinaz Mizan and Farrokh Namdaran.*

The awards for 2012 were given to **Fereidoon Kavosian, Narius Minwalla, Yasmin Iranfar, and Yasaman Iranfar.** All of whom had passed grade 12 and will be going for higher studies.

### 2- MEHRABAN & PARIDOKHT ZARTOSHTY EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

This is an independent Association whose directors are **Homa Zartoshty, Kourosh Mehin, Fariborz Rahnamoon, Khodadad Lohrasb, Bella Tata and Shirin Abadi.** The

*The awards for 2012 were awarded to Farzad Kasad, Nazneen Kasad, Parmis Behmardi and Benafsha Kapadia.*



### MEHRABAN & PARIDOKHT ZARTOSHTY EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

*From left: Benafsha Kapadia, Bella Tata, Fariborz Rahnamoon, Nazneen Kasad.*



**ZSBC Scholarship:** *From left :Homi Italia, Fariborz Rahnamoon, Narius Minwalla, Farrokh Namdaran, Bella Tata, Shervin Namiranian, Tandis Iranfar, Farhad Iranfar, Khodadad Kavosian.*

funds were donated by the late Arbab Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty.

### The Eligibility Criteria of this scholarship are

1. Zarathushti students who are legal permanent residents of British Columbia, and are enrolled to study in the second or subsequent year in a technical institution, college or university in Canada or the United States.
2. Zarathushti students who are not permanent residents of British Columbia but have enrolled to study for the second or subsequent year in a technical institution, college or university in British Columbia.



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# Scholarships



## Congress 2000 legacy

August 25, 2012

It gives us immense pleasure to announce that this year we have two winners for our 2012 congress 2000 legacy awards where our youth going to college are recognized with modest cash grants in order to acknowledge their excellence in Academic & contribution to the ZAH Communal service.

This year, again, competition was fierce, the applicants were spectacular, and hence after much deliberation the selection committee decided that the best avenue was to tie this award. The winners shared the award by an executive judgment of the Legacy Planning Committee Chair and acknowledged by the ZAH-EC.

### The two outstanding students were Cyra Byramji & Cyrus Byramji University of Texas at Austin

The chosen recipients of this 2012 Award applicants are to be commended on their dedication, achievement, and contributions and are the proud recipients of the "Cyrus Rohinton Desai Award" in memory of a courageous young Houstonian who lost his battle with cancer. This award is ONLY given to the person who is going to college for the first time since it was the wish of Cyrus to go even for a day to college but sadly this was not to be. It is a tremendous honor for one to be the recipient of this grant!

The Congress 2000 Legacy Award was established as a result of the funds that remained from the success of World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 & the additional grants received from the Desai family. The award recognizes young Zarathushti ZAH students who are studying at the University level and who have achieved excellence in their scholastic studies, in extra- curricular activities and who have made substantial contribution to Zarathushti community affairs.

The picture on the right shows the awards & checks being presented to the two winners by Cyrus Desai's grandmother **Mrs. Pervin Billimoria**. Looking on is Cyrus's mother **Mrs. Thrity Desai**. The Desai family contributes towards this award on an annual basis and ZAH appreciates their generosity.



Let us not forget our distinguished panel of judges who are selected by Dr. Farrokh Mistree. They were, *Dr. Beheruz Sethna, Dr. Poras Balsara, Dr. Farah Shroff, Dr. Tinaz Pavri & representing the youth group this year was Ms. Zeeba Kayani* since Mrs. Pearlina Collector (the ZAH youth representative) honorably declined to be part of the judging process due to the fact that two applicants from the rest were her direct relatives. We at ZAH are lucky to have such a dynamic panel of judges!

The congress 2000 Legacy Committee and the ZAH Executive Committee congratulate our winners. We believe these students deserve to be recognized as innovators and leaders for tomorrow's global community. By supporting the next generation of great minds we pay tribute to the success of the World Zoroastrian Congress we had in 2000!

With our best wishes,  
**The legacy committee**

**Homi Davier; Pearlina Collector; Dr. Farrokh Mistree and Aban Rustomji**

### CYRA BYRAMJI Zoroastrian Association of Houston

It was such an honor to receive the Cyrus Rohinton Desai Scholarship Award at the Zoroastrian Center of Houston in August, 2012. This award was used to pay part of my tuition at the University of Texas, Austin where I am attending as a freshman. My parents came to the United States to advance in their respective educational fields, and since an early age instilled upon my siblings and I how important it is to get a good education. Being fortunate enough to have grown up in a great Zoroastrian Community in Houston, and being involved with the many programs at

**The congress 2000 legacy is an award program of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston**



# Scholarships

our Zoroastrian Center, has given me the foundation to move on with a lot of self-confidence. My first semester at the College was very rewarding. Besides being able to make very good grades, I was able to join a few service oriented clubs, which not only helped me make new friends, but gave me the satisfaction of being able to help others and do something for the local community.

Keeping our beliefs of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds close to my heart, I pray that I continue to progress and look forward to achieving my goals.

## **CYRUS BYRAMJI** **Zoroastrian Association of Houston**

To have been chosen to receive the Cyrus Rohinton Desai Scholarship Award at the Zoroastrian Center of Houston this past August, was such an honor and achievement. The award proceeds helped pay for my tuition at the University of Texas, Austin where I am a freshman in the College of Natural Sciences. Education is so very important, and as an award recipient, I feel special and proud that my hard work and success in High School was recognized, and I will make sure that the next few years in College are just as successful.

During my first semester at the University, I stayed very busy with my classes as well as extra-curricular activities. I



joined the Business Health Care Association, and also a few clubs. The service projects that we took on at these clubs, besides giving me a sense of satisfaction of being able to help someone in need, also reiterated the true meaning of "Good Deeds". By adhering to our core Zoroastrian beliefs, and following the path of Asha, I feel confident and look forward to achieving my goals as well as make the Zoroastrian community proud.



## United States-India Educational Foundation

The United States – India Educational Foundation (USIEF) promotes mutual understanding between the nationals of India and the nationals of the US through the educational exchange of outstanding scholars, professionals and students. Since its inception, USIEF has awarded approximately 17,000 Fulbright, Fulbright-Nehru, and other prestigious grants and scholarships in almost every academic discipline.

Whether you are a US or Indian citizen, USIEF offers opportunities for you to study, lecture, or pursue research in any academic field.

More information:

<http://usief.org.in/index.aspx>





# Scholarships

## ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, INC.

**THE FALI CHOTHIA CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**10300 Farnham Drive, Bethesda MD 20814**  
**301 564-3726 / 301 774-0841**

**The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2012-2013 Awards**

**Avan Antia**, a National Honor Society and National Science Honor Society scholar holds many other distinguished awards and accomplishments as she enters the University of Maryland's Integrated Life Sciences program. In addition to her exemplary academic record, Avan has a passion for community service, has contributed over 260 hours in voluntary and civic work, and is an active participant in her local Zoroastrian community.

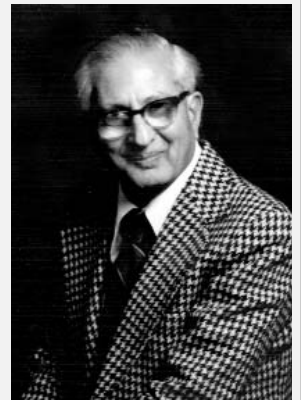
**Hooman Attaie**, is pursuing a Master of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering at Youngstown State University after migrating to the US in 2010 as a refugee from Iran. He has maintained a 3.8 grade point average even as he has struggled to make ends meet by working odd jobs. He has a deep knowledge of the Gathas and Zoroastrian history, and his future plans include establishing medical and educational charities for other needy Zoroastrians. (winner of the 2012 Vakshoori Scholarship)

**Parmis Behmardi** is in her final year of completing a Master of Information program at the University of Toronto where she has maintained a near-4.0 GPA. She is proud of her religion and community, and has taken on leadership roles within it. She is aware of the challenges facing our community, and hopes to utilize her background to devise technological and non-traditional tools to increase education, connectivity and unity in the world-wide Zoroastrian community. (winner of the 2012-13 FEZANA Scholarship and the 2012 Vakshoori Scholarship)

**Mehernosh Dabhoiwala** is working on a Masters in Computer Engineering at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and hopes to continue working towards a Ph.D. He is a high achiever with an excellent academic record, winning several gold awards and ranking first in the Electronics & Communications department for 3 consecutive years.

**Kaizad Patel** is in his second year of a Masters program in Environmental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. After completing a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree, and while

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust was established in 1988 to help provide scholarships to needy Zarathushti students. Awards are based on financial need, educational achievement, and community service. The trust is established under the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI), and makes awards to students from all parts of the US and Canada.



The US Chapter of the World Zoroastrian Organization supports the Fali Chothia Trust's scholarship program by contributing to this worthy cause. Donations made to the trust are tax exempt, and go directly toward the corpus of the fund. Individual members of the Board of Trustees absorb all administrative, mailing, and other fund-raising costs.

If you wish to make a donation to this worthy cause, please send a check made payable to "ZAMWI/Fali Chothia Charitable Trust" to: 10300 Farnham Drive, Bethesda MD 20814.

...serving as a volunteer with the Bombay Natural History Society, he got insights into the seriousness of the world's environmental problems and decided to put his pharmaceutical background to use in pursuing his new passion. His doctoral thesis will deal with the biogeochemistry of ecosystems and interactions between different forms of life. (winner of the 2012 Vakshoori Scholarship)

**Freya Shroff** is pursuing her dream of becoming a doctor of medicine, neuroscience, at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. Freya has had to confront many challenges in her young life, and in overcoming them, has grown into a determined, compassionate young woman. She has volunteered with numerous community organizations and says that she truly feels happiness when she helps others (winner of the 2012-13 FEZANA/Panthaky scholarship).

**Afshin Yazdani** is working toward a Masters degree in Electrical and Computing Engineering at Cornell after completing a bachelor's degree in India. His love for numbers has inspired him to explore several disciplines, and has even led him to be honored for participating in Olympiads, such as one conducted by the University of New South Wales. Afshin hopes to continue his work at the doctoral level and sees himself in the corporate world in the research and development sector.



# Scholarships



Vakhshoori Foundation

## Promoting leadership among Zoroastrian youth in academia, public life, and the arts

### Vakhshoori Scholarship Recipients for the Academic Year 2012-2013

We were extremely happy with the quality of our applicants this year. Here are this year's winners:

- **Mr. Zubin Shroff: \$10,000**
- o Doctor of Science (SD) in Global Health Systems, Harvard University, School of Public Health
- **Mr. Artan Zandian: \$4,000**
- o Master of Environmental Design, University of Calgary (Canada)
- **Ms. Pardis Gheibi: \$3,500**
- o Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, University of California, Berkeley
- **Mr. Mehernush Shroff: \$3,000**
- o Master of Education, Lesley University
- **Ms. Mitra Mehrabani: \$3,000**
- o PhD of Civil Engineering/Environment, University Calgary (Canada)
- **Mr. Anosh Daruwalla: \$2,000**
- o PhD of Electronic Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Mr. Malcolm Cooper: \$2,000**
- o Master of Music, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- **Ms. Parmis Behmardi: \$2,000**
- o Master of Information Management, University of Toronto (Ontario, Canada)
- **Ms. Anushay Mistry: \$1,000**
- o BA of Biology and Community Health, Tufts University
- **Ms. Banafsha Kapadia: \$1,000**
- o B.A. Political Science, University of Simon Fraser (British Columbia, Canada)
- **Mr. Hooman Attaie: \$1,000**
- o M.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering, Youngstown State University
- **Ms. Farina Chinoy: \$1,000**
- o Ph.D of Transpersonal Psychology, Sophia University
- **Ms. Ferin Yazdani: \$1,000**
- o B.S. in Pre-Psychobiology, University of California Los Angeles
- **Mr. Kaizad Patel: \$1,000**
- o M.S. in Environmental Studies, University of Pennsylvania.
- **Mr. Karl Khambatta: \$1,000**
- o B.S. in Hotel Administration, Cornell University
- **Ms. Nadia Kharas Mistry: \$1,000**
- o N.D. in Naturopathic Medicine, Bastyr University

Each winner has shown exceptional leadership in his or her respective academic field, community, and life in general. Here are their biographies in brief. We invite you to visit [www.vakhshoori.org](http://www.vakhshoori.org) to view short video clips that some of the winners have provided detailing their personal views and life experiences.

**Koorosh Vakhshoori**  
**Member of the Board of Directors**  
**Vakhshoori Scholarship**



# Scholarships



**Zubin Shroff** is a fourth year doctoral student at the Harvard School of Public Health pursuing a Doctor of Science Degree at the Department of Global Health and Population focusing on Health System Development. He did his medical degree at the University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi University followed by a Masters in Global Health and Population from the Harvard School of Public Health. He is an Indian Zoroastrian and grew up in New Delhi, India where he frequently returns.

He has been associated with a number of organizations working in the public health field in South Asia and the rest of the world. He has worked as a consultant for the World Bank to examine ways to promote rural service among health workers in Cameroon.

He was associated with the Public Health Foundation of India, where he helped conduct a large scale study to analyze ways to address problems of health worker retention in rural India. Prior to this he spent one summer in Dhaka, Bangladesh, working at BRAC, one of the largest NGOs in the world, trying to understand ways to scale up their health micro-insurance program and make it more attractive to underprivileged urban residents. He has received a number of prestigious scholarships and fellowships,

including the Dillon Family Fellowship 2011-12 and the South Asia Initiative at Harvard Graduate Student Fellowship 2010-11. In his spare time he enjoys traveling and cooking.

He has been actively involved with the Zarathushti community of Delhi since early childhood, being a founding member of the Farohar Program which aims to inculcate young Zarathushtis of Delhi with the values and teachings of the faith. His interest in and involvement with the community, led him to take up research on one of the most pressing and divisive issues in the Indian Zarathushti community, that of the role of intermarriage in the population decline of the community of Mumbai, India. This study, which was co-authored with a professor of Demography at Harvard, was published in August 2011 in the prestigious Journal of Demographic Research.

After completing his doctorate, he hopes to return to India and work in the field of health system reform, focusing on India and the neighboring countries of South Asia. Rapid economic growth has given governments the opportunity to contemplate the creation of Universal Health Coverage Systems in the region, making this an interesting time to work on this issue. He is extremely thankful to the Vakhshoori Scholarship for its generosity in helping him achieve his educational goals.

**Artan Zandian** is a first year Masters of Environmental Design (thesis) student at the University of Calgary, Canada. He did his undergraduate studies in architecture at the University of Tehran where he graduated with highest honors.

Winning one international and four national architecture awards during his studies, and hosting 1st National Conference on Membrane Structures, and NCSS2011, are some of his leadership experiences in academic life. Meanwhile he volunteered teaching Analytical Geometry at Firooz-Bahram high school for two



years. He has also published an article about the architecture derived from Zarathushtra's philosophy in an international magazine. Beside the goal of obtaining a Ph D in academic life, he is wants to be pioneer in designing sustainable neighborhoods for the new immigrant communities of Zarathushti faith. Aside from academic achievements, he was a member of Zoroastrian Students Organization (ZSO). He had organized, designed and managed many annual events such as Jam-e-Janbakhtegan (International Sports Olympics), Camp for Zoroastrian teenagers, Manthra (annual competition for religious research and chanting of Gatha) as well as major activities such as Zoroastrians' Culture exhibition, and Students' appreciation. He was a member of ZSO volleyball team and supervised the badminton committee in Jam-e-Janbakhtegan.

*"Happiness is for the one who wants the happiness of others", Zarathushtra says. This is the key maxim in his personal life. He believes anyone persisting on this goal will easily become a real Zarathushti, and the rest will come with the will of Ahuramazda. He believes that Zarathushti youth have the strength to revive our community and hopes a brighter future for our faith.*

**Pardis Gheibi** born and brought



# Scholarships

up in Shiraz, Iran, moved to America at the age of 11 with her family. She currently is a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, perusing a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. As a high school student, Pardis founded and was the president of Westmont's Society of Aspiring Women Engineers (WSAWE). The goal of this club was to involve females in the fields of science and engineering; this program was later extended to include middle school



students by launching and coordinating project EDGE (Engineering Design Graphics Excellence) as an after-school program that introduced students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to science and engineering in order to make STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) less esoteric to younger students. Pardis is also involved in the San Jose Zarathushti community by helping with events such as celebrations, local talents shows, and theatrical plays. At the University of California, Berkeley, Pardis has been an active member of UC Berkeley's LASA (Leadership Award Scholars Association) to promote leadership on the UC Berkeley campus. She is also an

active member of Berkeley College Republicans (BCR) on and off the UC Berkeley campus. As one of her personal goals, she looks forward to helping merge the Indian and the Iranian Zarathushti community even more than they are today in order to make our religious community stronger and more ambitious.

**Mehernush Shroff** born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts is currently a Master's In Education student at Lesley University. He has been a lifelong member of the Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA). In 2004, after graduating Cum Laude from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst with a Bachelor in Business Administration, Mehernush worked in finance for 3 years in Charlotte, NC as well as in the Boston, MA area. He is now studying Elementary Education with the intent of becoming an Elementary School teacher who will serve large, diverse, urban communities. Aside from attending



school, Mehernush is serving as a student teacher for the 2012-2013 academic school year. He is engaged in several community service projects in his local community, such as the annual Brendan Grant Home Run 5K run. When he is not busy student teaching or attending classes, he is involved with ZAGBA's youth group as well as with ZAGBA's childrens' classes.

While Mehernush is looking forward

to working with young people in the classroom, he hopes to one day serve as a principal of a school. His goal is to empower the next generation to gradually take ownership of the local community, whether tackling important issues in their town or within their Zoroastrian community. Mehernush intends to motivate and encourage youngsters to make small differences in their communities every day and hopes to inspire young people to take leadership roles in improving the impact a small religious community such as ours can have on their local community and beyond.

**Mitra Mehrabani Zeinabad** was born in London and raised in Iran in a Zarathushti family. She got her Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from Isfahan University of Technology (Isfahan, Iran) and her Master's degree from Amirkabir University of Technology (Tehran, Iran) at 2011. After graduation, she received several admissions from Canadian universities. She is currently studying a Ph.D. in the Environmental Engineering program of University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada). She loves her field of study as she believes that working in this field is in line with the law of Asha. As the law of Asha states that each Zarathushti must keep the environment and the four cleansing elements (water, fire, air and soil) clean and is responsible for the universe and what happens in it.

She believes that moving from Iran to another country on her own, with a different culture has given her the strength of being independent and to be able to work and live with people with different cultures.

Mitra has also done volunteering work and been involved in the programs of the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA) and is planning to get involved in the board of this association.

Currently, working on her leadership skills, Mitra is the VP Communication



# Scholarships



of a Student Union Club at the University of Calgary and is planning to strengthen her leadership skills which will help her throughout her journey to reach her goals. After receiving her Ph.D. degree, Mitra is hoping that she will be able to teach as a university professor and to pass on what she has learnt to the next generation and help them achieve their goals in life and provide a better environment for living.

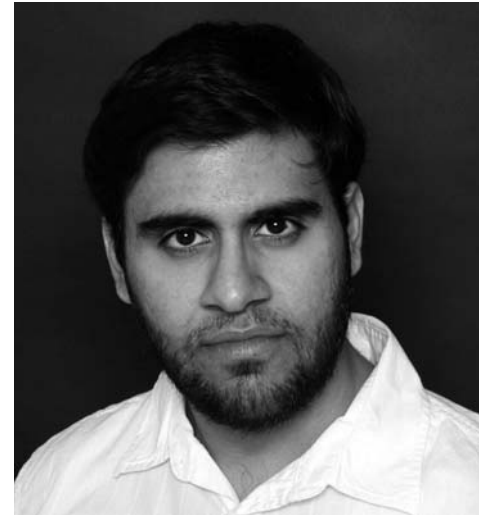
**Anosh Daruwalla** was born in Mumbai, India and after completing his bachelors' degree in the Mumbai University in 2010 t he came to the US for higher education to Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue his MS and PhD. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering at the same institute. In India, Anosh helped the Parsi community in his hometown of Navi Mumbai by raising money for the fire temple which was proposed to be built there. During his under graduation, he was actively involved in the core committee of his college helping organize various events, both technical and cultural. Growing up in an environment where everyone was looking to be a doctor or an engineer, he wanted to pursue something



different which made use of his avid interest in music.

During his masters' degree, he was exposed to a completely different world altogether; consisting of people from all over and coping with grad school. This helped him build himself as a stronger and patient individual in life and learnt a lot from the cultural exposure. Currently, he has started his PhD program and is working on integrated MEMS devices, specifically microspeakers, which help combine his engineering knowledge and his love for music. During his free time, he likes to lock himself away from the world and play the guitar.

**Malcolm Cooper**, a native of New Jersey, is a first year vocal performance master's student at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from the University of Delaware. An accomplished young tenor, Malcolm has tackled musical projects of a wide variety, including choral, opera, art song, musical theatre, and a-cappella singing. As a soloist, he has sung everything from the standard repertoire of classical art song and arias, to challenging new works in avant garde musical styles. While earning his music education degree at Delaware, he performed



lead roles with the University of Delaware Opera Theatre, including "Alfred" in Strauss' Die Fledermaus and "Mayor Upfold" in Benjamin Britten's Albert Herring. As a result, Malcolm is both a certified music teacher and an experienced soloist.

With the University of Delaware Chorale, Malcolm has performed in China, Spain, Germany, Hungary, and Greece, including performances for international choir competitions and global music conferences. In January 2012, Malcolm traveled to Chennai, India, where he recorded as the tenor soloist in Shanmuga Kavacham, by South Indian composer Ganesh B. Kumar. This groundbreaking grand choral work is set in the ancient Tamil language, but sung in the Western Classical style, making it the first work of its kind. Shanmuga Kavacham will be recorded with Maestro Stephan Weiler and his choir, Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart, in Germany. Malcolm is extremely proud of the work done on this project, and hopes to pursue similar projects in the future around the globe.

Malcolm's larger goals include living a responsible, happy life, dedicated to Good Words, Good Thoughts, and Good Deeds (or as Zarathushtis say Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni.) It is in these three simple and elegant tenets that Malcolm has found strength in difficult times. He will





# Scholarships

continue serving the Zarathushti community and society as a Mobedyar, and will teach prayer classes when the opportunity arises. More broadly, Malcolm is dedicated to lifelong learning, and hopes to foster growth in future generations through teaching and performing his music.

**Parmis Behmardi** moved to Canada at a young age and has lived in the province of British Columbia since then. She currently studies at the University of Toronto and is in her final year of a Master of Information program specializing in Information Systems & Design and Knowledge & Information Management. Prior to attending graduate school, Parmis studied Political Science and Commerce at the University of British Columbia and graduated with distinction.

A strong believer in the values of community service, Parmis has always been committed to giving back to her Zoroastrian community. This has included serving as the past President of the Zoroastrian Youth of



BC, assisting with the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, and serving as a community representative for different multicultural and multi-faith groups. Her academic endeavors have also been complemented by a variety of extracurricular activities and diverse professional experiences in

the government, corporate, non-profit, and academic sectors.

Parmis credits her achievements to the support and encouragement of her amazing family and the kindness and generosity of fellow Zarathushtis. She hopes to follow in their footsteps and dedicate her time, skills, and knowledge to ensuring the betterment and progress of our community.

**Anushay Mistry** was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts. She received her high school diploma in June 2010 and began her Bachelors of Arts and Sciences at Tufts University in September 2010. She is currently majoring in Biology and Community Health, with a concentration in microbiology and global health. After receiving her Bachelors of Arts and Sciences she plans to attend medical school to become a pediatrician. This past fall semester, she studied in Durban, South Africa and completed an internship at a rural hospital working in the pediatrics department as well as in the multi-drug resistant tuberculosis ward. While conducting this internship, she was able to complete a paper based on her experiences which was published in the journal of her study abroad program. Anushay is now finishing her third year at Tufts University and hopes to remain on the Dean's List of her university, which she has been on since her second year at Tufts.

Aside from academics, Anushay also enjoys spending her time involved in various extracurricular activities at Tufts University. For the past year she has served on the Executive Board for two different global health organizations as well as the director of a tutoring program that provides public schools with tutors from the university. One of the organizations, called the Global Health Network, recently nominated her as one of the co-presidents for the upcoming semester and the next academic year. Additionally, for the past two years, Anushay has interned in a laboratory



at the Boston Children's Hospital in association with the Harvard Immune Disease Institute. After meeting a fellow Zoroastrian student at her university, the two of them took an interest in re-initiating the Zoroastrians Students Association of Boston. This year they hope to gather all the Zarathushti students in Boston and reform the alliance through events such as dinners and celebrations in association with ZAGBA, the Zoroastrian Association of the Greater Boston Area.

**Benafsha Kapadia** moved to Vancouver with her family in 2002 and has since been an active youth leader in her school and community. She is currently enrolled in her third year Bachelors of Arts program in Simon Fraser University and looks forward to graduating with a degree in Political Science.

In spite of her busy school schedule, Benafsha has always made time to actively engage and make a difference in the community. She has been part of several community-wide youth projects, conferences and social change initiatives.

Over the years as a member of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, Benafsha has been a very dedicated volunteer. She has been an



# Scholarships



assistant teacher for the Zoroastrian Study Classes for children and she is currently volunteering as Treasurer for the Zoroastrian Youth of British Columbia.

Benafsha was the Events and Entertainment Coordinator for the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress held in Vancouver in July 2011. She was responsible for planning and executing various events and entertainment activities for the congress, attended by over 550 Zoroastrian youth from all over the world. As a result of the 5th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, Benafsha felt she needed to do more to build a positive identity for Zoroastrian Youth in the Vancouver community. This is why Benafsha decided to recruit a youth group for the citizenU project, an anti-discrimination and youth leadership project initiated by the City of Vancouver and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. As the Project Facilitator, she has been responsible for leading, training and motivating about twenty Zoroastrian youth through the various anti-discrimination and project development phases of the project. She has also worked hard to see the distinct groups of Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrian youth come together and build lasting connections and friendships. The project has also resulted in community building and inter-faith relations.

Over years of volunteering,

Benafsha has learned the importance of community engagement and youth leadership. As a proud Zarathushti, she plans on continuing her contributions and work with the community to bring youth together.

**Hooman Attaie** is a Zarathushti from Iran, who migrated to the US in 2010 and is now settled in Ohio. He got his Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Engineering from Iran. For better prospects, he decided to pursue his studies in the US, was admitted to the Youngstown State, University in Ohio during September, 2011 and at present he is studying for his Master's Degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering. His accomplishments at the University are many: He got High Scores and gained great experience in doing a project for re-designing the Lighting Systems in Audit Stall at General Motors. At present he is working on a process improvement project at a chemical plant to decrease input and increase output of the



Chemical Processes. He is designing quality systems to meet customers' needs. As a student at Firooz Bahram School in Tehran, he developed a love for Mathematics and because of his in-depth knowledge in Mathematics, he chose Engineering as a field of studies.

During his college studies, he interned in various Industrial Projects like participating in implanting preventive maintenance at Iran

Khodro Company. He redesigned and updated the MIS Systems for many small businesses.

During his stay in Iran he participated in various Zarathushti Social Activities., and was a member of the Kanoon Daneshjooyane Zartoshti, and on the Photographic Committee. He has an in-depth knowledge of the Gathas and Zarathushti history. He plans to write a book on the History of Zarathushtis of Iran after Islam (English Version) to enlighten the current generation of youths who have little or no knowledge about history and religious beliefs. He strongly believes that the Zarathushti Youths are the backbone of our religion and if they have a good knowledge of history and religion, they will be good practicing Zarathushtis who will be fully devoted and loyal to their religion.

**Farina Chinoy** is a 26-year old Zarathushti doing her PhD at the Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology/IITP). She was raised in India and moved to the United States after her Bachelor's degree. She went to Cal State, Fullerton for her MS in Clinical Psychology.

She has been studying psychology for eight years now, covering various types of psychology. She has extensive experience in the field and has worked as a clinician and a researcher in India and in the U.S. In India, she worked as a counselor in a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center. In the U.S., she worked as a clinician (1) as an MFT Trainee conducting psychotherapy with girls who had criminal records at the Crittenton Residential Treatment facility and (2) as a psychotherapist at the Crittenton Community Counseling Center. She has conducted various research projects at an Undergraduate and Graduate level in both countries. She has always been in good academic standing, consistently in the



# Scholarships

top 1-5% of her class. Her GPA for her B.A. was 3.83 and M.S. was 3.76. Apart from schoolwork, she has attended numerous seminars and conferences. During her Masters she was invited to serve as an expert panelist for a talk hosted by Kaplan on 'How to do well on the GRE'.

After studying and working in



conventional psychology for close to a decade she realized that something was missing and proceeded to find the answer in Transpersonal Psychology. Transpersonal Psychology is a new, cutting-edge, futuristic discipline that looks beyond the narrow, traditional focus of conventional psychology. It is an integrative/holistic and transformative psychology, which uses the world's spiritual traditions as an integrating framework for Western psychology. In line with this, she intends to be an agent of change in the world, not only by informing intellect through discourse but also by raising consciousness. Specifically, her goals include presenting at conferences, teaching, writing journal articles and continuing research in many areas. She is looking at how her work in this field may be applied to different work settings. Her personal goal involves continuing transformational work on herself, raising her own consciousness to help create transformation in others.

**Ferin Yazdani** is currently in her first year at the University of California Los Angeles pursuing her Bachelor of



Science with a Psychobiology major and a minor in Spanish. She plans to further enhance her education by attending medical school in the future. As a first step toward this goal, she was one of two participants selected to take part in the prestigious Eve and Gene Medical Summer Program in 2012.

During this internship she shadowed surgeons, specialists, and physicians at the Ronald Reagan Medical Center. Watching what actually happens in the hospital and observing doctors in practice was an incredibly eye-opening and rewarding experience that reinforced her passion in medicine. She is also part of a research team in the Molecular, Pharmacology, and Immunology department of UCLA where she studies the effects of a unique drug in counteracting the negative results of alcohol consumption, with a special emphasis on hangovers. The major benefit of the drug in the long run would be to prevent and control alcohol withdrawal diseases.

Besides excelling academically, Ferin is very committed to her Persian and Zarathushti community. She was born in Tehran, Iran, and lived there for more than half of her life. Thus she carries a strong sense of pride for the Zarathushti and Iranian community that helped her transition to the American lifestyle when she moved to the United States in 2005.

Consequently, she has and will continue to contribute to the community that has helped and supported her throughout her journey. She is a member of the Persian American Society for Health Advancement, a non-profit organization.

She holds a position in the Health Education Committee where she focuses on informing and spreading health education among the Persian Community. Moreover, as a committed and active Zarathushti, she consistently helps with the preparation of different cultural events and celebrations.

She volunteered at her local Zoroastrian Center as a dance choreographer and teacher of a group of young girls. She prepared multiple traditional dances for the girls to perform during major Zoroastrian and Iranian events, such as Norouz and Jashne Mehregan. She works towards making the Zarathushi religion more known in America by excelling both inside and outside of her religious and cultural community. The Vakhshoori scholarship will go a long way in helping her achieve that goal and for that she is very grateful.

**Kaizad Patel** is a second year Master of Environmental Studies





# Scholarships

(MES) student at the University of Pennsylvania, focusing on earth sciences. He is a Graduate Research Assistant as part of the Luquillo Critical Zone Observatory (LCZO) based in Puerto Rico. His current research involves analyzing soil samples to understand the genesis and distribution of various soil types across the research site.

Kaizad received his Bachelor of Pharmacy from the University of Mumbai, where he was also involved with a number of student organizations, notably the Indian Pharmaceutical Association - Students' Forum (IPA-SF). He has been the Vice-Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Branch of the organization and has helped organize a number of student events, including public awareness and public health campaigns (AIDS, diabetes, tobacco, tuberculosis), technical seminars and symposia as well as inter-college cultural and sports festivals. He has been on the editorial board of student magazines and news-magazines at the state and national level as well. Kaizad is keen on pursuing a Ph. D. on completion of his MES program. He hopes to gain experience with forest and soil science and apply that to the cycling of elements in the ecosystem.

**ERVAD Karl Khambatta** was born in Flushing, New York and was raised in Ridgewood, New Jersey. He became a Navar at age nine and a Martab at age twelve from Patel Agiary in Mumbai, India. As a priest, Karl has performed two Navjote ceremonies and participated in several Jashan and Mukta prayers at the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY). Karl began taking religious classes at ZAGNY as a child and has remained actively involved with ZAGNY ever since.

For the past four years, Karl has taught Religion and Shah-Nameh Stories to students between the ages of nine and twelve.

At the 2012 XVI North American

Zarathushti Congress held in Rye, New York, Karl had the distinct privilege to give a presentation on the translation of the daily Kusti Prayers. This session was very well received by the audience members and has sparked the interest of many young Zarathushtis.

Karl graduated High School with High Honors and was involved in many extracurricular activities. As leader of Asian Festival, Karl spread Indian culture through dance at an annual benefit performance. As Co-President of the Stock Market Club, was able to share his knowledge and passion for the subject with his peers. Additionally, as a member of the Debate Team, Federal Challenge Club, and Solar Cell Club at



Ridgewood High School.

Karl was highly active with his High School concert band and was a member of the Percussion Ensemble and Marching Band and served as Band Council Treasurer during his junior year. Following graduation from High School, Karl did a summer internship at Citigroup where he worked in the Deferred Tax Accounting group.

Karl is currently a freshman at Cornell University where he is studying Hotel Administration with a Concentration in Corporate Finance and Financial Consulting. At Cornell, Karl has joined several clubs and organizations including Cornell Hospitality Consulting, Cornell

Behavioral Economic and Finance Organization and Cornell Aviation Society. Karl hopes to excel academically at Cornell and aspires to become a successful restaurateur by establishing restaurants in major cities across the country.

Lastly, Karl will always remain close to the Zarathushti community in North America and will continue to proudly share his heritage with others while living his life according to the path of Asha.

**Nadia Kharas Mistry** is currently a fourth year student in the naturopathic medical program at Bastyr University in Seattle. Her journey in search of purpose and passion has often taken her far from family and friends. She grew up in Karachi, Pakistan and moved to the US in 1999 to attend the University of Texas at Dallas where she graduated with honors in computer science and psychology. In 2009, after 5 years in a successful corporate career she had the opportunity to follow her true passion and return to school to study medicine. When she is not in school she can be found enjoying cooking, yoga or exploring the great outdoors of the Pacific Northwest (only when its sunny!).



Nadia was drawn to the study of naturopathic medicine for its unique ability to blend the science of medicine with the art of being a healer. Wellness is not the same as being symptom free, rather, it is a state of being in



# Scholarships

balance physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually that allows us to experience a sense of aliveness.

Her vision is to create an integrative clinic where various medical practitioners come together and adopt a patient-centered model focusing on prevention, wellness, and education. She hopes to empower patients to improve their health and well-being using herbal medicine, clinical nutrition, homeopathy and lifestyle counseling.

Nadia is passionate about helping Naturopathic medicine enter mainstream healthcare so everyone has equal access to quality health

care. She intends to utilize her practice as a basis for community outreach, to offer educational classes and workshops that make healthy and sustainable living accessible to all.

In line with this goal she has worked at an integrative clinic serving Native American Indians and alongside a nurse worked at a day shelter for abused women and children. She is also a member of the alternative healthcare access campaign and has volunteered at the free clinic for homeless and transitional housing clients.

Nadia is grateful to her husband for

encouraging her to pursue her calling and to her family for their constant support and encouragement. She thanks the Vakhshoori committee for their support in helping her achieve her goals.

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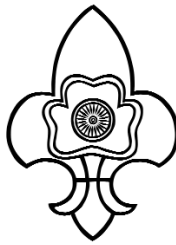




## *Guest Editor*



World Scout emblem



Bharat Scouts



Scouts America



SCOUTS CANADA



I have always believed that one goes to school and university to get an education and attain skills. This ultimately helps one get a job, run a business (or a nation!) or invent a new paradigm that changes the world forever. And for whatever one does not learn at school or university there is Scouting and Guiding!

One joins a Scout Troop or a Guide Company at an early impressionable age to acquire life skills that lead to a fuller, self-reliant and independent life. This is a hypothesis that I have come to based on my personal experience.

When Scouting came to India in the first decade of the 20th Century Indians tried it with trepidation. In 1914, one Parsi Zarathushti in Bombay, India, took it upon himself to partake of this “social experiment with youth”. And, the rest, as they say, is history.

Parsis were one of the first communities to embrace Scouting and Guiding. In Mumbai, many Parsis have either been part of a Scout troops or Girl Guide companies, or know another who has. What is it that has drawn generations of Zarathushtis spread over a century to contribute and excel at something that is entirely voluntary? At its best, Scouting provides a series of experiences and the opportunity to develop a plethora of skills that together create a more rounded human being.

Scouting and Guiding bonds generations. The mere mention of a memorable camping incident many decades ago brings smiles to the faces of old men and women as they reminisce and a young teenager listening in, can relate to these experiences as though they were contemporaries.

In this special issue on “*Scouting and Guiding and the Zarathushti Connection*” we have tried to explore the involvement of the community in the movement. The journey starts from the Indian sub-continent to its modern day manifestation in North America where a major diaspora now resides. From India’s oldest Scout Group, the Sethna’s 18th West Bombay to North America’s youngest Zarathushti Scout Group; the 100th Oakville Group, the Zarathushti connection provides fascinating stories.

In some cases, as many as four generations of a family have gone through the same scout troop. Rovers from one troop come together on another continent and start their own troop. Community leaders in the diaspora attribute their successes to the skills the movement taught them. Young Zarathushti boys and girls in North America live and embrace the ideals of Scouting and Guiding. And local Zarathushti Anjumans support and nurture their own Scout Groups. You will read the fascinating stories of some of these troops in the pages ahead.

Scouting offered me opportunities I could never have imagined. It allowed me to travel the country and the world. And build enough memories in the first two decades of my being to serve a life time. In reading this issue, the hope is Zarathushti parents of today will consider recreating the same experiences for their children here in North America. And who knows, it may spur some readers to reach out to their old Scout Troops and Guide Companies and re-connect to celebrate those “glory days of childhood”.

Yours in Scouting

**ARZAN SAM WADIA**

**Arzan Sam Wadia** joined the Sethna’s 18th West Bombay Scout Group as a second-generation Scout. Rising through the Group’s ranks he was awarded the President’s Scout Award in 1988. He had the singular honor of being the Troop Leader of the Indian Contingent to the 17th World Scout Jamboree at Mount Sorak, Korea in 1991. Living in New York with his wife Shirrin, he continues to be involved with the Troop, maintaining its web presence; and is a regular at Troop meetings and camps on his annual visits to Mumbai, India. Scouting runs in the Wadia family. Arzan’s father, Sam, is an active Scouter in the same group, and his sister, Mehernaaz, an active Guider and a holder of the Himalaya Wood Badge.



# A Century of Scouting Excellence

Arzan Sam Wadia

## THE SETHNA'S 18th WEST BOMBAY

Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group 1994



### SCOUT GROUP

What started as a mere idea, an experiment, nearly a century ago on August 14, 1914, has today become an institution without parallel in India and perhaps even the world. This is the story of Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group, India's oldest continuously running Scout Group. When **Rustomji Edulji Sethna** stumbled upon a book, "Scouting for Boys" by Lord Robert Baden Powell, on the then relatively unknown topic of Boy Scouting, the brilliance and vision in the man saw it as a building block of society and a way to pave the road to good citizenship for young boys at an early age.



**Scouter Sethna** (photo left) was born into a priestly family in Bombay on February 28, 1892. He joined the St. John Ambulance Brigade, (Parsi Division) in 1909 as a Private and rose to be the First Officer. When he discovered Boy Scouting,

he was determined to trial its teaching and invited some of the participants in the St. John Ambulance Brigade First Aid

classes to band together and learn about Scouting. Soon thereafter, Scouter Sethna founded a scout troop which later became the 18th/19th Bombay Boy Scout Group under the auspices of the "Parsee Scouting Society".

Scouter Sethna was, undoubtedly, the Grand Old Man of Scouting in Bombay. His humility, humbleness, discipline and above all ability to communicate with young boys endeared him to all those that knew him. Scouter Sethna was ably assisted at all times by his wife, *Najamai*, who was considered the "mother" of the Troop. "Sethna Sir" as he was fondly called, passed away on November 21, 1954, leaving behind a legacy that still lives on through the lives of the scouts that pass through the Troop. After Scouter Sethna's death, the Troop was renamed Sethna's Scouting Society and the Group became *Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group ("18th West")*. In its heyday, 18th West was over 60 boys strong. Since each troop cannot have more than 32 boys, the 19th West Bombay was added as another troop. For decades the Sethna boys were known as the 18th-19th Troop.

When first founded in 1914, 18th West was only open to Parsi boys. Soon after Indian Independence, Scouter Sethna opened membership to all boys, truly embracing the underlying ideal of the fourth part of the Scout Law that states "A Scout is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout". Nonetheless, religion plays a very important part in the life of 18th West and close to eighty percent of its members are Parsi. The Group's official badge is a logo



## SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY OF LIFE



seven years later. The Rover Crew provides a yeoman's service to 18th West and to Sethna's Scouting Society. Many Rovers continue to become Cub masters, Scoutmasters and Rover Leaders. The Sea Scout Troop within 18th West was started in 1962 under the Scout Mastership of Scouter S.R. Daroona who had received special sea scouting training at a course held in Khadakvasla by *Commander K.B. Godrej and Scouter Keki A. Gilder, both alumni of 18th West*. This Sea Scout Troop is the only active Sea Scout Troop in Mumbai and celebrated its Golden Jubilee last year (photo left).

Cubs and Scouts of 18th West work hard to learn Scoutcraft. Rovers, with their experience, provide the support needed by the Scouters; all with the intent of molding the boys to be better citizens of a fast changing world. *Captain Lavji Mistry, Group Leader (Scouts)* notes that *"The Troop has always had a belief that a good Scout Master must always be a Master Scout, that he should have a thorough knowledge of scouting, he must be a good Leader as also a good member of the team."* The result is that Sethna's scouters have a long tradition of service to the group, enabling the Group to retain its traditions, efficiency and the same exacting standards of excellence since its inception.

Cubs and Scouts are taken on training camps, annual camps, hikes and outings, to instill in them a love for the outdoors, team spirit and an awareness of self. Costs for these events are kept to an absolute minimum, and financial aid is provided to those in need. As recently as the mid-nineties, the annual fee for 18th West was Rs 1.50 (2 cents) for Cubs and Rs 3 (5 cents) for Scouts, with the cost of an all-inclusive 7 day annual camp at Rs 60 (\$1.10). The Sethna's Scouting Society raises funds through donations and special events. All the money is properly invested and the interest on investment combined with the purely voluntary nature of each person's services, adequately covers the Group's operating costs.

Today the Cub Pack, Scout and Sea Scout Troop and the Rover Crew number over one hundred. A core team of a dozen Cub Masters, Scout Masters and Rover Leaders are responsible for the daily affairs of 18th West. The Managing Committee of the Sethna's Scouting Society manages the affairs of the Troop including finance, long term planning and major decision making. The 18th West has, for decades, met twice a week: Saturdays at 4:30 pm and Sunday at 7:45 am.



depicting the rising sun with the words 'Humata, Hukhta and Huvarasta'. All meetings end with prayers with the Troop's Yell being **"S-E-T-H-N-A // SETHNA'S 18TH WEST BOMBAY // MOTTO OF 18th IS IN THREE// PURITY OF THOUGHTS, WORDS AND DEEDS //AHURA, AHURA, AHURA MAZDA"**.

Today at 18th West, young boys are welcomed to the Cub Pack at age six, moving to the Scout Troop or the Sea Scout Troop when they are eleven, and graduate as Rovers



Scouters and leaders have imparted training and experience to the scouting movement at the State and National Level and, as a testament, the Troop counts amongst its own a few Silver Elephant Awardees, the highest Scouting award in India. Scouts are encouraged to achieve the Rashtrapati Scout Award, the highest award for a Boy Scout in India currently. Participation at National and World Jamborees is encouraged and facilitated. The Troop was represented by three of its Rovers at the last World Scout Jamboree in 2011. The Society offers educational scholarships at all levels of education, encouraging its members to get a fully-rounded education.

Additionally, many of the Rovers of the Group have branched out and formed their own scout troops some of which are still functioning. Some of the most famous Parsi troops were started by alumni of the 18th West, including the 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Scout Troop and the 8th East Bombay Talati's Group founded by Ardeshir Jilla and Rustom Talati respectively. Scouter Sethna's scouting vision continues to flourish and expand even today.

My own scouting memories start with absolute clarity on a Sunday morning in July 1980 when I was all of six years old. My father's childhood scout friend, then Rover Leader Adi K. Mistry, stopped by our house and admonished my father for not enrolling me in the Troop. An hour later, I found myself at 18th West. That simple act changed my life forever. My 33 year association with Sethna Scouting Society, continues a multi-generational family tradition. Life-long friendships have been forged at hikes and camps and Jamborees. Skills were acquired, many of which have come in good standing.

How 18th West will succeed in the next century is uncertain. In a world of many distractions, the group's biggest challenge is in maintaining the numbers of boys. Yet, the fact that the 18th West Bombay has the singularly unique privilege of now being able to welcome a fourth generation of young boys is a testament to the Troop's values and durability. In the century since its founding, thousands of boys have passed through the Group's portals and benefited from Scouter Sethna's principles in action. Many have achieved great professional success, not only in India but all over the world. In talking to 18th West alumnae one is made keenly aware that the founding vision of one large scouting family remains alive and well.

Scouter Daroona sums it up best when he says "To be better citizens, to become leaders of tomorrow's nation, to understand and appreciate the idea of the world as a global village, [that] is the mission of Sethna's 18th West Bombay". May it always remain so.

**Arzan Sam Wadia** is an active Rover of the Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group. Arzan is a board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and also runs Parsi Khabar ([www.parsikhobar.net](http://www.parsikhobar.net)) an online portal about Parsis. He lives in New York City with his wife Shirrin and works as an architect and urban designer. Riding his motorcycle to work every day awakens his senses like nothing else.



"Scouts and Rover of the 18th West perform the Ava Yazad Jashan Ceremony on a boat in the Mumbai harbor."

## QUOTES

"Through Scouting we utilize the boy's spare time, we train him in leadership and citizenship; we teach him to be self-reliant, honest and loyal. In short by Scouting we make a man out of a boy, a man full of character, a man who will lead the nation tomorrow in one field or another".

- **Soli R. Daroona, Sea Scout Master; Sethna's 18th West Bombay**

"The quest to excel in the everyday world is eternal and is the strongest legacy left behind by the founding father that passed away 59 years ago."

- **Scouter Noshir M Mistry, Chairman of the Sethna's Scouting Society**

The challenges facing the troop today are many. In a globalized world of cut throat competition for every individual's attention, there are more and more reasons for a boy to be distracted by temporary and superficial attractions. In this scenario, the group faces the biggest challenge in maintaining the numbers of boys.

- **Homiar J. Hathiram, Rover; Sethna's 18th West Bombay**

"What differs the 18th West from countless other groups is that we believe in the adage 'Quality in Quantity'." With a fast changing world amid technological advances, the group finds the need to change and modify to today's needs to be more relevant and useful in its mission of making better men out of boys!!

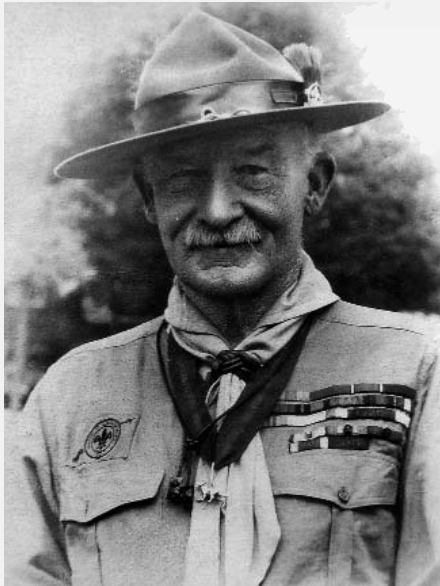
- **Yazdi Randelia, Scout Master; Sethna's 18th West Bombay**

"As we move ahead, we also look back at the tremendous sacrifices of our past and present scouters, who by their dint of hard work, love for the troop and loyalty to it, have gone out of their way to keep this flame alive."

- **Neville M. Mistry, Cub Master; Sethna's 18th West Bombay**



## Parsis in scouting: the early decades



Sometime in 1907 **Lord Robert Louis Stephenson Smith Baden Powell** of Gilwell, known simply as Baden Powell (or B.P.) photo above, started a program of informal education with an emphasis on practical outdoor activities, including camping, woodcraft, aquatics, hiking, backpacking, and sports. This movement came to be known worldwide as Boy Scouting, after the seminal book by B.P. called *Scouting for Boys*.

Scouting in India started within two to three years of the start of the movement in England. At first it was restricted to Bangalore, Calcutta and Bombay. In the beginning Scouting was confined to European boys only and then it spread slowly to the 'Native' boys.

Parsis were the pioneers in Scouting as they were in so many other things in India. The romance of Parsi Scouting in India began when the grand old man of Indian Scouting, Rustomji Edulji Sethna began the first Indian Scout Troop, then known as the Parsee Scouting Society on 14th August 1914 in Mumbai As scouting progressed in Bombay, it gave birth to two Associations in the city, viz. the European and the Indian. This turn of events did not please the patriotic soul

of Mr. Sethna, and he protested very strongly against such discrimination in a movement that espoused the doctrine of World Brotherhood.

He single handedly corresponded with the authorities in power and carried the matter right up to the Chief Scout Baden Powell himself, till the matter was put before the Council of the Imperial Headquarters of the British Empire. It was finally decided to have only one Scout Association for the whole of India, in which both the European and Indian troops could be registered. When these negotiations were in progress, some of the Indian troops got themselves registered with the then existing Association. The result was that the troop started by Mr. Sethna, though started first, had to get itself registered later, and was given the number 18th – 19th, under which the group achieved its fame. The Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Troop celebrates its centenary next year. (see page 37)

Scouter Sethna nurtured the first generation of Parsi Scouts and provided them the skills in leadership that enabled them to start their own troops. Thus came about 16th/17th Scout Troop started in 1920 by Ardeshir Jilla and functioning today as the 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Boy Scouts. Around the same year Rustom Talati, another alumni of the 18th-19th went on to start the 8th East Talati's Scout Troop. In the mid 1920's Com. K.B. Godrej, a good friend of Scouter Sethna, started the 33rd Scout Troop

Bombay truly became the hub of Parsi scouting in the early decades. In 1923 the first Bombay Presidency Boy Scouts Rally was held in Ganeshkind (now Shivaji Nagar, Pune) and was attended by large numbers of scouts from all over Bombay and Gujarat.

The ultimate event in Scouting is a World Jamboree and once again the Parsi presence was strong at the 2nd

**ARZAN SAM WADIA**  
World Jamboree at Copenhagen, Denmark in 1924. Scouter Rustom Talati and Comm. K. B. Godrej led a full contingent of scouts who went by sea on a passenger steamer and on this voyage came up with the famous "Bombay Yell".

Scouters Talati and Godrej took Parsi scouting to great heights both at the individual and collective levels. Both these great veterans were the first to attend the Himalaya Wood Badge courses at Gilwell Park in England sometime around 1925. **Comm. Godrej** after his return, was the first to conduct these courses for Cub-Masters and Scout-Masters in India. His services were recognized by the Imperial Headquarters and he was made the "**Akela Leader**" and Deputy Camp Chief of the Bombay Presidency in 1933. Years later he became the very first recipient of the '*Silver Elephant*' which is the highest award in Scouting in post-Independence India.

The year 1927 saw the very first All India Scout Jamboree being held at the Jamboree Maidan in Worli, Bombay. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy and Chief Scout of India, took the salute at the March Past at the Mahalakshmi Race course in Bombay. Also present was **Dr. Annie Besant**, National Commissioner Scouting, India. **Scouters Khurshed D. Mistry and Scouter Homi D. Bharucha** led the Bugle Marching Band at the parade.

In the 1930's there were a spate of national level competitions like the Sir Reginald Spence Cup Competition and the Sir Frederick Sykes Ambulance Challenge Cup. There was fierce competition for the same and year after year the Parsi Scout Troops of those days had a stranglehold on the winning position.

While Bombay was a stronghold of Parsi Scouting, there were other troops in other cities too. Scouter Ardeshir Batliwalla moved to Calcutta in 1933





and started a Scout Group within the Saklat Physical Culture Institute (SPCI). In a telephonic interview his grandson Nauzer informs us that the troop is alive and kicking today. Nauzar mentions that any and all Parsi boys who have grown up in Calcutta have passed through the SPCI troop, and this was reaffirmed by **Farrokh Patel of Califon, New Jersey**. Farrokh says "it was a great program and helped young Parsi boys work and learn together".

**Scouter Sheheryar Kaosji** of Hyderabad had a lifelong involvement with the movement in Hyderabad. He joined the scouting movement as a student of the St. George's Grammar School, and remained a scout for life. As a school teacher he was also a Boy Scout Commissioner, and at every institution he headed, he made sure to introduce a Boy Scouts troop. He was very proud of the Blind Boys Scout Troop in his school, which had one of the better known marching bands among scout troops in Hyderabad in the 1940's.

Parsi scouters rose to high ranks at local, state and national levels. Today one of the senior most trainers of the Bharat Scouts and Guides is Scouter **Dr. Cyrus Wadia**, Leader Trainer (S). Besides being a leading cardiac surgeon in India, he finds time to train leaders all over India and neighboring countries. In an extensive telephonic interview Scouter Wadia spoke about the core values that he has seen across Parsis involved in Scouting. Dedication, integrity, public service and a quest for excellence are some of the virtues that he feels have made Parsi Scouting and Scouts a class apart. Recipient of various local and National awards in Scouting, he was recently felicitated at the Asia Pacific Level in November 2012.

The glory days of Parsi Scouting were the decades of the 1950's, 60's and 70's. **Navroze Siganporia, Rover Leader** of the 16th East Bombay reminisced about the large number of fellow young Scouts in the 1960's when he was growing up. "That was

*the one activity every boy looked forward to, come Sunday"* he said.

At 91, **Scouter Khurshed D. Hathiram** of Bandra, Bombay; embodies the Parsi Scouting connection. He has spent all his life volunteering for Scouting activities. Till his late 70's he would attend grueling National Jamborees. Even today he is a regular fixture at the East Bombay Camporee, imparting training to Scouts and Guides. An example of his longevity in scouting comes from the fact that he was my examiner for the Plumber's Badge in 1987. And he was also my father's examiner for the Pioneer Badge in 1962. Continuing to work in a voluntary capacity, he shuns awards and stays true to the Scouting ideal of service.

The Parsi Scout troops were often called the Open Scout Groups, because they were not attached to academic or government institutions. Besides these open scout troops, Parsis were involved in Scouting activities in other avenues too. Those who worked for the Railways, helped start and ran Scouting troops there. **Scouters Minoo Anklesaria, Jal Engineer and Burjor Mistry** were for decades the pillars that guided Western Railway Scouts.

Others established Scout troops in schools. A lot of the Jesuit and Parsi Schools in Bombay embraced Scouting whole-heartedly. Scouter **Homi K. Lala** of the 13th East Bombay St. Xaviers School and Scouter Pesi Damania of the 15th East New Bharda Academy raised the bar amongst Scouting troops attached to academic institutions.

Eminent Parsi families like the Jeejeebhoy's offered patronage to the Scouting movement. **Late Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy KT. J.P.** became the first President of the 32nd West Bombay Pioneer Scout Group (attached to the BJPC Institute and School in Bombay) when it was founded in 1922. He remained so, for the next twenty-two years till his death in 1946. He devoted his life to the

entire Scouting movement in India as the Provincial Commissioner of the Bombay Province and was a recipient of the Silver Elephant – the highest award in those days, given at the hands of Sir John Colville, the Governor of Bombay at a special rally held in his honor at Cooperage in Mumbai.

In a telephonic interview Scouter **Dara Mehta of the 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Scout Group** spoke fondly about the Scout Masters of the yesteryears. He attributed a lot of the success of those Scouting years to the strict and fair discipline laid out by Scout Masters like **Padam Pavri of the 16th East**. Scouter Pavri started out as a Scout at the Sethna's 18th West and then graduated to become a rover. He joined the 16th East where he rose to be a legendary Scout master.

Scouter **Jehangir S. Mehta** of the 51st West Bombay was another such luminary whose stamp over Parsi Scouting was felt for decades and is alive even today through the lives of his scouts.

Finally it is a matter of great satisfaction to us that even today there are a number of Parsi Troops in Mumbai and Calcutta where Scouting is handed over from generation to generation.

This article has been put together with major inputs from *Scouter Dr. Cyrus Wadia, L.T. (S) Bharat Scouts and Guides; Sea Scout Master Soli R. Daroona, Sethna's 18th West Bombay and Scouter Noshir M. Mistry, Chairman of Sethna's Scouting Society.*

Thanks are extended to

- *Scouters Dara Mehta, Navroz Siganporia, Noshir Randellia and Rover Khushnood Viccaji of the 16th East Bombay Scout Group.*
- *Scouter Nauzer Batliwala of the SPCI Scout Troop Calcutta.*
- *Scouter Lavji Mistry Group Leader (S); Sethna's 18th West Bombay*





## SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY OF LIFE

**Arzan Sam Wadia** is an active Rover of the Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group. He was awarded the President's Scout Award in 1988 and led the Indian Scout contingent as the Troop Leader to the

17th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea. Originally from Bombay, he currently resides in New York City with his wife Shirrin; and works as an architect and urban designer. Arzan is a board member of the Zoroastrian

Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and also runs Parsi Khabar ([www.parsikhavar.net](http://www.parsikhavar.net)) an online portal about Parsis.

A number of Parsis held high positions in the Scouting movement in India. Some examples are given below:

<p><b>National HQ</b></p> <p>Commander Keki Godrej</p> <p><b>State Headquarters</b></p> <p>Noshir Pundole N.J.K. Khan K. R. Readymoney Keki A Gilder Padam S. Pavri Naval R. Dordi Homi K. Lala Khurshed D. Hathiram Khusroo F. Chinoy Bahadur Palkhiwala Jehangir Shroff <i>and many others.</i></p>	<p><b>Bombay City (West Bombay District)</b></p> <p>R.E. Sethna Principal Banaji Dr. N.R. Dordi Khurshed D. Mistry Dorab Mistry Jehanbux Cooper N.M. Mistry Rustom Talati Dr. N. Billimoria J.D. Surti P.D. Chaina M.B. Shroff</p>	<p><b>Bombay City (East Bombay District)</b></p> <p>Scouter Colabawala Homi K. Lala Minoo Damania Pesi Damania R.R. Dalal</p> <p><b>Bombay (Suburban)</b> Sorab Talati</p>
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### List of other Active Parsi Scouters In Bombay

<p>R.M. Cooper C.R. Mistry Dr. J.A Gilder D.M. Patel J.S. Master</p>	<p>S.R. Daroona H.D. Lavangia M.B. Gilder Manekshaw E. Mistry R.R. Dalal</p>	<p>Bahadur Palkhiwala K. D. Hathiram Burjor Lavangia Col. Petigara K.A. Jilla</p>
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The above lists are from memory only and any missing names are regretted.





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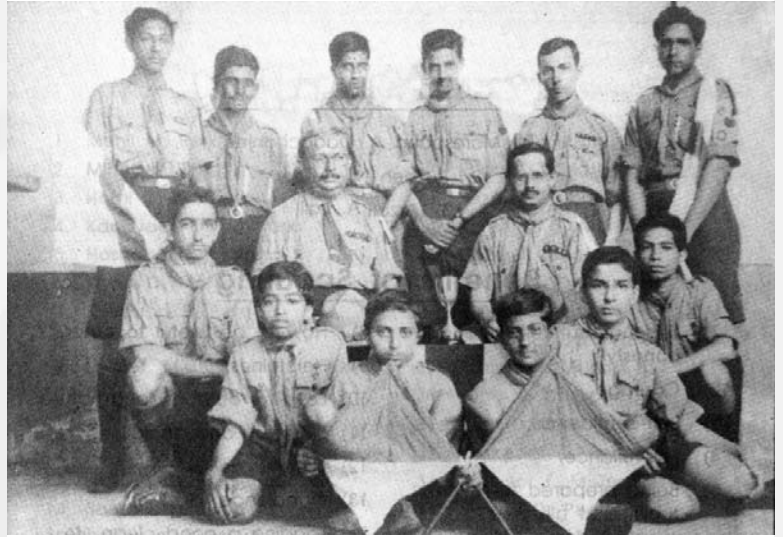
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# SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY OF LIFE



1930 Signalling



1931 Signalling



1935 Group Photo



1945 Cub Pack Grand Howl



1955 Rover Hike



# GIRL GUIDING THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY

SHERNAZ ASPI ACHARIA & MEHERNAAZ SHOVIK IRANI (WADIA)

*The Zarathushti religion is based on good thoughts, good words and good deeds.*

*Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta are the three tenets on which the religion revolves.*

Lord Robert Stephenson Smith Baden Powell started the Scouting Movement over a hundred years ago in England. Scouting for Boys was a program conceived and planned mainly for the benefit of British boys. The ideas and program set out in Scouting for Boys were however so universal that it was not long before they had travelled across the English Channel to many lands beyond the Seas. In time, it was introduced in India.

The Parsi Community was amongst the foremost to adopt Scouting into their lives. In 1914, sometime in August, a troop by the name of Parsi Scouting Society was formed by the late **Mr. Rustomji Edulji Sethna**. It still exists and will celebrate its centenary next year. The members of the Parsi Community were well-educated and spoke fluent English which was the reason behind their proximity to the British and the community's adoption of Scouting.

## THE ALL-INDIA GIRL GUIDES ORGANIZATION IS BORN

Initially the Indian girls were not allowed to enroll as Girl Guides. Notwithstanding, the girls soon caught up and many Parsi ladies took to the Guiding Movement as a way of social work/service. The All-India Girl Guides Organization came into being soon after the visit of the Founder and the Chief Guide in 1921. It also became a founder member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

## MERGER OF BOY SCOUTS AND GIRL GUIDES BHARAT SCOUTS AND GUIDES

After the formation of the Bharat Scouts and Guides, **Mrs. H. C. Captain, Chief Commissioner** of the then All India Girl Guides Association was invited to join the Merger Committee, if the Girl Guide Association so desired so that the Scout and Guide Movements could work in tandem. Various women, who were already established as driving forces in their respective states as members of the All India Association then took up positions of authority in the National Organizational structure of the Bharat Scouts and Guides. Amongst others, Chief Commissioner Mrs. H. C. Captain, Mrs. Tehmi Asha and Ms. S. B. Rustomjee were elected.

One of the main problems of the Movement in the early years was finance. Efforts were made to collect money for training and publications. The Association secured small grants-in-aid from prominent business names, specifically

Lady Ratan Tata and Lady Cowasji Jehangir amongst others.

## PARTICIPATION OF ZARATHUSHTI WOMEN

Among the many Zarathushti ladies who worked hard for the Association in the 1930-60s were **Mrs. LalKaka, Mrs. P. M. Khareghat, Ms. Homai Mehta and Mrs. Zinobia R. Ranji**. At the ground level, in Mumbai, the participation of Zarathushti women in the Guiding Movement was unprecedented. The women who featured prominently in the guiding movement were **Mrs. Siloo Zaiwala, Guide Captain at the St. Annes High School, the late Mrs. Veera Kapadia, Mrs. Banoo Cama, Mrs. Nergish Patel, Mrs. Roda Khambatta, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Homai Jilla, Mrs. Shirin Wadia, Mrs. Naju Pundole and Ms. Kanga**. Most of these women were either Guide Captains, Bulbul Flock Leaders or District Officials along with being Leader Trainers at the National Level.

These women have trained and nurtured generations of women in the Guiding way. Their dedication to the cause has been so infectious that the girls who learnt under them have imbibed that dedication and are now taking forward that legacy.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

For a lot of us, it is our version of community service. It's the medium by which girls with common religious backgrounds come together and grow together and then nurture together. From the above names, it is amply clear



that a lot of women took to service to the community at large by being involved whole-heartedly in the movement at various levels. The list above is not comprehensive by far. The names are just the prominent ones who have done great visible service impacting hundreds, thousands and even more girls depending on the position and influence of



the Guider. There are just as many unsung heroines in our movement here in India who are most probably remembered only in the most fond memories of the girls that passed under them and who are now proud upstanding citizens doing their bit to make the world a better place.

At present, one will find more Zarathushti women involved in guiding than one can count on both fingers. The women come from all strata of society and work with all strata of society. Therefore we have a Mrs. Prochi Tachakra, Guide Captain, 14th Central Bombay Scottish School Company a school primarily catering to elite children in Mumbai. Mrs. Tachakra has won various awards at the Asia-Pacific Level and is founder member of the Friends of Sangam, Asia-Pacific Region (Sangam is one of the 4 World Guide Centers located in Pune). On the other hand there is the 71st Zoroastrian Bharat Guides, an exclusive Zarathushti guide company and the 68th Talati's Guide Company who, in spite of not being exclusive are primarily Zarathushti, especially at the trainer level. (See picture below) Guiders at camp take in Zarathushti girls irrespective of their status in life.

### ATTRACTION OF THE GUIDING MOVEMENT

What is it that makes us young women join and then keep going back year after year for decades? Maki Majra, Guide Captain of the 71st Zoroastrian Guides remembers sitting at her window as a small girl looking on at a slightly



68th Talati's Guiders

older girl from her colony dressed out in full uniform and carrying staffs to head somewhere, obviously adventurous. At that age, when there was no entertainment for a young girl outside of school than the odd rubber ball or doll gifted by parents or relatives, the thrill of the possibilities that lay in becoming a guide must have rivaled that of Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci combined before they set out on their historic voyages.

It is this thrill of the unknown, of adventure galore, of the basic human urge to explore and experience things beyond

the ordinary everyday which brought all of us women to this movement, whether this urge surfaced 80 years ago or 8 months ago. Moreover, as Zarathushtis, we tend to be more liberal and supportive of our children heading out to learn and experience in a safe and reliable environment. For many poor Zarathushti families it is the best way to ensure that their children travel to new places since the parents themselves could not afford family holidays. Another factor, which contributed to the large number of Zarathushti women in the movement, is an oft-underrated reason; the sense of equality amongst sons and daughters in our community. Our parents over the last few generations have never failed to remind us girls that we have as much of a right to education, good clothes, friends and self respect as the boys in our lives. This right extended to participation in this glorious movement which our fathers and brothers were part of. A lot of women will pinpoint this as perhaps the primary reason they joined guiding... because their brother, cousin, neighbor or parents went too.

Amongst the various Guide Companies in Mumbai today, the two with the maximum Zarathushti members are the 68th Talati's and the 71st Zoroastrians. Rivals at the district level where they compete often, but held together by more common threads than they realize.

68th Talati's was started in 1987 as the Guide Wing of the already active and flourishing 8th East Talati's Scout Group that is still strong at 91 years running. The Company started with a few girls who were all either sisters, cousins or neighbors of scouts in the Talati's Scout Group. The late Ms. Banoo Talati, stalwart and State Organizing Commissioner of the Western Railway Guide Section, being the niece of the founder of Talati's Scouts took up the mantle along with Mrs. Shernaz Acharia who is still Group Leader and who is the glue that keeps the Company together. The 68th is an open group, not affiliated to any school and is inclusive, with girls of every community welcomed. But over the years for reasons never understood, it's the Zarathushti girls who have stayed on to become leaders and train the next generation.

The founders of the 16th Zoroastrian Scouts who felt the need for a guide wing started the 71st Zoroastrian Guides in 1993. Mrs. Maki Majra, in the movement since 1951 heads the 71st Guides. The 71st are unique as an exclusive Zarathushti guide company. Their community involvement is immense. Every year they sponsor the navjote of one poor deserving Zarathushti child. Even the guides contribute to these navjotes and their collections are turned into fixed deposits for the navjote children. They collect old clothes and food from friends and distribute them to poor Parsi families. They also donate new sadras and clothes to various Rural Homes for parsi students in Surat and Navsari. When on camps, the members of the Guide and Scout Groups contribute some elbow grease to cleaning agiaries if there happen to be any near the camping



location. They have effortlessly intertwined guiding and Zarathushti spirit in their regular guiding activities.

Guiding cannot be separated from the Zarathushti religion. As a young Zarathushti girl one learns that Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds are the rules by which we can live honorable lives. When that girl comes to

guiding, she learns the absolute same thing when her Guider teaches her the 9th part of the Guide Law:

“A Guide is pure in thought, word and deed”.



**Shernaz Aspi Acharia** lives in Mumbai. She is the Group Leader of the 68th Talati's East Bombay Guide Company and also the District Commissioner of the East Bombay Bharat Scouts and Guides. She has been the recipient of various awards in Guiding and considers the movement to be an intrinsic part of her life. (photo right)

**Mehernaaz Shovir Irani (Wadia)** lives in Mumbai. She is a lawyer and practices privately. She has been a guide since 1992 and is now Asst. Guide Captain at 68th Talati's East Bombay Guide Company. She believes she was born into guiding. (photo left)



## SCOUTS AND GIRL GUIDES MOVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

### Remembering the Leaders

### Acknowledging their Contributions



**GOOL S. MEHTA**

Bai Virbaijee Soparivala (BVS) Parsi High School for boys (est. 1859) and Mama Parsi High School for girls (est. 1918) have always been leading educational institutions in Karachi. Their respective alumni, the Virbaijeeites and Mamaians have

made remarkable achievements and contributions in Pakistan and around the world. Both these institutions were pioneers in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movements in pre-partition India as well as in the new nation of Pakistan after 1947.

This article provides a brief history of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides activities, mainly in the city of Karachi during pre-partition India and after the creation of Pakistan. More importantly, the writer attempts to remember, acknowledge and thank active Parsi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides pioneers and leaders who made significant contributions, always living up to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides motto, “Be Prepared” or “Teyar raho” in Urdu.

#### BVS School & Scouting History:

According to legendary Scout Master Jehangir D. Vakil, scouting at BVS was started around 1919/20 under the direction of the then principal Mr. Rustom J. Dastur (1918-1920). It

consisted of 2nd, 3rd & 4th Karachi Troops, which were the pioneer troops in the city of Karachi. The 2nd troop was organized in 1921 and founded by Mr. Fakirji Cowasji and named “Cowasji Variavas Own” in memory of his father. A first Joint-Camp was organized at Bath Island in Karachi, where troop colors were presented in the presence of Sir Montague Pomeroy Webb, chairman of Karachi Chamber of Commerce. On 25th September 1923, a “chota” (small) jamboree was held at Karachi Parsi Institute (KPI) under the direction of District Commissioner Mr. Ingle Scott where Dastur Dr. Maneckji Dhalla performed presentation ceremony of colors. Subsequently, the three troops won many awards (i.e. the George Birch Scout Trophy; Sir Montague Webb Shield and Mr. Jamshed Mehta Shield), participated in personal development activities, and attended events such as the Grand Jamboree in Bombay in 1927, the All India





BVS-"Akela (Cub Scout) Pack Leaders" (Ms. Sheikh, Mulla, Jessa and Boatwalla -circa early 1950s)



The 1st All Sind Scout Camp (Jamboree) in Hyderabad, Pakistan-1950 with Principal and Scout Leader Behram S. H.J. Rustomji and Scout leader Eruch Pavri , second and third from left

Jamboree in 1937 and a tour of Kashmir region in 1936. Scout Master Jehangir Vakil also volunteered his services during the devastation caused by the infamous 1935 Quetta earthquake.

Subsequent BVS School Principals, **Dr. Maneck Pithawalla, Behram S. H. J. Rustomji, Behram Minwalla, Rustom Divecha, and Deena Mistri** were all Scout Masters and/or strong supporters of the scouting programs. **Scout Masters**

**like Jehangir D. Vakil (holder of Scout, Cubs and Rover Wood badges), Minu Mehta, Eruch Pavri, Rusy Sethna, Soli Mistry, Cawas D. Shroff (Sea Scout) and Club Masters (the Akela leader of the Pack) Ms. Daulat Mulla & Ms. Roda Boatwalla** have all devoted their lifetime promoting and supporting the Boy Scout and Cub Scout movement. These Scout and Cub Masters encouraged and supported hundreds

of young boys to become fine citizens and exemplary leaders of tomorrow.

The BVS Parsi High School was the only school in Karachi, which had a contingent of Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts, and Air Scouts as well as the Scout Band (organized in 1927 as 'Cowasjee Variava Band'). The BVS School Band was also prominent at all the Scout rallies and jamborees and won numerous awards from the jamboree leaders for their outstanding performances.

Two historic scouting events which took place after the creation of Pakistan included the 1st All Sind Scout Camp in Hyderabad, Pakistan in 1950 (my husband Shahrokh Mehta attended this three-day event) and the 1st Scout Jamboree in Karachi, Pakistan in 1952, where Boy Scouts from all over Pakistan attended in large numbers.

Through the years, the scouting program at BVS has witnessed changes in activities as well as in scout leaderships. The core activities of camping (including camp-fire programs), hiking, educational tours, organizing fund-raising 'Mela' continue with renewed spirit and vigor. Emphasis continues to be on underlying core values of physical activity, service and conservation. BVS scouts with scouts from other schools have helped in the collection and distribution of food and clothing, evacuation of trapped people to safety in time of crises and operating first-aid stations in refugee camps.

The Scout "Patrols" at BVS are currently named after animals (i.e., Dolphin, Leopard, Panther, Eagle, Python and Tiger) and scouting continues to thrive under the direction of **Kermin Parakh**, principal of BVS Parsi High School.

## MAMA SCHOOL & GIRL GUIDES HISTORY

The Blue Birds and Girl Guides movement in pre-partition India started in Karachi around 1911. It was customary that top Girl Guide leader positions were accorded to spouses of





Blue Birdsat Mama School with leader Gulshan N. Patel 1950s



politicians and leaders in pre-partition India. These positions were mostly ceremonial and for public relations purposes. The tradition continued when Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA) was formed in December 1947. **Fatima Jinnah**, sister of the first governor general Muhammad Ali Jinnah, became PGGA's first Patron. The tradition continues today, with spouses of political leaders in office.

Mama Parsi Girls High School principals Iris Thompson, Goola Shroff, Mani Contractor and Zarin Mavalvala were all strong supporters and promoters of Girl Guides programs. Well-known and prominent Parsi Girl Guide leader Bachamai Pastakia, Commissioner of Girl Guides in Karachi, represented Pakistan at the Girl Guides Conference in England and met the HRH Princess Elizabeth of York (later Queen Elizabeth) during 1949/50. **Nina R. Wania** represented Girl Scouts at a conference in Portland, Oregon in 1951 and later a Camp in Sri Lanka. **Meheramai Ardeshir Marker**

(mother of Ambassador Jamsheed Marker) was the Commissioner of Girl Guides in Quetta, Baluchistan Province. **Meher Daruwalla** attended a Girl Guide Camp in Colombo, Sri Lanka. **Perviz N. Dhalla** (daughter-in-law of Dastur Maneckji Dhalla) was one of the major contributors to the Girl Guides movement during the early days of creation of Pakistan. Other Parsi Girl Guide leaders active in the program included *Perin J. Dinshaw; Goolcher F. Dadachanji; Mani C. Cowasjee; Meher N. Kabraji ; Jerbanoo J. Patel (Quetta); Ginny K. Navroji (nee Minwala); Sehroo S. Dubash; Tehmi V. Kabraji, Gulshan N. Patel; Zarin J. Kakalia, Thirty K. Spencer, Zenobia H. Master; Soonamai J. Desai; Phiruze F. Ogra; and Kamal J. Vatcha.* (This and previous lists of names in this article of scouting leaders who have contributed and/or were associated with the boy scout and girl scout movements are by no means complete. Apologies in advance for any omissions.)

The Girl Guides of Mama School have attended camps in Karachi, Hyderabad, Islamabad and Quetta, taken part in Pakistan Independence Day parades, and worked with a variety of foundations and community projects involved in eradication of illiteracy, promoting health and environment, economic upliftment, food and nutrition, handicrafts, and forming special guide companies for physically and mentally challenged girls. The Girl Guides also go on a variety of field trips, lending helping hands at institutions like SOS Children's Village (social welfare organization dedicated to the welfare of orphans, abandoned and abused children); IDA Rieu (School for the Blind & Deaf); Dar-ul-Sukun (home for the physically and mentally challenged); Aurat Foundation (women's empowerment and citizens' participation); Al-Umeeb Rehabilitation Assoc. (school for children with cerebral palsy) and the Parsi General Hospital in Karachi.

**Sunita Kaikhosrowzadah** is the current Girls Guide Counselor at Mama School and under the direction of **Furengese Tampal**, the school principal, the Girl Guides program continues to flourish in its rich tradition and in service of humanity. Due to a severe decline in the Parsi population in Karachi, both the BVS School & the Mama School's Parsi student populations have decreased considerably. Consequently there are only a handful of Parsi cubs/boy Scouts and blue birds/girl guides, participating in this youth program that helps form character and good citizenry during their formative years.

**Gool S. Mehta** (nee Khambatta), was a Blue Bird, Girl Guide and also a Cadet (St. John Ambulance Brigade) at Mama Parsi High School in Karachi in the mid 1950s. At an awards ceremony, "The 100 Who Inspire Girls to Achieve and Lead!" in Syracuse, NY on March 12, 2012, on the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Girl Guides movement in USA by Juliette Gordon Low, of Savannah, Ga., Gool was awarded an "Honoree Ribbon" for her participation and dedication to the Girl Guides in Pakistan. The award ceremony recognized 100 local Girl Scouts in the "Central New York/Pennsylvania region" at the "Women of Distinction Birthday Gala."



## Guides of Pakistan, Quetta Convent School, Branch



Aban Rustomji, age 13 at Juliette Low Camp, Adelboden, Switzerland



Top With President of Pakistan General Ayub Khan



Left: Aban Rustomji, Quetta

# LESSONS I REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW IN LIFE

*I learned from girl guiding!!!*

**KATAYUN KAPADIA**

The Girl Guide motto is "Be prepared." This motto has been entrenched in my life since I started as a Bulbul in the 13th 'B' Girl Guide Company at J. B. Vachha High School in Dadar, Mumbai, India. It has served me well through the years in my journey as a professional internal auditor and continues to help me in my current role as President of FEZANA.



I had an adventurous girl guiding experience in late 1950's and 60's with the girl guides of Central Bombay District, Maharashtra and participated in camping & hiking activities that allowed me to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. I travelled extensively with my girl guides across India to various jamborees and camps and actively participated in various Girl Guide events hosted at

Shivaji Park, Mumbai where we had our regional headquarters.

The excitement and adventure that I felt when I participated in the following events are etched in my memory forever: I was at the Sangam World Center, located in Pune, India on the banks of the Mula River, one of the World Centers of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), during its inauguration in 1966 and attended several trainings & events there till 1975. Sangam, which means "coming together" in the ancient language of Sanskrit, offered me the opportunity to interact with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world, share experiences, as well as the culture and traditions of their homelands and Member Organizations.

I was an Assistant Guide Captain with the 13th 'B' Girl Guide Company at J.B. Vachha High School when I had the privilege and pleasure to represent India at the WAGGGS Global Conference in Osaka, Japan in 1970. It was an experience of a life time thanks to my mother Freny Dinshaw who always encouraged me to reach for the stars



## SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY OF LIFE



*Katayun Kapadia second from right as part of the Indian contingent participating in Diamond Jubilee of WAGGGS in Osaka, Japan 1970*

and my Girl Guide Leader **Piroja Ghadialli** who coached, guided and recommended me for this distinct honor. There were several firsts on this trip for me - a nineteen year old, my first flight that too an international one from New Delhi to Tokyo; my first superfast bullet train journey from Tokyo to Osaka; selected to have lunch at the same table with then Crown Princess Michiko of Japan, the current Empress of Japan.

Some of the discussions were on environmental awareness. Through Girl Scouting, girls see the earth as their home. Whether they're learning about endangered wildlife, developing creative recycling projects, or working towards earned grade-level awards, girls focus on care, conservation, and responsibility. They ensure the safety of our planet for future generations.

These girl guiding experiences in India left a lasting impression on me and so when I got married and came to USA and my first born was a girl Zarin, I waited till she was 6 years old and then enrolled her as a Brownie in the Girl Scout Troop at the Russell Knight School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey (NJ). I was the Assistant Girl Scout Troop Leader for my daughter's troop #631 in Camden County, NJ from 1988-

**Katayun Kapadia** has been actively involved with the local, national and global Zarathushti community for the past 30+ years and has been involved with FEZANA matters in North America since its very inception. Katayun is a Chartered Accountant (CA), Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) and a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). Katayun and her husband Kersi reside in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, and continue to be active members of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ). They have two children – Zarin (High School Counselor, Washington D.C.) and Farrokh (Lieutenant, U.S. Navy, Submarine Corps). Katayun is committed as President of FEZANA to making a difference in our local, national, and global Zarathushti community.

1996. I felt a sense of commitment and enjoyed the thrills of responsibility and accountability to help develop and mold the characters of these young ladies through girl scouting. I was a Cookie Mom for several years and I still enjoy Girl Scout cookies!

I see a lot of similarity between the Zarathushti values and the Girl Scout Law which states - I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

A Girl Guide or Girl Scout accepts the Promise and the Law based on spiritual values, personal development and commitment to helping. A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency.

This lesson has been valuable to me professionally as an Internal Audit Executive for the past many years, and during my tenure on the Board of Trustees for The Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ) and the FEZANA Executive and now in my role as President of FEZANA.

The Girl Scout slogan, which has been used since 1912, is "Do a good turn daily." The slogan is a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute positively to the lives of others. We, as Zarathushtis, follow the path of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds and should continue to make this a daily practice.

Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting changed my life, it helped me discover my potential and also develop my personal self.

*Are you ready to be the Change? I would urge all parents to encourage their daughters to join Girl Scouting to help them in their self-development, boost their self-esteem and in enhancing the Zarathushti values in their lives.*



# The core essence of scouting

## “DO YOUR BEST”, “BE PREPARED”, “SERVICE”

are the three mottos in the life of Scouting, as the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Rover Scout has helped and guided my life since I joined the **16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Boy Scout Group (ZBS)**, a community-based Scout group for Zarthushti boys.

I joined ZBS when I was seven years old and since then it has really changed my life, though at that young age one does not realize the profound impact it would have on my life, I now know that scouting has strongly influenced me as an adult whether during my time at college/university, in my career, my religion and in my social life. It gave me a new set of friends, peers and teachers who taught me to be a true friend, a good person and a leader.

Recalling my days as a Cub Scout from age of seven to twelve, I always looked forward to weekends to attend the cub meetings on Sunday morning between 8:00-10:00 a.m. at Princess High School, Grant Road, alternating with Parsee Gymkhana grounds. The day started with cub's promise, an hour of Cub scout-related training and then an hour of various indoor and outdoor games. It was fun to be competitive whether it was in fun and games or to pass various levels of exams and rise up the ladder in the cub pack to a senior level. At the age of twelve, I moved from cub pack to Scout troop. The next six years were fun - filled combined with a sense of achievement, as in ZBS we were always instilled with personal goals and targets to achieve at every level. A new scout recruit, in the first 3-4 months would have to pass the first level of exam to get his badge and scarf (troop colors), till then we were allowed a khaki shirt and short pant up to the knees and a Parsi prayer cap.

Covering the head with Parsi cap was a compulsory item for all in ZBS when not in uniform at all our meetings. By the age of 14, we needed to pass all our exams for Second Class, by age 16, for First Class and by age 17, Presidents Scouts.

Proficiency was gained in various skills by working towards passing the required badges. Leadership was instilled as we rose up in the ranks to Asst. Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, and finally Troop Leader. Annual and Training camps were held every May and December where we really learned outdoor nature activities, cooking, and surviving away from the comforts of urban life, and as a result become independent.

After completing my Presidents Scout Badge Award, I became a Rover Scout which allowed me to devote time and Service to teach young Cubs and Scouts, the skills I had learnt in the years gone by.

And till today, every time I am in Mumbai I try to visit the group at its regular Sunday meetings. There is a sense of belonging and pride to be a member of ZBS. I feel Scouting at ZBS provided me an opportunity to be trained in various aspects of life to become independent and be a good leader.

When I moved to Muscat in 1983, I was alone and away from my family for the first time. The training of my scouting years came handy to survive in a new place alone. Years of learning how to cook, clean, maintain my personal belongings at Scout Camps ensured that I never went hungry and my home was clean and healthy to live in. I made some new friends and many of them were also boy scouts from different parts of India and from around the world that gave me a new family of



BOMI PATEL

friends and helped increase my network.

On migrating to USA in 1991, my scouting experience again helped me to settle down in a new environment which was totally different from other parts of the world. In addition to my work, I have been actively involved in our Zarathushti community at local, national and international levels and I owe this spirit of community participation to my scout masters and leaders. *Late Mr. Padam Pavri, then ZBS Group Leader, Late Mr. Kersi Jilla, Vistasp Patel, (Canada) Bomi Damkevalla (Chicago), Navroze Siganporia (Mumbai), Boman Moradian (Mumbai), Noshir Randeria (Mumbai, and current ZBS Group leader)* and others have been role models and pioneers who have all contributed to my success as they have to many other scouts in some way or the other.

My enthusiasm for service has led me to accept various leadership roles – **President of Local Anjuman (ZANC), President of FEZANA and now Global Vice President of World Zarthushti Chamber of Commerce**

ZBS, has a chequered and long history of being a successful Scout group since 1920 and one of a few private and community Scout groups active in Mumbai. The Group comprises of a cub pack of about 20-25 Cubs, a Scout Troop ranging from 40-45 scouts and a Rover Crew of 40-



50 Rovers. The Group today faces the same crisis faced by our community – lacking numbers of youth in the 12-18 year age group in the scout troop. With scouting becoming compulsory in schools from grades 8-10, many of our youth are joining the school-based troops where Scouting is taught as an

academic subject and not as a way of life which is the case in open scout groups which are totally voluntary.

I feel parents from our community should make it a point to enroll their children in Scouting and Guiding at an early age so that it helps them achieve better grades in school for scouting

and guiding by the time they are in 8th grade. This also helps the children get free time in school during school Scout meetings. I take this opportunity to thank ZBS and its leaders for giving me this opportunity to be a part of a great movement that has in so many ways, big and small, transformed my life.

**Bomi Patel** Joined 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Scout Group in 1965 and since then has achieved various ranks. He is a President Scout and was awarded a certificate signed by Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the President of India, at that time. He was a winner of the Best Patrol Leader's Trophy in East Bombay district for 1974-75. Bomi is still member of ZBS and tries to attend Group meetings during his visits to Mumbai. Bomi was President of FEZANA 2008 – 2012.

## 100<sup>th</sup> TORONTO-FIRST ZOROASTRIAN SCOUT GROUP

**FREDDY MIRZA**

The genesis of a Zoroastrian Scout group was born in conversations at a house party in 1989. As a teacher in the religious education class of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), I noticed that there were 120 to 150 Zarathushti children attending the religion classes and hence we discussed the potential to start a Zoroastrian Scout Group. It was suggested that I should find out general community interest in the idea, ZSO being agreeable to come aboard as a sponsor and would provide its facilities for the use by the scout group; especially as the Scout Group would meet on the same days as the Religion class at ZSO. Another very important consideration was whether Scouts Canada would allow a "Faith-based ethno-centric group".



leader and Maneck Saththa, the first Scout Troop Leader assisted by Phiroz Dastoor. The Group was registered with Scouts Canada as "**First Zoroastrian 100th Toronto Scout Group**".

The scarf colors of grey with a brown border were selected as an homage to the Homavazir's Dadar Parsi Colony Scout Group, known as the 11th CBDA (formerly the 100th Bombay Scout Troop), since 5 of the 7 GC members were from that Group. The 100th Toronto established formal links with the 11 CBDA by exchanging information, scarves and other troop memorabilia with their leaders. Noshir Dastoor designed the crest for the scarf. In 2010, Scouter Shiraz Tampal designed the shoulder crest of "First Zoroastrian Scout Group". Both the crests

The ZSO President at that time, Mr. Sam Vesuna and his Executive Committee responded very positively to our suggestion. A questionnaire to the community through the ZSO News Letter also generated a positive response. Scouts Canada readily agreed to our request for starting a "closed group" as there were already in existence various Jewish, Muslim, Armenian and Greek Groups. Finally, the ZSO Religious Education Chair Jaloo Cooper was very supportive as she herself was an active Girl Guide in Mumbai.

Process of registration commenced in late 1989 under the guidance of Scouts Canada Greater Toronto Region. A Group Committee (GC) was formed on February 18 1990 with Vispi Patel, Noshir Mirza, and Jimmy Mistry as the office bearers under the Chairmanship of Noshir Dastoor. Also part of the GC were Freddy Mirza, the first Cub Pack

are designed to symbolize scouting, environment and the Zoroastrian religion.

A partnership Charter between Scouts Canada and the Sponsor is a mandatory requirement. Since ZSO agreed to be the sponsors for the Group, they signed the Charter to form a Partnership with Scouts Canada and to provide and support our Group activities. This Charter is renewed annually. Over the last two decades this sponsorship by ZSO is a model that other Zarathushti associations may want to adopt.

September 9th, 1990 dawned under a cloudy sky and drizzling rain as the first meeting of the "First Zoroastrian Scout Group" took place at the Toronto Darbe Mehr. 6 cubs and 9 scouts had registered; but only 3 cubs and 6 scouts attended the meeting due to the weather conditions. The Guest of Honor was Russi Surty, ZSO Vice President and a





100th Toronto Scout Group celebrating the Baden Powell Day Feb 23 2013.

former scout himself from Kolkatta. During his speech he commented that “a great oak tree grows from a tiny acorn” a saying truly befitting our growth. Over the past two decades and more, the troop numbers have gone to as high as 50 youth and 15 leaders.

Building on the success of the “Boy Scout” Group in the first year, ZSO requested the Group to look into starting a Zoroastrian Girl Guide Group. And hence, two years since inception, the Troop held the 1st Co-Ed meeting. It also added the Venturers Section (youths 14 -17 years old) to the existing Beavers (5-7), Cubs (8-10) and Scouts (11-13) and the total strength of the Group jumped from 20 to 60!! Our Group has had the Rovers section (17-24) intermittently.

Outings and outdoor activities are a very important part of the Scouting activities. Our Scouts, Venturers and Leaders have attended every Canadian Jamboree since 1993, and currently preparing for the 2013 Canadian Jamboree in Alberta. In addition, we participate every year in Challenge Camps, Training (LAFF) Camps, winter activities (“Operation Snowman”) and all other activities organized by Scouts-GTR plus camps and outings organized by our own Section leaders. In 2010, 2 of our Scouts, **Zubin Sethna and Rushad Bharda**, achieved the highest award of “Chief Scout”.

Scouts Canada have a Religion-In-Life Award which is presented to those scouts who complete the requirements for their age group. The requirements and the design for this award were put together by **Late Putli Byramjee and Putli Mirza when she was the Chair of the ZSO Religion Class in or around 1985.**

Partnership between the First Zoroastrian Scout Group and ZSO has been excellent. As sponsors, ZSO is a very strong supporter of the Group. They have allowed the Scout Group to use the Darbe Mehr free of cost, for all meetings, fund raising activities, storing of camping equipment, a cupboard in the library for Scout books and the use of ZSO newsletter for advertising the activities. ZSO financially

assisted the Group when requested during the startup and in sending the scouts to the Jamborees. In return, 100th Toronto, offers their community service by cleaning of the Darbe Mehr and all the implements for the Muktdad ceremonies, planting trees and picking up fall leaves as well as help during the ZSO events when requested. GC runs the Group as per Scouts Canada By-Laws, Policies and Procedures.

The 100th Toronto has spurred the growth of Zoroastrian Scouting in the Greater Toronto Area. As of February 2012, one of our leaders Khushroo Bharda (formerly of 8th East Bombay Talati Scout Group) founded another Zoroastrian Group to fulfill the needs of the Zoroastrian community in the Mississauga and Oakville area. This Group is registered as the “**100th Oakville Zoroastrian Scout Group**” and is sponsored by the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Federation (OZCF).

In conclusion, we can say that our Group has always been blessed with extremely dedicated leaders. On an



Founding Group 1990

From left Freddy Mirza, Jimmy Mistry, Maneck Satta (4th from left); Noshir Dastoor (4th from right in green uniform); Vispi Patel; Phiroz Dastoor and Noshir Mirza. Also in the photograph but not founding members: Rushad Amaria (Assistant Leader- Scouts) and Shenaz Pardiwala (Assistant Leader Cubs).

average, our leaders stay with us for nearly ten years. The fact that our Group sections receive awards for providing an excellent quality of scouting activities from Scouts Canada speaks volumes of the dedicated voluntary service provided by the leaders and the Group Committee. Some of our adult members were also appointed at the Regional level to do various tasks as well as volunteering for Scouts Canada fundraising activities and public services The success of our First Zoroastrian Scout Group is entirely due to the full cooperation from the Group Committee, Parents, ZSO and the entire Zoroastrian community in the Greater Toronto Area and, of course, Blessing and Guidance of Ahura Mazda!!

**Freddy Mirza** joined the Scouting movement in 1950 as a Cub in the Homavazir’s Dadar Parsi Colony Scout Group in Mumbai. He is one of the Founding member and a current member of the 100th Toronto-First Zoroastrian Scout Group in Toronto. He is a recipient of several awards from Scouts Canada including a ‘Medal of Good Service’





# A BRIEF HISTORY OF “GOOD LIFE” AWARD

FRAMROZE K. PATEL



As the children of first generation of Zarathushtis in North America were graduating from high school, they were becoming involved in the Boys Scout movement. They were aspiring for the highest award that the Boys Scout of America (BSA) bestows, i.e. Eagle Scout (ES). Every candidate for Eagle Scout has to complete the requirement of a religious medal. Till 1982 BSA did not have a religious medal for Zarathushtis.

During 1982 two scouts- **Pashang F Patel and Kurush F. Morris**- both from ZAGNY had completed all the requirements relative to ES, except the religious medal. The troops to which both, Pashang and Kurush belonged had already announced the date for their investiture ceremony. Fortunately, Fred Morris, the father of Kurush was an Executive at BSA. ZAGNY was assured by BSA that if we followed the guidelines of religious medal curriculum and come-up with a program they will review and approve the program.

With the guidance and support of Reverend Dr. Albert E. Iverson and Reverend William A. McCleery of BSA we were able to submit the program to BSA within a month. BSA approved the program, and Pashang and Kurush were first and second Zarathushti Boys Scouts to be awarded “Good Life” (GL) Religious Award.

The late Farrokh Gandy, the president of ZAGNY, at that time, had formed a committee consisting of *Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani, Dr. Lovji D. Cama and Framroze K Patel* to introduce GL program.. The program consists of completing the course under a counselor and fulfilling a community oriented project. The program was introduced during 1982 with a publication of The booklet was based on previously public works of *Late Dinshaw J Irani, Dastur Manekji N. Dhalla, Dr. Farang Mehr, and Mr. Ali A. Jafrey.*

The co-authors, for the first edition, acknowledged the contribution of

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, and The Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai. The first edition could not have been completed without the help of *Ms. Samantha Hall, Ms. Nora Quigley, Ms. Gloria Tennaro, Mrs. Zarin Dotivala and Mrs. Sheroo Kanga.*

The second edition published in 1994, and third edition which was published in December 2002 were dedicated to the memory of *Mrs. Villy H. Gandhi.*

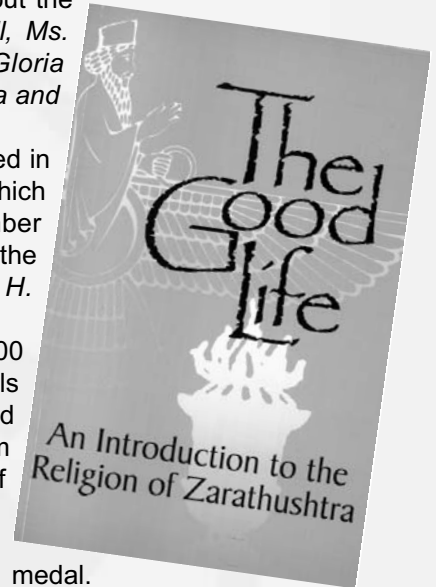
Since inception about 300 young Zarathushtis- both girls and boys- have completed the program. This program is recognized in all states of the US and scouts of all religious background can work towards this religious medal.

The program has been kept alive because of tireless efforts of dedicated Zarathushits, like Sarosh Collector, Dr. Lovji Cama, Viraf Gadiali, Homi Gandhi, and Rohinton Rivetna. ZAGNY plans to publish the expanded fourth edition by September 2013, which will have a chapter on Zarathushtrian ethics.

The highlight of GL book is Epilog which attempts to summarize the message of the prophet in one and a half pages thanks to **Prof K D Irani's** understanding of message of the prophet and his command over the language.

It is not necessary for the Good Life advisor to be a Scout Leader. The parents could guide the child through the program and refer to Good Life Administrator for approval of the award.

**Please contact Sarosh J. Collector at 281-332-8661 [sjcollector@gmail.com](mailto:sjcollector@gmail.com) <<mailto:sjcollector@gmail.com>> and Viraf Ghadiali at 732-972-6527 [vghad@hotmail.com](mailto:vghad@hotmail.com) <<mailto:vghad@hotmail.com>> for any enquiry relative to the program.**



**Framroze K Patel**, is past president of ZAGNY and of FEZANA . He is also a Certified Public Accountant , Certified Forensic Financial Analyst . Additionally he was a Rover and Troop leader of Seth Rustomji Muncherji Kooka Surat Parsi Orphanage Troop whose leader was late Keki Vaid. Eruch Munshi, of ZAGNY was also a troop leader. Since the residents of the orphanage were not allowed to leave the compound, going to scout camps and other scouting events was “ a big and cool deal” .



# SCOUTING MOVEMENT AT OZCF : 100 OAKVILLE ZOROASTRIAN SCOUTS GROUP

## **KHUSHROO BHARDA**

*Homamvazir Scouts) and Chisty Bulsara (Ex-100th Toronto Scouts Group). The Beavers would have Farzana Panthaki as their key leader, assisted by Tanya Bharda (Ex-100th Toronto Scouts). The Cub Pack was led by Khushroo Bharda and assisted by Kashmira Nagarwala (Ex-Alexandra 14th East Mumbai Girl Guides) and Lily Suntoke. The Scout Troop Leader would be Xerxes Madan (Ex-11th CBDA Homamvazir Scouts), assisted by Perveen Patel (Ex-Alexandra 14th East Mumbai Girl Guides). The Group was registered as the “100th Oakville Zoroastrian Scouts Group” for official Scouts Canada purposes. Since Khushroo Bharda was a Talatie’s 8th East Bombay Scout, the GC agreed to adopt the colors of Talatie’s 8th East Bombay scarf, which was Navy Blue with a Yellow border.*



,In February 2012 a new Zoroastrian Scouts Group was incorporated under the sponsorship of the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF. The Scouts Group is run under Scouts Canada, Central Escarpment Council of the Oakville Area.

The first Zarathushti scouts group incorporated in Canada, 100 Toronto Scouts Group has been running for a long time under the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) and has earned many accolades over the last two decades. With the growth of the Zarathushti population towards the West of Toronto, the need to start a new scout group emerged to cater to our children who were unable to travel all the way to the East for the scouts meetings.

OZCF has always encouraged and supported the youth movement in the area and have generously accepted the proposal to start the new Scouts

Group under its umbrella. This new scouts group *100 Oakville Zoroastrian Scouts Group* is running under the leadership of Khushroo Bharda, an avid scout from Talatie’s 8th East Bombay Scouts Group in Mumbai. Having moved his way up the scouting program in India, he brought back his learning and experience to our children in Canada and has been instrumental towards a successful scouting movement. To form the new scout group we received a lot of guidance from Central Escarpment Council’s Area Support Manager Scouter Ed Balyk & Oakville Area Commissioner Scouter Dennis Powell

The first step was to form a Group Committee (GC). This was formed at the first GC meeting on Thursday, October 27, 2011 with *Khushroo Bharda as the Chairperson, Kaiomarz Suntoke as the Treasurer, Havovi Bharda as the Fundraiser coordinator, Khushroo Mirza (Ex-11th CBDA*

In February 2012 the new scouts group started with 14 youth, 7 leaders and 4 group committee members. Currently our group strength is 28 youth and 8 leaders. In our scouting program we accept any child (boy or girl) between the ages of 5 to 14 years, provided at least one parent is a Zarathushti/ Iranian, we are one of the few closed groups in Canada. All the meetings are conducted at OZCF on Sundays between 2.00 pm & 4.30pm. The group takes part in a lot of volunteer activities & follow the scouts Canada program to achieve the best results for the youth.

A typical meeting day starts with the flag break, “O Canada” national anthem and then 2 Yatha Ahu Vairyo and 1 Ashem Vohu. After that the beavers our youngest 5 to 7 year olds do the “River Banks” followed by the Cubs 8 to 10 year youths doing the “Grand Howl”. Then the youth are



## SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI WAY OF LIFE

dispersed from the horseshoe & they play a few games for about half an hour. After which we start taking up any badge work the youth is supposed to complete at home.

The two scouts groups work hand in hand and often arrange joint programs such as Camps, Outdoor activities, Operation Snowman, etc. One big initiative undertaken is to ensure that all scouts get to attend the Canadian Jamboree in the summer of July 2013 in Alberta and all cubs to attend the Cuboree in Ontario in July-August 2013. Through major fundraisers all eligible scouts have now been registered and all set to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Being a Zoroastrian Scouts Group, 100 Oakville Scouts Group inculcates the values of good thoughts, good words and good deeds into our programs, ensuring there is respect, honesty, trust and teamwork at all our meetings. *"Parsi, Thy Name is Charity"* – We practice what we preach and every year, our scouting children of 100 Oakville take part in a "Live the Prayer" project where they prepare Parsi delicacies and sell the food to the community. All proceeds go towards charity. We also volunteer for various community events and get our children to give back to our community in their own ways.

On Saturday, February 23, 2013, we celebrated the birth anniversary of Lord Baden Powell the founder of the scouting movement commemorating his contributions and acknowledging our accomplishments over the last one year. There was a Kub Kar Rally and a Beaver Buggy followed by a dinner. The Cubs competed at the Oakville Kub Kar Rally on Saturday, March 02, 2013. Our Cubs and Scouts are participating at the Manitou Scout Camp from March 29-31, 2013,

For over 100 years, Scouting programs have instilled in youth the values found in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Today, these values are just as relevant in helping youth grow to their full potential as they were in 1907. Scouting helps youth develop academic skills, self-confidence, ethics, leadership skills, and become



**Khushroo Bharda** is the current Group Commissioner at 100 Oakville Zoroastrian Scouts Group that was incorporated in February 2012.

*Born in India, he immigrated to Canada with his wife and two children in 1998. Being an avid scouter he pursued scouting as a Cub, Scout, Venturer and Rover Leader at 100 Toronto Zoroastrian Scouts Group from 1999 to 2013. Khushroo comes with an extensive 17 year background in scouting where he was a part of the Talatis 8th East Bombay Scouts Group.*

*In India he was a part of the Talati's 8th East Bombay Scouts. He was the Deputy Area Commissioner in Greater Toronto Council at Scouts Canada.*

*Khushroo is involved with the OZCF in various capacities. He is an Auxillary Police Officer with the Peel Regional Police and the Editor of the North American Mobed Council's newsletter "Athraavan". Khushroo works full time as a Purchasing Manager with Teknion.*

*17 year background in scouting where he was a part of the Talati's 8th East Bombay Scouts Group.*

*In 2007 Khushroo was awarded Scouts Canada Commemorative Centennial Medal.*

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# A ZARATHUSHTI ON RECEIVING THE CHIEF SCOUT AWARD IN CANADA

ZUBIN SETHNA



We all want to be successful in the real world, but let's face the truth- it's easier said than done. Throughout my adolescence, I knew I wanted to be successful in life, but I just didn't know how to get there. I knew I wanted to be a community leader, but then again, how would I go about achieving that? It just so happened to be around this time that scouting provided me with a challenge. Being that young twelve year old boy, I understood the challenge to be one thing and one thing only: achieve the Chief Scout Award. At the time, it meant everything to me. I still remember walking alongside my buddy, Rushad Bharda, and representing our 100th Toronto- First Zoroastrian scout troop. It was a great experience, but it wasn't easy.

The Chief Scout Award (photo above) is an intricate combination of one's physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual abilities- all of which are applied interdependently in the great outdoors. This aspect of the

award would teach me my first lesson for success- balance. To succeed, it is not simply good enough to excel in one area. The strength of one component is at its greatest from the strength of the other three. My Zarathushti tradition would fit well into this balance of life. As a Zarathushti, I am taught that my good thoughts, good words, and good deeds should be practised throughout my life, and not just in times of spirituality. For the good to triumph over evil, these actions of good



should be practised during every moment of everyday, in order to be effective. Although this may all sound as if I would have gained the utmost knowledge these awards would have to offer, I would be in for a surprise.

Upon receiving my Queen's Venturer Award (photo above) at my recognition ceremony, the first sentence on my certificate caught my attention. The following was written:

*"As a Queen's Venturer you have chosen to do your duty to God and to help other people and have proven worthy of this trust".*

Reading these words brought about a question in my mind: Was it solely based on my achievement of the Queen's Venturer Award that enabled me to "do my duty to God" and "help other people"? Did I have to achieve an award to be a good citizen? For three years as a Venturer, I was working towards this achievement for mere prestige, yet I think I only understood the true definition of this award after my completion of it. When Baden-Powell introduced the Queen's Venturer Award, (back then known as the King's Scouts Award) his purpose was not to promote scouting, but rather a way of life. No one needs to achieve the Chief Scout or Queen's Venturer Award to be a Good Samaritan. It was Baden-Powell's goal that, through scouting, one would gain the background and skills necessary to excel in the real world and become the community leaders of their generation. If I could give a few words of advice to that young twelve year old boy, aspiring to be a Chief Scout or Queen's Venturer someday, I'd tell him to attempt the award for the right reasons, not simply for prestige. To my community, I say: *Don't help simply to be recognized. Just help.*



*Zubin Sethna has been involved within his community scouting program ever since the age of six. From his days as a Beaver Scout to his participation today as a Rover Scout, Zubin has always strived to reach his maximum potential. His Chief Scout and Queen's Venturer Awards symbolize just a small portion of his successes within scouting. Currently, Zubin is studying Political Science at York University with aspirations to pursue further education in law and apply his work at an international level.*



## AN EAGLE SCOUT'S THOUGHTS ON SCOUTING AND THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION

NEVILLE A. CLUBWALA



A year and a half ago my niece was given a homework assignment to interview someone about their proudest achievement in life. I was honored that she chose me and I quickly told her I'd be happy to do it. As she looked at me, with pen and paper in hand, and eager to write, I realized I wasn't quite sure what to say. Soon after I became an Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America, was I thought always my highest achievement when I was younger. However, this time I hesitated, and didn't say a word. It had been over a decade since I received the award and I figured there must be something else by now I was more proud of. I told my niece I needed to think about it, and that I'd answer her another day.

My father drove me to the train station in Hawthorne, NJ and I boarded a train back to New York City. I thought about my new assignment and realized that such a simple question was actually quite profound. By this time in my life I had earned a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, been a volunteer

firefighter and police officer, and had worked internationally while advancing my career. I then began to think of many other achievements I was proud of, but after a 60 minute train ride, I realized my mind kept drifting back to all the things I learned along the trail to becoming an Eagle Scout.

It was clear. Becoming an Eagle Scout was still the one thing I was most proud of in my life. However, knowing my clever niece all too well, I knew she would ask me why, so I boiled down the many reasons to the most impactful three.

First, I truly learned and internalized what it meant to "Be Prepared." The official Boy Scouts of America Motto is simply those two words. It's one of the first things you learn as a scout, and often manifests itself in a very physical and literal way. You're eager for your first few campouts and you inevitably forget to pack a poncho, and then it rains, or matches, and you can't make a fire. By the third or fourth campout, you start to learn that you should "Be Prepared," and you now have a checklist of all the necessary gear by your side while packing. As you grow both physically and mentally over the years, the term "Be Prepared" turns into a philosophy and a life skill. You learn that you can and should be prepared mentally, psychologically, spiritually, and so on, as often as you can, for the many different situations you'll encounter in life. Now two simple words mean a lot more.

Second, I learned about the importance of the community, and caring for people around you. Many of the 21 merit badges required to become an Eagle Scout teach you skills in a variety of areas. They span from subjects like Environmental Science and Personal Management, to skills like Camping and Hiking. They are each specific in their own way, but there's a clear, overarching theme - "it takes a village." During a campout, I alone cannot gather the firewood, collect the water, set up the tents, cut the wood, start the fire, and cook the food all before sunset, but a troop of my fellow scouts, all taking on a specific task, can unite to make it happen. It was an invaluable lesson: I'll need help from the people around me to achieve my life's ambitions and goals, so I better help others achieve theirs along the way.

Third, and most importantly, my journey to becoming an Eagle Scout reinforced my already strong faith. As an American born Parsi, I thought I'd always have to go through life explaining my religion to others. I thought the only people in America who knew about the Zarathushti religion were other Parsis I knew from ZAGNY, the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York. I couldn't help thinking about how I always needed to explain my religion, when most other children I went to school with, did not. Unexpectedly, that all changed when I turned to the 624th page of the 10th

edition of The Boy Scout Handbook. There, shining proudly, and recognized in this handbook for scouts across the USA, was a picture of The Good Life Emblem – the Zoroastrian emblem for young Zarathushtis who show dedication to their religion and community. I learned that day, and forever, that the Boy Scouts of America would always have a special meaning for me. Not only as an institution that taught me so much over the years, but also as one that recognized my faith, and identity, as a Zarathushti



**My Neville A. Clubwala** currently lives and works in New York City. He's a Senior Human Resources Manager at Edelman, the world's largest Public Relations firm. Prior to Edelman, he spent most of his Human Resources career at American Express, working both in New York and London. He enjoys spending his free time volunteering with the New York Police Department as an Auxiliary Police Officer.





## LOOKING BACK: WHAT SCOUTING TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIFE AHEAD

Sunday July 5, 1982. 8:30 AM. I am at the August Kranti Maidan in Bombay, waiting for my weekly Boy Scout meeting of the 51st West Bombay Scout Group to begin. The best part of my week is at last here. Those were the good old days. The boys were joining the Scouting movement to learn, play, teach, befriend & respect. The key objective was to gain knowledge of life lessons. Learning to work hard, win respectfully, lose gracefully, never give up, face difficulties with a smile and always **"BE PREPARED"** - our Scouting Motto.

The Scouting Movement was started in 1907, by Lord Robert Stevenson Smith Baden Powell, a lieutenant general in the British Army. Since then, the primary goal has been to help youth with their physical, mental and spiritual development. To provide a casual, informal setting for them to learn various skills, with an emphasis on practical outdoor activities, like hiking, camping, & sports. It encourages the youth to learn and rehearse, techniques and skills like fire lighting, cooking, estimation, knotting & first aid, amongst others.

Today, video games and computers are the ways of the new generation and arguably in some cases, it can be

educative. We see television shows about being able to survive in scary situations like lost in the wilderness, or outlast natural calamities like hurricanes, earthquakes, or even worse, a terrorist attack. This preparedness does not come in a blink of an eye or by buying a survival kit. It comes with learning life skills, that take time to learn & years to master. The scouting movement teaches these same skills in a more subtle, casual but constructive manner, to a more impressionable audience. The key is to make the younger generation understand that self-reliance, self-confidence, resourcefulness, adaptability and readiness are characteristics that help in all walks of life and not just surviving disasters, manmade or natural.

A classic example is when I came to the US to pursue my Masters. Cooking, cleaning, sewing a shirt button, polishing my shoes, ironing a pair of trousers (without an iron), giving first aid for a cut, a burn or a scratch, was something that I was very comfortable with. It was not something that I had learnt in the Indian academic system. It was a function of being a part of the Scouting movement since I was 5. Being independent and self sufficient was a distinct

advantage I had over my peers.

As a practicing Zarathushti priest, at the Sethna Agiary in Bombay, India and in Boston thereafter, I have also tried to embrace the spiritual side of Scouting. The Scouting limerick reminds us of the 10 parts of the Scout Law - Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Brotherly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Smiling, Thrifty, Pure in Action, Speech and Mind. The last part of our Scout Law 'pure in action speech and mind' is exactly in line with the tenants of the Zarathushti religion - Good thoughts, words and deeds. Religion in Scouting has been interpreted differently and given diverse elucidations over the years. With the modern world becoming more secular & religiously diverse, there can be disagreements and differences of opinion. However, the key to note is that Lord Robert Baden-Powell founded the Scout movement as a youth organization which was independent of religious boundaries, yet still held that spirituality and a belief in divinity were key to the development of young people.

Along with my Group Leader **Late Scouter Jehangir S. Master** and other Rovers and fellow Boy Scouts I have performed the annual Jashan ceremony for our Scout Group on several occasions, a tradition that

### NAUZAR VIMADALAL

continues to date. 'Khari Kamai' - literally translated as 'truly earning ones livelihood' was an annual occurrence as well, when we as Boy Scouts went from door to door looking for chores that we could do, for a measly sum of money that was then collected and donated to a charitable cause. The goal was to not only teach us the value of money but also hard work. The Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) was another yearly occasion when we used amateur radios (HAMs) to connect with different scout troops from across the world. It was a forum for accepting cultures, exchanging ideas and trading songs, jokes and opinions.

I received my President Scout (Eagle Scout) Award in 1992. It was one of the most rewarding moments in my life. It was the pinnacle of my Scouting career that I had worked so hard for over 12 years. But in some ways it made me feel like the accomplishment was an indication that I was ready to take on life, regardless of what it threw at me. It had taught me traits like leadership, collaboration, focus, persistence, problem solving and having a positive attitude. Today, I am grateful for everything that scouting has given me - lifelong friends and strong foundation to thrive and flourish as a son, a brother,



*Nauzar Vimadalal is a business intelligence & analytics professional with an MBA in Management Information Systems, a Project Management Certification & over 14 years of database marketing & analytical experience. He specializes in combining analytical and project management skills, to maximize the business value of data. He lives in Nashua NH with his wife & twin girls. Nauzar likes martial arts, hiking, camping, & of course, boy scouts.*





## HOW SCOUTING HAS BETTERED MY LIFE

**FREDDIE MEHTA**

I am going to tell you about how scouting has bettered my life and why it is important to enroll your child into the Scouting / Guides movement. Not selling anything, rather just attempting to make a point. Unfortunately, arriving at that point is a long winded process. Our civilization seems to be getting more aware of philosophical concepts regarding human behavior in general. A lot more information is available and it is a lot more accessible. One of the knock on effects, especially in the Western world, is that parents, who obviously always want the best for their kids, tend to do a lot of this phenomenon termed as “analysis leading to paralysis”.

Parenting seems to have changed a lot and I’m skeptical of using the word “evolved”. One may argue that it has evolved to suit the current changing society. Following a Freudian-esque pediatric psychoanalysis parenting course costing \$5000 to the letter is OK, but its worthless if it is done at the expense of losing the bigger picture in the development of your child’s basic physical, mental and / or emotional self. Every child, irrespective of background, needs clean air, clean water and nutritious food to nourish the physical body, needs unconditional love and human attention to nourish

the mental and emotional self and needs a good balance of values and tact to take their place and shine in society.

Parents should be able to take care of the physical and partly the mental and emotional needs of a child but scouting goes a long way in enhancing the value system and sparking that extra level of confidence which can set you apart from the crowd. Above all, it does it in a simple and easy to understand manner. If one looks for “Scout Law” on Wikipedia, they will find what the movement is truly about. Enforcing and understanding basic values and their importance in daily life.

Being at the 8th East Bombay Talati’s Scout troop was an awesome experience. Led by some very able scouters, we had a blast every Sunday morning with games, tasks, learning about scouting and everything else from cooking to camping in an environment that was amazing.

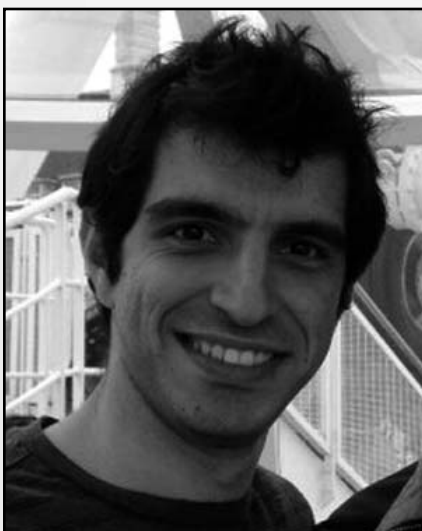
Apart from making some “friends for life” during my scouting days, I have learnt a lot more indirectly from the movement than just the direct teachings to my group. The structure and methodology of activities in my scout troop made me understand, albeit implicitly, that it is really important to stick to your values, especially in today’s skewed society. That it is important to communicate and accommodate people in all circumstances. That it is crucial that you truly listen with your whole hearted

attention when you are in a conversation with someone. That it is imperative that you acknowledge and celebrate differences in human beings while still keeping in mind the universal oneness that binds us. That simple virtues like kindness, generosity, giving and open mindedness are not just arty-farty words meant to live in love songs but are true virtues of a good human being.

When I was 17, I was truly excited to leave the scouting movement and join “Rovers”, the people who I had looked up to. But just after the ceremony I broke down and wept for 10 minutes. At that time, it was probably because I would miss all the activities and fun I used to have on Sunday mornings but I think I was missing all the learning I had obtained from this movement.

Beware, this pseudo-sales pitch comes with a disclaimer. There are a few scouts and guides groups who have been infiltrated with a separate agenda, often in the form of a particular religion or a similar separatist ideology. You can make sure this is not the case by talking to the seniors at the group or to the parents of other kids who attend that group.

If I had to summarize this whole thing in a sentence, it would be: In this day and age of high performance parenting, scouting adds a refreshing dose of much needed simplicity in training our youngsters to become confident, good human beings who have a positive impact on society.



*Freddie Mehta is a 20-something young man who has been in love with cars since a very young age. He was a scout with the 8th East Bombay Talati’s Scout Group since the age of six. Currently, he has a dream job with Jaguar Land Rover in the United Kingdom.. Driving big Jags, Range Rovers and other competitor cars like Porsches, Audis BMWs is his job! He moonlights as a seeker of knowledge, delving into all fields of knowledge ranging from Ayurveda to psychoanalysis of “why dogs like to lick people” to the link between Quantum Physics and Spirituality.*



# ZARATHUSHTI BOY SCOUT IN AMERICA

**DARYUS DORABSHAW**

Boy scouts is said to shape young boys into men. Many lessons that are taught in boy scouts are designed to create certain values and set standards of how you should live your life. In my experience I have seen that many of these lessons preach similar values as the Zarathushti religion. We see this simulate through the Zarathushti core beliefs of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

The Buddha once said *"We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think."* We, as Zoroastrians, believe strongly in the power of positive thinking. In my boy scouting career I have been witness to a similar mentality. In boy scouts we believe in an oath and a law that we live and make decisions by. In that law we state that a boy scout must be friendly. When we say that a scout must be friendly we mean that they must be friendly in person and mentally. Just like in Zarathushti religion as we believe in having a clean friendly mind and leading our lives free of corruption. In boy scouts we refer to that as being mentally awake. The combination of my religions teachings and my boy scouting experience has truly shaped my mind into a true form of optimism. I remember once I had extremely important test coming up. I specifically remember this test because it was in math, my worst subject. You could say I have quite a record of coming up short in math. This test was an average, but was very important to me. This test would either make or break my grade for the semester. If I was to do well on this test I could end the semester with an A in math, a gift from God for me! But if I was to come up short on this test I would continue with my record of Bs. At first I was not very confident in my abilities and doubted myself. But then I realized that I was not thinking positively. I had not been nurtured by my religious teachings and raised on the teachings of mental awareness in my Boy Scout career to have these negative thoughts of self doubt. From that point on, I approached this test with good, positive thoughts. I studied hard with the belief that I can do well on this test and I will do well on this test. The day I took the test I was cool, calm, and confident. The next week I got my results. I had got an A! Not only did I get a fantastic grade for the semester, but I learned something that day. I realized the fact that the belief of good thoughts that had been drilled into me by my religion and by my Boy Scout teachings really can help me in my day-to-day life. Ever since that day I've tried my best to practice good thoughts in any situation I face.

In society we are urged to be nice and to only say nice things to others. For us as Zarathushtis we learn this lesson through our religious belief of good words. In boy scouts a similar concept is taught in the scout law when we say a scout is clean, and kind. When we say a scout is clean we refer to both the physical aspect and we also mean clean words. We must never use any sort of offensive language or

fowl terms. Kind somewhat corresponds with our belief of clean words. The Boy Scout community is in great support of the idea of always using kind words. In my experiences in boy scouts I too have been assisted several times by the blessing of kind words. I remember one specific time when we were hiking. Now this was not any normal kind of hiking. This was a backpacking trip. That means that everything I needed for the entire weekend was rolled up in to one giant fifty pound bag and strapped onto my sixth grade back. Our plan was to hike five miles from the parking lot to the camp site, stay overnight at the campsite, then finally hike back to the parking lot. That alone would have been a hard plan to accomplish considering the large amount of younger scouts including myself. But of course as the saying goes, when man makes plans, God laughs. While on the trail our scout troop got lost and our simple ten mile hike was extended by a several additional miles. But the memory of this hike that happened almost four years ago still stays deep within me because of everyone's reaction to hearing about us being lost. Nobody was mad, complaining, frustrated, or anything of that sort. Everyone only spoke kind words to each other. The older scouts were encouraging us younger scouts to push on and to keep moving forward. To this day I know for a fact that without those kind, encouraging words I would have had to struggle a lot more to complete that hike. That day really taught me something. I learned that with the use of positive words, you can really make a great impact on people and motivate them to stay positive on the righteous path.

They say that our actions speak louder than our words. Performing good deeds is incorporated into our daily lives. Every day we hold doors for people, let them into elevators first, and participate in small random acts of kindness for complete strangers. In the Zarathushti religion we support these acts of goodness by incorporating the belief of good deeds into our religion and our lives. Just like the Zarathushti religion, boy scouts is a massive supporter of good deeds. The actual scout slogan that every boy who enters the program must memorize and live their day to day life by is "do a good turn daily". In Boy Scouts community service is a requirement in order to advance to any rank. In the scout oath we explicitly say *"I will do my best, to do my duty, to God and my country"* By performing good deeds we believe that we are serving our country in the way that we must according to the scout oath. I remember an instance when our belief in good deeds truly made a difference in a person's life. We were on a canoe campout next to a river. The current was strong that day and the river was full of large boulders. We were playing football on the river bank when a family of five came down the river. They had two canoes and they were going down stream side by side. Suddenly one of the canoes hit a large rock and capsized!



When that happened the capsized canoe hit the canoe next to it and that canoe lost control. The people in that canoe were jerked out of their seats and into the water! What happened was nothing short of amazing. My fellow scouts and I sprang into action. While some of us ran to make sure that the family was alright, a few friends and I ran to get their canoes that were now flying down the river with the current. Once we got the canoes onto the bank we treated the family for any injuries. Luckily none of them had any major injuries. After all the drama the father of the family thanked us and told us that our actions had inspired him. He said that how we reacted and how we so quickly went out of our way to help his family really touched him!

Raised as a Zarathushti, I have been deeply educated about the true meaning of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. But my boy scouting career has truly advanced my knowledge of what these words mean. Boy scouts has allowed me to take these simple values and enabled them to grow into complex ideas and guidelines. Scouting has allowed me to take the most basic and essential Zarathushti values and apply them into not only real life situations, but my everyday life.

*Daryus Dorabshaw is a fifteen year old Zoroastrian Boy Scout living in Frisco, Texas. He is a student of Frisco High School and is highly active in the school's Debate team, aspiring to be a lawyer.. His hobbies include camping, video gaming and participating in theater productions. He is currently working towards accomplishing the Eagle Award; the highest honor in American Boy Scouts.*



## Dhunjishaw Hosy Bharucha (1965-2013)

*A most highly decorated and honored Scout leader in the Atlanta area and Captain, Army National Signal Corps*



Dhunjishaw Hosy Bharucha, age 48, of Roswell, died on February 7, 2013. Dhunjishaw grew up in Valley Stream, NY, graduating from Valley Stream South High School. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from University of Albany and a Master of Science in Management Information Services from University of Maryland.

Dhunjishaw was very active in the Boy Scouts as a

Tiger Den Leader, Wolf Den Leader, Bear Den Leader, Webelos Den Leader, Cubmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, and MB Instructor for National Jamborees.

Dhunjishaw won numerous awards including the William D. Boyce New-Unit Organizer Award, District Award of Merit, BSA Year of Celebration Award, Whitney M. Young Award, and the Vigil Honor Member, Order of the Arrow. He had specialized training in the Wood badge, Wilderness First Aid, Extreme Wilderness Survival and Hazardous Weather Training. He was one of the most highly decorated and honored Scout leaders in the Atlanta area.

At his viewing he was honored with the Broken Arrow Ceremony by American Indian Scout

Troop who came in full uniform including the feather head piece and formed an honor guard as Dhunjishaw was a member of the "Order of the Arrow-America Indian Scouts". The troop placed matches, rope and pocket knife for him to go camping in the future and beyond. They then knelt and broke the arrow in two and placed it in his coffin.

He was honorably discharged from the Army National Guard as a Captain, Signal Corps having served in the Army from 1986 –1995. He was stationed in the U.S., South Korea and Germany, was deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, and Central Africa. He received numerous awards, including Meritorious Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Commendation Medal-2, Army Achievement Medal,

National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and Overseas Service Ribbon-2

He received military honors, from the color guards, who opened the flag draping the coffin and while the Taps sounded the bugle, the flag was folded and given to the mother saying "Thank you from a grateful nation for his service to his country" His ashes were scattered at Georgia National Cemetery. His tomb stone will bear an Asho Farohar- (pioneered by Dr Rodabe Bharucha for her son Col Bharucha-Reid who died 2 years ago and is at Arlington cemetery VA).

Dhunjishaw is survived by his mother, Dilkhush, son Ryan, twin sister Gulestan; brother Frazer. His father Hosy predeceased him.

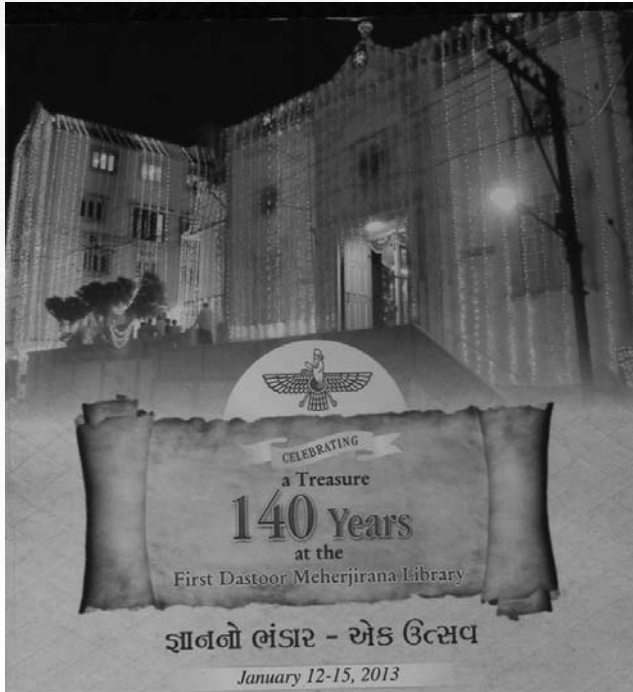
**Submitted by twin sister Gulestan Hosy Wilson**

# IN THE NEWS

## 140 YEARS OLD VERITABLE MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY CONFERENCE

NAVSARI, GUJARAT, JANUARY 12 -15, 2013

ERVAD SOLI P. DASTUR



140 Years old Navsari Meherjirana Library

"Watch that sickle, Maneck!". "Look out for that Rickshaw!" Yes, we three back seat drivers and Maneck were slithering through the maze of Navsari traffic on Saturday afternoon trying to find the veritable Meherjirana Library in Tarota Bazaar, Navsari! The little streets of Navsari are numerous and come up at no warning and you can easily miss them. After a number of stops for directions, go left, go right, go straight – well we finally reached the library and were greeted with a number of eager volunteers to help. We climbed the steps and there it was that famous 140 years young grand ole lady, the Meherjirana Library, with an unmatched number of centuries old Zarathushti manuscripts in Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian, Sanskrit, Gujarati and English!

There were libraries of yore: *Ganj-e-Shaayegaan*, *Alexandria*, and of present, but Meherjirana Library stands tall among all of them for its wealth of Zarathushti manuscripts!

From the beginning to the end of this conference, the pleasant memories of the graciousness with which the locals extended their hospitality to all of us throughout, will remain with us always.

So we enter the conference building, built in 2009, thanks to the generosity of the Dorab Tata Trust equipped with various modern facilities including a new reading room, a conference hall, and apartments for visiting scholars, and a laboratory for the preservation of the library's many rare books.

There were 60-80 people attending per day with 60 being accommodated in the conference room and the rest watched on the TV screens outside. There were 35 presenters of which 13 were Zarathushtis with 2 from North America.

### INAUGURATION OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference: "***Celebrating a Treasure: 140 Years at the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library***", a PARZOR and Meherjirana initiative, is the first International Conference of its kind in Navsari and the sponsors hope to have many such conferences in the future.



Prof. Almut Hintze being adorned with a "Kanku Tilli"

The Conference started on Saturday afternoon and **Dr. Daniel Sheffield**, one of the three organizers, welcomed all on behalf of the Library Committee. In the true Parsi tradition, all Conference speakers were adorned with the red "Kanku tilli" which was much appreciated especially by

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## MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY CONFERENCE



Dasturji Kotwal lighting the Traditional Deevo.

visiting International speakers. Then the traditional “Deevo” (oil lamp) was lit by Dasturji Firoze Kotwal and other dignitaries, a very heartwarming sight indeed!

**Ms. Katy Antia, Chair of the Board of Trustees**, inaugurated the Conference and thanked all involved in making it a reality. She was followed by Ms. Bharti Gandhi, Librarian, Dr. Shernaz Cama, UNESCO PARZOR Project, and Dasturji Kotwal.

Finally, **Dasturji Kotwal delivered the Inaugural Address: A Historical Overview of the Parsi Settlement in Navsari and Its Rise as the Bastion of Zoroastrianism**. He traced the history of Navsari from its very inception around 821 CE mentioned in a copper plate, to the arrival of first Mobed Kamdin Zartosht in 1142 CE from Sanjan to perform religious ceremonies, to the epochal arrival of Iranshah Atash from Vansda around 1479 CE, to the appointment in 1579 CE of the First Dastoor Meherjirana after his triumphant stay in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, to the sad events of violent skirmishes between Bhagaria Mobeds and Behdins resulting in nine people being murdered in 1686 CE, to the Sanjana Mobeds leaving with Iranshah in 1740 CE, to the

establishment of the Navsari Anjuman Atash Behram in 1765 CE. It was a very gripping history of Navsari.

The organizers then belatedly recognized the birthday of **Dasturji Kotwal** and had a Birthday Cake in his honor. Also, in his honor, **Prof. Jamsheed Choksy & Jennifer Dubeansky** have edited the book: “Gifts to a Magus: Indo-Iranian Studies Honoring Firoze Kotwal” with contributions



Dasturji Kotwal presented with the book in his honor with Shernaz Cama & Katy Antia.

from many International Scholars which was officially released and the first copy was presented to Dasturji Kotwal.

The day ended with a sumptuous Parsi dinner at Jamshed Baug.

### A BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

According to the Conference brochure, there were 33 Presentations but 4 speakers were not able to present their papers. One more impromptu presentation was made instead of the scheduled one and famous **Parsi Poet and Writer Keki Daruwalla** read a poem from his Sonnets. So in total there were 31 presentations plus Dasturji Kotwal’s inaugural address.

Many of these presentations were too scholarly for a common person like me to understand and comprehend their significance to us in present day world. Many of them presented the history of Parsi settlements in Canton, Calcutta, Sri Lanka, etc. And there were some esoteric

# IN THE NEWS

## MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY CONFERENCE

ones which I could not understand the reason of their inclusion in this Conference.

I have arbitrarily grouped these 30 presentations in 5 groupings and will give a short review of each group with the number of presentations in brackets:

### GROUP A: MANUSCRIPTS AND RELATED SUBJECTS (7)

These seven presentations dealt with the illumination in our manuscripts with Cypress trees, pomegranate bushes and fruits, etc., the Sanskrit Yasna, Zurvanism in

*technologies of Digital Humanities for the benefit of Avestan manuscript studies, thus taking the subject into a new field of enquiry."*

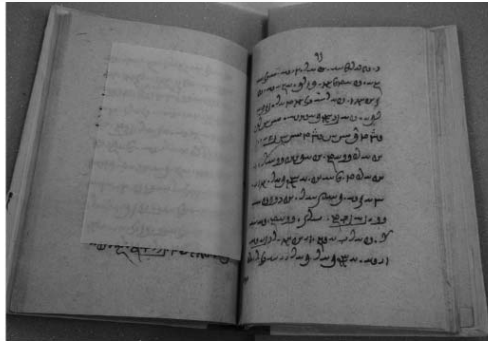
Let us talk a little about our 1500+ years old Avesta Script! When I was a student in the venerable MF Cama Athornan Institute, Andheri, Mumbai (1945-1954), we had to learn by heart the whole *Yazashne* (72 Haas), and *Visperad* (23 *kardaas*) with the *Pav Mahel* and *Paragra* ceremonies to be performed with the prayers.

It was in the year 1888 CE. that **Ervad Tehmuras Dinshahji Anklesaria** published *Yazashne baa Nirang* containing the Avesta texts (in the Avesta script) of the Yasna, the Visperad and the Yasna of Rapithwan with ritual directions in Gujarati. Ervad Anklesaria based his Avesta text of the Yasna and the Visperad on **Prof. N. L. Westergaard's Zend-Avesta, Copenhagen 1852-54**. The book was specially meant for young Zarathushtis belonging to the priestly class, who were preparing themselves for the Navar ceremony.

The second edition of Ervad Anklesaria's book was published by his son **Mr. Hoshang T. Anklesaria in 1926 CE**. In this second edition, the important variants from **Prof. Geldner's Avesta the Sacred Books of the Parsis (Stuttgart 1885-1896)** are given in the foot-notes. This important addition greatly enhanced the value and utility of the book. This second edition was reproduced in 1957 by MF Cama Athornan Institute, MM Cama Education Fund and Bombay Parsi Panchayat Trustees under the able guidance of late Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Mirza for the use of the Athornans and of the students of the Avesta language and literature and this same book is being used in Dadar Athornan Institute to teach the young Mobeds.

It is the current opinion of Avesta scholars that the over 100 years old Yasna edition of Geldner is inadequate due to the availability of new manuscripts and new technologies for electronic text editing. Hence this project is conceived to create a new Digital Yasna.

I strongly objected to the trend of Western Scholars to completely obliterate our over 1500+ years old Avesta script and instead create another monster script like Hoffman with Greek and Latin letters. The saddest part is that our own Parsi scholars also have followed their suit. This is clearly obliteration of our Avesta Script!



T14. Pazand Jamaspi. Pazand. Written in AY873/1503 CE by Rana b. Jesang. **The Jamaspi** is a famous text among the Zoroastrian community, containing predictions about future events which are attributed to the sage Jamasp of the court of Kay Wistasp. Though the earliest recensions of the text, which are composed in Pahlavi and Pazand, are quite fragmentary, subsequent versions of the text in Persian and Gujarati became quite elaborate, sometimes reaching voluminous lengths. The book reached such fame that the Safavid monarch Shah 'Abbas (r. 1642-1666 CE) is said to have seized copies of the manuscript from the Zoroastrian community at Isfahan. The present copy of the **Pazand Jdamaspi** is especially significant for the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library since it is copied in the hand of Rana, son of Jesang, the father of the First Dastur Meherji Rana.

Iran and India, techniques for preserving old manuscripts, etc.

The session by **Prof. Almut Hintze: "Avestan manuscripts and digital scholarship: Towards a new edition of the Yasna"** caught my attention. Prof. Hintze is a well-known scholar in Zoroastrian Religion from London based School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

*"This paper presents the method that underlies the work on a proposed new edition of the Yasna (Yazashne). The project, called Digital Yasna, proposes to create a web-based electronic platform of Avestan, Pahlavi and Sanskrit Yasna manuscripts encoded in Extensible Markup Language (XML). The Digital Yasna project has the ambitious objective of exploiting the XML format*



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From what little I heard and read about this ambitious project by Prof. Hintze, we wish them well. However, I wonder its utility for day to day use by our Mobeds.

### GROUP B. HISTORY – ATASH BEHRAMS AND PARSI FAMILIES (10)

These ten presentations dealt with the histories of Iranshah and Surat Atash Behrams, of Parsi families of Calcutta and Sri Lanka, old historical newspaper article of Parsee Prakash, etc.

I was fascinated by the plenary address by the famous **Padma Shree writer Amitav Ghosh, titled: The Parsi connection in China and its role in making of Modern India** (see FEZANA JOURNAL FALL 2012). This traced the history of early Parsi entrepreneurs like **Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the First Baronet** and others who established the Opium Trade with China based mainly in Canton. He then described the off shoots of this connection in the development of Parsi Garas, Reverse Glass Paintings in Contemporary India, and eventually Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai.

Padma Shree Amitav Ghosh is a wonderful speaker and his subject matter kept the audience glued to his words!

### GROUP C. RELIGION AND RITUALS (6)

These six presentations dealt with *Penance in Avesta/Pahlavi Literature, Namgrahan Recital in the preservation of Bhagaria Fehrest System, some lesser known Baj Dharna Rituals, etc.*

**Kianoosh Rezaia's (Georg-August University of Gottingen) presentation: Circumambulation: An Old Zoroastrian Ritual Practice?** – (Circumambulation means walking around (something), especially as part of a ritual) gave some insights from our scriptures about this practice of walking around in ancient Atashkadehs during prayers. He showed the architecture of **Chahaar Taaq (Four Corridors) in Takht-e-Soleymaan Atash Kadehs** where such circumambulations may have been performed. He cited words like *"Pari gaam"* (to go around), *"Pari jasaamaide"* (Y. 36.3) (to approach), *"Pari jassai"* (Y. 28.2) (to approach), etc. to make his point. I further informed him that the famous last para of *Hosh Baam prayer: "Pari Thwaa Jamyama"* (may we approach Thee!) also alludes to this.

In *Visperad 3.1*, there are references for eight Mobeds performing the ritual. At present, only two Mobeds perform the Visperad ritual but Raathwi, the assistant to Zaotar, has to go to eight different places in the Paavi and respond to the "Roll call" of Zaotar when asked if different Mobeds are present. This may be an oblique offshoot of circumambulation.

### GROUP D. ARCHEOLOGY AND CULTURE (2)

**Rukshana Nanji (Independent Archeologist)** presented the **Archaeology and Conservation of Sanjan and Bahrot** which can be found on Internet.

**Dr. Shernaz Cama (University of Delhi, UNESCO Parsi Zoroastrian Project): Cultural Memory: Intersecting Narratives in the Contemporary World** – presented a broad spectrum of all PARZOR projects to preserve our Parsi Culture. It reflects how four cultures – Iranian, Indian, Chinese and European – create a special heritage of humanity.

### GROUP E. BIOGRAPHIES (3)

**Afshin Marashi (University of Oklahoma)** presented **the Life and Work of Dinshah Irani** and His Collaboration with Iranian Intellectuals, especially with Ebrahim Purdavud in Reviving Zoroastrianism in Iran.

**Sadaf Jaffer (Harvard University): Zoroastrianism beyond Blood: Dastur Dhalla's Transformational Autobiography** – presented from the Autobiography of Dasturji Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla how he transformed from a strict orthodox Parsi to a moderate one during his scholarship at the Columbia University under the influence of his mentor, Prof. Jackson.

**Prof. Daniel Sheffield (Princeton University): The Loss of the Persianate and the Recovery of the Iranian: Parsi Philologists in 19th - Century Bombay** – in this presentation, Prof. Sheffield presents the dilemma to the Parsi Zarathushti community in Western India due to colonialism. On one hand, increasing community members thronged to Bombay losing traditional structures of religious authority. On the other hand, they eagerly embraced new forms of education replacing the older Indo-Persianate ones. Yet at the same time, they readily embraced the rediscovery of ancient Iran due to the newly discovered sciences of philology and archeology.

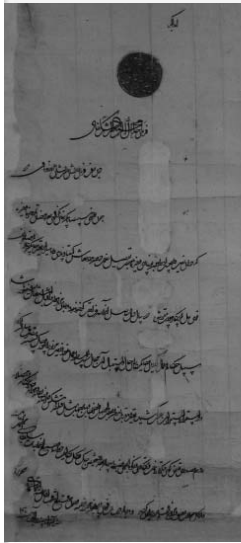
# IN THE NEWS

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The presentation then focuses on the works of the two individuals whose careers illustrate this transition – **Mulla Feroz and Sorabji Shapurji Bengali**. A short summary of their lives and literary works were discussed.

Weaving, exhibition of Garas, even a Gujarati/English Parsi Natak, and the best of all, an exhibition of Garas and selected old manuscripts including over 450 years old Sanad of Akbar the Great for the first Dastoor Meherji Rana! A special tour was arranged to show typical Parsi homes, homes of **Jamshedji Tata, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the First Baronet** etc.

Overall the Conference was a great success! The facilities were adequate, the presentations were thought provoking, the Parsi food was excellent, but above all, the hospitality, the friendliness, the arrangements, and the smiling faces of all volunteers were par excellence and will remain with us forever!



### **Imperial Farman of the Emperor Akbar issued for the Meherjirana Family**

In the years 1578-1579, the First Dastur Meherji Rana was chosen by the Mughal governor of Surat to attend the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri. According to tradition, Meherji Rana impressed the emperor so much that the emperor ordered his vizier Abu'l Fazl to keep a fire burning day and night at court. Before Meherji Rana left the court, he was presented with a land grant by the emperor. In later years, Meherji Rana's son Kaykobad also visited the Mughal court and was presented with Imperial grants. Original Mughal documents such as the farman on display here thus form a precious part of the historical heritage of the Parsi community of Navsari.



Samples of Glass Beads Parsi Torans.

### **GROUP F. ESOTERIC (2)**

There were two such presentations on “**The Shoe Question**” and “**Nasusalars and Khandias**”! I have no clue what connections these two presentations had for this Conference.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The Conference also had added attractions for the attendees: demonstration of the entire process of Kushti



Kasti Weaving Process Demonstration.

Let us end this with **Poet Keki Daruwalla, a Member of the National Commission for Minorities: Reading from his Poem: Pasargadae Sonnets**

This was an added attraction to the Conference which was not in the formal program. Keki read from his Pasargadae Sonnets about Cyrus the Great and his final resting place. It was fascinating to listen to him reading this. I will just quote the last lines:

“And prayers smoked upwards, profoundly intoned, by muffled, half-masked Mobeds who, now and then, when flame turned ember, lapsed into a drone. Your words lay simple on the limestone face:

“Here I lie, Cyrus, King of the Persians. Stranger don't grudge me these few feet of space.”

**Ervad Soli P. Dastur** is the last of 11 children born in a small village, Tarapur, India, to a priestly family from

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Mass Merchandising industries for P&G Sales Division. In 1991 Soli was transferred to Brussels, Belgium, where he trained P&G sales people in computer technology in 11 countries from UK to Saudi Arabia and UAE. He retired in 1994.

When requested, Soli performs Mobed duties all over Florida and NA., visiting different associations during Gatha Prayers, and in 2009 started the first Annual Muktd Gatha prayers in Miami. An active member of NAMC, he is in charge of all its communications. In December 2010, Soli was awarded the Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award at the NAZC in Houston. In January 2011, he started teleconferencing Zoroastrian Religious Class and has since conducted 8 Tele Classes, videos of which are available on: [www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net). He has been married to Jo Ann, whom he met on a blind date, for 46 years. They have twin daughters, Shirin and Anahita, and 5 grand children.

Udwada, Soli completed his high school in the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute boarding school, his Navar, Martab, and Samel ceremonies in Udwada Iranshah Atash Behram. Soli received his M.S. and a Ph.D in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. He joined the Procter & Gamble Co. in Cincinnati in 1964 as a Research Chemical Engineer, but drifted to Computer Technology, developing Marketing Data Analysis, Store Shelf Management Software for managing stocks in Grocery and

**Photo credits Ervad Soli P. Dastur**

## CELEBRATING A TREASURE: 140 YEARS OF THE MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY

### Speakers and Presentations



Top (L to R):  
 Murali Ranganathan  
 Marzban Giara  
 Almut Hintze  
 Pooriya Alimoradi  
 Afshin Marashi  
 Sadaf Jaffer  
 Leon Goldman  
 Kianoosh Rezanian  
 Iris Colditz  
 David Buyaner  
 Monique Vazifdar



Bottom (L to R):  
 Dinyar Patel  
 Khojeste Mistree  
 Reza Hosseini  
 Takeshi Aoki  
 Sarah Stewart  
 Alberto Cantera  
 Miguel-Angel Andres Toledo

**Roundtable Discussion**

**Photo credits Ervad Soli P. Dastur**

# IN THE NEWS

## MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY CONFERENCE

### CELEBRATING A TREASURE: 140 YEARS OF THE MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY

#### Speakers and Presentations

1. Alberto Cantera (University of Salamanca): *Illuminated Avestan Manuscripts.*
2. Ervad Parvez Bajan (Mumbai): *Transmission, Propagation and Preservation of Avestan-Pahlavi Literature through Manuscript Traditions.*
3. Leon Goldman (School for Oriental and African Studies, London): *The Sanskrit Yasna.*
4. Shervin Farridnejad (Georg-August University of Gottingen): *Artistic Aspects of Avestan and Pahlavi Manuscripts: Some Points on Codicology and Palaeography of Zoroastrian Manuscripts. (Absent)*
5. Meher Mistry (University of Mumbai): *Bharuch and the Kabiseh Controversy. (Absent)*
6. Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor (Iranshah Atash Behram, Udvada) : *Historical Chronology of Kisseh-i-Sanjan and the Iranshah Atashbehram.*
7. Simin Patel (Oxford University): *"The Shoe Question:" Self and State Fashioning in Colonial Bombay.*
8. Marzban Giara (Independent Scholar, Mumbai): *Parsee Prakash:A Chronicle of Important Events in the Growth ofthe Parsee Community in Western India.*
9. Götz König (Free University of Berlin): *The Forgotten Codices. (Absent)*
10. Takeshi Aoki (Waseda University, Tokyo): *Zoroastrian Persian Manuscripts on Zurvanism in Iran and India.*
11. David Buyaner (Free University of Berlin): *Penance of Sins in theAvesta and Pahlavi Literature.*
12. Pooriya Alimoradi (Concordia University): *Zoroastrian Clergy Dealing with Rebellions in 8th-9th-Century Iran according to the Eschatological Texts.*
13. Khojeste Mistree (Zoroastrian Studies, Bombay Parsi Punchayet): *The Recital of the Namgrahan and the Preservation of the Bhagaria Fehrest System: Its Historical and Socio-Religious Links.*
14. Sarah Stewart (School for Oriental and African Studies, London): *TheNavsari ÁtashBahrám in Literature and Song.*
15. Anton Zykov (Oxford University): *Nasusalars and Khandias in the Zoroastrian Communities of Iran and India.*
16. Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia (Dadar Athornan Institute, Mumbai): *Ritual reflecting life: Life and society as reflected from some lesser-known invocations ofBájdharnā.*
17. Plenary Address by Amitav Ghosh, recipient of the Dan David Award (2010) and the Padma Shri (2007): *TheParsi Presence in Canton in the 19th Century.*
18. Afshin Marashi (University of Oklahoma): *The Life and Work of Dinshah Irani and His Collaboration with Iranian Intellectuals in Reviving Zoroastrianism in Iran.*
19. Dinyar Patel (Harvard University): *The Banaji and Mehta Families: Forging the Parsi Community in Calcutta.*
20. Sadaf Jaffer (Harvard University): *Zoroastrianism beyond Blood: DasturDhalla's Transformational Autobiography.*
21. Almut Hintze (School for Oriental and African Studies, London): *Avestan manuscripts and digital scholarship: Towards a new edition of the Yasna.*
22. Miguel-Angel Andres Toledo (Free University of Berlin): *The Role of the Manuscripts of The First Dastur Meherjirana Library in the Transmission of the Vishtaspa Yasht.*
23. Kianoosh Rezania (Georg-August University of Gottingen): *Circumambulation: An Old Zoroastrian Ritual Practice?*
24. Iris Colditz (Free University of Berlin): *A New Project on Processes of Interaction and Transfer between Zoroastrian and Islamic Law in Post-Sasanian Iran (7th – 11th c.)*
25. Ervad Dr. Rooyintan Peer (Mumbai): *From Pahlavi to Firdowsi to Persian.*
26. Murali Ranganathan (Independent Scholar and Journalist, Mumbai): *Early Persian Newspapers of Mumbai.*
27. Daniel Sheffield (Princeton University): *The Loss of the Persianate and the Recovery of the Iranian: Parsi Philologists in 1Vh-Century Bombay.*
28. Jamsheed Choksy (Indiana University): *The Zoroastrians of Colonial Ceylon and Independent Sri Lanka. (Read in absentia By Aban Marker)*
29. Shernaz Cama (University of Delhi, UNESCO Parsi Zoroastrian Project): *Cultural Memory: Intersecting Narratives in the Contemporary World.*
30. Dasturji Cyrus Dastoor (D. N. Modi Shahenshahi Atash Behram, Surat): *A Short History of the D. N. Modi Shahenshahi Atash Behram, Surat.*
31. Homi Dhalla (World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation) and Rukhshana Nanji (Independent Archaeologist): *The Archaeology and Conservation of Sanjan and Bahrot.*
32. Reza Hosseini (University of Delhi): *The Nawroz Festival in Delhi Delhi Sultanate: an Issue of Convergence in Heterogeneous Court of Sultans.*
33. Dasturji Peshotan Mirza (Iranshah Atash Behram, Udvada): *Reverence to Stars in the Zoroastrian Religion. (Absent)*
34. Monique Vazifdar (Paper Conservanist, South Africa): *Techniques of Preserving Paper Manuscripts (Impromptu Presentation)*

# IN THE NEWS

## *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*



**An exhibition celebrating a community that embodies the American spirit."**

**December 2013 (TBA) - Winter 2015 (TBA)**  
**Museum: Natural History Museum**  
**Sponsor: Asian Pacific American Center**  
**Location: 2nd Floor, Northwest Gallery (Hall 26)**

Learn about the history and contemporary experiences of Indian Americans as they have grown to be one of the more diverse and well-recognized communities in the United States. Photographs, artifacts, video, and inter actives are used to trace their arrival and labor participation in the early 1900s; their achievements in medicine, small business, IT, and taxi-driving; and their many contributions in building the nation. The exhibition also reveals how they have kept and shared their culture and organized to meet the needs of the under-served, as well as how the younger generation has participated in spelling bees, dance, hip-hop, and contemporary cuisine.

Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation", by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, occupying more than 5,000 square feet of space in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History starting in late 2013 and continuing for two years, and expecting to

draw more than 7 million visitors before embarking on a national tour in 2015.

With Mr H.R. Shah as Chairman and CEO of TV Asia , this network has teamed up as the media sponsor for the exhibition. Masum Momaya is the curator of the exhibition.

The exhibition will "bring to life the rich history of immigrants from India and Indian Americans in the United States and detail their many contributions to America. Through a collection of photographs, artifacts, videos, interactive stations and stories, visitors will learn about the Indian American experience and the many dynamic roles they have played in shaping American society and culture."

"The Indian American story has yet to be told," said Konrad Ng, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. "Visitors of all ages will leave the exhibition with a deeper understanding of this vibrant community as they strive to realize life, liberty and pursuit of happiness in America. This exhibition is about celebrating a community that embodies the American spirit."

This is an opportunity for the Zarathushti community to show case their contribution.

***The poem submission of Farida Bamji, of Ottawa, has been accepted as one of the displays.***

**CONTACT**  
Smithsonian Institution  
Asian Pacific American Center  
Capital Gallery, Suite 7065  
600 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.633.2691 Telephone; 202.633.2699 Fax



# IN THE NEWS

## A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

### A Gara-Dugli Fundraiser on February 23, 2013

JEHANBUX R. MEHTA

The dugli was retrieved from the dry-cleaners, starched and white as sunlight. The paghri was located after a search through closets and tried if it could fit a balding head. Thankfully, both had withstood the test of time for wear and tear. That had to be so; after all, there had been very little wear. The gara was carefully unfolded, lightly ironed and draped over the sofa.. This ritual must have been performed at several Parsi households in Houston.

We were now ready and presentable to meet our humdins at the Zoroastrian Center on February 23, 2013. And, what a wonderful sight greeted us as we entered at 7:00 p.m. *Chalk-chadan* and beautiful floral torans adorned all doors. Pretty ladies looked even more gorgeous

in myriad colored garas: splatters of mauve, royal blue, black, red, orange dazzled the eyes. The gentlemen also stood out in their dazzling white, some with paghris, others in phentas. Behold, we were Parsis once again.

The skeptics among us had to scramble as the evening began to unravel. Guests mingled in the atrium with booklet in hand, to commemorate the event, beautifully designed by Homi Davier, had their photographs taken by **Percy Behramsha, Yezdi Engineer and Percy Katrak;** and entered their bids for the several tempting hampers of assorted goodies donated by the many members. Greetings of tandarusties were exchanged with the tinkling of glasses by the several who had complied with the BYOD instructions. At 8:00 p.m. sharp, the full capacity crowd of 200 guests were requested to take their seats at the long dinner tables in the Main Hall to enable the proceedings to commence.

In walked **Arna Sethna and Mitra Khumbatta** to the stage at which they performed *acchu-micchu* to the bevy of ladies carrying the traditional sagan-ni sess to the strains of Roj Mubarak, after which all joined in to belt out our anthem “*Chhayeh Hamay Zarhosti*”. The Master of Ceremony for the evening, **Kaemerz Dotiwalla** welcomed everybody and introduced, **Vehishta Kaikobad** who was overjoyed to

announce that the famed relic, the **Cyrus Cylinder and other Persian artifacts** would be on display in May at the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston. I was then asked to perform the pleasant task of introducing the Entertainment Committee for taking on the trying responsibility and tiring work done in making the unbelievable come to be. Yes, the critics



among us had to run for cover. An interlude of music by “**Tarkash Entertainment, Unlimited**”, the Zarathushti trio specially flown in from California entertained the crowd eagerly awaiting dinner.

A twelve-course dinner, catered by our own **Naushad Mehta and Rustom Setna**, was served on banana leaves as we were once used to. *Potato chips, lagan nu achar, mango murambo and rotlis* started the feast. Next was the ubiquitous vegetable *istoo and bhida per eedu*, followed by *patra-ni-macchi, papeta ma gosht, jhinga biryani and masala dal*, all piping hot and served by our troop of volunteers young and some not as young, all donning white aprons and gloves. They did a marvelous job of serving and returning frequently with seconds to satiate our voracious Parsi appetites. Our many thanks to them all. A mango drink was at hand to wash down the dinner. We then retired to the atrium for the *lagan nu custar* – please



# IN THE NEWS

note the correct pronunciation – and *faluda flavored cake*, and also *hot tea*. The departure from the norm was the availability of fork and spoon for those uninitiated in the art of eating with the hand, the absence of guests standing behind us to participate in a 'second paant' and, happily, the enamel basin and hot water to cleanse your hands. Ah well, can't adhere to everything, can we? And, did you observe that a volunteer was at hand to cut for you the string around the *patra ni macchi*? What more can one ask for?



Just as dinner was concluding, our MC announced it was time to draw the lucky winner of the raffle of a lovely gara donated by **Shireen Thakore** and requested the highest bidders of the silent auctions to collect their bounties. A live auction of two paintings donated by Parsi artists netted eight hundred dollars for our ZAH, thanks to auctioneers **Kamalrukh Gandhi and Dr. Firdaus Dastoor**. The committee has yet to come up with the amount netted for ZAH after accounting for all expenses. This amount actually stands doubled by the very generous offer of **Aban**

**Rustomji** and her family to match it in memory of Purvez, who as I mentioned during my thank-you's, had not just the vision for our Center, but also worked hard toward its fruition. ZAH owes him a lot.

The evening was now turning into a *mélange* of song, dance and good cheer. **Nauzad Sadry and his sister, Khushnum**, to the accompaniment of **DJ Zubin Chichgar**, a former Houstonian, made it so that it was impossible to sit down. The energy exuded by them transcended to the happy crowd till way after.

What an evening! How novel the theme and oh me, oh my, what effort! Once again, **Roshan and your group of Fred Bhaider, Nozer Dungor, Farrokh [Gary] Firozgary, Nazneen Khumbatta and Fiona Setna with the backing of Yasmin Medhora and Khursheed Dastur** and a host of volunteers and donors, a million ta's for giving us this evening to remember. How proud we were all to be Parsis once again!



# IN THE NEWS

## WELFARE ACTIVITIES OF

### THE WZO TRUST FUNDS

### THE WZO TRUST FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

### THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANIZATION TRUST

**An overview of welfare activities for 2012 of the above funds was received from Dinshaw Tamboli**

The year 2012 was very interesting, satisfying and rewarding not only in terms of donations received but also for opportunities that came their way to enlarge the activities of the Trusts.

The report covers

#### **FARMERS REHABILITATION**

In a 1987 study commissioned by WZO, *DR Cashmera Bhaya* identified 687 families in 209 villages living below the poverty line, which was defined as Rs 15,000 per annum per family in rural areas. In 2012, 14 families in 5 villages were rehabilitated. The donations were used for sinking bore wells, submersible pump sets, providing pipelines, seeds and fertilizers, brick kiln, setting up a poultry farm. Total amount Rs 3,566,895 (\$68,594). Since 1991, 450 Zarathushti farmers in 179 villages have been rehabilitated. Total money spent Rs 59,930,546 (\$1,152,510).



2013 - Glimpses of Zoroastrian poverty in villages of South Gujarat. Dadi Vaid of village Karchund in his hut, the door of which is made from tin boxes

#### **RURAL HOUSING**

Rehabilitation also necessitates improving the quality of life by providing decent living conditions. The huts needed to be replaced by cottages. To date 199 huts have been converted to cottages at an average cost per cottage of Rs 350,000 or \$6,730).



2013 - Inside view (1) of hut replaced into cottage (Village: Manekpur)

#### **SELF-EMPLOYMENT/MICROCREDIT**

Many poor farmers had no adequate resources to generate income. Through a self-help project where an interest-free loan is provided (max Rs 300,000/ to be repaid in 40 equal monthly installments of Rs 7,500). In 17 years 827 Zarathushtis in 105 different locations were given these loans to start their own business.

Total amount Rs 129,057,543 (\$2,481, 875),

#### **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

In 2012, 83 students were given educational support. Total amount Rs 5,239,884 (\$100,767).

# IN THE NEWS

## MEDICAL AID

24,1% of the Zarathushti population is over 65 years of age making ours an aging and ailing community requiring medical support on a regular basis. In 2012 341 individuals were supported for medical and hospitalization expenses through the donations received. Total amount Rs 17, 833,686 (\$343,051)

## RELIEF FROM POVERTY

In spite of relevant affluence of the community there are economically challenged pockets where family income is less than Rs 2,600 pm as opposed to the National average of Rs 3,538 pm. In 2012 funds were raised to support 373 elderly/indigent expending Rs 12, 076,766 (\$232,245)



2013 Food Grains Distribution Residents of Saded Uev village with their packages.

Funds are also raised to distribute food grains and other essentials to 120 -150 families residing in rural areas of Gujarat. (photo left)

## RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

In 1996, the Athornan Mandal –WZO was set up to encourage young boys of athornan families to take up mobedi as a full time vocation. A corpus of Rs 10,000,000/ was set up and from the interest, funds have been distributed to 49 young full time mobeds practicing at 13 different locations in India. Funds are also raised to help 38 elderly full time mobeds, living in poverty, who have retired or will be retiring soon. Funds were raised to repair two agaries

## ECONOMY HOUSING IN NAVSARI

Ancestral home in Navsari are gifted to the WZO Trust funds to be redeveloped and used for the community. Ten such buildings have been renovated and given out on a modest monthly fee.

## SENIOR CITIZEN CENTRES AT NAVSARI

The two senior citizen centres continue to be operational and very popular. Generous donations from **Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust and Mr Dinshaw Dossabhoy Mehta of Pune** help in maintaining the high standard of care provided.

## SANATORIUM AT SANJAN

In 1997 the **Trust of Bai Maneckbai P.B. Jeejeebhoy Deed of Settlement Fund** provided generous funds for the purchase of a sprawling dilapidated bungalow on 4.5 acres of land in Sanjan. Since 2001 this bungalow has been named the **Bai Maneckbai P.B. Jeejeebhoy - WZO Sanitorium** and because of this generous donation, room and board is provided for Rs 325 per person per day

All these activities are possible due to the generous donations for 25 organizations and individuals who have been the main pillars of encouragement, motivation and support towards the various welfare projects, During 2012 the **P.E. Polson Charity Trust and Minoo and Aloo Polson Charity Trust** amalgamated with the WZO Trust thus increasing the corpus.

The report also thanked **FEZANA** and the North American diaspora for their continued support and trust in the activities of WZO Trust Funds. The panel on **“Combating Poverty Track Team”** was particularly thanked for providing the Trusts with a platform to showcase their activities.

***Building Bridges, Guiding Beneficiaries Towards Horizons of Hope.***

***Summary Report Prepared By Dolly Dastoor***

# IN THE NEWS

## What I Would Do In A World Without TV, Internet and Mobile Phones

HUFRISH SETHNA



Children born in this technologically advanced century surrounded by TV, internet and mobile phones 24\7 cannot visualize a world without these electronic gizmos.

One night I dreamt about the simple charms of a mango orchard in village Pardi. My friend, slave to today's mobile culture rudely awakened me at 6:00 a.m. Painting my beautiful dream on canvas rather than doodling on MS Paint gave me great joy and satisfaction.

Without TV, internet or mobile, I would have loads of spare time to express my inner self through activities that uplift my spirits— painting, singing, dancing, playing the guitar, writing poems, stories, plays. Grandfather's stories from history, mythology and his life would impart life's best lessons.

The joy of reading would be rediscovered. A man who befriends a good book can never be lonely. Besides, newspapers and magazines would increase awareness in diverse fields-sports, politics, business.

Not being a couch potato, I would spend more time swimming, increasing fitness and agility. Chess, monopoly, crosswords, puzzles would sharpen my logical thinking and clever planning.

Holidays would be far more exciting; exploring the outdoors with cousins and friends, enjoying adventures in real life than in virtual mode. Interacting with 'real' people, not facebook and twitter profiles will forge deep bonds and meaningful friendships. Besides, nature inspires creativity and teaches survival skills. No wonder our ancestors came up with brilliant inventions-the wheel, telescope, electric bulb, gas stove..... in an age devoid of TV, computers and mobiles that have rotted our good sense, killed imagination dead and turned us into materialistic monsters.

**Hufrish Sethna; VII A**

**Ava Bai Petit Girls School in Bandra, Mumbai**

**[This essay was written for the Hindustan Times Scholarship Programme]**

FROM THE EDITOR : Hufrish Sethna (about 12 and a half years old) from Bandra won a scholarship of Rs. 50,000/- after writing an essay about how she would spend her time, if not encumbered by cell phones, television, and computers. 280 schools participated with 57,000 applications from classes 5,6, 7 8 and 9, 150 of these applications were shortlisted

Over several weeks, these 150 students were interviewed by the editor Soumya Bhattacharya and deputy editor Pravin Nair of the Hindustan Times.

50 were finally selected and had their photos in the newspaper published on February 8, 2013.

# IN THE NEWS

## *A Journey:*

### STUDENT-PIANIST-MASTER-TEACHER

**A few musical “notes” from the Russian Traditional School of Piano, Geneva, Switzerland. ETRP**

Musical appreciation is a wonderful ability. Creating music is a priceless gift. Enabling others to realize their musical talents and facilitating their existential artistic journey is an honored calling.

To appreciate music and musicians, it helps to understand the lifelong journey that dedicated professionals and nonprofessionals take in their trek toward artistic perfection and achievement.

The journey starts with a love of music. In today’s digital world, music is the most pervasive art form. Available to anyone, anywhere. Unfortunately, some people (read: “the younger generation”) have myopic genre preferences. With school budget cutbacks, too often starting with music programs, many of the younger generation are not exposed to the richness of the world’s greatest music and musicians. Parents should actively encourage their children’s music appreciation growth—perhaps not as musicians but as appreciators. Love of music is age-proof and it age proofs.

The journey continues with the recognition of an innate musical talent. Many people with exceptional musical talent do not recognize it in themselves, believing that “it is normal, doesn’t everyone have this aptitude?” When you notice talent, let the person know, then encourage them to embrace music as an intrinsic part and gift of their life. Not everyone

starts as a prodigy, set your and their expectations appropriately.

The journey is embarked by understanding the personality of the student, which helps direct them to the choice of an instrument and, finally, a teacher. The student must understand and appreciate music’s nuance and subtlety, silence and sound, heart and soul. There should be an intuitive respect and correct interpretation of polyphony’s musical values: harmony, tension, and dissonance. The study of music leads to a profound understanding of human sentiments and the development of the student’s intelligence. It was natural for the Russian school of piano tradition to be transformed into a school based on a deep relationship between student and teacher; often resulting in a lifelong bond of friendship.

The journey is confirmed by a commitment to a lifestyle of discipline and rigor. Self-recognition of a musical proclivity is essential, because the true realization of one’s potential will be directly related to their commitment to “put in the hours.”

The journey continues through life, guided and encouraged by devoted teachers, accomplished colleagues, and family. Skilled teachers and mentors will provide midcourse corrections to the roadmap, encouragement, and expertise to support the student as they travel toward their “maestria.” Through the skills and attention of the teacher, the student delivers the faithful rendering of the piece, not introducing their moods or sentiments. The teacher’s years of experience will help hone the student’s ability to concentrate, master

technique, and follow the time and space “routes” dictated by the piece.

The journey never ends and the cycle continues.

#### ABOUT THE ETRP

For more than a century, the Russian piano school has produced Masters of the Piano such as Heinrich Neuhaus, Alexander Goldenweiser, and Konstantin Igoumnov; they, in turn, have produced many progeny. Without doubt, the next generation of students, pianists, masters, and teachers will be those coming from the renowned *Russian Traditional School of Piano (ETRP)*, in Geneva, Switzerland.

The influential legacy of the Russian School of Piano is brilliantly honored by Djordje Milojkovic, pianist and teacher of international acclaim, and his masters at the Traditional Russian School of Piano in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### The School’s Mission:

- Provide piano training to students of all ages and levels of achievement, while being faithful to the precepts of the Russian piano school and its celebrated masters: Neuhaus, Goldenweiser, Igoumnov, and Feinberg;
- Provide the best pedagogical environment for contemporary music and piano education through master classes, lectures, and workshops;
- Support and promote young pianists with exceptional ability; and

# IN THE NEWS

- Provide social and cultural enrichment to the Swiss musical landscape.

In recognition of the ETRP's stellar academic standings, the Canton of Geneva has authorized the ETRP to deliver diplomas—Bachelor, Master, and Post-Master—as degrees equivalent to those delivered by the "Hautes Ecoles de Musique" and "Conservatoires" in Switzerland and in Europe.

The ETRP offers two tracks: nonprofessional and professional. They respond to the needs of students of any age and that may be pursuing various objectives in their pianistic career. Lessons are offered in French, English, German, Italian, and Serbo-Croatian.

Registrations are accepted at [www.etrp.ch](http://www.etrp.ch). "Master classes" are held several times during the year; applications are accepted throughout the year. Requests for financial aid are

considered on an individual basis.

Professor Milojkovic may be communicated with at: [dmilojkovic@etrp.ch](mailto:dmilojkovic@etrp.ch)

Y. Jhabvala, pianist, professor, and Administrative Director of ETRP may be communicated with at: [yj@etrp.ch](mailto:yj@etrp.ch)

**The ETRP website: [www.etrp.ch](http://www.etrp.ch)**

*Yasmine Jhabvala has lived in Geneva, where she completed her academic studies. From the age of five Yasmine learnt piano and music theory first at the "Institute Jacques-Dalcroze" winning several medals. And for her masters degree studied piano at the former "Conservatoire de Genève", under Henri Gautier. Her piano studies were interrupted when she went on to obtain her doctorate in History of Religions (University of Geneva and Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne). In 2008 she re-started her piano studies at the ETRP under Djordje Milojkovic, to obtain a diploma of virtuosity under his direction. In October 2011 she passed "huis-clos" of virtuosity, gave two concerts in Geneva in January and February 2013 and is preparing for her final concert to obtain her diploma of virtuosity. Since June 2012, Yasmine is a partner in ETRP with Professor Milojkovic.*

Photo credit Enrique Pardo Geneva, Switzerland  
[www.enriquepardo.com](http://www.enriquepardo.com)





# IN THE NEWS

## LAUNCH OF A NEW MUSIC ALBUM KHUSHALI NE BANDAGINA GEETO (Monajats –songs of joy and peace)

This new 60 minutes audio CD is a music lover's delight. It was released by Dasturji Khurshed Dastur on the auspicious occasion of the salgreh of M. J. Wadia Agiary at Lal Baug on Roz Meher, Mah Meher Yezdezerdi 1382 1st March 2013. It contains 16 devotional songs including Iranshahno garbo, surajne vadhavvanu geet, Khudavind O Khaavind, Navjoteni mubarakbaadee, and the entire Chhaiye Ame Jarthosti. This CD was also released by **Mr. Vispy Kapadia**, chief guest at the Iran League annual prize distribution function at Cama Baug on 2nd March 2013 when **Mr. Vispi S. Dastur**, great grandson of **Kavi Firoz Rustomji Batliwalla** and President of Iran League presided.

### *Khushali Ne Bandagi Na Geeto* (Monajats - songs for joy and peace)

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Sakhee suraj bhale ugiyaa re    | 9. Je nekine sambhaale           |
| 2. Khudavind O khavind Parvardegar | 10. Jyaare badkaaro raakhe chhe  |
| 3. Iranshahno garbo                | 11. Sakal shrushtino Khudaay     |
| 4. Navjoteni mubarakbaadee         | 12. Madad karo mujhne            |
| 5. Hey Keertaar mane aadhaar taro  | 13. Sarjanhaar pote potaano      |
| 6. Maangu madad yatha taaree       | 14. Namu chhu O Malik            |
| 7. Bhale leedho janam jagpar       | 15. Tan ne nit chhe sukh shantee |
| 8. Pavitrai tan mannee chhe        | 16. Chhaiye Ame Jarthosti        |

Sponsored by The Parsee Vegetarian and Temperance Society  
in memory of Late Kavi Firoz Rustomji Batliwalla

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KHUSHALI NE BANDAGINA GEETO by M. J. Giara



### *Khushali Ne Bandagi Na Geeto* (Monajats - songs for joy and peace)



**Vocals**  
Sanobar Reporter

**Music arranger & programmer**  
Kaizad Patel

**Chorus**  
Kaizad Patel, Bapsy Giara

**Rhythm Programmer**  
Kaizad Patel and Firoze Patel

Digitally recorded, mixed and mastered by Firoze Patel at Soundkraft studios.

Available from Marzban J. Giara,  
Dhunamai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar (E), Mumbai 400014.  
Tel. +91-022-24166204. E-mail: marzbang@gmail.com

Marzban Giara who learnt these songs as a child at the navjote class conducted by Dadar Parsee Youths' Assembly has produced this CD and booklet of lyrics. **Sanobar Reporter**, the nightingale of Nowroze Baug, a trained singer and radio and TV artist has rendered these songs in her melodious voice. The music arrangement and recording has been done by **Firoz and Kaizad Patel** at their studio in Mumbai. This project is sponsored by **The Parsee Vegetarian and Temperance Society** in pious memory of **Kavi Firoz Rustomji Batliwalla** (who composed the Parsi anthem and most of these songs) on the occasion of his death centenary.

A song becomes a hit when it is played over and over again. It is hoped that singing and listening to these hymns daily at home and at all Parsi Zoroastrian community functions will bring joy and peace in our families, community and country.

Price: Rs.150/- . Available from Marzban Giara, Dhunamai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400014. Tel. 022 -24166204. e-mail: marzbang@gmail.com

# Ponderables for the zarathushti community

MANOUCHEHR MOBARAKEH

*Although efforts have been made by Zarathushti religious leaders, scholars, and historians to clarify the Zarathushti religion, most efforts have fallen short of the mark. Serious Zarathushti studies began during the nineteenth century and remained the domain of a handful of religious and ethnic historians until the past few decades. Even then, much remains to be learned and understood. This paper suggests that the Zarathushti religion would be well-served by increased learning and understanding of its history and philosophy.*

## ZARATHUSHTRA—A COMPOSITE FIGURE?

A topic, which I invite you to consider, is Zarathushtra's birth date and birthplace. Could it be that Zarathushtra's Fravashi existed for several thousand years... and not just several hundred?

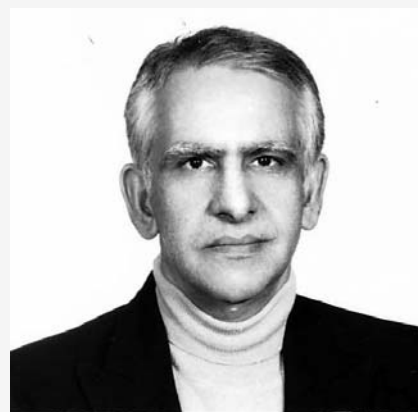
Some believe there were three Zarathushtras: Zarathushtra the First was born ten to twelve thousand years ago in Bactria. Zarathushtra the Second (aka Zaratushtoma or Sushiyant) was born in Rey or Ragma. Zarathushtra the Third (Zaratushtroma or Soshiyant) lived about four thousand years ago in Mogan, Azerbaijan. Can we accept the idea of three Zarathushtras?

Based on the continuity and consistency of historical and non-historical teachings that have come down to us, there is a strong argument that the last two Zarathushtras have the same characteristics of Zarathushtra the First. This record of successions was disrupted by the Arab invasion of Iran, which overwhelmed people and left the Zarathushti religion in disarray.

Immediate and unbroken succession is found in several religions: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. The triggering event for succession is most often death or incapacitation of the leader, as we have seen with the Pope, the Dalai Lama, and others; such is not the case with the millennial cycles of the Zarathushti religion.

## ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION

Zarathushtra taught a way of life. He preached the existence of one Supreme God: Ahura Mazda (the Wise Creator). Zarathushtra made the three principles of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds the pillar of His religion and beacon for the world. Personal accountability for right and wrong decisions is a hallmark of the Zarathushti religion and is exemplified by the lack of compulsion in the Zarathushti religion. It is the only religion where adherents are given a choice. Even before their Navjote or Sudreh-Pushi (initiation into the religion), children of Zarathushti parents are initiated into the faith from the age of seven to fifteen years under their free will and only after their contemplation. Millennia ago, Zarathushtra admonished his



followers, "Hear the best with your ears and decide by your pure mind. Let everybody judge for himself/herself and find out what he/she ought to do before the Great Trial. Let all wake."

Zarathushtra preached happiness. He says, "Happiness to those who make others happy." Sorrow, grieving, penitence, mortification, lifelong celibacy, anger, revenge, mourning, and religious sacrifices including animals are forbidden in the Zarathushti religion. Can you think of a more uplifting and needed philosophy?

Zarathushtis confirm their belief in Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra's teachings by praying five times a day—each division is called "Gah." Prayers may be held before fire or any source of light—light is a symbol for the radiance of God—the source that distinguishes good from bad to those with clear vision. According to Zarathushti beliefs, five types of fire and energy are described in the Avesta's Yasna 17.11: Fire of creation, Fire of lightning, Fire of plants [energy], Fire of animals [energy], and temporal Fire. In ancient times, and now, the single quintessence that continually glows is fire. In the Zarathushti religion, Fire is preserved in Fire temples as a symbol of purity. Confusion over Zarathushti practices has led some non-believers wrongly, and sometimes maliciously, to refer to Zarathushtis as "fire worshippers." We need to offer knowledge and to counsel respect in these instances.

## ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION AND HINDUISM

Zarathushtis, like other Persians and Indians, belong to the same Aryan race that migrated from north of the Caspian Sea to the south, including the Iranian plateau, the Indian subcontinent, and Europe. Indo-Iranians and Indo-Europeans have belief, literature, and social entities that share many common features with the Zarathushti religion.

Many parallels and commonalities exist among the Zarathushti faith and other religions; notably, the other great Aryan religion: Hinduism. It would not be wrong to call the Zarathushti religion and Hinduism siblings. For example, the Ahunavad Gatha of the Zarathushtis and the Bhagavad Gita of Hindus not only bear linguistically similar names, they also have a common meaning, style, and purpose with various pronunciations owing to the accents of Avesta and Sanskrit. Ahunavad and Bhagavad both convey "holy" and Gatha and Gita mean "song." Both are written in four stanzas, or quadrants, that invite the reader or listener to Righteousness or Asha. In the Gathas, we read, "Happiness to those who make others happy." Similarly, the Gita says "Man attains the pinnacle of glory by doing his duty with the total detachment."

To a Zarathushti, the similarities among the customs, practices, rites, and rituals between these two great Aryan religions are explicit. The Hindu Asura is the same as the Zarathushti Ahura. Their Upashta is the Zarathushti Avesta, Chand Upashta is Khordeh Avesta and their Kuti and Sutra the Kushti and Sudra of the Zarathushti religion. The Zarathushti Maneshni, Gaveshni, and Kuneshni are the Manani, Gavani, and Karani of the Hindus. Zarathushtis, on the eve of Nowruz, (the Zarathushti New Year) make fire to herald its beginning. Non-Zarathushti Iranians call it Chahar Shanbeh Suri. The Hindu Divali is similar to these celebrations.

Wonderful examples of the Zarathushti religion's cross-pollination with other religions and cultures abound. Zarathushtis, particularly those in Iran, gather and place personal objects like coins and keys in a clay pot filled with water during midsummer. After reciting a poem, one of the items is removed from the pot, the item's owner then becomes associated with the poem's meaning. After the last item has been removed, the remaining water is spread on people followed by the participants spraying water on one another. This practice resembles the Hindu festival of Matka breaking and Holi where color is sprayed instead of water. Similar water spraying festivals take place in Cambodia, Thailand, Armenia, Israel, and the Scandinavian countries.

**Manoucher Mobarakbadi** Ph.D Born 1937 at Yazd, Iran, graduated in Commerce and received a doctorate in Zoroastrian religious activity. He is a former member of Zoroastrian Anjuman of Tehran, and a crusader for Zoroastrian need for change in rites and disposal of the dead, acceptance of non-Zoroastrians into our faith and revival of Zoroastrianism, He has Translated " The Creation of Wealth" by R.M.Lala into Farsi, He is a Columnist in "Farvahar Magazine" an Iranian monthly. He now lives in San Jose, California.

The Zarathushti tradition of tying multicolored threads on each others' wrists in memory of Arash (the heroic Iranian Archer) is similar to the Hindu tradition of Raksha Bandi. The presence of fire during many ceremonies and rites in both the Zarathushti religion and Hinduism is common. The themes of happiness and joy are evident in the Zarathushti and Hindu cultures from ancient times.

The white color represents happiness and joy and is symbolic of these two Aryan religions. White is used in dress as well as surroundings in all ceremonies concerning these religions. Sadly, despite these and many other similarities and parallels between them, only modest efforts have been made in the Indian community to familiarize its members with the Zarathushti religion.

The pervasiveness of Zarathushti influence on and contributions to other religions, cultures, and civilizations is hardly noticed outside the Zarathushti community. Rather than trust our precious heritage to a handful of scholars, historians, and dusty books—it is WE that need to take the initiative and carry Zarathushtra's wonderful message beyond our community.

**Editor's Note :** *Fezana and the fezana.org website are important cornerstones of the global Zarathushti communications network. Like newspapers and cable news outlets, the value of Fezana is its content. Our source for valued content is you. The Fezana platforms have an unlimited potential for education, communication, and ideation. Here's an exercise: close your eyes and picture yourself as Zarathushtra with all of these tools at His fingertips. How would He use them? Please send your thoughts to the editor at [editor@fezana.org](mailto:editor@fezana.org)*

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# ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF ZARATHUSHTRA

*Their transformation over the ages*

ADI J. DAVAR

Part 2/2

## INTRODUCTION

Zarathushtra's real teachings/1 were briefly explained in Part I of this article in the Winter 2012 issue of the FEZANA Journal . They need to be kept in mind to understand the magnitude of their transformation over the ages and how different our beliefs and practices are today.

Clearly, no religion flourishes over thousands of years in a vacuum of its own. A revealed religion, particularly one as ancient as the Zoroastrian religion is no exception. Being revolutionary in its teachings, it transforms individual and societal ways of thinking, defies established religious and political institutions and undercuts traditional bases of wealth and power. It has to withstand and grow in the milieu of deep-rooted traditional beliefs, ideologies and practices it replaces, whose beneficiaries are loath to give them up.

Such forces usually manifest themselves through changes in a religion's rituals, rites, practices, traditions and religious leadership. But basic doctrine and their underlying theology, remain essentially intact. This has been the case with all major religions, except the Zoroastrian religion. Over the ages, its reformist monotheistic teachings were increasingly blended with pre-Zarathushtrian deities and percepts denounced by Zarathushtra. Religious practices and religiosity that he castigated, were also reintroduced. Moreover, some modifications made in them in one era, were altered in subsequent ones.

As their sweep is too expansive for a brief article, the transformation/2 will be explored illustratively through a limited number of topics, over 3 time periods:

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- (i) The **Gathic Period (GP)**, from around 1700 BCE up to 1400 BCE;
  - (ii) The **Younger Avestan Period (YAP)**, from around 1400 BCE up to 250 CE (the advent of the Haptanghaiti Gathas until the end of the Parthian era); and
  - (iii) The **Later Avestan Period (LAP)** , from about 250CE to 900 CE (Sassanian/ Islamic era) up to the present times.
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## TOPIC 1: AHURA MAZDA'S ATTRIBUTES & MAN'S QUALITIES.

In the GP, belief continued in Zarathushtra's teachings that Ahura Mazda created everything through His innate Mentalities and abstract Attributes, and He endowed man/3 with Qualities akin to His Attributes so that he could help perfect the world by perfecting his urwan. They were: Asha (Absolute Truth /Righteousness), Vohu Mano (Good Mind/ Divine Love); Armaiti (Divine Service/ Devotion); Khshathra (Divine Power/Energy); Haurvatat (Perfection); and Ameretat (Immortality).

Such monotheistic teachings made it difficult for the priests of the pre-Zarathushtrian faith to generate fear in the laity that it had to perform expensive rites and rituals to assuage various godheads, primordial and supernatural divinities. Faced with the resulting loss of influence and income, they began agitating against the new teachings.

During the YAP, such opposition intensified. Zarathushtra's weak successors could not resist the rebelling priests who were determined to revert to pre-Zarathushtrian beliefs and practices to regain wealth and power. Ultimately, a "grand compromise" was forged between them. It is reflected in the Haptanhaiti Gathas, and later scriptures. In essence, the syncretism introduced, was to retain the concept of Ahura Mazda in name, while blending pre-Zarathushtrian entities and practices into many of the strictly monotheistic doctrinal underpinnings of the Prophet's teachings.

How was it all done? It began by keeping Ahura Mazda as supreme, but subtly eroding His omnipotence. His six innate Attributes were personified into primordial "Amesha Spentas". He was then only placed at their head, to form

Heavenly Council of Seven "Holy Immortals". For the first time in our faith, a divine Zoroastrian pantheon was thus created. Amesha Spentas held first rank like that enjoyed by archangels of subsequent faiths. Each personified Attribute was made responsible for a physical earthly domain: Vohu Manah, for the Cattle Kingdom; Asha, for Fire; Spenta Armaiti, for Mother Earth; Khshathra Vairya, for the Mineral Kingdom; Haurvatat, for the Water Kingdom; and Ameretat, for the Plants Kingdom.

Many of Zarathushtra's percepts were abandoned. For instance, that: Ahura Mazda endowed man with Qualities akin to His Attributes, so that he could cope with his responsibility for deciding whether to perfect his urwan and thus the world, and for the fate of his urwan's fate in afterlife; by using the keys of good thought, good words and good deeds, man should live by the faith's basic principles of Good Thinking, Truth and Service and perfect his urwan and the world. Instead, he could now seek the help of Amesha Spentas and Yazats. Rituals and ceremonies denounced by Zarathushtra, were grafted into the faith. Under the garb of his teachings, many supernatural elements of the pre-Zarathushtrian times were effectively blended into the faith. And almost all rituals and prayers now implored their help along with that of Ahura Mazda.

In the LAP: The seven Amesha Spentas continued as the Heavenly Council. But they were now called "Aspandads". Ahura Mazda was renamed, "Ormazad". New languages used in this period, probably account for the name changes.

The Aspandads are no longer responsible for the different earthly domains. Except for Ormazad, each now represented objects used in ceremonies and rituals:

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Arthavahista – Fire, Vohuman – Milk, Spandarmad – fruits and vegetables, Shatravar – Metals, Kurdad –Water , and Amardad –Oil.

### TOPIC 2: YAZATS:

In the GP, there were no Yazats or any primordial or supernatural force to believe in or worship. They were simply not part of Zarathushtra's real teachings.

In the YAP, the Yazats (Adorable Ones) were introduced along with the Amesha Spentas, for the first time into Zoroastrian theology as part of the compromise reflected in the Haptanghaiti Gathas. They were made part of the newly created divine pantheon, but below the Amesha Spentas (at the level of angels in later religions). Unlike them, Yazats were not primordial. They were "ahura dhatas", created by Ahura Mazda.

Groups of Yazats helped each Amesha Spenta to take care of the material and spiritual aspects of his/her earthly domain. "Mainyava" (spiritual or celestial) Yazats like Daena, Serosha, Mithra, Rashnu, Verethragna , presided over wisdom, contracts, rectitude, victory, etc; and the "gaethya" (material or terrestrial) Yazats like Atar, Ardivi Sura, Vayu, Tishtrya, over fire, water, wind, rain, etc.. Later in this period when Persian empires expanded, the polytheistic gods of conquered nations began to be absorbed for political reasons into Zoroastrianism as Yazats. Their numbers therefore multiplied.

Elaborate ceremonies, rituals and religiosity reentered the faith, achieving the rebelling priesthood's goal of regaining lost wealth and power. Yashts were composed to honor every major Yazat. Man recited them to seek boons, benedictions and help from the Yazats. Such reliance further eroded man's responsibility for making choices relevant to the perfection of his urwan and the world.

Zarathushtra had taught that Ahura Mazda endowed each man with a Daena, which received His guidance through His Divine Messenger Mentality, Serosha. Their role was now played by the new concept of fravashis. Both were also demoted, as celestial Yazats.

Zarathushtra, and Ahura Mazda, are now often called Yazats. Even the juice of the intoxicating ephedra plant, Hoama, whose consumption and use in pre- Zarathushtrian rituals was castigated by the Prophet, is personified as a Yazat. A Yasht was composed to honor him and recited while paying homage to him through a ritual.

Zarathushtra's taught that Ahura Mazda created the Universe through His Spenta Mainyu Mentality. That credit is taken away. Instead, Amesha Spentas, Yazats and others are credited with helping Ahura Mazda in the creation process.

In the LAP, Yazats, renamed "Izads", multiplied to over 31,000 by the end of the Sassanian era (632 CE). They continued to be worshipped through an increasing number of prayer ceremonies and rituals, which included recitation of Yashts composed to honor the major ones. Power and responsibilities of Izads now outstripped those of Aspandads.

Serosha, Mithra and Rashnu are no longer "celestial" Yazats. All three, are made the Judges at Cinvat Bridge. The

Prophet's teaching that Ahura Mazda is the only Judge at the Bridge, was thus modified.

### TOPIC 3: FRAVASHIS:

In the GP, there was no belief in fravashis. They had no place in Zarathushtra's teachings.

In the YAP, fravashis were introduced into Zoroastrian theology for the first time, as part of the "grand compromise". They are "holy souls" who "existed since "the dawn of time", i.e. before the creation process began. Another primordial force was thus blended into Zarathushtra's revolutionary monotheistic faith. Fravashis joined Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas and Yazats in the creation process. Ahura Mazda's omnipotence in the creation process was thus further diluted and His Spenta Mainyu Mentality's role cut out.

Zarathushtra's teaching that Ahura Mazda guides every man's Daena through His Serosha Mentality, is discarded altogether. Instead, man receives guidance from his heaven-based fravashi, or guardian spirit. Everyone and everything, even Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas, have fravashis. One of the oldest Zoroastrian prayers written in this period, the Fravardin Yasht, lists about 300 fravashis, some primordial and others of persons who played invaluable roles in spreading Zarathushtra's teachings in many lands.

The new prayers, including those composed for socio-religious occasions, invoked not only Ahura Mazda's help, but also that of Fravashis, Yazats and Amesha Spentas.

In the LAP, fravashis, renamed "farohars", underwent a transformation from the preceding period. It is Ahura Mazda, renamed Ormazd, who created them before He decided to create the universe.

Yet another major transformation in Zoroastrian theology was, that farohars agreed to Ormazd's request not to live with Him in heaven, but on earth within man to serve as his guide in earthly life and return to heaven only when his body dies. Zarathushtra's original concepts of Daena and Serosha, as well as the change made in them in the YAP, were thus discarded. As the world today has over 7 billion persons, it now has, by implication, over 7 billion fravashis instead of about 300 in the Fravardin Yasht.

Whatever a man's transgression may be, his fravashi always intercedes on his behalf with Ahura Mazda. It accompanies his urwan across Cinvat Bridge, to plead for him with its 3 Judges. It also does that in his after-life. The monotheistic teaching that man is responsible for the fate of his urwan in afterlife is thus watered down.

### TOPIC 4: ANGRE MAINYU OR AHRIMAN :

In the GP, there was no belief in Angre Mainyu, It was simply not part of Zarathushtra's teachings. As explained in Part I of this article, he mentions Wickedness (called "Evil" in later scriptures) in 3 places, in the context where the word means a "doer of wickedness", "wicked person" or "victim of wickedness". This suggests that Wickedness has no substance, until man gives it life by choosing to think, speak or act wickedly.

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In the YAP, Wickedness is personified for the first time in Zoroastrianism as “Angre Mainyu”, the Evil Spirit. As part of the “grand compromise”, it emerges as a primordial spirit that is always in opposition to Ahura Mazda’s innate Spenta Mainyu Mentality (His Creative Mentality). That Mentality is thus turned into a personified primordial spirit.

Angre Mainyu’s goal is to overthrow Ahura Mazda and lure men into becoming his allies. Although Zarathushtra had castigated belief and worship of daevas and divs, they re-enter Zoroastrian religion as Angre Mainyu’s panoply of the evil forces. They are always engaged in perpetrating evil in the universe and persuading men to commit evil.

Towards the end of YAP, in the Achamanean era (549-330 BCE), the “Zurvanite heresy” gained credence amongst Zarathushtris, namely, that Zurvan (i.e. Time), not Ahura Mazda, was the father of both Spenta Mainyu and Angre Mainyu.

In the LAP, Angre Mainyu was renamed “Ahriman”. From his position as the rival of Ormazd’s Spenta Mainyu Mentality in the YAP, he is now made Ormazd’s co-equal. This was done through the Avesta-Zend compiled in the Sassanian era. In other words, it was only 1,700 years ago that the name as well as co-equality of Ahriman with Ahura Mazda was introduced in our 4,000 year-old faith. Is that duality compatible with Zarathushtra’s teaching of monotheism?

Ahriman swears vengeance against Ormazd and His creations. He vows to destroy them. He creates all evil in the universe, including falsehood, disease, pestilence, war and death. With his panoply of daevas and divs, he spreads and deepens evil in all forms everywhere. When any man abandons the worship of Ormazd, Ahriman makes him his partner. He is determined to prevent Frasho-keriti (Ultimate Renovation of the Universe), a concept also grafted into Zoroastrianism in the Sassanian era. All this is a drastic change in Zarathushtra’s teaching that evil has no substance until man makes it a reality.

A further change occurred in Sassanian times. In place of the Achamanean heresy of Zurvan, Zarathushtris now believed that Zurvan fathered Ormazd and Ahriman as twins. Learned scholars like Mary Boyce have concluded that most Sassanian kings, and presumably many Zarathushtris at the time, were Zurvanite in their belief.

### TOPIC 5: RELIGIOUS PRAYERS AND RITUALS

In the GP, man followed Zarathushtra’s teaching of venerating Ahura Mazda, His Mentalities and Attributes, by reciting individual prayers with outstretched arms (Ha. 50.8), doing simple rituals to reaffirm devotion and by living life according to the faith’s basic principles. This was done before an ever-burning hearth fire, whose light was symbolized by the Prophet as Ahura Mazda’s light of Wisdom and Creativity. Since Zarathushtra had denounced rites and rituals that led to the loss of the wealth and influence of the pre-Zarathushtrian priests, it might be safe to assume that Zarathushtri priests only performed “socio-religious” ceremonies. No one seems to know what prayers they then recited. But presumably, they only invoked Ahura Mazda and drew upon the relevant stanzas of those Gathas that Zarathushtra had composed to teach his faith.

The YAP however witnessed a revival of many ceremonies and rituals of the pre-Zarathushtrian era, inclusive of animal sacrifices, gift offerings and libations. Since Amesha Spentas, Yazats and Fravashis were now blended into the faith, prayers recited at all rituals and socio-religious prayer ceremonies, invoked their blessings and help besides that of Ahura Mazda.

The Hoama ritual was revived and new ones introduced. For example, certain days of the year were earmarked as “fravardigan days”, when the 300 fravashis of the Fravardin Yasht come down to earth. Man had to propitiate them in order to persuade them to look after the urwans of their deceased family members. New expensive ceremonies like the afringan, faroksi and varsi had to be performed throughout the year to help those urwans. Such practices transformed Zarathushtra’s basic teaching that a man’s urwan pays in after life, for living or not living according to the faith’s basic principles.

In the LAP, the expensive Nirang and Vendidad ceremonies were added. But animal sacrifices and gift offerings ceased. Fire, milk, fruits, metal objects, water and an oil lamp, the earthly domains that were assigned to the seven Aspandads in this period, were used instead. Religiosity and rites increasingly become man’s means of venerating Ormazd, rather than through individual prayers and simple personal rituals.

As in the YAP, eminent priests continued to compose prayers invoking Amesha Spentas, Yazats and Fravashis, besides Ahura Mazda. But phrases from the Gathas were now interwoven into them to give them the authenticity of reflecting Zarathushtra’s teachings. That was also the purpose of inserting the surviving 17 Gathas composed by Zarathushtra, in the middle of the 72 chapters of the Avesta-Zend.

By the Islamic period (around 632 CE), the number of fravashis swelled to 9,999. Yet another change was introduced in fravardigan practice. Fravashis of the deceased relatives accompanied the 300 fravashis of Fravardin Yasht. Family members propitiated them to cajole them into taking care of their relatives’ urwans. That practice again changed in later centuries. On favardigan days, only the fravashis of the deceased family members came in the company of their urwans. But since the last 200 years, urwans of the deceased relatives alone came, so that their families could remember them.

### TOPIC 6: HEAVEN AND HELL

In the GP, belief continued in Zarathushtra’s teaching that a man who had lived according to the faith’s principles and perfected his urwan, is rewarded on crossing Cinvat Bridge by being absorbed in Ahura Mazda’s emanation, the allegorical Abode of Light and Song. Those who had not, went to the allegorical Abode of Woe and Misery.

In the YAP, a four-fold division for both heaven and hell replaced the GP’s two-fold division. Heaven’s 4 divisions were: Anaghra Roaocha (endless light), where Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas, Yazats and the Fravashis of perfected souls dwell as reward for having perfected themselves on earth; the remaining 3 lower heavens, in a descending order, awaited those who had led less perfect lives, namely, those of Humata (Good Thought), Hukhata



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(Good Words) and Huvarshata (Good Deeds). Hell's 4-fold divisions, in a descending order, were those of Dushmata (Evil Thought), Dushukhta (Evil Words), Dushvarashata (Evil Deeds) and Angra Temati (Endless Darkness). In addition, man who lived life with an equal measure of good and wickedness, went to Misvana Getu (place of mixing), a midway place between heaven and hell.

In the LAP, these divisions remained. But the urwans for whom no obsequies were done by their relatives, went to a lower level of heaven. Those for whom they were done, ascended to its highest level, Garotman. Locations of heaven are set in different parts of the cosmos. From the lowest to highest, they were between stars to moon, moon to sun, and sun to Garotman and Garotman to endless light where Ahura Mazda resides. The four location of hell are in the middle of the earth, below Cinvat Bridge. Each is distinguished by increasing gradation of punishment meted by Ahriman and his divs to the urwans. The midway heaven is located between the earth and stars.

### SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this article is simply to provide information not easily available to most Zarathushtis. Readers might ponder over it and reach their own conclusions as to whether what they practice as their faith, reflects Zarathustra's original strictly monotheistic teachings. Or, whether it is closer to the practice of the Sassanian era, by which time Zarathushtra's teachings had regressed through blending pre-Zarathushtrian divinities, primordial and supernatural beings into them and also rituals to propitiate them.

It seems to the author that the extensive blending initiated through the "grand compromise" reflected in the Haptanhaiti Gathas, was deepened in our later scriptures because Zarathushtra's teachings had become dimmer and dimmer by that time. This was probably due to the inability over those centuries to understand the ancient Gathic language in which Zarathushtra had composed them. Together, they succeeded in drastically changing most of his strict monotheistic teachings, not merely the faith's rites, rituals, practices, traditions and religious leadership - as it happened in other major faiths.

The net result was: to preserve the concept of Ahura Mazda, not as the sole omnipotent Creator, but as one who relied on supernatural beings and forces even for process of creation itself; to personalize His innate Mentalities and abstract Attributes, and turn them into supernatural forces; to create a hierarchial divine pantheon of Amesha Spentas and Yazats, akin to arch angels and angels of later faiths; to revere Ahura Mazda not only through personal prayers, but increasingly through expensive and frequent rituals and ceremonies invoking such divinities and forces; for man's Daena not to receive Ahura Mazda's guidance through His Serosha Mentality, but instead be guided by a supernatural guardian angel, a man's fravashi, that Zarathustra mentioned nowhere.

Further results were: to continue venerating Ahura Mazda, along with the supernatural Amesha Spentas, Yazats and Fravashis who had no place in Zarathushtra's teachings; for man to no longer be the one who gives substance to Wickedness, but instead pass the blame to a

primordial Evil, Ahriman; to make him equal to Ahura Mazda; for man to rely on supernatural Yazats and fravashis to help him perfect his urwan and the world, rather than choosing to lead life based on the faith's basic principles; to nourish hope of a better fate for his urwan in afterlife through the intercession of his fravashi and obsequies done by relatives, rather than reap the benefit of, or the penalty for, the way he lived on earth.

The reality seems to be, that the Zarathushti religion rests today on beliefs and practices that do not reflect Zarathushtra's pristinely monotheistic teachings. Should Zarathushtis practice it as it has evolved "by tradition", in the erroneous belief that it is what Zarathushtra taught? Or, should they practice the faith only as HE taught it? Or, while doing that, should they also respect the traditions that have grown up over the ages, while recognizing that they are merely time-honored traditions which do not reflect the Prophet's real teachings? Each Zarathushti must confront this dilemma alone, and live with his personal decision.

As followers of a tolerant faith premised on the use of man's Good Mind and Truth, is it possible to consider engaging in a productive discussion about what has happened in Zoroastrian religion. In such a dialogue, can we remain firm in our beliefs without demonizing those with just as strongly held different convictions? Can we thus come to some common understandings, which can be passed on as a legacy to future generations? Is it too much to hope for such a mutually beneficial outcome?

### REFERENCES

1. Zarathustra's teachings mentioned in the article, are drawn from the 17 surviving Gathas ascribed by scholars to him. Each teaching is based on the translations by the pre-eminent Parsi scholar Dr. Irach Taraporewala in "The Divine Songs of Zarathustra", Bombay, 1993, and the leading Gatha scholar, Stanley Insler in his "Gathas of Zarathustra", Leiden, 1975.
2. Among the surveys of historical transformation of the faith, the most erudite in the author's view, and on which he has relied, is the one made by scholar-priest Dasturji M.N. Dhalla in History of Zoroastrianism, 1985, Bombay.
3. "Man" or "men" are the abbreviations used in the both genders.

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**Adi Davar** holds a degree in economics and law from Bombay University and a Masters in International Law from Harvard University. Senior executive in the Tata Group and the World Bank-from where he retired as a Director of East Asia and Pacific Region. He came to Washington DC in the 1960s

and was the founding President of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington. He is active in community affairs, internationally, nationally and locally. Researcher, writer and speaker on Zoroastrian religion, its history and contemporary issues.

# Zoroastrianism

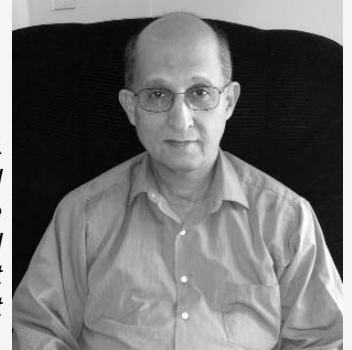
*mankind's first known attempt to acquire social justice.*

## DETERMINING THE LOCATION AND TIME OF THE PROPHET ZARATHUSHTRA.

### Installment 2 of 3

#### PILSUM MASTER

*In Installment 1 (FJ Winter 2012 ) we discussed how and why the Steppe Cultures formed on the Eurasian Steppes and spread over vast areas of Eurasia between the Eneolithic and the Late Bronze Age, and the first migration of these Steppe cultures into the agricultural communities of Old Europe. We ended with the description of the three dramatic events that gave rise to the dominance of the Steppe Cultures over the agricultural settled communities at the margins of the Steppe and their influence on cultures even further away.*



*In this second Installment we will discuss the development of inequalities in the nomadic Steppe Cultures, and the triggers for their migrations across the vast expanse of the Eurasian steppes. We will see the effects of these migrations on the Steppe cultures and the other cultures that they came into contact with at the margins of the Eurasian Steppes and in Central Asia.*

*The most critical part of our story is to determine why the Steppe Cultures and their languages took precedent over the other cultures that they came into contact with. At the same time we will discuss the reasons for the rise of violence and warfare amongst the Steppe Cultures, and the importance of the rise of the Sintashta culture east of the Ural Mountains. The Secondary Products Revolution of the Bronze Age and the resulting Community of Towns will be linked to other important events such as the development and use of the War Chariot and the migrations into Central Asia. The importance of the connection between the Sintashta and Andronovo Steppe Cultures and the development of the Indo-Iranian (Aryan) identity and language and the impact of this Age of Heroes will be determined.*

*We end the second installment with the discussion of the BMAC Agricultural communities of Central Asia, and we will learn more about this important culture in Installment 3 and how it played a vital role in the life and times of Zarathustra and Vishtaspa.*

#### REASONS FOR INSTITUTIONALISED INEQUALITIES IN STEPPE CULTURES:

##### PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS:

At first the herding communities probably had a communal herd, and then, when the wheeled wagon provided mobility, individual families spread out over the Steppes and owned their own herds. Problem was that in the harsh environment, cattle, sheep and horses could be lost due to weather, lack of food or predators and had to be replaced. One way to replace them was to go to your neighbour, who may have been a better herder with fewer losses, to borrow some of his herd. This created a system of patron-client, with reciprocal obligations built into the system. The patrons became chiefs who in return for such favors demanded where and where raiding was done as well as other privileges. The chiefs in return had to provide for the patrons, including periodic feasts – which in turn necessitated raiding neighbouring communities. The Proto-Indo-European word for chief was \*reg (regulator) from which the Italic rex and the Old Indic raj are derived (Anthony; 2007; pg. 160).

##### TRIGGERS FOR MIGRATION (adapted from Anthony; 2007):

1. Threats of repeated raids by their neighbours may have prompted the migration of these Steppe people eastward over the Kazhak Steppes, east of the Urals to the Altai Mountains, and then by about 2000 BCE southward between the Caspian and Aral Sea to Iran and the Bactria-Margiana area (Fig 3).
2. Migration was also caused by climatic changes. Between 3500 and 3000 BCE the climate on the Eurasian Steppes became significantly drier as determined from pollen cores (Anthony: 2007; pg. 300) causing the need to move herds frequently and over a longer distance. Fortunately, in this period the wheeled wagons were discovered and became common on the Steppes.

Wagons and horseback riding allowed the Steppe herders to move back and forth long distances with their families and herds but also to move long ways to newer pastures.

# Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra

## EFFECTS OF MIGRATIONS ON THE STEPPE PEOPLE AND THE OTHER CULTURES:



The Steppe People began to encroach on the territories of the Sedentary Cultures, first westward in the Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age into Old Europe (current Bulgaria and Rumania) – (Fig 3)--and then east and south into Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau – ( Fig 3 and Fig 7):

By 2500 BCE, the spread of the Steppe cultures over this vast area caused their language -- identified as Proto-Indo-European to pass into a number of daughter languages known as the Indo-European family, the root of Greek, and other European languages and the Proto-Indo-Iranian language (from which sprang the Avesta and Sanskrit languages. (Mallory; 1999; pg. 263; Anthony; 2007; pg 51-52.)

### WHY DID THE STEPPE WAYS AND LANGUAGE TAKE SUCH PRECEDENT OVER THE OTHER OLDER NON-INDO EUROPEAN LANGUAGES, CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF THE SEDENTARY CULTURES THEY CAME INTO CONTACT WITH?

According to Anthony (2007; pg 340) “The pre-Indo-European languages of Europe were abandoned because they were linked to membership in social groups that became stigmatized”. According to Anthony (2007; pg. 341-343) there were five important factors in enhancing their status. Similar explanations are supported by other scholars (Witzel: 1995; pg 110 -115):

1. The Steppe horses were larger than the ones in the other communities. The Steppe societies got rich really quickly trading these stronger and more manageable animals.
2. The demand for horses increased because horses were used to raid other communities without warning – even at long distances. This increased insecurity so dramatically, that agricultural communities were abandoned and the people took up the life style of their tormentors, which in turn increased demand for their horses for herding and raiding.

## Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra

3. This increased the patron-client relationship because the weak had to gain the protection of the strong. Societies began to be moulded into the Steppe ways and customs that used contracts for protection, which obligated many to loyalty and service to a few.
4. The destruction of the settled way of life forced adoption of migratory society customs, such as the mutual obligation of hospitality offered to people who accepted the new rules and were under the new social umbrella. This accelerated the assimilation of new groups by extending the protection.
5. Steppe society had created an elaborate ritual around funerals, with feasting on meat and mead for other cheerful public functions. Also there was elaborate gift giving, including the awarding of gifts and favors by chiefs to their clients. These events enforced a new identity on the newcomers and was useful for recruiting new members.

### **RISE OF VIOLENCE AND WARFARE – STEPPE CULTURES FORCED TO PROTECT WINTER PASTURES AND SOURCES OF COPPER– THE INDO-IRANIANS (Anthony; 2007; pg. 389- 411):**

By 2500 BCE the climate on the Eurasian Steppes became even more cooler and arid, causing the forests to retreat, the grasslands to expand, and the marshes so critical to Steppe herders to dwindle. The risk of losing valuable marshland caused the migratory people to settle down in or near the marshes.



**Fig 4 : Archaeological remains of the Sintashta Culture in Arkhaim, Southern Russia just east of the Ural Mountains (location in Fig 6 ).**

Warfare for shrinking resources must have been intense and caused a number of changes to occur between 2100 and 1800 BCE. The people settled on terraces overlooking the marshland in heavily fortified settlements, with walls and towers. Fig 4 is an aerial photo showing the remains of one of these major sites in Russia.

### **THE SINTASHTA CULTURE –ANCESTORS OF THE INDO-IRANIANS (Lamberg-Karlovsky;2002; pg 64-69):**

Fig 6 shows the location of the Sintashta Cultural area just east of the Ural Mountains known for metallic deposits of copper and precious metals.

## SECONDARY PRODUCTS REVOLUTION AND THE COUNTRY OF TOWNS (Anthony; 2007; pg. 390-411):

Soviet Archaeologists have uncovered 20 fortified settlements similar to Arkhaim in a small area of the Steppes just east of the Ural Mountains, an area rich in metallic ores, even in modern times. These people got together to protect valuable resources like winter pastures and copper mines that were used to produce their weapons.

Archaeological remains show that the Sintashta settlements had been turned into industrial centres that specialized in metal production. Remains found in grave burials, point to greater numbers of new weapons with longer and heavier projectile points, attached to longer and heavier spear handles. Some of the weapons and artifacts are visible in Fig 5.

## THE WAR CHARIOT — ANOTHER PRODUCT OF THE SECONDARY PRODUCTS REVOLUTION (adapted from Anthony; 2007; pg 397-408 and Parpola; 2005; pg 6-12):

Perhaps the most important development in the Sintashta culture was the widespread use of the war chariot. One piece of evidence is the remains of chariots in Steppe graves (kurgans) —(Fig 5). Ratha (Sanskrit: *rātha*, Avestan *raēa*) is the Indo-Iranian term for the spoked wheel chariot of antiquity. It derives from a collective \*ret-h- to a Proto-Indo-European word \*rot-o- for "wheel".

The Steppe chariot made by skilled carpenters who had mastered bent-wood joinery was built entirely for speed, and usually driven by a single man. It required a specially trained team of fast and strong horses, as well as talent, skill and the time and resources for warriors to practice driving the whole team through a turn, while keeping balance in a bouncing backless vehicle, which also required the charioteer to throw javelins during war. This meant that a single man had to control the horses with one hand while throwing the javelin with the full force of his body with the other hand. If he had to switch to a bow and arrow then he had to tie the reins around his waist and use both hands to shoot arrows with his bow in both directions.

In spite of these challenges, the charioteer had a distinct advantage over riders on horseback. This was before the invention of stirrups, when riders without stirrups for leverage would have a difficult time using all their strength in throwing a javelin from horseback without losing their balance. The bows in those days were too long and horseback riders could not change the direction of firing an arrow from one side to the other with any ease, while the standing charioteer could.

## THE AGE OF HEROES HAD BEGUN:

These specialized skilled warriors became heroes in the upper class in the Steppe societies and were buried with great feasting ceremonies in kurgans together with their chariots, their weapons and their horses.

## MIGRATIONS INTO CENTRAL ASIA:

### SINTASHTA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ARYANS (Anthony; 2007; pg. 408-411 and Mallory; 1999; pg. 228-231):

The term Indo-European is used to identify the linguistic, social and possibly the racial identity of the Steppe cultures discussed so far.

Western scholars now prefer to apply the term Indo-Iranian to the cultures that sprang from the Sintashta and amalgamated with the settled societies of Bactria-Margiana region of Northern Iran, Afghanistan and the Amur Dairya area. The term Indo-Aryan or Rig-Vedic is applied to the cultures that sprang up in the Contact Zone around 1800 BCE and then migrated south to the Indus River basin. Sanskrit evolved from the Indo-Aryan (Old Indic) language. The term Iranian

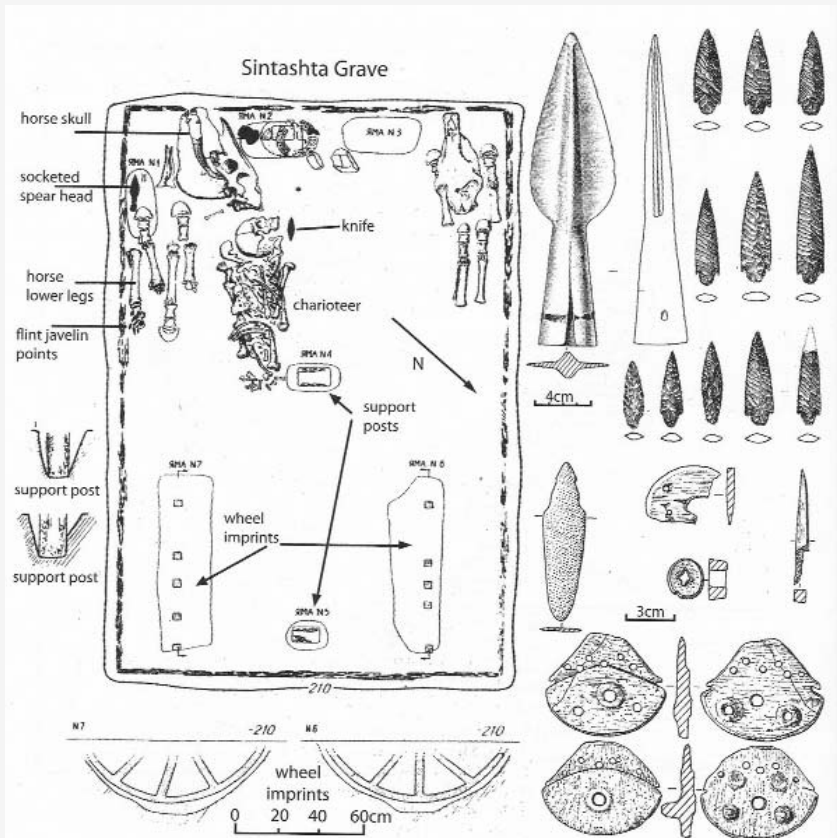


Fig 5: Sintashta SM cemetery, grave 30, with chariot wheel impressions, skulls and lower leg bones of horse team, cheekpieces for bits, and weapons.

from David W. Anthony

## Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra

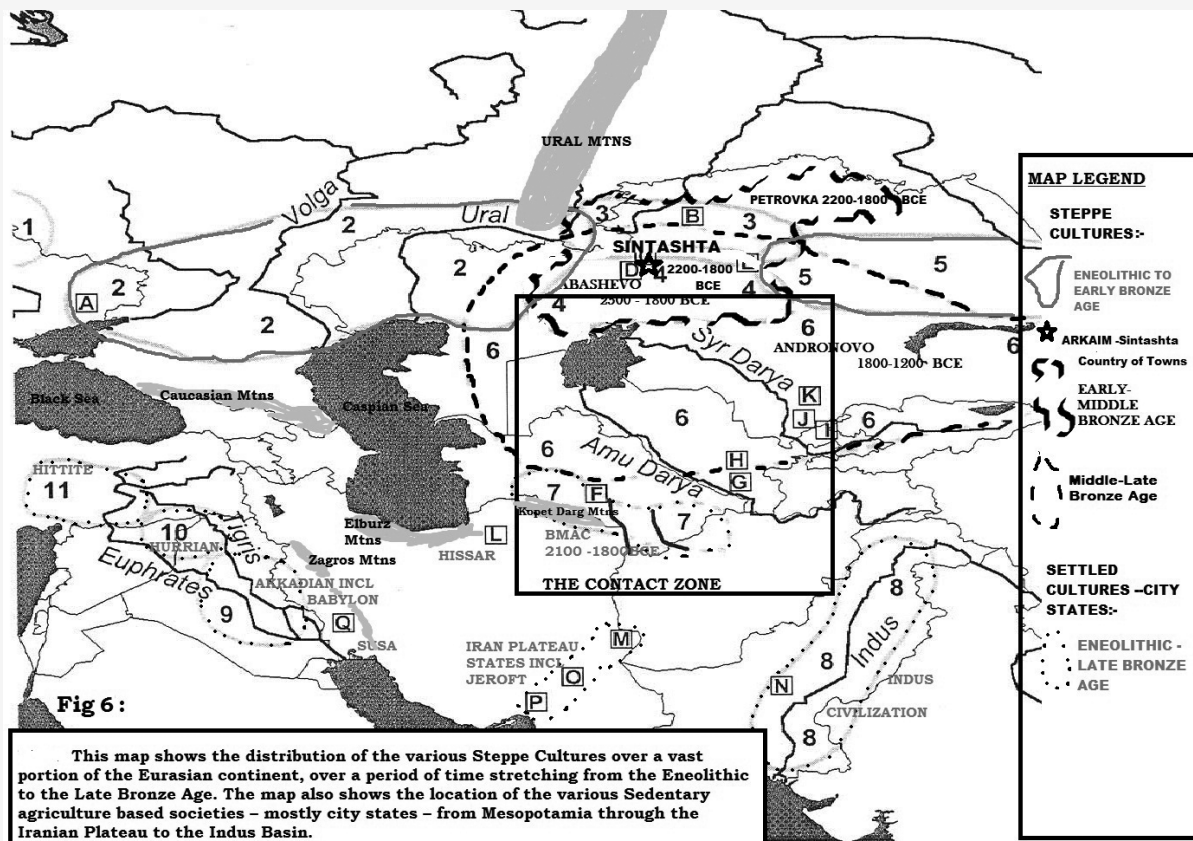
applies to the people of the eastern Steppe and the Contact Zone that migrated on to the Iranian Plateau, and their language evolved from Proto-Iranian into the Avestan and still later into the Old Persian language.

Within the Steppe society, however, a person was identified as an "Airya" if he "sacrificed to the right gods in the right way using the correct forms of the traditional hymns and poems" (Anthony; 2007). If he did not, then that person was a "Dasyu". Later in Iran such a person was called Anarya. Old-Indic/Sanskrit and Avestan are closely related languages, and both are daughters of a Proto-Indo-Iranian language. In Sanskrit "arya" meaning noble, or "airya" in Avesta refer to Cosmic Order (Asha). In both old Indian and Iranian context the term "airya" is an ethnic name.

Between 2500 and 1000 BCE Indo-Iranian origins are connected to the Sintashta Steppe culture. In many ways the cultures of the Steppes, west to the Don River showed a common kinship with the Arya (Airya) of the Rig Veda and the Avesta. For example, the use of the chariot rapidly spread from the eastern Steppes west to the Ukraine and into south eastern Europe and then south across the Caucasus Mountains into Armenia.

After the Ural frontier was broken and Steppe culture spread eastward towards Siberia, and southward, finally bringing the northern Steppe culture face-to-face in contact with the old civilizations of Asia –the Contact Zone in Fig 6.

### ACCELERATION OF THE SECONDARY PRODUCTS REVOLUTION WITHIN THE STEPPE CULTURES:

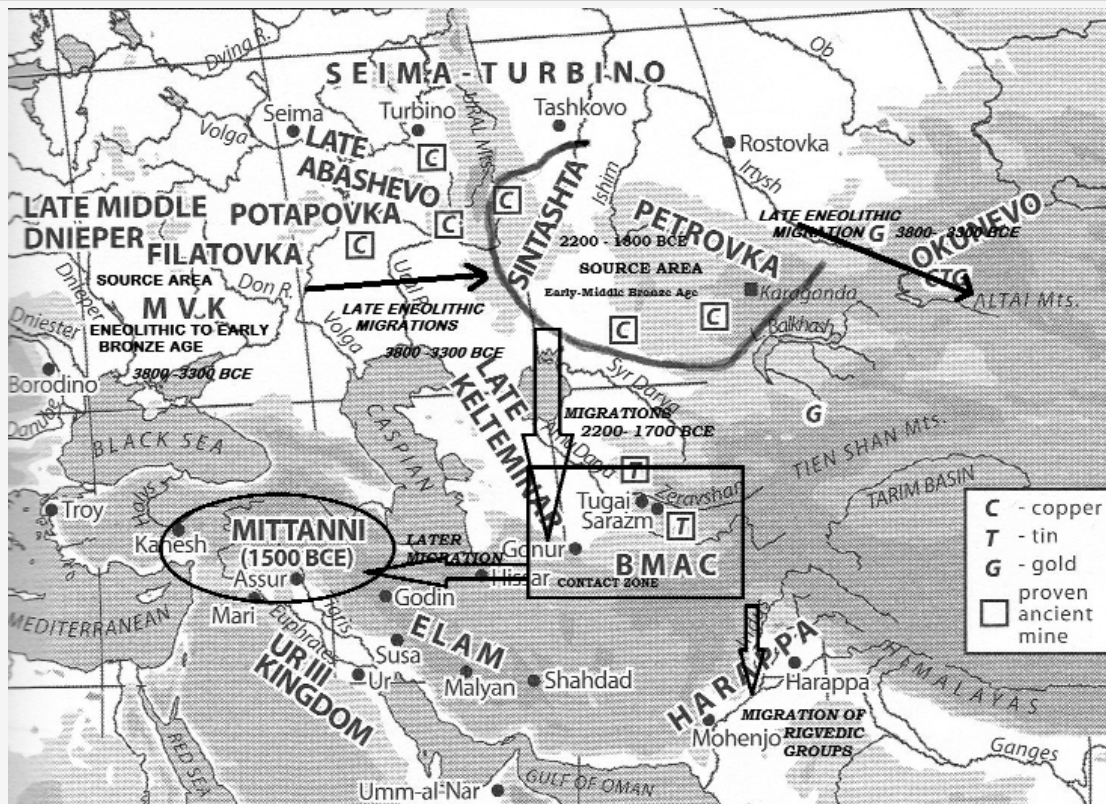


Between 2200 and 1800 BCE the portions of the ancient world (Fig 6) including the Ur kingdom in Mesopotamia, the Elam civilization of southwest Iran, the Harappa culture of the Indus River system and the BMAC (Bactria-Margiana) cultures of north eastern Iran began to become a part of a single (but non-Indo-European) system. This was due to trade and conquest, driven by a voracious demand for metal, gems, ornamental stones, exotic woods, leather goods, animals, slaves and power (Anthony; 2007; pg. 412). Climate change was no longer a major factor for change.

The greatest demand was for horses and bronze weapons. There were a few known copper deposits in Anatolia (Turkey) and a few deposits of copper in the Danube valley which contained tin as well. Fig 7 shows the location of copper mines and deposits near the Ural Mountains and in the area north of Syr Darya (river) – all Steppe culture territory. The metal smiths of these Steppe cultures were already experts at making pure copper and copper-arsenic alloyed weapons, but now they needed tin to alloy with copper.



## Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra



**Fig 7 : First Eastward Migration far to the Altai Mtns from the Pontic-Caspian Steppe in the Eneolithic (3800-3300 BCE). Then South in the Early to Middle Bronze Age -- 2200 to 1800 BCE. Then west to Anatolia in Late Bronze Age (1500 BCE)-- (Adapted from David W. Anthony).**

### THE ANDRONOVO STEPPE CULTURE – THE INHERITORS OF THE SINTASHTA:

In the Late Bronze Age on the Steppes east of the Ural Mountains, a new Steppe culture developed – the Andronovo Culture (Fig 6). It occupied such a vast area, that the competition for resources reduced and the need for fortifications decreased, but the Secondary Products Revolution in weapons and metallurgy and horse breeding continued feverishly. The economy was based on cattle and sheep herding. Permanent settlements of 50 to 250 people living in large houses sprang up with wells providing water for the winter. These were the descendants of the Sintashta and spoke Indo-Iranian and Proto-Iranian dialects (Anthony; 2007; pg. 448-449).

The Andronovo people were getting prosperous by trading in horses and metal. Bronze weapons and tools were in great demand in the city states of Mesopotamia, Elam and the Iranian Plateau.

Samarkand is in the Zeravshan River valley. The Zeravshan is a tributary of the Amu Darya River and both these river basins played a vital role in the development of the cultures we are dealing with. Earlier in the Middle Bronze Age the Steppe cultures had already taken over the Zeravshan valley mainly to mine for tin and process bronze weapons with copper brought in probably from the Ural area (from Anthony; 2007; pg 418 -421,427-435,462 and Mallory; 1999; pg. 222-231). Fig 8 is an enlarged view of the upper portions of the Amu Darya river and the Zeravshan valley.

### THE BMAC AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (from Anthony; 2007; pg. 421-435,452-454 and Sariandi; 2010):

BMAC stands for the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex consisting of a number of archaeological Bronze Age sites covering the Margiana River delta in present day Turkmenistan, and sites in Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan, a culture built on fortified urban centres. The contribution of the BMAC to the development of the Indo-Iranian language, culture and religion is just beginning to be recognised.

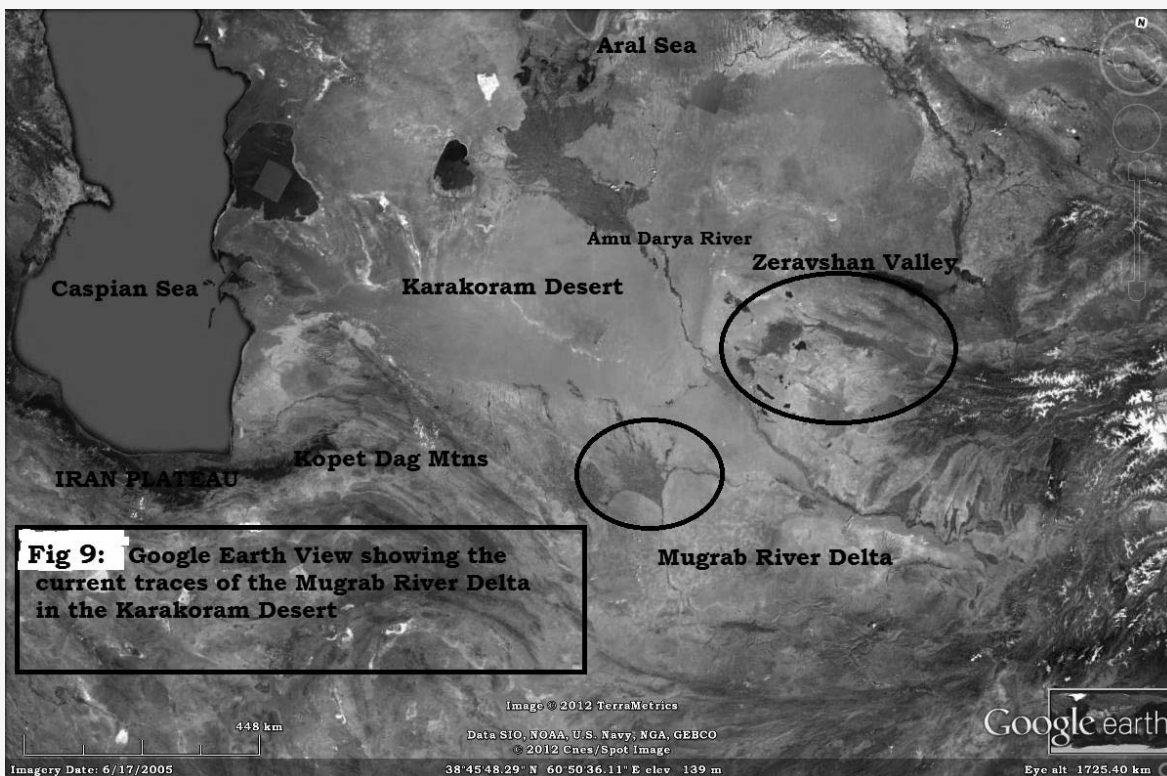
As early as 3500 BCE the people of the Namazga settlements, at the edge of the Iranian Plateau near the Caspian Sea, were venturing across the desert onto the Zeravshan valley (current Uzbekistan) to extract turquoise. Eventually a colony was established at Sarazm ( Fig 8 ) . with several communities founded as farming towns situated on alluvial fans where the rivers from the Iranian Plateau flowed into the Central Asian deserts with the water simply disappearing into the sand.

## Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra



**Fig 8: Upper reaches of Amu Darya River and the tributary Zeravshan R**

By about 2100 BCE a substantial population colonised the Murgab River delta. This river fanned out into the sands and dropped deep loads of silt it had carried from the mountains of western Afghanistan, a journey of 180 km. This silt created a fertile island of vegetation about 80 by 100 km in size, one of richest oases in Central Asia, ( Fig 9). Studies of skeletal remains suggest that these people came from further west probably from the Kopet Dag Mountain area.



**Fig 9: Google Earth View showing the current traces of the Murgab River Delta in the Karakoram Desert**

## Location and Time of Prophet Zarathushtra

Between 2000 and 1800 BCE a richer period occurred when metal smiths of BMAC made beautiful objects of bronze, lead, silver and gold using the lost-wax process that allowed casting very detailed metal objects.

By 2000 BCE tin-bronze appeared prominently at these BMAC sites probably imported into the Margiana area from Bactrian mines in the Zeravshan valley (Fig 8). Gomur and Togolok are remains of large walled towns, temples and palaces built by these people (Fig 10). Several of the sites associated with the BMAC complex and the Zeravshan Valley are mentioned as Avestan Nations in the Pahlavi Texts.

*Installment 3 will develop the idea that Zarathushtra and Kavi Vishtaspa were products of this Indo-Iranian heroic world of semi-nomadic Chariot Warriors interacting with Settled Irrigation Farmers of Central Asia in or near the Contact Zone.*

*Zarathustra's philosophy and ideas – aside from being divinely inspired – were shaped by the conditions of the location and time he was born in. According to many western scholars, portions of the Gathas are probably the only part of the Avesta that can be attributed directly to Zarathushtra. It can be shown that some of the utterances in these Gathas were a result of the conditions under which Zarathushtra lived in, and we have a reasonable way of correlating these conditions to a particular time and place in history (or the Archaeological record), therefore, we have a way of assigning the time and place of the Prophet himself.*

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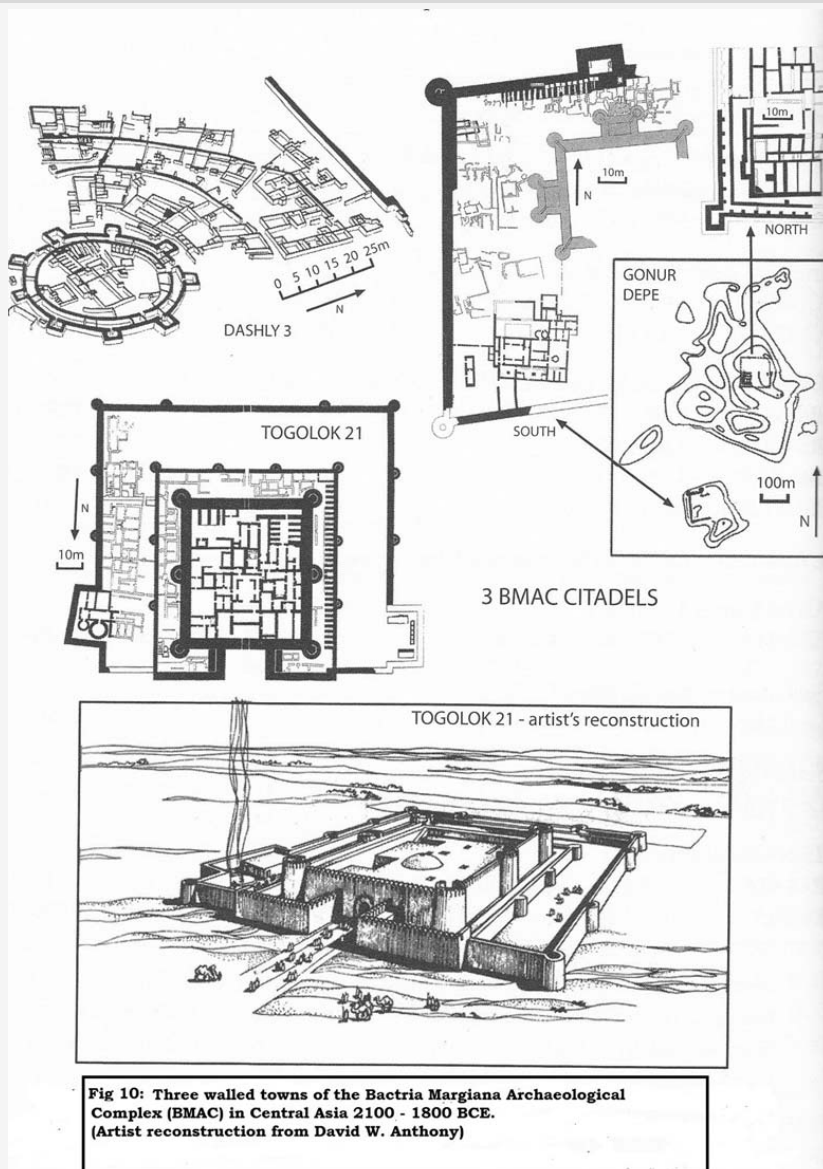
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**Pilsum Master** is a retired Minerals Exploration Geologist who spent 30 years in the Mining Industry as a Professional Geologist and Manager of Research. He has worked also as an IT Administrator. He has published articles in geology and industrial minerals for the Alberta Geological Survey and for the British Columbia Department of Energy and Mines. Pilsum currently resides in Calgary, Alberta. He is also very much interested in the Zoroastrian religion and in the archaeology and pre-history of Central Asia, Iran and India. Pilsum maintains a website on these subjects. <https://sites.google.com/site/azaintis/>



**Fig 10: Three walled towns of the Bactria Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) in Central Asia 2100 - 1800 BCE. (Artist reconstruction from David W. Anthony)**



## *Parvin Farkhani*

### **1st Woman Head of a Zoroastrian Anjoman In Iran**

Parvin Farkhani has been at the head of the Yazd Anjoman, the oldest Zarathushti organisation in Iran for just over 3 years. She was elected by the community in Yazd who saw in her a woman of vision and energy, rare qualities these days when each person has their own personal woes and problems to deal with. Among the 11 Anjoman committee members elected by the Zarathoshty population of Yazd, she polled the highest number of votes and was thus the automatic choice for President.

Parvin trained as a teacher at age 19 which helped develop her people skills and then soon after her marriage at age of 21 to her lifelong devoted husband and friend, Bahram Mali, she took up a further training course in Leadership and Management. From this she went on to become head of the Marker Girls school in Yazd for several decades.

During her happy years of marriage with Bahram Mali (now deceased), they produced three wonderful children of whom they were very proud. Their son Shahriar now a doctor and tutor at the University of Ahwaz, their daughter Mozgan who practices general medicine in Yazd where she lives with her family, and the youngest daughter Niloufar who has trained as an architect.

Fortunately for the Zarathushti community of Yazd, , exactly after 32 years of service in the teaching profession, in 1997 Parvin agreed to take up the directorship of the Pouchista Foundation which was looking for an inspiring person to take the project forward and although Parvin had only just retired, she and her husband agreed that this was a cause worth pursuing.

Parvin has been indefatigable in managing the Pouchista Foundation project, an initiative launched by Shahin Bekhradnia with the help of her parents and their friends. It is intended to help provide Yazdi women with skills that will allow them to make an economic contribution to their household finances. It was thanks to Rostam Yeganegi that Parvin was introduced to Shahin as the obvious person who could make her vision a reality. Having understood and sharing that aspiration, Parvin showed her characteristic can-do attitude by simply hiring a house and engaging teachers initially, and thus ran the skills academy on a modest scale. However thanks to donations and fund raising efforts outside Iran amongst diaspora Zarathushtis, it was possible to purchase a semi finished house and Parvin and her husband Bahram put in hours well beyond the call of duty to ensure that the finished version of the building was worthy and ready for use.

Since then the project has extended to providing a Senior



Citizens' Day centre for the older community of Zarathushtis of Yazd. Again mindful of the lonely experience which her own grandmother in Yazd had undergone when all her relatives were far away, Shahin discussed the idea with Parvin who immediately confirmed that this was an idea well worth carrying forward. Without Parvin's energy and vision, however, it would have remained nothing but a pipe dream. The bureaucracy and paperwork required to get permits and authorisations from all the public health bodies, etc is mind boggling, and for a woman to confront and overcome these obstacles was a Herculean task. Instead, both these projects have been so well received among the community in Yazd, that Parvin has been asked to give talks to the provincial officials running similar welfare projects for them to learn from her successes.

Undoubtedly it is because the community has seen for itself that unlike so many others in Anjomans all over the world who join or aspire to higher positions merely so that they can revel in their own "glory" of having status, Parvin really is a doer and walks the walk, and does not just talk the talk. During her time trying to improve the welfare and situation of the community within the framework of the Anjoman, she has had many trying moments, having to appease the egos of those who may resent her presence and energy, but she sees overcoming obstacles such as these as challenges, in which she has to use her diplomacy, her oratory, and her art of persuasion.

Our Iranian community is clearly able to practise the philosophy of Zarathushtra who regarded women as partners and co helpers in promoting the Good Life and Good Religion. Voting for Parvin Farkhani as the Head of the Anjoman came hot on the heels of the ordination of 7 female Mobedyars. The ability and willingness of both senior and ordinary community members to elect a female demonstrates that the message has not been lost and indeed, the vote for Parvin has been a ringing endorsement of the fact that women are extremely practical and energetic if they have the motivation to take projects on. The reality however is that in the Iran of today, with the social and economic difficulties that present themselves on a daily

# Personal Profiles

basis, finding people like Parvin who are prepared to put selfish motives aside and who honestly want to work for the betterment of the community are rare. Apart from dealing with internal wranglings, which unfortunately have dogged her, Parvin has virtually single handedly dealt with authorities and ministries to protect and promote the welfare of the community. It can be readily understood that this is no easy task, and can at times be extremely daunting.

Her most important campaign with the Anjoman has been to protect the integrity of the Zarathushti cemetery and dakhma land totalling 1.5 million square metres in face of attempts to lay down water pipes and annexe off some of its lands. She has been able to get the authorities to re-open a closed dossier on this matter, and there is a realistic prospect that now, the community's assets may be reclaimed. There are many other such issues that crop up on a constant basis, another example being her valiant attempts to claim back for the Zarathushti community, land and homes that have been appropriated by the authorities or squatters on the grounds of absent landlords. Campaigns such as these two have involved her having to come to Tehran monthly several times for meetings and for lobbying. It is a matter of regret that Parvin Farkhani is not seeking re-election at the next round of elections; her experience of egos and politics in the world of anjomans has not impressed her, and she feels that she can continue her community work just as well outside the confines of the charged atmosphere engendered within the anjoman committee. She is also looking forward to enjoying some well deserved time attending to her grandmotherly duties!

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH SHAHIN BEKHRADNIA**

**Shahin Bekhradnia** is the Founder of the Pourchista Foundation, Yazd. Shahin lives in Oxfordshire UK and has started a 6th form college and language school in Oxford city. She is a teacher, Justice of the Peace, interpreter for the Immigration Appellate, and WZO Religious Affairs spokesperson. Her postgraduate thesis from Oxford university was about Zoroastrian identity among Iranians and she regularly gives talks about different aspects of her religious and cultural heritage, drawing inspiration from her maternal grandfather who was a renowned priest - poet.

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# INTERFAITH WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

In the Editorial of the February issue of The Interfaith Observer (TIO) Leslie Mezei, the editor wrote that for the first time Toronto participated in two cultural activities for the *World Interfaith Harmony Week*.

"Celebrating Interfaith Culture" was a dinner sponsored by the Toronto Chapter of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, on Friday, February 1st. where there were songs from the Baha'i Unity Choir, a Lutheran Choir, some Islamic and Hindu chants, and Sufi poetry. All 80 participants sang an interfaith peace chant: "Shalom, Salaam, Shanti, Pacem, Gowa (first nations), and Peace," originally composed by Rabbi Schlomo Carlbach.

*The Importance Of Interfaith Dialogue And Co-Operation* was sponsored by the Toronto Japanese Cultural Centre and the Toronto Area Interfaith Council (TAIC) on Thursday, February 7th. Some 50 people braved the beginnings of a major snowstorm. Speakers made it from seven Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim and Zoroastrian communities. They explored their faith's approach to others, and outlined ways they could work together.

The presentation of Ervad Jehan Bagli is reproduced below

### 'INTERFAITH MOVEMENT: ZARATHUSHTI PERSPECTIVE'

JEHAN BAGLI

February 7, 2013, Toronto

at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre

**"NO MAN IS NOBLER THAN HIS FELLOWS, THE DEMAND IS LAID UPON EACH MAN, THAT HE WORKS, WHEN POSSIBLE, FOR THE WELFARE OF MANY; IF NOT, HE WORKS FOR THE WELFARE OF A FEW; FAILING THAT, FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS NEIGHBORS....."**

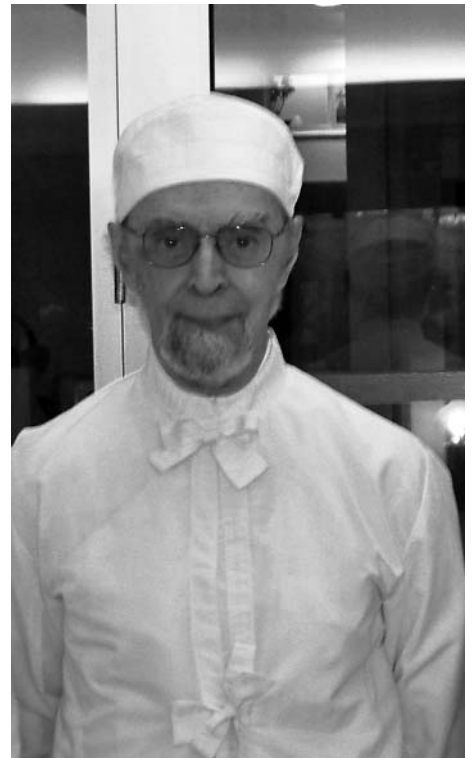
*Albert Schweitzer, Philosophy of Civilization 1923*

Interfaith activity by its very definition is to fill the void of knowledge and understanding, of our diverse faiths. An ideal scaffold to build on to fill this void, are the common notions that prevail among different traditions. These commonalities can create a basis for a constructive and mutually enriching interaction among all faiths. They also constitute the strength that religious traditions have, to create a better world. A world where global issues such as poverty, social justice, and global ecology can be approached with the power that comes through unity.

Rooted in the practices of our diverse faiths are some profound commonalities. The basic one being the spirituality towards the common Divinity we all address as God. Even though we address this Ultimate Reality by different names, there is no

doubt that this supreme divinity is uniquely singular in its unity.

The other primal commonality that pervades through human race is the Good Mind gifted to the mankind by the Creator. In Zarathushtrian tenets, this is designated as Vohu Manah and represents the primal cornerstone as an aspect of God articulated by the prophet in his Holy hymns. Zarathushtrian theology is uniquely positioned, to relate this profound Divine Gift (of Good Mind) that permits mankind to perceive the value of Global Truth designated as the law of Asha. The success of mankind in quest for the Global Truth is channeled through Good Thinking, which leads to good expressions, that in turn generates Good Actions. It is through these actions and understanding that mankind can bring to life the concept of Completeness or Oneness, with the Divine, in this corporeal existence. This Oneness with the Divine is





# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

recognized in Zarathushtrian Faith as perfection or completeness and designated as Haurvatat.

Mind is a commonality that symbolizes the Universal semblance of divinity among mankind. The Good Mind in Zarathushtrian Faith, is a Divine spark of that infinite Glow of light, which we believe as the embodiment of the Supreme Divinity addressed as Ahura Mazda. Through proper use of that Divine gift we can sow the seeds of harmony among humanity. Understanding of that basic fact can, evolve any human being, into a better human being irrespective of ones Faith. In doing so, we can strengthen our sense of identity with other human beings.

When we see someone suffer, we feel sad; when we see them joyful, it raises our own spirits. That is the divine bond of mutual unconditional love, compassion, and benevolence within the human brotherhood. When the Hebrew scripture says, "Love thy neighbor as yourself" it is because your neighbor is a part of yourself. Only when mankind view themselves, as a part of all that they encounter and all that they encounter as a part of them, that we can begin to recognize the reflection of the Divine Oneness among us and realize the importance of sharing the creation in an equitable manner. This bond of oneness among mankind is in fact localized in the commonality of the presence of the Divine spirituality that pervades through entire creation, the heavens, the earth, water, plant, the animal kingdom and the humans.

We know this bond of oneness exists. All we need is to observe the human attitude in time of catastrophe. In these traumatic situations, we consistently notice, that all institutional barriers melt down regardless of their

traditional origin. In the face of these human tragedies, it is the innate divinity, that Holy spirit, dormant within each one of us, surfaces uninhibited, to bring forth the Spiritual Oneness among Mankind.

The attributes of anger, fear, hatred, ego, discrimination all vanish in the face of the dominant strength of that Divine spirit. It unequivocally demonstrates to us, and more so to the victims, that they are not alone, that the humanity and through it the spirit of God is with them, to guide, to watch over and to walk with them.

People of all faiths have held hands, comforted each other and join together in prayer under these circumstances, only to show the solidarity of their Oneness. Only the recognition of Divine Oneness among mankind, can truly generate, a just and lasting Peace, not only for oneself, but also in the family, among the friends, in the community and among nations.

With the rapid technological advances our world has shrunk to a global village, and we see an equally rapid growth of interdependence among people. Despite that connectedness with Nature and with each other, we consistently find acute shortages of food and water in many pockets of the world, on a planet, which is in fact, self-sufficient in both. This is a clear reflection of disparity among mankind, to share these essentials of life.

Those who died in the catastrophic event in New York in 2001, in wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, in natural disasters or fighting a despotic regime, will not have died in vain, if their cries of anguish can be a wakeup call to people of diverse faith to reexamine the practices, to root out all that divides us. The struggle of interfaith movement is to eradicate

extremism and to preserve and protect the Fundamental Human Rights that Zarathushtrian and all other major Faith traditions extols.

It is through understanding the "treatment of others as we expect others to treat us" that we can successfully strengthen the bond of Oneness among the human brotherhood. The written history of this cliché goes back to 8th century BCE but we can go even further back to nearly 1700 BCE when prophet Zarathushtra in his Holy Hymns says:

**" One who undertakes to harm  
the world**

**Shall not have his fiery action  
reach me**

**They shall recoil with his  
hatred to him**

**And shall keep him from good  
way of life"**

Ys 46.3

This is the essence of the Golden Rule that has since appeared not only in more than one place in Zarathushtrian religious texts, but is also enshrined in the texts of every single major traditions that followed the times of Zarathushtra. The

Golden Rule has been recently rejuvenated and refreshed elegantly by the diligent efforts of one of the organizer of this very event - Paul McKenna. The light and brilliance of

Divine Oneness of human brotherhood is deeply rooted in the very practice of the Golden Rule. To think of others as you think of yourself in one's daily life is not always easy as we go through the diverse vicissitudes of life.

Zarathushtra who fled Iran to India in 716 CE have however attempted to live by the tenets of the Golden Rule.

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

This community presently of about 65,000 in the Indian population of 1.2B is known as Parsis. They have contributed through charities in healthcare, education and other social sectors, entirely out of proportion to their numbers. Giving not only within the community, but also to the humanity at large throughout India. About them, Mahatma Gandhi once said, "In numbers, Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution beyond compare".

Zarathushti youth in N.A. diaspora are attempting to perpetuate this tradition to live by Golden Rule as much as possible. In 2012 Zoroastrian Youth North America (ZYNA) has assigned a day called "Zarathushti International Day of Service". They organized an initiative "Zoroastrians Stepping Forward" and collected hundreds of pairs of shoes for young and old to be donated to those deprived, who go barefoot on uneven terrain. Consciousness of the Divine Oneness in our youth is evident when they say, "Our vision is to cultivate a professional community of young Zarathushtis that is focused on building relationship and working together to learn, grow, and make a difference in the world we live in".

In Toronto the community, young and adults, have also participated in the project 'Out of the Cold' with other faith groups to cook and serve food to the homeless people in the city.

Another potential common initiative is vested in the care for global ecology. In this era of ecological sensitivity, we need to bring awareness to mankind that they cannot continue to be the predators of the biosphere, always taking never giving. In the words of a Native Indian leader, "We have NOT inherited the earth from our ancestors, but have

borrowed it from our children". We are obligated to use with utmost care, what does not belong to us.

We must work towards making these basic common values, the clarion call in the classrooms, in the churches, in the synagogues, and the temples; to provide a firm base for our youth to pave their way to the global harmony that can pervade through Nations. As we begin to feel the power and strength of the Unity, through the practice of the Golden Rule in life, the Divine Oneness can manifest itself, to bring the sentiment of the very presence of God in this corporeal existence.

*Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli is invited to participate in the interfaith event of various organizations in Greater Toronto Area as well as outside suburbs. He sits as a Zarathushti representative on the Board of Directors of Ontario Multifaith Council(OMC) and participates in the Toronto Area Interfaith Council (TAIC). He is often a speaker for events of MOSAIC another interfaith organization in Toronto. As well as get invitations from Islamic and Hindu organizations for their events.*

10th World Zoroastrian Congress, Mumbai,  
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A LECACY OF THE TENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS, The Alpaiwalla Museum at Khareghat Colony, will be refurbished, creating display areas for over 1,800 extant museum artifacts.

**'FROM CANTON TO MUMBAI - THE STORY OF PARSIS TEXTILES'**  
This exhibition will showcase Parsi and Iranian textiles and costumes, such as Gara saris, Tanchoi saris, Jablas (loose blouse) and Coatees, Ijars (loose pantaloons), embroidered shawls, and traditional Zoroastrian costumes from the province of Yazd, Iran. It will also showcase Canton of the 19th Century from where Parsi merchants purchased Garas and brought them to Bombay.

*Dinshaw Mehta, Chair , welcomes all to the Congress*

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

### A ZARATHUSHTI OFFERS PRAYERS FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL

February 14, 2013 was a day of pride for all Zarathushtis as our religion was one of eleven world faiths to be represented at the United Nations as part of the 'Symphony of Peace Prayers' ceremony of the 'United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony' event, celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week.

Nina Mistry had the honor to represent the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) and be the first Zoroastrian to recite peace prayers from the rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly Hall. Prayers are not usually offered in the General Assembly Hall, but to highlight different religious and spiritual traditions sharing a message of peace, representatives from world faiths were invited to offer peace prayers, readings and invocations making this an event of historic significance.

At this truly unique opportunity for Zarathushti prayers to be recited in the General Assembly Hall, Nina recited in Avestan, Yasna Verse 60.5, and from the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna Verse 29.10, followed by an English translation. Yasna Verse 60.5 calls for the triumph of peace over discord, generosity over greed, devotion over arrogance, honest discussion to dominate over falsehood and righteousness to prevail over evil of lies. Yasna Verse 29.10 calls on Ahura Mazda to grant His followers authority and power through truth, that with the Good Mind, they may bring the world peace and happiness of which Ahura Mazda is indeed the first possessor. Nina Mistry (photo above) recited Zarathushti prayers in Avestan, from the rostrum of the United Nations



General Assembly Hall as part of the 'Symphony of Peace Prayers'.

World Interfaith Harmony Week was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly and adopted on October 20, 2010 on the premise that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions for a culture of peace and a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. Since 2011, World Interfaith Harmony Week has been an annual event observed during the first week of February.

World Interfaith Harmony Week was celebrated from February 1-7, 2013, culminating in the 'United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony' event, presented by the President of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations.

The event comprised of three parts: *The Role of Interfaith Harmony in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Symphony of Peace Prayers, and World Peace Flag Ceremony.* President of the 67th

United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremiæ, opened the special event and spoke passionately about his personal background of an interfaith family.

The Role of Interfaith Harmony in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes part of the program included statements from seven distinguished speakers who each stressed the importance of creating mutual understanding and a strong web of relationships among religious, indigenous, faith traditions as an indispensable foundation for peace.

Mrs. Masami Saionji, Chairperson of The World Peace Prayer Society and Byakko Shinko Kai, spoke of the vision and historic relevance of the Symphony of Peace Prayers in the United Nations General Assembly



Hall, explaining that this unique prayer ceremony, first held in Japan in 2005, is an inter-religious, inter-spiritual annual peace prayer event, which brings together people from different

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

faiths, traditions and cultures to pray with one voice for peace on Earth. Representatives from Indigenous, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths were invited to recite prayers, readings and invocations with a message of peace. Several representatives were dressed in traditional attire, including Nina who wore a Parsi-style sari with embroidered border ('kor') and

countries, the gathering of over a thousand attendees chanted, "May peace be in (name of country)".

The three parts of the program were interspersed with heart-warming musical performances by singers from Sri Chinmoy, an operatic soprano from the Philippines, the Junior Four Chorus of the United Nations International School, and the Unity Made Visible Interfaith Choir.

### REFLECTIONS FROM OTHER ZARATHUSHTI ATTENDEES

#### MAHRUKH CAMA

We entered the UN General Assembly Hall amidst the hustle and bustle of organizers and mike checks and line-up of the presenters. At 10:00 am sharp everything came to order. After opening remarks from the UN officials and speeches from various ambassadors to UN, the Symphony of Peace Prayers commenced. Representatives/priests of eleven faiths came to the podium and recited prayers one by one to the accompaniment of soft background flute music. We proudly watched Nina Mistry ending with our Zarathushti prayers. Yes, there were eleven prayers, but the message was one – PEACE. If only this message of co-existence of religions is embraced across the world, "what a wonderful world this would be".

#### ERVAD PERVEZ P. PATEL, ZAGNY PRIEST

This was truly an unique experience. Impressive General Assembly Hall, over a thousand people of all different faiths from all over the world, young and elderly, excitement on every face, talks, sermons, speeches, wonderful children's programs and of course the prayers offered by representatives of major religions, including our great Zarathushti religion represented by our young ZAGNY Board member Mrs. Nina Adil Mistry, who did a wonderful job of reciting two paragraphs from the Holy Yasna, with their explanations, breaking for the first time the male dominated tradition of offering Zarathushti prayers at public functions by males only.



Photo left (from left to right), Ervad Pervez Patel, Virasp Davar, Mahrukh Cama, Rohinton Cama, Nina Mistry, Maya Mistry and Adil Mistry.

covered her head while reciting the prayers. Accompanied by Jon Blond on the flute, the 'Symphony of Peace Prayers' created a deeply moving and powerful experience.

Mr. Hiroo Saionji, President of The Goi Peace Foundation and The World Peace Prayer Society, introduced the World Peace Flag Ceremony part of the program. As flags of each of the 193 United Nations Member States and two Observer Missions were carried into the General Assembly Hall by representatives of the respective

In closing, Ms. Monica Willard, President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, echoed the mantra "May Peace Prevail on Earth!"

**Nina Mistry** is actively involved with the Zoroastrian community as Board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) since 2009, and is currently the Joint Secretary of ZAGNY.

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA AVESTA PERFORMERS

## GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS AND GOOD DEEDS THROUGH MUSIC,

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*

On December 6, 2012, a group of young people from the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc, (ZAMWI) performed the music *Khan Ashem Vohu* at the 33rd Annual Interfaith Conference Concert in Washington, DC before an audience of approximately 1000 people. The young Zoroastrians were the opening performance in the concert which was held at the Washington Hebrew Congregation and featured five additional faith groups. Other faith groups represented in the concert were Baha'i drummers, Buddhist Dancers, an Islamic guitar soloist, a Baptist Choir, and a Catholic Choir.

Kamyar Dastani on left and Yasna Khademain on right singing the solo parts



Following a beautiful recitation of the *Ashem Vohu* prayer by **Ervad Brigadier Behram Panthaki**, the performers took the stage. **Yasna Goshtasbi** played the piano composition for the performance, accompanied by **Garshasb Soroosh on the daf, and Artin Aidun on the violin**. Members of the *Khan Ashem Vohu Chorus* included *Rumtin Aidun, Amy Engineer, Haleh Farahifar, Athra Goshtasbi, Bita Khadivi, Parisa Mazdeyasni, Roksana Mazdeyasni, Sanaya Mistry, Zara Mistry, Shahrzad Dehmobad Nasrabadi, Kiarra Parthasarathy, and Roksana Verahrami*. The dance was

choreographed by **Parmis Khosravi**, and also included *Gordiya Khademian, Neda Samya, and Sima Sekhavat*. *Kamyar Dastani and Yasna Khademian sang the solo parts*. As the youngest group performing in the concert, the young people practiced for months leading up to the performance to beautifully represent their community and their faith.

The music, *Khan Ashem Vohu* is written in Farsi, and honors the Zoroastrian faith and pursuit of truth and goodness. The musical composition is also a combination of many talented contributions of our

Zoroastrian Community. The song was composed by **Dr. Khosrow Mehrfar, (of California)** inspired by the lyrics of Professor Ebrahim Pourdavood, and **Mr. Neville Dusaj a young talented musician and student at the University of Pennsylvania**, arranged the music for the piano, violin and daf.

The young performers in the Interfaith Concert are part of the Washington, DC Avesta Performers, a group of about 30 talented children and young adults ages 6 to 25 who participate in an Instrumental Ensemble (17 musicians), a Chorus

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## AVESTA PERFORMERS

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

(10 to 20 singers depending upon the performance), and dance troupe. Different combinations of performers from these three groups regularly perform in solo, duet, trio, quartet, or quintet form in community events, or in combined form as they did for the Interfaith Concert. The Instrumental Ensemble rehearses one Sunday per month in the Fall, and two Sundays per month from January through April, following Avesta Class. The chorus and dancers rehearse at scheduled times in preparation for specific events.

The Avesta Performers are supported by the Avesta Class and ZAMWI Board, as well as by the dedicated parents and families of the performers.

Leadership of the Avesta Performers rests with three young adults who dedicate their time and energy to working with the young performers to prepare for concerts and community events.

The Instrumental Ensemble is conducted by **Artin Aidun**, a 23 year old college student at George Mason University studying Applied



Information Technology. He is a classically trained violinist who composes most of the music for the Ensemble. (photo above)

Choreographer for the Avesta Performers is **Parmis Khosravi**. She is a 22 year old college student pursuing a degree in clinical psychology from George Mason



University, a talented dancer and student of Persian dance. (photo above)

The Chorus is led by **Sima Sekhavat**. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a minor



in Music from George Mason University and is currently pursuing medical school. Sima began playing the violin at 10 and began training in Persian classical music at age 17. She now works as a violin instructor, teaching both Persian and western classical styles. (photo left below)

In addition to their service to the musical mission of the Avesta Performers, Artin, Parmis and Sima contribute in many ways to the Washington, DC Zarathushti community, and beyond, Artin serves as DJ for many of the community events, and Parmis and Sima are the Zarathushti youth representatives for the Interfaith Conference in Washington, DC. Their leadership sets the example of good thoughts, good words and good deeds each day for the young people of the Washington, DC community.

The goal of the Avesta Performers is to provide the young members of the Washington, DC Zarathushti Community an opportunity to develop and apply their talents through music, song and dance, and to share the meaning and the beauty of the Zarathushti faith. The next performance of the Avesta Performers will be the upcoming Norouz event on March 30 in Silver Spring, Maryland. A link to the Avesta Performers web page is: <https://sites.google.com/site/theavesta-performers/performances>

**Anne Khademian** is a co-coordinator of the Avesta Class in Washington, DC and coordinator for the Avesta Performers. She is a professor of public administration and policy and Director of the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech.



# Letter to the Editor

Editor, FEZANA Journal

## Parsis in Politics 1857-1954

In the Fall issue of the FEZANA Journal 2012, I read with interest the many contributions made by the Parsi stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji, Madame Cama, Khurshed Nariman and many others during the freedom movement. Yet there were those lesser known who also contributed at a much lower level, yet suffered a great loss due to their zeal. My father was not a great politician as such, but he got deeply involved in the Swaraj Movement, the Independence movement headed by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhai Patel Lokmanya Tilak and Pandit Nehru. The freedom spirit was in the air all over India and in that passion my dad, Fredoon Dholoo, also got involved in order to be free from the British shackles. He took part in rallies, started wearing the Hindu garb with a proper Nehru cap and participated in the Dandi March. Little did he realize that the consequences of such participation would hurt an average family man like him much more disproportionately. He had a good job employed as a travelling salesman for Lever Brothers, now Hindustan Lever. Because of his involvement, his British employers sacked him and he was jobless with a pregnant wife. He was in jail when my mom delivered her first son, Tehempton. My dad was given special permission to go see his first born son and then return to jail. A true family story, well remembered by all siblings is that our eldest brother was born with the umbilical cord symbolically wrapped around his tiny wrists, like handcuffs.

Things gradually became so bad for them that my mum had to sell off all her wedding jewelry just to make ends meet. As years passed he continued to struggle in his Free India movement . A contemporary of his from Lever Brothers was now a manager. Anyway, my dad somehow managed to get a low-paying job as an accountant and the kids kept coming. A total of eight children! In spite of all his adversities he looked after his children well, entertained and educated all of them, of course with the help of our many munificent Parsi charities. His love for his Zarathushti community led him to offer his artistry at Rangoli to the community. At every anniversary of any Atash Behram he would take his own and some of the neighbor's children to adorn the halls with beautiful Chalk Work, all done absolutely FREE. He never charged for his artistic work and in fact spent his own money for taxis, colors etc.. He, was hardly ever reimbursed, considering he was in a financial mess. At one such trip to Udwada fire temple during the 1250th anniversary his youngest



*Ferdoon Dholoo, 10th Oct 1935 in the Bharatpur Fair in Rajasthan*

son Jimmy fell in love with one of the neighbor's daughter Shahdokht and is today happily married for 35 years.

Later on in life he started his famous Memory Training classes for young children, visited numerous schools and with his talented students he gave incredible demonstrations of the power of the human mind. 'Fredoon Dholoo was truly an institution', said Vijay Merchant, the famous Indian cricketer and a great opening batsman. My dad used to give free demonstrations of his Mental Drills to many schools and public places. His demonstration at Hindustan Mills was attended by Vijay Merchant, one of its directors, who got to know my father, Since that day he took a liking towards my father and supported his endeavors.

*Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, Maryland*

# M I L E S T O N E S

as of March 1, 2013

## BIRTHS



Riaa Dolly Contractor Morena, a girl to Cyra & Farzin Morena, sister to Ryaan, grand daughter of Sam & late Dolly Morena, and Dr Farhad & Houtoxi Contractor, niece to Dr Laila Contractor & Homi Bodhanwala, Rayomand Morena, and cousin to Iyana in Orange County, California on 9th Jan 2013 (photo above).

Amaz Mody, a girl, to Gustad and Tanaz Mody, granddaughter to Yasmin and Adi Irani (Orlando, FL) and Jasmine and Phiroze Mody in New York, NY on January 21, 2013.

Zachary Dubash, a boy, to Nevin and Roxana Dubash, sister to Aliza, grandson to Nozer and Jeroo Dubash (Dubai) and Kayomars and Nergish Mehta in Naperville, IL in January 23, 2013.

Kian Irani, a boy to Mershab & Zeeba Irani, grandson to Themton & Ketayun Irani, and Sarosh & Thrity Irani, in Calgary, Alberta on January 7, 2013.

Livia Tristin, a girl to Zara Canteenwalla and Fred Phelps, granddaughter to Vahishta and Jambi Canteenwalla (Montreal) and Vivian and Jim Phelps, great granddaughter to Homai and Shiawax Canteenwalla, (Montreal) niece to Shauna Canteenwalla in Ottawa, ON. on February 12, 2013.

Astad Debu, a boy to Kaizad Debu & Bakhtawar Pastakia, grandson to Hilla & Kersi Pastakia and Farida & Shapur Debu, (all of Mumbai, India.) in Edmonton, Alberta on February 14, 2013.

## NAVJOTES



Sanaya Parekh, daughter of Chermeen and Yazdi Parekh (Hong Kong), sister of Ava, granddaughter of Mahrukh and Viraf Parekh (Hong Kong) and Diana and Ardeshir Elavia (Irvine, CA) and great granddaughter of Ruby Majaina in Hong Kong on December 21, 2012. (photo top).



Mahrrin Atashband, daughter of Ervad Burzin & Renaz of Calgary, Alberta, granddaughter of the Late Esfandiar Atashband & Aban Irani, and Adi & Ruby Irani, in Iranshah Atashbehran, Udvada, on December 25, 2012 (photo above).

Naila and Farhad Yazdani, children of Natasha and Kaizad Yazdani (Las Vegas, NV), grandchildren of Dinaz and Shahrokh Rustomji (Toronto, ONT) and Dogdo and Jehangir Irani (Las Vegas, NV) in Las Vegas, NV on December 30, 2012.

Ariana Bedford, daughter of Binnaifer and Bruce Bedford, granddaughter of Sarosh and Farida Khambatta in

Orland Park, IL on January 19, 2013.



Meher Irani and Sanaya Bharucha, daughters of Dr. Jennifer and Rustam Irani of Tampa, FL and Dr. Diana and Cyrus Bharucha of Great Falls, VA. Granddaughters of Homai and Pourus Khajautia, Amy and Gustad Irani, and Rashna and Viraf Bharucha, on December 29, 2012 in Mumbai, India. (above)

## WEDDINGS

Sarosh Nentin, son Aban and Gev Nentin to Dana Vartabedian, daughter of Diana and Nishan Vartabedian in New York on November 17, 2012.

Zubin Khambatta, son of Farida and Sarosh Khambatta (Orland Park, IL) to Amanda Minor, daughter of Jim and Anita Minor in Mason, OH on November 17, 2012.

Sarosh Dastoor (Houston, TX) son of Firdaus and Tehmi Dastoor, brother of Neville Dastoor to Ami Desai, daughter of Dinesh and Ansuva Desai, sister of Bella Desai in Austin, TX on February 16, 2013.

Perinaaz Wadia, daughter of Pervin and Rohinton Wadia of Mumbai,



# M I L E S T O N E S

as of December 31, 2012

India, to Navroz Gandhi, son of late Villy and Homi Gandhi of Glen Rock, NJ at Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Ajiary in Mumbai, India, on March 3, 2013.

## DEATH

Darayous Hakim, brother of Kushru, Lovji, Rumi, Changis and Eddie Hakim (Trustee of Vadodra Parsi Panchayat) on November 14, 2012.

Minoo Sorabjee Crawford, husband of late Homai Minoo Crawford, father of Yasmin (Antish) Aleck, Roxzana (Khushroo) Mistry, grandfather of Darnesh and Karizma Aleck in India on December 3, 2012.

Iraj Jahangirji, husband of Shida Bakhtiani, father of Maziar and Monica in Tehran, Iran on December 5, 2012.

Nargesh Mehernosh Dastur, wife of late Mehernosh Burjorji Dastur, mother of Banoo (Adil) Makoojina (Houston, TX) and Burjor (Khursheed) Dastur, grandmother of Rustom, Mahtab and Darius in Mumbai on December 26, 2012.

Sarosh Bejonji Commissariat, brother of Homi Commissariat (Toronto, ONT), Nauzer, Mahrukh Billimoria and Shahrukh (Houston, TX) in

Karachi, Pakistan on December 27, 2012.

Dhinjishaw R. Surti, husband of late Piroja Surti, father of Niloufer Surti (B.C) in Toronto, ONT on January 7, 2013.

Belle Wittlin, 88, mother of Barry Wittlin, mother-in-law of Piroozi Cooper-Wittlin in New York on January 20, 2013.

Vispi Kabraji, husband of Tehmi Kabraji, father of Navroze Kabraji in Mississauga, ONT on January 23, 2013.

Piloo Randeria, wife of Godrej K. Randeria in Houston, TX on January 26, 2013.

Khordshed (Kay) Nargolwalla, wife of Feroze Nargolwalla, mother of Pervez Jamula, Tanya Nargolwalla, and Charis Wania in Mississauga, ONT on January 29, 2013.

Goolshan Edul Udvadia, wife of late Edul Udvadia (Chicago, IL), mother of Fili (Jer) Udvadia, Jimi, Mehru, grandmother of Nina Mastrian, Eddie and great grandmother of Laila in Savannah, GA on January 31, 2013.

Dhunjishah Hosy Bharucha, 48, father of Ryan, son of Late Hosy and Dilkhush Bharucha of New York;

brother of twin sister Gulestan (Gerard) Hosy Wilson; Frazer; Ryan's mother, April An; uncle of Jake Nicholas Bharucha; Stephanie Wilson, Jessica Wilson, Christina Wilson, Ashley Wilson and Samantha Bharucha in Rosewell, on February 7, 2013,

Khodamorad Kamran, 80, husband of Banoo Zohrabian, father of Faranguis Farahfar, Madji Mohabat, Shahin Kamran Foroutan, and grandfather of Parissa, Roxanne, Kamyar, Arshom, and Atessa in Bethesda, MD on February 9, 2013.

Rhoda Sorab Gorimaar, mother of Tehmaas Gorimaar on February 10, 2013.

Dolat Merwan Bamji, 83, mother of Edul (Tehnaz) Bamji, grandmother of Zarina and Spenta in New Jersey on Monday, March 4, 2013 .

## Matrimonials

**FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between**

**interested parties; We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at [RRRivetna@aol.com](mailto:RRRivetna@aol.com).**

Female, 25, 5' 5", MBA (Finance) from Coventry University, UK, currently working as Finance and HR executive in a Travel and Leisure company in London, UK, enjoys traveling, reading, dancing, cooking. Interested in meeting an educated man, and settling down in UK or elsewhere. Contact [phicooper87@yahoo.com](mailto:phicooper87@yahoo.com). [F13-03].

Female, very attractive, MBA, with dual specialization in Marketing and HR, currently manager at flagship store of leading telecom operator in Mumbai. Contact [simeenp@gmail.com](mailto:simeenp@gmail.com) or parents in Mumbai at 91-22-6510 0261. [F13-04].

**Looking for a Soul Mate? Try these matrimonial sites and services:**

[www.chaalokaajkariye.com](http://www.chaalokaajkariye.com) (new website, launched in 2011)

[www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com](http://www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com)

[www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net)

[www.TheParsiMatch.com](http://www.TheParsiMatch.com)

[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com)

[www.ParsiMatrimony.com](http://www.ParsiMatrimony.com)

[www.ParsiShaadi.com](http://www.ParsiShaadi.com)

[www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com](http://www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com)

**Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai,  
[goolpesi@gmail.com](mailto:goolpesi@gmail.com), tel: 91-22-2416 6120.**

# JOIN US



Mr. Khodamorad Kamran's Memorial Ceremony

1001x528

**Host:**

Banoo, Farangis, Madji,  
and Shahin Kamran

301-299-0339

**When:**

Sunday, March 10 from 11:00 AM to 3:00  
PM

**Where:**

The Kamran Dare Mehr  
15316 Barnesville Road  
Boyd's, MD 20841

## In Memorium

*Khodamorad Kamran*

(October 30, 1932- February 9, 2013)

a visionary and philanthropist, dies in Bethesda, MD.

On behalf of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, we express our sincere and heartfelt sympathies to the family of Mr. Khodamorad Kamran, who so suddenly passed away on February 9, 2013. Mr. Kamran was a man of great vision who cared deeply for the Zarathushti community and supported it munificently. We are saddened that his demise has come at a time when he was very close to realizing his noble dream of completing the construction of a magnificent Dare Mehr and community center in Boyd's, Maryland. To his last breath, Mr. Kamran spared no time and effort in overcoming the final hurdles of establishing the worship facility.

We pray to Ahura Mazda to grant him "the reward given ... to those who, in their physical life, truly serve the community... with their deeds of the good mind... and promote Your plan of wisdom through communal righteousness."  
(Ahunavaiti Gatha).

Board of Trustees,  
February 10, 2013

# WZCC Business

## WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WZCC) EXCELS IN SINGAPORE



In the never ending quest for searching and then rewarding the spirit of Entrepreneurship and Professionalism, WZCC excels again, this time in a grand Event in Singapore's reputed Hotel Marina Mandarin, held on Friday, 4th January 2013.

The Annual General Meeting was a representative gathering of the Global Zarathushti diaspora, with formal proceedings and the business sessions conducted in a cordial atmosphere and a sense of camaraderie prevailing throughout the day. The event had a very international flavor with high caliber professionals and businessmen from various countries creating an atmosphere of optimism. The Speakers spelled out the immense opportunities for our community youths to launch into business and professions in various areas. This was well demonstrated by the considerable successes and attainments of the Speakers themselves.

In his opening address, the **Global President, Mr. Minoo Shroff**, underlined the credo of WZCC "*Industry and Integrity*" stressing that these are the quintessential qualities of our Zarathushti community which have stood the test of time and have been the bedrock of success of Zarathushti enterprises. Given his wide experience and sound judgment, he counseled the youth never to stop learning. He emphasized that the very essence of learning is through net-working. Besides, those who have achieved success in life should in turn ask the question "what can I do to contribute". This can be done only by seniors sharing their invaluable experience and thus empowering the younger generation to fulfill their aspirations. He elaborated on the huge opportunities for trade and investments in South East Asia and other emerging countries. The centre of gravity of global business is rapidly shifting to the East with China and India being in the vanguard.

# WZCC Business

**Mr. Rohinton Rivetna**, the founder President of WZCC gave a brief background of the formation of WZCC. This Organization which completed 12 years of its fruitful existence has now grown and has served the needs of our Community. If the business grows, the Community grows.

**Mr. Rustom Engineer**, Global Vice-President, brought the “Economic Forum” on the scene and introduced the Panel Moderator, Mr. Neville Shroff, of Hongkong, Chairman and CEO of Shroff & Co. Ltd who then introduced the Panel Members

**i) Mr. Kai Taraporevala, Founder & MD, Tethys Ventures, Singapore**

**ii) Mr. Rajeev DeMello, Head of Asian Fixed Income, Schroders Investment Management Singapore**

**iii) Mr. Hoshi Deboo, President, Asia Pacific and Japan, Esko-Singapore**

**iv) Mr. Dorab Mistry, Director, Godrej International Ltd. & Godrej International Trading & Investment Ltd., U.K.**

Elaborating further the business scenario, **Mr. Neville Shroff** emphasized the importance of new and upcoming countries, namely, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Vietnam according to him is just about 15 to 20 years behind China. Cambodia is growing but has limited capabilities. Laos has pro-business Government with lowest labor costs. Myanmar is a promising new market and investment opportunities there are plenty. However, he clarified that it would be better to do business through Singapore Banks.

He elucidated that Hong Kong is the biggest competition to Singapore. The most free economy is Hong Kong but the most easy economy to operate in is Singapore. The simplicity of Tax system is enjoyed by Hong Kong; and is the most corruption free country. Although Singapore has a young talented population, Asia's world city is Hong Kong. Singapore is the preferred International Business Centre in the Region and Hong Kong is preferable to do business in.

**Mr. Kai Taraporevala** then gave a very interesting in-depth view of doing business in ASEAN Countries. According to him – Risks, challenges and opportunities are huge. Very productive and young labor force exists in these countries, infrastructure is improving and manufacturing, service industry together with agriculture and community businesses are growing. He further emphasized that one has to consider important factors like the concerned culture, selection of local Partner, politics and the relevant rules and regulations. He strongly advised that under no circumstances should one indulge in corruption; just do NOT do it he said; and that one should have tremendous patience as long term benefits are many.

**Mr. Rajeev DeMello** then succinctly mentioned that Asia is strong in a weak global Environment. There is high saving rate in Asia and moreover, Asia has a large yield advantage over US, Europe and Japan.

**Mr. Hosi Deboo** narrated the importance of doing business in Singapore as he mentioned that Singapore is rated No.1 in the world for ease of doing business as it takes just about one to two days to incorporate a company in Singapore.

**Mr. Dorab Mistry** then emphasized the growth and opportunities of business in the areas of Agri-commodities. Singapore, according to him, is still the focal point. “Godrej” invested in Vietnam as a Singaporean Company.

**Mr. Russi Ghadially**, one of the successful early settlers in Singapore and the Past President of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Singapore gave a vivid historical review of how Parsis played a significant role in the growth and development of Singapore. He emphasized that Singapore has the world's best labor force, which coupled with a high quality of life made Singapore a very good place to live in.



# WZCC Business

**Mr. Sanjiv Misra**, President – Phoenix Advisers Pte. Ltd. in his valedictory speech mentioned how and why Singapore achieved growth and prosperity. Singapore according to him is the Wealth Capital of the World. TATA Organization has a huge presence in Singapore. Singapore has industry with a deep rooted Integrity in all spheres of life. It has safety, transparency, high degree of hygiene and excellent financial security. Singapore plays a significant role in the ASEAN countries and is now a significant Economic Power of consequence.

Mr. Misra went on to say that Singapore is currently facing several challenges. The economic growth rate has slowed down, it has rising inflation, costs are rising, it has a declining human fertility rate and of late, restrictions have been placed on foreigners. However, he is still of the view that he will bet on Singapore; and while doing so, he would



From Left Outstanding Professional Mr Bomi Bhole; Outstanding entrepreneur co-winners Mrs Homai Engineer, Capt Percy Mehta; Outstanding Young Professional Dr Zuleika Homavazir

prefer to follow few basic principles. He said – do not risk a lot, do not risk more than you can afford to lose and consider having a local Partner when doing business in Singapore.

## AWARD WINNERS FOR 2012

### Outstanding Entrepreneur of the Year

**MRS. HOMAI ENGINEER** – Founder, Chairperson and Managing Director of Industrial Boilers Pvt. Ltd. and I B Turbo Pvt. Ltd.

Mrs Engineer is a woman of outstanding vision and abilities who realized the industrial growth of India Vs the acute power shortage and set up a Steam Turbine manufacturing plant in North India. Today both the factories complement each other in giving complete energy and environment solutions to the industry and receiving nation wide recognition !

Since 1982, Homai Engineer has consistently received awards including the Best Entrepreneurship Award, Outstanding Women Professional Award, Industrial Excellence Award, YuvRatna Award, .National Mahila Excellence Award, .Rajiv Gandhi Award, Dadabhoy Navroji International Award, Best Citizen of India Award and World Quality Commitment International Award, in Paris. In 2012, Mrs. Engineer received the Outstanding Achiever Award- Women Entrepreneur, from the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce.

# WZCC Business

## Outstanding Entrepreneur of the year Co-Winner

**CAPT. PERCY MASTER** born in Porbunder under humble surroundings moved to Mumbai when he was 9 years old. After completing his SSC, he joined the Training Ship Dufferine and was determined to sail successfully and overcome all storms and turbulences. Young Percy Master passed out as Senior Cadet Captain with several medals and the unique distinction of leading the Dufferine Scouts in various March Past nationals.

As a young Cadet Percy joined Scindia Steamship Navigation Company and in a short time rose to command several vessels. He resigned after 20 years of service as the entrepreneurial bug bit him, starting a small survey company under the name of Master Marine Service Pvt Ltd. What started as a small survey company has today grown into a group of companies with 3000+ professionals working in 45 offices spread across India. His flagship company Master Marine Service Pvt. Ltd today is a No. 1 survey company in India representing 120 shipping lines and controlling 90% of the market.

Captain Masters has provided outstanding services to our community on various philanthropic projects: renovating our Iranshah, constructing the road leading to the Atashbehram from the Udwada village, maintaining, refurbishing and renovating our Dadiseth Agiary, Toothi Agiary and even our Lonavla Agiary.

## Outstanding Professional of the year.

**MR. BOMI BHOTE** is a Mechanical Engineer by profession from Birla Institute of Technology and was awarded a scholarship by World Trade organization to study international trade in Rotterdam, Holland.

He started his career as a Management Trainee in TELCO and had the fastest career growth in this organization to build a team which not only produced the first vehicle from Pune but also developed the Tatamobile vehicle which started the diversification process from trucks to cars !

After 14 years, Mr. Bhote moved to General Electric, USA as Vice President and developed exports for GE from India. This was the first Indian Company to export to South Africa after the economy opened up. Mr. Bhote then changed gears...from Cars to Patient Care !

He joined Ruby Hall Clinic as their CEO and turned the 150 bed nursing home into a nationally recognized 550 bed medical center which today offers all conceivable medical facilities under one roof !

Under Mr. Bhote's professional leadership, Ruby Hall acquired ultra modern facilities, 500 consultants, 1500 staff and annual turnover of Rs.250 crores. Ruby Hall caters to 1.2 lacs of out-patients and more than 30,000 in patients every year. It also has India's largest critical care set up of 130 beds.

However, Mr. Bhote has not forgotten his Manashni Gavashni and Kunashni. Under his leadership, the hospital does not require any deposit on admission and the medical treatment is totally disassociated from the commercial recovery of the patient. In addition, Ruby Hall has been credited with several first achievements: the first to start an Air Ambulance in Pune, the first test tube baby and many more.

Mr Bhote has ensured that Ruby Hall has been rated as the best hospital in India and has also got the first prize from the President of India as the best medical facility for tourism in the country in 2012 !

## Outstanding Young Professional or Entrepreneur of the Year.

### Dr ZULEIKA FIRDOOSH HOMAVAZIR

Zuleika was born in Mumbai and received her Bachelor's degree from Wilson college Mumbai, where she was awarded the prestigious Sir Dorab Tata Merit Scholarship Prize. She obtained her Master's Degree from University of Bombay while working with Pfizer India Ltd. and a second Master's degree in Human Resource Management.

Zuleika worked with Novartis India Ltd and Holcim South Asia IT Services Ltd where she received the Employee of the Year Award but decided to follow her passion !

*"I always believe that every great dream begins with a Passion as long as the dreamer remembers that she has strength, patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world "*

Her passion was to teach. This brought her to Wilson College as a Lecturer with the Department of Management Studies and before long she was promoted as Head of the Department and the most sought after lecturer !

She then earned her doctorate in Management in 2009. She is currently pursuing her second year of the LLB degree in Criminal Law.

# WZCC Business

Often referred to as the Iron Lady, Zulieka in 2012 managed to turn around her college to rank the 4th best in the country and 2nd best in Mumbai. Zulieka's brainchild *HOPE...Help Our People Elevate* and other initiatives like "Fervour Foundation," "Youth for India" and "Dance for a life" are all a reflection of great social initiatives this young professional indulges in.

Zulieka's belief is that "Leadership Excellence requires a balanced mix of paradoxes...Leaders need to be visionary yet practical, ...teachers yet learners...believers yet open minded...and assertive yet tolerant!"

## OFFICE BEARERS 2013

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**Ms. Behroze Daruwalla, Secretary** –International Board of WZCC, proposed a vote of thanks., commending the informative and lively presentations by all the Speakers, which made the proceedings both enlightening and enjoyable and generating a fine sense of fellowship displayed by all those present giving the participants an enriching experience to treasure till the next AGM

**Submitted by Ms. Behroze Daruwalla, WZCC**



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**Registered address: 5750 South Jackson Street, Hinsdale, IL 60521 USA**

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

1424E Walnut Avenue, Orange CA 92691  
Tel 949-583-9973, [tdamania@zcla.org](mailto:tdamania@zcla.org)

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[Sniknam1980@gmail.com](mailto:Sniknam1980@gmail.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Rocky Mountain (Colorado) (ZARM):**  
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[Neville\\_rust@hotmail.com](mailto:Neville_rust@hotmail.com)

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[zamwi\\_president@yahoo.com](mailto:zamwi_president@yahoo.com); Rep Shehernaz Verahrami Tel 301-355-8460  
[sverahrami@yahoo.com](mailto:sverahrami@yahoo.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF):** President: Furrokh Irani, Tel: 305-281-0971, Address: 16586SW, 51<sup>st</sup> Street, Miramar, FL 33027  
[firani@aol.com](mailto:firani@aol.com)

**Atlanta Zarathushti Association (Georgia)(AZA):** Representative: Cyrus Aidun : Tel 404-894-6645  
[Cyrus.aidun@me.gatech.edu](mailto:Cyrus.aidun@me.gatech.edu); Farzan Bharucha, President,  
[farzan.bharucah@kurtsalmon.com](mailto:farzan.bharucah@kurtsalmon.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (Illinois) (ZAC-Chi):** Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Hinsdale, IL 60521, Tel: 630-789-1983, President: Dinaz Weber Tel 630-830-3430  
[kenanddina@yahoo.com](mailto:kenanddina@yahoo.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAK):** President: Daryoush Jahanian, P.O. Box 30011, Kansas City, MO 64112  
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**Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana (ZAKOI):** President: Bakhtavar Desai Tel 5130829-7818,  
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[aspidengineer@gmail.com](mailto:aspidengineer@gmail.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Michigan (ZAOM)** President: Neville Bugli, 42729 Wimbledon Way, Novi, Michigan, MI 48377 Tel 248-926-9626  
[nbugli@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nbugli@sbcglobal.net)

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[dinyar@msn.com](mailto:dinyar@msn.com)

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[president@za-pa.org](mailto:president@za-pa.org); [secretary@za-pa.org](mailto:secretary@za-pa.org)

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[jrivetna@ensoftconsulting.com](mailto:jrivetna@ensoftconsulting.com) rep Sherazade Mehta;  
[sheerazadem@yahoo.com](mailto:sheerazadem@yahoo.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of Houston (Texas) (ZAH):** 8787 West Airport Blvd, Houston, TX 77071, Representative: Sarosh Collector, Tel: 713-882-8465,  
[scollector@cdadvisorsinc.com](mailto:scollector@cdadvisorsinc.com)

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[yazdibulsara@yahoo.com](mailto:yazdibulsara@yahoo.com)  
ZAA Rep Neelum Austin 316-30 McHugh Court N.E. Calgary, Alberta T2E 7X3  
Tel 403-271-1273 [hapajiji@shaw.ca](mailto:hapajiji@shaw.ca)

**Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC):** Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr, 8900 Halifax St., Burnaby, BC V5B 2R5, Tel: 604-420-3500, President: Fariborz Rahnamoon; Tel 604 986-2077 [fariborzr@hotmail.com](mailto:fariborzr@hotmail.com)

**Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF):** 4244 Taffey Crescent, Mississauga, ON L5L 2J2, President Firdosh Bulsara Tel 905-824-7692 [president@ozcf.com](mailto:president@ozcf.com)

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**California Zoroastrian Center (CZC):** 8952 Hazard Avenue, Westminster, CA 92683, Tel: 714-893-4737 [info@czc.org](mailto:info@czc.org)  
President: Shiva Khorshidian; Rep Dr Sohrab Salamatipour tel 949-640-7612  
[salamatipour@yahoo.com](mailto:salamatipour@yahoo.com)

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