

FALL 2006, PAIZ 1375 YZ

Mah Meher-Avan-Adar 1375 (Fasli)

Mah Ardibehest-Khordad-Tir 1376 (Shenshai)

Mah Khordad-Tir-Amardad 1376 (Kadmi)

# FEZANA in North America

## Also Inside:



**CELEBRATING A SEASON  
OF PEACE**



**ZARATHUSHTIS JOIN  
UNITY WALK IN D.C.**



**ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD  
GUJARATI CONFERENCE**



**HOUSTON HAPPENINGS**





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## FEZANA JOURNAL

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Photo on cover:by  
Dariush Jamasb

Sunrise Ceremony for  
prayer vigil for the earth

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# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN  
ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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

## IN COMING ISSUES OF **FEZANA** JOURNAL

*Winter 2006 /  
Spring 2007:*

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

**Guest Editors:**  
**Shirin Cama and**  
**Vishtasp**  
**Soroushian**

*Summer 2007*

### **20th ANNIVERSARY**

*Fall 2007*

### **ORAL HISTORY**

**Guest Editors.**  
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**N.Merchant**

**Deadline for  
Summer**

**2007**

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## A word from the Editor:

### What is the role of FEZANA in North America?

FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, was born out of a need for the Zarathushti community in North America to pool resources and ideas to achieve collaboratively and collectively more than what can be done individually. But even then, people asked themselves, why should we join FEZANA? What is in there for me or for my association? After 20 years are we still asking the same question?

Has FEZANA achieved what it wanted to achieve? What started as a federation of six associations has now grown into twenty-five associations with eight Darbe Mehrs and one Cultural Centre. From a modest budget of several thousand dollars FEZANA has now grown into half a million dollar operation, with several endowed funds for education and welfare of the community. We have an NGO status with the United Nations, a 10 year strategic plan that has charted our direction on this continent. Along with demographic surveys, directories both paper and electronic of Zarathushtis on this continent, youth and adult congresses and a world congress which has brought the community together, along with the annual sports event. Books by Zarathushti authors, videos, musical CDs, this quarterly North American publication (The Journal), active participation, in Inter-faith activities around the continent, in religious conferences, development of the chamber of commerce, and the growth of websites which further binds the community.

The earlier role of bringing the community together has expanded into empowering the community to consolidate its position center stage in every facet of North American life as Zarathushtis. We have grown not only at the individual level but also at the structural and organizational level. But can all this be attributed to

FEZANA? Maybe not. However one can clearly see that FEZANA has been the catalyst in community building, for setting parameters for growth, for facilitating the associations to achieve their potential, in moving the community forward, providing a meeting ground for Zarathushtis from India, Iran, Pakistan and Africa to interlink and interconnect, and most importantly helping to forge the unique North American identity,



But growth, fame and popularity bring their own problems, the more the philosophy of the religion is appreciated outside the community, the greater is the interest to practice it, bringing out schisms between the proponents of Born-Zarathushtis and Zarathushtis-by-Choice. Should the community ask FEZANA to develop parameters for controlled and regulated acceptance, or should it continue to bury its head in the sand and snow and wish the problem will go away?. The more coverage we get in the press the more defensive we become, killing the messenger rather than reflecting on the message.

FEZANA has played a significant role in the developmental history of the Zarathushti community in North America but it needs to continue working on the more positive experiences of consolidation by encouraging the new generation of North American born and educated Zarathushtis to assume leadership roles

**A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 2007 TO ALL  
IN THE COMMUNITY**

### AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We sincerely regret the inordinate delay in the publication of the summer 2006 issue. As you know, this is the second effort of the new board. Getting the articles and putting them all together without diminishing the quality of the journal has caused unavoidable delays

As a one-time catch-up provision only, the Winter 2006 and Spring 2007 issues will be combined. The next issue will be published in March 2007. All existing subscribers will have their subscription extended for one free issue. We thank you for your understanding.

**THE BOARD OF EDITORS OF THE FEZANA JOURNAL.**



## A ZOROASTRIAN NEWS AGENCY (ZNA) IS BORN

....where you get at most one E-mail a day but you learn what other Zarathushtis are doing around the world!

On June 1, 2006, a few individuals from different parts of the world established the **Zoroastrian News Agency (ZNA)** to keep Zarathushtis worldwide connected with unbiased and un-editorialized news of local, national and global interest on events and issues affecting our greater community.



The news includes but is not limited to a wide variety of topics such as births, engagements, weddings, great achievements, Sedreh Pushi/Navjotes, deaths, community events, public service announcements, celebrations, ceremonies/Jashans, media links, etc. ZNA is not for any personal forums, discussions, arguments, etc

The subject line will carry information to enable the reader to choose what they want to read. All news will be archived on a website for future reference. The default message delivery option is "Daily Digest", so at most one email that includes all Z-News for any particular day will be received by subscribers.

To subscribe please send an E-mail to: [zna-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:zna-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Persian readers send an E-mail to: [izna-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:izna-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**In The Zarathushti Community, Every Local News Is Global News!**

Current Moderators: **Ardeshir Behi (UK)** **Bijan Khosraviani (US)** **Fereidoon Demehri (Canada)**

## A P P E A L S F O R A I D

### PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

**Donations.** Unless specified otherwise, please send all donations to: **Katayun Kapadia, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054.** Make checks payable to "FEZANA," specifying the fund (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Academic Scholarship, Creative/Performing Arts Scholarship and FEZANA Journal). All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in USA. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for tax records. For donations under \$250, use your canceled check as a receipt.

**Appeals.** All appeals for community welfare, medical, social and critical assistance should be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee: Chair – **Houtoxi F. Contractor,** 2301 Colony Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, tel: (412) 367-2948; [Hfmc31@aol.com](mailto:Hfmc31@aol.com). For information, visit: [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).

## FEZANA FINANCIAL UPDATES

Between June1, 2006 and September 30, 2006, donations totaling \$38, 284 were received for the following funds. We thank you most sincerely for your very generous contributions. Each quarter we will report on the donations received which will enable you to see the growth in each fund.

Jerry Kheradi, Chair, Funds and Finance & Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer

### SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP	\$ 2,644.00
KHERADI ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ 0.00
KAPADIA ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ 0.00
PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP	\$ 0.00
SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP	\$ 0.00
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUND	\$ 852.50
JUNGALWALA LECTURE SERIES	\$ 5,000.00
JOURNAL FUND	\$ 1,001.00
GENERAL FUND	\$ 855.00

### WELFARE FUNDS

FEZANA WELFARE FUND	\$ 4,907.00
DAMKEVALA ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ 101.00
BHATHENA ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ 0.00
TAMBOLI ENDOWMENT FUND	\$ 10,000.00
FEZANA CRITICAL ASSISTANCE FUND	\$ 6,027.50
DISASTER RELIEF	\$ 6,896.00

**TOTAL \$ 38,284.00**



# FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT

It has been said that we are the most generous generation ever!! Between 2003 and 2004 over 76,000 charities were created. As the government keeps cutting spending, and the public demand for help continues to grow, the inevitable occurs, more charities coming to us for help, and those of us that are blessed, truly do want to help.

However, there are thousands of charities that would like you to contribute and a few more that have set up scams trying to capitalize on your generosity. So here are some tips in giving to protect you and the good, decent charities that deserve help.

## TIPS

1. The FLOOD – Ever notice that after you give money it seems like within a month everybody and their brother calls you asking for more? When you donate to a charity there is a high likelihood that they will share your name if you do not ask them not to...so tell them not to share your name and they almost always honor it. FEZANA does not share your information.
2. HOW DO THEY USE IT? – Most charities have administrative and fundraising costs and on average only 70% of your donation goes to work for the charity of your choice. Isn't it better to donate to FEZANA where 100% of your donation goes to work for the community?
3. ARE YOU REGISTERED? – Another good question to ask is whether they are registered with the Federal or State governments. FEZANA is registered as a non-profit religious corporation with a Tax ID # 36-3521343, registered in the State of Illinois.
4. KEEP GOOD RECORDS OF YOUR DONATIONS – Never give cash unless it is for a very small donation. Also, never give a credit card number to a telephone solicitor unless it is one of the major charities about which you have no doubts. It is best to donate by check so you can easily track it for tax purposes. You can feel safe giving donations to FEZANA.

Thanks to the generosity of the community, we have been able to establish four endowment funds besides the original funds FEZANA has. We hope you chose FEZANA as your charity of choice.

Kindly make your donations to any of the FEZANA Funds –

**General Fund,  
Religious Education Fund,  
Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund,  
DamKevala Endowment Fund for Welfare Fund,  
Bhathena Endowment Fund for Welfare/Critical Assistance Fund,  
FEZANA Academic Scholarship Fund,  
Kapadia Endowment Scholarship Fund for Need,  
Kheradi Endowment Scholarship Fund for Merit- FEZANA Scholar,  
Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship Fund,  
Journal Fund and the newly established  
Khorshed F. Jungalwala (Wadia) Zoroastrian Literature Lecture Fund.**

Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund you wish to support and mail it to: Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA Treasurer, 3 Preamble Drive, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054.

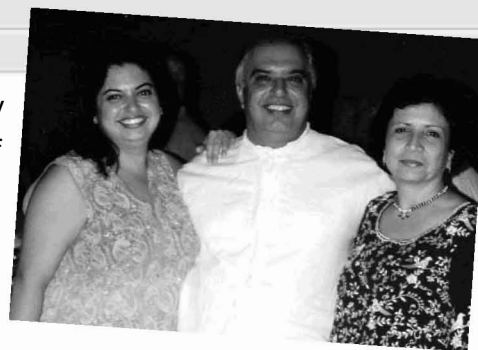
Thank you for your continued support and may the blessings of Ahura Mazda be with you.

*Jerry M. Kheradi, MD,  
FACG Chairperson,  
FEZANA Funds and  
Finance Committee  
Committee: Katayun  
Kapadia (Treasurer),  
Rashid Mehin, Celeste  
Kheradi, Behram Irani.*



# Critically Speaking

by  
Freyaz Shroff



FEZANA is a registered, non-profit, religious and charitable organization designed to enhance the welfare of our community. In order to accomplish its objectives FEZANA has several volunteer committees that are dedicated to sustain and enhance its integrity.

The Critical Assistance Committee is a FEZANA committee designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.

The committee chairs Houtoxi Contractor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Hosi Mehta of Chicago, Illinois started with only an idea in 2002 and published the 1st Critically Speaking Column in 2003. Although received with support, many community members were tentative about the need for this committee. However because of clear objectives, defined goals and an understanding of what the community needed, the Critical Assistance Committee has partnered beautifully with the Welfare Committee, also chaired by Houtoxi and Hosi to provide consistent legal, social, medical and educational assistance to over 20 families and innumerable Zarathushti agencies and hospitals.

The committee managed a toll free informational line for a little over a year; over time though it was realized that our little community liked the internal roads of communication. We share our personal numbers and accept collect calls and stay with our community members in need, until the situation is resolved. Outlined below is a sample of cases we have handled this year alone. Please know many details have been restricted to maintain confidentiality.

It is our sincerest hope that this column has provided a little insight into what the Critical Assistance Committee does and how it works within the FEZANA structure. If you or someone you know is in need, please feel free to contact us and we assure you that we will do our best to assist. For cases that are not accepted by our committee we will find or refer them to organizations and associations that will be better suited to provide the needed assistance.

It has been my good fortune to work with Houtoxi, Hosi and our team of volunteers on this committee over the last 3 years. If you would like to assist our committee by providing your professional services, financial support or would just like to volunteer your time to provide social support to members in need we invite you to please call us and join our family of volunteers and donors.

Until next time,

Ushta-te (may happiness be unto you always),

**Houtoxi Contractor** 412-367-2948 or [HFMC31@aol.com](mailto:HFMC31@aol.com)

**Hosi Mehta** 630-833-6923 or [hosimehta@aol.com](mailto:hosimehta@aol.com)

**Freyaz Shroff** 843-283-4676 or [freycz@aol.com](mailto:freycz@aol.com)

"Believe in the strength that comes from one hand holding another through times of trouble" -  
Anonymous

# Critically Speaking

Appeal For	Appeal Description	Appeal Status
Anonymous Hospital	In need of Medical Equipment .	Monetary donation provided for specific equipment.
Anonymous Family	Low Income w/ Sick child and no Medical Insurance .	Partnered with local Z -association to provide financial support. Legal issues prevent job assistance.
Anonymous Family	Immigration issues causing immediate family separation. Financial college restrictions for student.	Legal assistance is being provided. Z -Volunteers in all appropriate countries have been solicited and are assisting in re-uniting the family. Financial assistance was provided for the student.
Surat Floods	Countless families displaced. Many businesses required re-building, for many this is their main source of income.	<b>OPEN:</b> Requests are being handled as cases are evaluated.
Bombay Train Blast Victim	31 year old Zarathushti man who left behind old mom, wife and 1 child .	Financial Assistance was provided.
Anonymous Family	Domestic Violence. Abuse of children in the home. Legal Issues.	<b>OPEN:</b> Social support is being provided as we await pending legal issues to be resolved.
S.P. J. Sadhana School	Autistic and Mongoloid Parsee Zoroastrian Children <a href="http://www.yougivemewings.org">www.yougivemewings.org</a>	<b>OPEN:</b> Waiting to see how the Z -community comes together to meet the school's needs. Appeal was also published in the last Journal.
Anonymous Female	Recent widow w/o job skills, needing to re-build her life. Currently needing assistance with basic needs such as housing.	Financial assistance has been pledged to subsidize rent contingent on the fact that the local association also support this person.
Bai Avanbai A. Cooper Agiary Trust Lahore	Need funds to stay open and continue providing services to Community members.	Financial assistance was provided and a thank you letter was sent acknowledging receipt of the money.
Anonymous Family	Suffered the loss of a child.	Financial Assistance provided for funeral expenses.
Anonymous Female	Domestic Violence. Legal and Separation Settlement Issues. No children.	<b>OPEN:</b> Assistance was previously provided, but new needs have arisen.

*If you want children to keep their foot on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders.*

**Abigail Van Buren**



# Calendar of Festivals

September 2006 to March 2007

## Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin Tues, Aug 8. (K)  
Thurs, Sept 7. (S)

## Maidyozarem Gahambar

**Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher**  
Wed, Aug 3 – Sun, Sept 3. (k)  
Fri, Sept 29 -Tues, Oct 3. (S)

## Paitishem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran  
Tues, Sept 12- Sat, Sept 16. (F)

## Jashne-Mehergan

Mah Meher, Roz Meher Mon, Oct 2. (F)

## Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad, -Aneran  
Thurs, Oct 12 – Mon, Oct 16 (F)

## Jahne –Avangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

Mah Avan , Roz Avan Thurs, Oct 26 (F)

## Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir. Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher  
Sun, Oct 29 - Thurs, Nov 2 (K)  
Tues, Nov 28 – Sat, Dec 2 (S)

## Jashne-Adargan

Mah Adar, Roz Adar Fri, Nov 24 (F)

## Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed Tues, Dec 26 (F)

## Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram Sun, Dec 31- Thur, Jan 4 (F)

## Jashne Daegan

Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin Sun, Jan 7 (F)

## Jashne Bahmangan

Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman Tues, Jan 16 (F)

## Paitishem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran  
Fri, Jan 12 - Tues, Jan 16 (K)  
Sun, Feb 11 -Thur, Feb 15 (S)

## Jashne Sadeh

Mah Bahman, Roz Meher Tues, Jan 30. (F)

## Ayatherem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran Sun, Feb 11-Thurs, Feb 15 (K)  
Tues, Mar13 - Sat, Mar 17 (S)

## Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Five Gatha Days Fri, Mar 16-Tues, Mar 20 (F)

## Char- Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

Tuesday Prior to Nouruz Tue, Mar 20 (F)

## Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd Wed, March 21

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

## UN/NGO Events

Zarathushtis are invited to participate on the FEZANA Team in Future UN/NGO activities.

Interested individuals may send CV to Homi Gandhi homidgandhi@gmail.com

or

Behram Pastakia  
bpastakia@aol.com

## THE FEZANA WELFARE

## COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE

The FEZANA Welfare Committee helps the Zarathushti community members, across the globe, in crisis and determines the best course of action.

Requests are also received for medical assistance from people not qualifying for health insurance, women in abusive marriages and wanting to become financially independent to make a fresh start, from families who have lost their sole bread earner etc. The committee works diligently with member associations, community action groups and the families and individuals in need of assistance to verify the need and then determine the best course of action. Their track record has been stellar.

Please support our efforts to assist our community members by sending a donation to: FEZANA WELFARE & mail it to the Treasurer; Katayun Kapadia ; 3 Preamble Drive; Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 For information and suggestion for opportunities to extend support and to work in partnership, contact

**Houtoxi Contractor, Hosi Mehta, Freyaz Shroff, FEZANA Welfare Committee**



## COMING EVENTS

### **YEAR OF ARYAN CIVILIZATION, TAJIKISTAN, 2006**

President Rahmonov of Tajikistan has declared year 2006 as "The Year of Aryan Civilization" to further protect and value the intellectual treasures of our ancestors .....and strengthen national identity of the future Tajik generation" (FEZANA Journal, Winter 2003, page 37)

### **STANDFORD LECTURE SERIES OCTOBER, 27, 2006**

"The Enlightenment View of Religions and Zarathushtra's Contribution: Prof Kaikhosrov Dinshah Irani, Emeritus NYU

### **SIXTH ANNUAL INDO-AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL, NOVEMBER 2006**

Independent & Diaspora Films, November 1- 5 2006 Contact Email: aroon@iaac.us or pooja@iaac.us; Website: www.iaac.us

**WZCC AGM, JANUARY 2007**  
**The Annual General Meeting of WZCC will be held in Mumbai, January 5-7 2007** hosted by WZCC -India Visit website [www.wzcc.org](http://www.wzcc.org)

### **ROUNDTABLE SESSION , COMING TOGETHER INITIATIVE, JANUARY 2007**

A meeting of "Coming Together to Work Together" in Mumbai the week of January 7, 2007. Contact Rohinton Rivetna [rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com)

**Commission on the Status of Women, Feb 26-March 9, 2007 UN New York:** Elimination of all forms of Discrimination and violence against women. Contact [homidgandhi@gmail.com](mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com) or [bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)

### **FEZANA AGM, APRIL 2007**

The 20TH FEZANA AGM will be held April 6-8, 2007 in Dallas/Ft Worth hosted by Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT). All member Association representatives and committee chairs are encouraged to attend. Contact Rita Engineer, Secretary, [ritaengineer@yahoo.com](mailto:ritaengineer@yahoo.com) Tel 561-487-4343, Arbez Patel, [asp0716@aol.com](mailto:asp0716@aol.com)

### **NAMC EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR, MAY 19, 2007**

"Passage of Time and its influence on Zarathushtrian Traditions." ZAPANJ will host a one day educational seminar, May 19, 2007 Contact Ervad Jehan Bagli. [jbagli@rogers.com](mailto:jbagli@rogers.com)

### **FEZANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SUMMER 2007**

University of Missouri, Kansas City Details to follow Contact Nikan2@aol.com

### **NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS, TORONTO, JULY 2007**

The X1V North American Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Toronto, July 1-4 2007, hosted by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Contact [sam.vesuna@sympatico.ca](mailto:sam.vesuna@sympatico.ca)

### **FIFTH ZARATHUSHTI UNITY CUP SOCCER, SEPTEMBER 2007**

THE Fifth Soccer Tournament will be held on September 1-3, 2007. Contact [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org)

### **WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 2007**

The FOURTH World Zoroastrian Youth Congress "Back to the Future" will be held at the University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008 Contact Shiraz Mistry, at [Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au](mailto:Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au)

### **Eleventh Zarathushti Games, San Diego, CA JULY 2008**

The eleventh Zarathushti games will be held the 4th of July weekend 2008 in San Diego. See more at <http://www.sandiego.org/nav/Vistors>

### **WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI 2009**

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity through the Sands of Times" to be held in Dubai, Decmber 28-31 2009. Contact [meher\\_bhesania@hotmail.com](mailto:meher_bhesania@hotmail.com)



The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.

*- Henry A. Kissinger*

\*\*\*\*\*

Only those who dare to fail greatly can achieve greatly.

*- Robert F. Kennedy*





# THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

## FEZANA

### AND ITS ROLE IN NORTH AMERICA

The FEZANA constitution chartered in Chicago and incorporated in the STATE of ILLINOIS on November 15, 1986 states in its Preamble

We, the subscribing Associations of North America, recognize that:

WHEREAS many Zoroastrians (Zarathushtis) have recently settled and been born on the North American continent;

WHEREAS various regional Associations have been formed in Canada and the United States of America to serve the religious and charitable needs of North American Zoroastrians ; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to adopt a UNITED approach on issues facing Zoroastrians; GUIDED by the blessings of AHURA MAZDA and the teachings of our prophet Zarathushtra;

A FEDERATION is hereby formed, consisting of Zoroastrian Associations in North America, to further the cause of Zoroastrianism in North America.

The activities of this Federation shall be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect, co-operation and unity amongst all Members, and with due regard for the principles of GOODNESS, TRUTH, REASON, BENEVOLENCE, IMPLICIT TRUST and CHARITY towards all Mankind.

The original charter was signed by 6 associations now there are 25 associations and many unchartered groups across the continent. There are 8 community centres and places of worship with two in various stages of creation.

At the Annual General Meeting in May 2007 (see FJ Spring 06) a new slate of officers was elected and one of the first acts of the new president was to organize a workshop for association presidents and committee chairs to set direction and assure that FEZANA is as relevant today as it was in 1986.

[Dolly Dastoor ED.]



Dr Rustom Kevala  
President, FEZANA



# FEZANA FEZANA Orientation Workshop

Rustom Kevala Ph.D President

FEZANA held an orientation workshop at the Arbab Guiv Darbe Mehr, Chicago from September 2-4, 2006, which was attended by about 30 representatives of member associations and interested community members. Considering this was a labour day weekend and with many national and international events taking place throughout the country this was a good attendance of committed Zarathushtis.



The first day was devoted to reviewing what FEZANA has achieved, and in assessing how well these activities are coordinated.

The second day, Sunday, was devoted to developing a collective vision for the community, reviewing the present committee structure and the need for changes.

The final day was a working session to develop specific action items to move FEZANA forward.

## REVIEW AND RETROSPECTIVE

*Remarks by Past Presidents*

All the past presidents feel that the FEZANA concept is still not clearly understood, especially outside North America. Getting the attention of the presidents of the Associations to approve resolutions or to pass on information to their members in a timely manner is not always easy. We need to make FEZANA bring value to the Associations, and be relevant to them. This means that the activities of FEZANA should not overlap local Association activities. The past presidents are sensitive to oft-repeated comments that they are autocratic in making decisions. The problem is that people give suggestions and advice in good faith, and decisions have to be made for the collective good of the community but may be contrary to what some would like.



### Some reflections

FEZANA's major achievement appears to be that Zarathushtis in North America are now more connected with each other. Our meetings are

orderly; our communications are direct and issue-oriented and not personality-driven. Zarathushtis are beginning to be recognized as a religious group and FEZANA is contacted whenever the media wants information about the religion. But several problems still persist. The youth are not as interested in religion as we would like to see. Adults are unwilling to take the time to study and discuss serious issues or participate in long-term community-building activities. Although donations are coming in for charities and welfare, fundraising for community assets such as community centers and halls of worship is very difficult.

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

FEZANA'S strength is in its committee structure. Committee budgets are generally approved by the Board, i.e., the Associations, at the FEZANA annual general meetings. Hence the committee chairpersons need to plan ahead for the entire year. Scholarships, awards, and congress committees are able to submit budgets, but other committees like welfare, religious education and public relations have had difficulty planning ahead. Youth activities, sports and journal are practically self-supporting.

**The Awards Committee** did excellent work under late Dinshaw Joshi, which has continued with Yasmin Pavri.

**External Affairs Committee**, chaired by Rohinton Rivetna, is primarily involved in interfaith activities. There are literally hundreds of local, national and international interfaith organizations. FEZANA tries to encourage local Zarathushtis to attend meetings. Most interfaith groups promote peace and harmony through joint community development work and local charities. Homi Gandhi and Behram Pastakia have been coordinating UN/NGO activities, which encourage young Zarathushtis to participate in various activities. The Zarathushti Deen is now recognized as one of the 14 major faiths by the UN. If we continue our active participation, we can put our activity on the UN website.

Bomi Patel, Vice President of FEZANA, chairs the **North American Zarathushti Congress Committee**. Toronto is the venue for the next

Congress, from June 29 to July 1, 2007. Early Bird registration will be CAN\$300 for adults and CAN\$225 for students. WZCC meeting on June 29 will require separate registration. The Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra, for which FEZANA has pledged \$10,000, will perform during the Awards luncheon. (See separate article in this issue)

Fereshteh Khatibi, who chairs the **Public Relations Committee**, emphasized the need to explain FEZANA better to the Iranian community. She would like publicity information and FEZANA messages to be prepared in Farsi as well as English. Religious education materials are posted by Kayomars Mehta on the internet every month. Stanford University has confirmed participation in a lecture series on the Zarathushti Deen and agreed to pick up half the cost. Jungalwala lecture series is funded.

**Academic Scholarships Committee** is ably chaired by Dolly Dastoor. The FEZANA scholar receives \$5K from Kheradi Endowment, based on merit. Kapadia Endowment scholarship takes need into account. Remaining FEZANA scholarships recognize merit, need and public service. The scholarships are available only for studies in USA and Canada.

**Welfare and Critical Assistance** is a very active committee. Procedures have been created to process requests. The committee is in touch with Anjumans in India. The WZO India Trust has also been very helpful. The critical assistance hotline has been discontinued as people prefer to call directly.

**ZYNA** (Zarathushti Youth of North America) has been doing a great job, but now needs new leadership. Nikan Khatibi suggested that FEZANA should organize leadership camps for Association youth. Natalie Vania will check into a suitable venue. **ZYWIB** (Youth without borders) supports NA youth to go overseas and contribute to improving life for someone else. A separate committee will be formed. Performing and creative arts scholarships will also be organized into a separate committee. Sports scholarships are also available. **Sports Committee** sent soccer balls to Iran. The next Zarathushti games will be in San Diego.

## Related Non-FEZANA Activities

2007 World Youth Congress in Australia is being organized by individuals from Australia with Shiraz Mistry as Chairperson. FEZANA has requested that several speakers from North America be allocated times to present our perspective at the congress. 2009 World Congress will be held in Dubai. Chairperson Meher Bhesania has requested seed funding after a budget is prepared. The congress will focus on networking for Zarathushti businesses.

PARZOR project funded by UNESCO to record Parsi Irani heritage in India is ongoing. Parsi Resource Group (PRG) was recently organized by an individual to provide financial self-sufficiency to the practicing mobeds and renovate fire temples in India.

The recent seminar organized by Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) was successful. SSZ aims to encourage interchange of ideas between Zarathushtis and professional scholars of the Zarathushti Deen. A "Coming Together" session was organized by the Rivetnas in London last year and will be repeated in Bombay on January 8, 2007. FEZANA's role in this event needs to be clarified. The next annual general meeting of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce will be held from Jan 5-7, 2007 in Mumbai and Pune.

ZNA (Zoroastrian News Agency), an internet-based news dissemination effort, seems to be progressing well. ZWIN (Zoroastrian Women's International Network), started at the World Congress in 2000 in Houston, is active in assisting students who are away from their homes studying in different parts of the world. They also showcase women's achievements.

## General Observations

The afternoon discussions brought out some interesting observations:

- As FEZANA tries to be more involved, its activities have become fragmented. Coordination and cooperation have become key issues. The FEZANA vice-president's role as chair of the coordination and planning committee is extremely important and needs to be strengthened.
- FEZANA needs to develop standard operating procedures to guide the elected officers in executing their responsibilities and in interacting

with the Board of Directors, i.e., the Member Associations.

- One of the major areas over which FEZANA has little control is planning and coordination of international events such as the world congresses.
- The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) is a notable success story. Its decentralized structure and focused purpose encourages innovation and cooperation and is a worthy model for future worldwide bodies.

## **DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE VISION**

On the second day, participants reviewed and expanded on the 3-point platform of Rustom Kevala, FEZANA President.

### ***1. Build a United Zarathushti Community***

How can we develop a united sense of purpose and speak with a united voice? How can we strengthen the sense of identity of the Member Associations with FEZANA? How do we meet the needs of ALL Zarathushtis, even those who are not members of any formal Association or group. Both Iranian and Parsi Zarathushti cultures, traditions and beliefs should be respected and celebrated.

Religion and religious practices are what bind us together. North American Zarathushtis are asking for more interactive and participatory ceremonies, better understanding of the relevance of rituals; and more in-depth direction from the religious hierarchy (North American Mobeds Council) for controversial issues like interfaith marriages, conversion and funerary practices.

Leadership at the Association level is now shifting to the 30 to 40-year olds. This is a good trend and more of this age group now needs to be integrated into the FEZANA committees and working groups to propel us to the next level.

### ***2. Make Zarathushti Presence an Integral Part of the North American Landscape***

FEZANA can prepare and distribute well-prepared texts to schools and libraries and encourage Zarathushtis to publish articles in non-Zarathushti publications. We should provide information about our festivals and major events to the media. Academic and other scholarships for religious studies, music, fine arts and sports will encourage promising youngsters to excel in all

walks of life. Zarathushtis participate in interfaith groups and social causes. All of these are bound to raise the profile of Zarathushtis in North America.

The delegates added that:

- Youth should be encouraged to participate in workshops and motivational seminars to develop their leadership, business and management skills.
- Community building activities are essential for building unity and communicating our religious beliefs to the North American public.
- There is great interest in socially responsible activities and in the UN-organized forums from school- and college-age participants. This is an area that shows much promise for the future.
- Let us celebrate NowRuz on the spring equinox in a BIG way all over North America. The Haft-seen table provides a message of rejuvenation of life and prosperity. The Cylinder of Cyrus can be highlighted to provide a message of respect for human rights embodied in our culture.

### ***3. Develop Zarathushti Infrastructure in North America***

Today, there are almost 25,000 Zarathushtis in North America. We have gone as far as we can go with an all-volunteer staff to publish the Journal, do all the accounts, correspondence, meetings and seminars, develop textbooks, public-relations, website, etc. FEZANA now needs to staff a modest office. Once the office is established, FEZANA should explore community infrastructure needs such as a consecrated place of worship, religious study centers, meeting facilities, family retreat, etc.

Chicago is already storing FEZANA files and archives in its library and has offered to make space available for a FEZANA office. A working group will be organized to make recommendations on long-term needs of the community as a whole, look at alternate locations, space needs and staffing costs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTION**

First, let us look at some of the obvious conclusions that can be drawn. Only broad areas are considered here to highlight the difficulties to be anticipated.

## **Zarathushti Identity and Community Building**

Religion and culture are synonymous in the minds of many Zarathushtis. Religion is what binds us together. It is our common bond, our identity. Cultural aspects, outwardly, relate to language and food preferences, but at a deeper level they impact our relationships with each other, our worldview. Ideally, religion should subsume cultural differences by providing a spiritual connection. FEZANA's aim should be to develop a religious community that is identified with Zarathushti ethos: principles, morals, and way of life.

### **Public Relations**

In reality, public relations is everybody's responsibility. But our varying perceptions and abilities and listeners' personal biases result in projecting a very discordant picture to the media. The ease of spreading intentional or unintentional misinformation over the internet causes many problems.

Internal communications are handled by the FEZANA elected officers. Ideally, this should be done in Farsi as well as in English. Member associations are slow to respond to FEZANA communications. Interactive website and electronic bulletin boards have been suggested to speed up communication.

External communications need focus and a responsible spokesperson that is in touch with all current events, viewpoints and controversies! This task generally falls on the FEZANA president. But often, the FEZANA executives are not best equipped to deal directly with public media. Media relations require careful preparation and professional guidance.

Clearly, if a public relations committee is appointed, it will have to include many talented individuals with direct access to all committees and the elected officers.

### **Information Receiving and Disseminating**

FEZANA's constitution, written before the Internet Age, explicitly states that the Information Receiving and Disseminating (IR&D) committee shall be a standing committee of FEZANA. Over the years, the IR&D committee has devolved into a publications committee, with its main business the publishing and distribution of the FEZANA Journal.

The Journal includes announcements of ongoing and future events of interest to North American Zarathushtis and announcements of milestone events (births, navjotes, weddings, deaths). Thus the Journal serves a very important and irreplaceable function in the life of Zarathushtis. However, the high volunteer manpower cost of preparing each Journal is difficult to justify with its paltry subscription volume of only about 1500 copies.

Exchange of information has become a critical element in today's environment. The Journal, published every 3 months, needs to be supplemented by frequent bulletins and web logs to increase community awareness. If the IR&D committee were to truly carry out its mandate, then its activities will overlap public relations, census & survey and coordination and planning committees. Furthermore, to carry out these activities, committee members require expertise in and constant use of electronic communications. We need a superhero to chair such a committee!

### **Census & Survey**

All Associations are required to submit the names and addresses of their members to FEZANA. Theoretically, it should be possible to estimate the number of Zarathushtis in North America after correcting for those who are not members of any association. This has been done in the past with varying success. Current estimates vary between 15,000 and 25,000 individuals, with about 7,000 in Canada. The North American Zarathushti directory on the FEZANA website, ably managed by Noshir Jesung, requires voluntary updating by individuals. It contains about 3,600 names.

But for a true census, we need much more information. Zarathushtis have been reluctant to provide personal information such as age, household income, and profession, even if they are assured of statistical anonymity. At present, the FEZANA Journal publishes information about life events: births, navjotes, weddings, and deaths culled from local newsletters or sent in by individuals. Some of this information should be easily available if the mobeds who perform navjotes, weddings and funerals are diligent in sending in information about each event to NAMC, who can then provide relevant data to the FEZANA census & survey committee.

## **Youth**

The pressures of life, study demands and new-found independence upon going to college have all contributed to a feeling among the community elders that the youth are not interested in our religion. Actually, youth are very interested in the fellowship of other youth at outdoor events, youth congresses and community projects. Many youth who have received religious education in our Anjumans are returning as teachers and mentors for the next generation. Youth committees, sports, performing and creative arts, and cultural events need to be bolstered. Youth should be encouraged to co-chair committees to gain experience in working with community leaders.

## **Long-Term Planning**

FEZANA Strategic Plan was prepared under Dolly Dastoor's leadership in 1996. Over the last 10 years, most of its goals have been achieved. Now we need to go further. A working group should be created to plan and prioritize:

- FEZANA infrastructure needs, i.e., location, size and costs for a FEZANA office.
- Standard operating procedures for FEZANA elected positions as well as committees.
- Community-wide infrastructure needs. Develop guidelines for Anjumans wanting to build meeting facilities (funding issues, site selection, facility size and design, etc.); future need for community retreats, archives, libraries, study and training facilities, etc.
- University relations: endowment of faculty positions, courses for divinity schools, inclusion of Zarathushti topics in scholarly conferences, etc.

## **HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS?**

### **Committees:**

Looking at what we want to accomplish, it becomes obvious that some of the existing committee mandates may need to be revised. Each committee and working group will need to develop plans and milestones and submit a revised budget if necessary. For maximum impact, it was recommended that each committee must develop a major milestone to be accomplished before the next AGM in April 2007.

## **Community-Building:**

A coordinated, public celebration of Navroze at the spring equinox would achieve many purposes: provide our Associations an opportunity to work together, involve our youth, and bring awareness of Zarathushti culture to the North American public. A subcommittee will be formed to accomplish this, starting with Navroze 2007, eventually building up to year-round activities and cultural events.

## **Service and Outreach**

Community service and assistance to worthy causes are hallmarks of Zarathushti thinking and being. The period between 21st March to 22nd April (Earth Day) has been designated by the UN as Season of Service. To participate in this, we can revive the ancient Persian tradition of "Rooze Derekhtkari." Zarathushtis have participated in Habitat for Humanity and river cleanup projects to name a few, which have been very rewarding to the participants.

## **Unity among Zarathushtis:**

Convene a working group to develop procedures for and conduct orderly discussions of core issues through a "meeting of the minds." This group may conduct philosophical discussions on core beliefs, doctrinal issues, and preserving our religion in North America.

## **Infrastructure:**

Convene a long-range planning group as outlined above. The group should make recommendations for a FEZANA office space by the next AGM in April 2007.

## **FEZANA's 20th Anniversary**

The chair of the Coordination and Planning committee, FEZANA Vice-president, should coordinate the celebration of FEZANA's 20th birthday throughout 2007. This can include modest celebrations at the AGM, at local association gatherings, and at the North American Zoroastrian Congress in Toronto in July 2007.

This concluded the three day workshop and deliberations of the representatives of the member associations and interested community members present. The FEZANA leadership can set the tone, show direction but it is now upto each and every one of us to move forward to accomplish what we want to accomplish.



# FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

*Representing 25 Zoroastrian Associations in the USA and Canada*

Committees are established to expedite the business of the Federation, to fulfill the purposes of the Federation and to transact specific activities for the Federation. Additional ad-hoc committees and working groups may be formed when situations demand, to address specific issues. According to Article VI, Section 5 of the FEZANA Constitution, the appointments are subject to approval by the Member Associations.

## FEZANA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS, 2006-2008

### STANDING COMMITTEES

**Coordination & Planning:** Bomi Patel (FEZANA Vice President), San Jose, CA, bomip@yahoo.com

**Zoroastrian Unity and Welfare:** Houtoxi Contractor (chair) Pittsburgh, PA; HFMC31@aol.com ; Hosi Mehta, hosimehta@aol.com; Freyaz Shroff, freyaz@aol.com.

**Information Receiving and Disseminating** Firdosh Mehta (chair), Weatherford, TX, fdjmehta@charter.net Dolly Dastoor (FEZANA Journal Editor-in-chief), dollydastoor@sympatico.ca

**Funds & Finance:** Jerry M. Kheradi, M.D. (chair) Providence, RI

**Youth (Zoroastrian Youth of North America):** Nikan Khatibi (chair), nikan2@aol.com

**Education, Conference & Scholarship:** Lovji Cama (chair) Tenaflly, NJ, ldcama@verizon.net

**North American Zoroastrian Congress:** Bomi Patel (chair) San Jose, CA, bomip@yahoo.com

**Small Groups:** Kia Kaviani, M.D. (chair) Orlando, FL; drkiak@hotmail.com.  
Mahrukh Motafram, mmotafram@msn.com

### AD-HOC COMMITTEES

**Academic Scholarships:** Dolly Dastoor, Ph.D. (chair) Brossard, Quebec, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca

**FEZANA Awards:** Framroze K. Patel (chair) Woodbridge, NJ, goodbai@comcast.net  
Shehemaz Joshi Verahrami (co-chair) North Potomac, MD, sjoshi@law.gwu.edu

**Historical Research & Preservation:** Ervad. Jehan Bagli, Ph.D (chair) Mississauga, Ontario

**Interfaith Activities:** Homi Gandhi (chair) Glen Rock, NJ, homidgandhi@gmail.com,  
Behram Pastakia, MD (co-chair), bpastakia@aol.com

**Performing & Creative Arts Fund:** Sherazade Mehta (chair) Dallas, TX, sherazadem@yahoo.com,  
Anahita Sidhwa Coppel, TX, afsidhwa@dcccd.edu.

**Sports Excellence Fund:** Khushchehr Italia (chair) West Hills, CA, exissfund@yahoo.com

**UN/NGO Activities:** Homi Gandhi (co-chair), Behram Pastakia, M.D. (co-chair)

**Public Relations:** Jim Engineer (chair) jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com

**Sports Committee:** Bijan Khosraviani Ph.D (chair), ZSC@FEZANA.ORG

### WORKING GROUP:

**Infrastructure Working Group:** Shahrokh Mehta, (chair) Syracuse, NY, sammehta@aol.com,  
Bella Tata, Vancouver, BC, bellatata@shaw.ca.  
Neville Rustomjee, Denver, CO, neville\_rust@hotmail.com,

*Forget the past. No one becomes  
successful in the past*

## Poem

I await each issue  
With awe & wonder  
As to what articles  
It would contain?  
From the likes of  
Various scholars  
Imagine the valuable  
Knowledge I would gain!!!

It covers a wide range  
Of very interesting topics  
To satisfy every taste bud  
It's all due to the editor in chief  
Whether they be past or present.

Silently & dedicatedly  
Day in & day out  
You work your  
Fingers to the bone  
Educating Zarathushtis  
So that the Zarathushti Deen  
Is not forgotten by  
Telling Others Who Are  
Followers of Asho Zarathushtra.

Let's not forget  
The mailing crew  
We appreciate for  
All you've done  
And continue to do  
To put service before self  
It's an exemplary thing to do.

Though FEZANA is an  
Umbrella organization  
There's still some  
Teensy weensy work  
To be done  
To make Zarathushti Deen  
"Affordable & Available"  
To Each & Everyone!

**Farida Bamji**  
**Canada**

## Persian Gulf mis-named in FEZANA JOURNAL

Dear Dr. Dastoor

I am an eager reader of every issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL and send kudos to you and your team (as well as the previous one) for publishing an excellent journal. On reading this issue (Summer 2006) of the Journal, I was disappointed to see on page 47 under "The Morris brothers" that the Persian Gulf is named the Arabian Gulf.

Despite the fact that many in the Arabian Gulf countries refer to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf, I believe there is ample international documentation that has "Persian Gulf" as the official name of the Gulf in the Middle East.

With kind regards,

Mehran Pooladi-Darvish  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

*[The Arabian Gulf mentioned on page 47 should have rightly been termed the Persian Gulf. We were quoting from a newspaper clip, though all of us at FEZANA Journal clearly know that the Persian Gulf is the correct term. We regret this slip and thank you for bringing it to our attention. ---ED ]*

# FEZANA ANNUAL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

RESULTS FOR 2006

## FEZANA SCHOLAR FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT

The Mehraban and Morvarid Kheradi Endowment Scholarship of \$5000

**Farokh Irani , University of Florida, Medical College**

The Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Scholarship of \$1000

**Nasha Minwalla University of Guelph, Molecular Biology and Genetics  
1st year Bachelor of Science,**

## FEZANA Scholarships of \$1000 each

### GRADUATES

Rayomand Dabhoiwala	Michigan Technological University, Masters in Mechanical Engineering
Shahryar Bahmani	University of Arizona, College of Law
Rashna Umrigar	University of Southern Florida, Masters in Public Health
Shirin Kiani	Simon Fraser University, Masters in Global Health
Perinaz Bhada	Columbia University, Masters in Earth Resources Engineering

### UNDERGRADUATES

Kainas Mistry,	McGill University, Bachelor of Science, 1st year
Anahita Amalsad	University of California, Premed School
Farhad Jamshedi	American River College, CA, Civil and Structural Engineering
Afsaan Kermani	University of Central Florida, Computer Software Engineering
Anaita Bharucha	University of Western Ontario, Bachelor of Medical Science & Honours degree in Business Admin.
Farshaad Bilimoria	University of British Columbia, Faculty of Science

*Dolly Dastoor Ph.D. Chair, FEZANA, Academic Scholarship Program.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP**

The FEZANA-ZYNA Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship (P&CAS) Committee is pleased to announce the P&CAS scholarship. It provides financial support for performing art forms like music, drama, dance, etc. or creative art forms like literature, poetry, fine arts, sculpture and painting.

Application form for 2007, is available at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org), or from your local association.

**Deadline. Send completed applications by March 31, 2007 to:**

Sherazade Mehta, Chair P&CAS Committee  
5400 Preston Oaks Rd, #3048  
Dallas, TX 75254  
972-385-4847

Donations towards this fund are welcome. Please make checks payable to FEZANA, with a footnote "For P&CAS Fund" and mail to Treasurer, Katayun Kapadia, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

## Ahura *Scholarship*

**offered by the Persian Zoroastrian Organization in Northern California**

**Ahura scholarship mission:**

***"To promote leadership among local Zoroastrian youth in academic, social, and political fields."***

We were so overwhelmed and impressed with the quality of the applicants that we decided to expand the scholarship from one to three. The recipients for 2006 are:

Ms. Perinaz Bhada with the amount of \$3000  
Mr. Shahin Shayandeh with the amount of \$3000  
Ms. Pantea Farahmand with the amount of \$ 500

**Perinaz Bhada** is a Masters Student at Columbia University, NY in Earth Resource Engineering.  
(She is also the recipient of the 2006 FEZANA Scholarship)

**Shahin Shayandeh** is a graduate student at University of Southern California (USC) in Computer Science working towards his Ph.D.

**Pantea Farahmand** is a fourth year honors student in University of California, San Diego working for her diploma in Neuroscience and Animal Physiology, in order to pursue her dream of an Oncology Surgeon.

**Congratulations to all the candidates.**

# Results of Writing Contest

## “What have I learned from the Gathas”

More than a year ago, the Rustam Guiv Foundation announced a writing contest on “What have I learned from the Gathas of Zarathushtra”. The contest is now over.

34 people participated, 29 from Iran, 2 from India, 2 from Pakistan and 1 from the United States. The writing contest was judged by Dr. Ali Jafarey and Dr. Mehraban Khodavandi.

First prize: \$1000 awarded to **Mr. Ramin Shahzadi** with an average grade of 18

Second Prize: \$400 each, awarded to

**Dr. Afshin Jahanguiri and Daryoush Yalzadeh**, both received the average grade of 16

Third Prize: \$300 awarded to

**Arash Khorshidian** with an average grade of 15.5

29 essays from Iran were in Persian and those from India, Pakistan and US were in English. The winners were all from Iran and their ages ranged from 15 to 30 years.

Originally only \$1000 was to be awarded to the first winner. But due to an encouraging number of contestants and the average grades, it was decided to make some adjustments and consider awards for the second and the third winners as well.

*Daryoush Jahanian, M.D.*

*From The Rustam Guiv Foundation*

## Grants to protect the Environment Deadline 30th November 2006

**Eight winning groups are selected each year to win \$10,000. One environmental educator/leader each year receives \$5,000. For information about how you, your school or student group could win both money and recognition, call toll-free 1-877-792-4332.**

# OUR **FEDERATION** (ZANA)...

## **MAY THE FORCE (AHURA MAZDA) BE WITH US**

Dinaz Kutar Rogers

“Put before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light.”  
Joseph Pulitzer

Growing up as a Parsi in Bombay, India, brought many joys to my life: the camaraderie of our gatherings in the holy city of Udvada and hometown of Navsari, the hilarious Parsi Nataks (plays) performed in fractured Gujarati by Parsi actors; the food, fun and prayers at navjotes, weddings, ghambars and jashans, and the greatest of all, our deep sense of belonging. Now more than ever, these things are central to the survival of our faith and community. A tiny minority in India, Iran and now here on the North American continent, Zarathushtis are once again engulfed in a vast sea of “others”.

Most of us here are gathered together under a broad umbrella of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)! With over twenty five big and small associations and some small groups thriving, we need to keep the old ways flourishing but also add some new adaptations for our new land. These widely-separated communities can stay in touch through visits, telephone calls, and e-mails, but above all through publications like the FEZANA JOURNAL.

Currently, the Zarathushti community in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) is raising funds to build a Zoroastrian Cultural Centre for monthly religious classes, ghambars, jashans and other events. The best way for them to involve all of the Zarathushtis in North America is through the Journal.

The Journal serves to unify the various Associations and Darbe Mehrs of North America, but for those who are far from any of these centers it provides an especially important tie that binds them to the rest of us. I can attest to the importance of this--the nearest Darbe Mehr and Association for me and other Zarathushtis, here in Oregon, is roughly 400 miles to the south in San Francisco!

Since the very first moment I discovered my first FEZANA JOURNAL, I felt that an answer to the hopes of so many Zarathushtis had been fulfilled. At last, a glue to bind us all--so far away from our roots and our homelands of Iran and India. A publication that plays a role in serving a widely dispersed population of Zarathushtis, just not in North America (as the last two letters in the acronym FEZANA suggests) but also, ever increasingly, to every other corner of the world, where we have dispersed.

The Journal, now having gained readership in Iran and India brings us all a little closer. To cite one example out of many, FEZANA JOURNAL Winter 2004 issue--“The Zarathushti World! A Demographic Picture” serves well in understanding the dynamics of our modern-day Diaspora.

We have a diverse and oft times a highly opinionated community—which reflects in the journal’s letters to the editor (Readers’ Forum) and in the diverse backgrounds of the contributing writers and their scholarships. The journal provides an open forum to allow reasonable discussions concerning our differences and rises above petty contentiousness, and imagined or real grievances.

Published four times a year, FEZANA journal is a microcosm of our faith and culture and a time capsule for future generations. The outstanding production value begins with the cover—always attractive and appropriate for the issue’s theme. The list of twenty-five Zarathushti Anjumans in North America speaks of our prevalence in all corners of the continent. The subscription rates are reasonable, and the journal depends solely on payments, ads, sponsorships and donations to meet operation costs.

The editorials are always thought-provoking and examine all sides of an issue. There are a few emotionally charged matters that have been with us for the last few decades, and now FEZANA airs them for their readers to ponder over, discuss and decide. The Calendar of Festivals is in the spirit of inclusiveness as the journal lists all three denominations: S=Shenshai, K=Kadmi, and F=Fasli.

From ‘Milestones’, ‘Events and Honors’, ‘Matrimonial’ and ‘Obituaries’, we learn about navjotes, weddings, deaths, and any scholarly or other meritorious achievements. A few of us have found friends



and relatives upon reading this section in the journal, or mourned the death of an acquaintance from the past. Appeals for donations for an ailing individual or a family in distress; requests for money for restoration of aging agiyaris and other Parsi or Zarathushti institutions--may they be anywhere in the world--brings to the forefront some of the problems facing our Zarathushti communities.

FEZANA JOURNAL provides an indispensable service under the banner 'Between the covers' in making its readers aware of relevant publications on our faith and heritage by both Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis, along with, at times, literary works, by Zarathushti authors. A few of these works are reviewed in the journal.

The theme of each issue is relevant, encompassing just not the needs and topics for our times, but also incorporating and examining our ancient history and themes. The articles are an eclectic incorporation of writers--both Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis. No matter what the theme, all pieces are thought-provoking, informative and hopefully have served their purpose to enlighten and inspire.

To capture the attention of our younger generation, the journal deals with youth-oriented themes by young writers. With our busy life schedules and no easy access to fire temples for most of us, I believe the journal is one answer. Another is parental and local community involvement--all paramount to the survival of our faith and culture.

There are about 1,000 households that subscribe to the journal in the USA, 250 in Canada and 250 in the rest of the world. Some of us have kept every FEZANA JOURNAL issue and each volume has proven to be a great source of reference and information, no matter what topic or theme. In fact, the journal is archived at several American and Canadian Universities.

For most of us, growing up amongst our own in Iran and India, in Parsi colonies, baugs and mohllahs, we celebrated our faith and culture, communally. Easy access to and availability of fire temples bonded us together. Another central force was the power of the print--the then-daily Jam-e-Jamshed and Sunday Kaizer-E-Hind--our Parsi community papers! All this is not here for us and our children.

At times for most expatriates there is a certain conflict, certain heartache--as to what extent to assimilate, how much to compromise. Should we...could we, adapt and change without losing our integrity and identity? As I look back at our early arrival in India centuries ago--when our forefathers spoke Farsi, dressed differently, and suffered incredible hardships in the Mother Country Iran--I see that generations since then over the intervening centuries, have done a tremendous job to bring us into our modern-day times.

I salute and applaud them. May the coming generations benefit from our actions and help them keep the spirit of the Zarathushti Deen and culture alive in their hearts and in those of the generations to come.

"From my lips to God's ears."

An old Yiddish saying.



*Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a teacher and published writer. She thinks of herself as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed; sowing not apple seeds, but hope, knowledge, inspiration, pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaego and its ancient faith--Zarathushti Deen.*

Sports have always played a big role in the Zarathushti Community. Many of our youth regularly get together to shoot hoops in their spare time, and a picnic would hardly be complete without a volleyball game. With all the excitement that sports bring, it's no surprise then that a group was formed to unite our Zarathushti community by this channel.

What is sometimes overlooked, however, is the amount of time and energy that is put into organizing sport events, especially those that are on a large-scale, such as the last games in 2006. After many years of organizing successful, fun-filled events, we'd like to take you for a stroll down memory lane to the birth of ZSC .....

### History of ZSC

The 1988 Zoroastrian Olympics which took place at Taft High School, in sunny Los Angeles, was the creation of a group of imaginative Zarathushtis. The idea was first conceived by a handful of ambitious youth at, of all places, a wedding party. Low and behold, three months later, the first ever Zoroastrian Olympics were held in sunny Southern California. A few teams and individuals signed up for a fun 4th of July weekend of basketball, volleyball, and ping-pong.

By '88 the group had met its goal of bringing together a group of Zarathushti athletes and sports-lovers and to unite Zarathushtis through sports and related social activities. But, this was no longer enough for the group who had grown, both in size and experience. So, in 1989 ZSC was officially formed under FEZANA, Federation of Zoroastrian Associations on North America.

Wasting not even a second, the group organized the next Olympics on the July 4th weekend of that year 1989. University High School was the site of all sports events, which now included track and field. The Anaheim Dar-e-Mehr graciously hosted the participants.

The '89 Olympics were just as successful, if not more, than the previous ones. By 1994, ZSC had successfully organized three more games:

- 1- San Jose, California (1990) which included soccer games for children, as well.
- 2- California State University, Long Beach (1992), in which athletes from around the world participated,
- 3- California State University Domingos Hills (1994), one of the largest event ever held.

During the 4th of July weekend of even years: 10 Zarathushti Games have been hosted. 7 in Southern California, 1 in San Jose, Northern California – 1990, 1 in Houston, Texas The Seventh Zarathushti Games 2000, along with the World Congress in Houston Texas, 1 in Vancouver, BC – The 9th Zarathushti Games, 2004

During the Labor day weekend of odd years: 4 Zarathushti Unity Cup Soccer Games have been held.

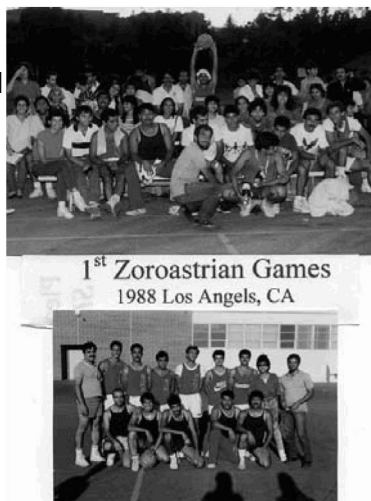
Zarathushti Games have included sports such as Basketball, Volleyball, Table tennis, Track & Field, Badminton, and Swimming for both adults and children in different age groups.

Events included elaborate cruises and disco nights. Just to give you an idea of how far ZSC has come. Our first event only cost \$500 as compared to what our last two Olympics cost.... \$65, 000 for each event.

The ZSC has special funds to help Zarathushti youth both in North America and overseas with their sports activity and equipment.

While each event grew larger and larger and more and more exciting, it becomes increasingly hard to say "good-bye" on the last day. With your help and support, we have been able to hold events on a relatively regular basis, so that the friendship ties can grow stronger and stronger.

As you can see, ZSC has really grown over the years. Starting with only



five founders in 1988, the committee has grown to over fifty members. Mrs Behnaz Dianat, ZSC Treasurer and Bijan Khosraviani have been the only two Zarathushtis who have been with the committee since its start in 1988. (Truly dedicated volunteers, ed.) There have been 17 officers during the past 18 years and more than 200 volunteers who have helped during different events.

There are 11 subcommittees:

#### **Sports**

**Registration/Accommodation/Bookkeeping**

**Security/Transportation/First Aid**

**Advertisement/Publication/Database**

**Fund-raising/Long Distance Help**

**Photos/Videos/Reportage**

**Informal Dance / Appreciation Day**

**Dinner Cruise / Banquet**

**Opening/Closing Ceremonies**

**Awards/Resources Children/Statistics**

**Past and current ZCS officers:** Bijan Khosraviani, Behnaz Dianat; Bijan Pourjamab; Behrooz Khosraviani; Yassi Farin; Behnam Pastovi; Keikhosorow Hormozdiari; Artemis Javanshir; Niaz Kasravi; Sahel Javanshir; Ava Parsi; Jahangir

Mehrkhodavandi; Shahram Ghandeharizadeh; Ramin Shahriari; Arsham Dianat; Behrooz Mehrkhodavandi; Tehran Ghasri.

Based on original article by Bahar Moigani, 1994.



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



### **DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN PLANNING FUTURE ZSC EVENTS? HERE IS HOW:**

There are no fees or annual memberships to be an active ZSC member. All we need are individuals dedicated to helping Zoroastrian unite through sports. There is much work to be done before the next events, so if you want to help, please contact:

**ZSC**

**P.O. Box 66828, Los Angeles, CA 90066**

**ZSC@FEZANA.ORG**

*Bijan Khosraviani was born in Tehran/Iran. Was an active member of Zoroastrian Youth Fravahar Sports Club in Tehran. BS in Electrical Engineering, MS in Engineering Economic Systems and Operations Research, PhD in Engineering Organization Management from Stanford University. Bijan has worked for 14 years in high-tech industry in research, engineering, and corporate for IBM Almaden Research Center, Kaiser Alumnium, Varian and Novellus Systems, Inc. Bijan now lives in Boston and works for his 15 month young daughter, NeeKee (his boss!), as a full-time father, and is married to Negin (you guessed - his manager)*

**ADVANCE NOTICE**  
**The Points of Light Foundation**  
**Mini Grants available**  
**January 2007 and January 2008**

In 2005 The Foundation received nearly 70 grant applications, and after a series of technical assistance conference calls/e-mails and an internal review process, the applicants were awarded grants in increments from \$1,000 to \$10,000, for a total of \$90,000.

For the year 2007 about \$ 90,000 will be available as grants. **This is a competitive process which requires planning, organization in advance and writing a good proposal**

[http://www.pointsoflight.org/about/mediacenter/tothepoint/2006/03/volaction\\_belovedcommunity.cfm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/about/mediacenter/tothepoint/2006/03/volaction_belovedcommunity.cfm)

For more information on MLK Day and the Faith and Outreach Initiative, please contact Reverend Mark Farr, senior director, Outreach at (202) 729-8144.

**NOTE**

The wonderful volunteer work the Zarathushtis did earlier this year, with the earthquake clothes collection drive for survivors in Pakistan, can serve as a backdrop for future applications to the Points of Light Foundation, since those who make the decisions will be looking for evidence that the organization receiving the money can deliver what they promise to do.

Rev Mark Farr, the senior Director of Outreach knows of FEZANA. This is an authentic program and an opportunity available to volunteer groups all across the USA. (Editor)

**r-----**  
**North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) is willing to sponsor deserving candidates from North America, to be ordained as priests through Navar ceremony in India. The extent of the support/scholarship will be decided by the Executive Committee based on individual need requirements of each case.**  
**Interested candidates may please contact, Ervad Nozer Kotwal, secretary,**  
**(tel: 905 820- 0461, nozerk@yahoo.com) or Ervad Jehan Bagli, President, NAMC**  
**(tel: 905 855 1132, jbagli@rogers.com) with appropriate details for consideration.**  
**-----**

**Harvard University joins Princeton University in eliminating tuition fees for honour students that have a family income below \$40,000.**

**No tuition and no student loans.**

Visit Harvard's Financial Aid Website - [www.fao.fas.harvard.edu](http://www.fao.fas.harvard.edu)

Tel (617) 495-1581

# SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

A list of miscellaneous scholarships is given below:

● **FEZANA Scholarships** and **Mehraban & Morvord Kheradi Endowment Scholarship – FEZANA Scholar, and Bannobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Edowment Scholarship** for students at institutions of higher learning in USA/Canada. Dr. Dolly Dastoor, dollydastoor@sympatico.ca, tel: 450-656-2036, www.fezana.org.

● **Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarships** for higher studies/research in Zarathushti religion at an institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Kayomars P. Mehta, kayomehta@aol.com, tel: 630-654-8828, www.fezana.org.

● **Fali Chothia Charitable Trust** scholarships for students in NA universities. ferozaftch@lexicongraphics.net, tel: 301-564-3726, www.zamwi.org/about/2001FCCT.pdf

● **ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago) loans/scholarships** for study in USA & Canada. ZACscholarships@yahoo.com, www.zac-chicago.org.

● **ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia)** awards scholarships to its members seeking admission to a university. Homi Italia, (604) 438-2076, www.zsbc.org.

● **Performing & Creative Arts Scholarship** offered by FEZANA/ZYNA. Application form is on www.fezana.org. Anahita Sidhwa, afsidhwa@dcccd.edu.

● **Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships** support graduate education for immigrants and children of immigrants. www.pdsoros.org.

● **Houtan Scholarship Foundation** offers a scholarship of \$2,500 per semester for studies in Iranian language and culture. Visit www.houtan.org.

● **Indo American Community Foundation** offers scholarships of \$3,000 per year to Indian Americans. Visit www.upakar.org.

● **Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO)** scholarships, for research in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Tajikistan). www.irex.org/programs/iaro. Also visit www.irex.org/programs/roberts for study grants in Iran.

● **Institute of International Education's** Scholar Rescue Fund offers fellowships to scholars from any country and in any discipline, whose life, security or work is threatened in their home regions. Visit www.iie.org/SRF. Email: SRF@iie.org.

● **Harvard's Pluralism Project** offers research grants. staff@pluralism.org; www.pluralism.org/research/student\_grant.php. For summer internships, visit www.pluralism.org/resources/calendar/summer\_internships.php

● **National Science Foundation** offers grants for documenting endangered languages. Visit v/Applicants/NSF/OIRM/HQ/04-605/Grant.html.

● **Gates Millenium Scholars Program** offers awards for science studies. Visit

www.gatesfoundation.org/Education/Scholarships/Announcements/Announce-040607.htm.

● Global Environment Facility of the **World Bank** and **YES**, offers fellowships for entrepreneurs in field of renewable energy. Visit http://www.projects.takingitglobal.org/

● Scholarships for **Commonwealth citizens**. www.csfonline.org/hostcountries/uk/

● **Royal Society scholarships** in science. www.royalsoc.ac.uk/funding/

● **Marshall scholarships** for Americans in UK. www.marshallscholarship.org.

● **Fulbright exchange programs**. Visit www.fulbrightexchanges.org/base/grant.asp.

● **UNESCO** 'Information for All,' an international information society initiative offers funding for information literacy projects. www.portal.unesco.org/ci/en/

● **Indicorps fellowships** for a one-year public service program in India. www.indicorps.org. Email: info@indicorps.org, or contact 2004 Indicorps scholar roshnikasad@yahoo.com.

● **Canadian Subsidy Directory** contains 3100 listings of government grants and loans, including foundations and associations. \$69.95. Call 450-224-9275.

● **Boren Scholarships** and **Graduate Fellowships**. http://nsep.aed.org.

● **Jacob E. Javits Fellowships**. Undergrads or first year of graduate study. Includes social sciences, arts, humanities. www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html.

● **Gates Cambridge Scholarship**. All countries (except UK) eligible. www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk.

● **Harry S. Truman Scholarship** Foundation. Graduate funding for career in government or public service. www.truman.gov.

**Keyannejad-Kapadia Zoroastrian Scholarship Fund** (endowed by Homi Kapadia and Mahkrokh Keyannejad) for a member of Triangle Fraternity. www.Triangle.org/TEF. [See ad in this section].

● **Rotary Scholarships**, to citizens of all countries where there are Rotary Clubs. Rotary ambassadorial Scholarships are at: www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb\_scho/rotarian/award/avail.htm

● **Goldwater Scholarships** for sophomores and juniors, for mathematics, natural science, engineering. www.act.org/goldwater.

● A list of **trusts/organizations in India**, which support postgraduate studies abroad is given in Parsiana, December 2001. Contact Parsiana@vsnl.net.

● Scholarships **mainly for students in India**. http://educationsupport.nic.in/allscholarship.asp?allsch=Yes.

● **Engineering Scholarship by Northrop Grumman** of \$10,000 to student in Maryland, Baltimore and Illinois.

www.es.northropgrumman.com

# Volunteer Voices

By Freyaz Shroff

**Volunteers fuel the engine of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Four out of every five charities use volunteers, who are instrumental in reducing costs, improving quality, sustaining services and raising awareness of the services provide by these NGOs. FEZANA is an example of a NGO that functions entirely on volunteer power.**

## ***“Ushtā Ahmāi yahmāi Ushtā Kahmāichit”***

In January 2002, all Americans were asked to devote 4,000 hours (the equivalent of two years of work at 40 hours per week) over the course of their lifetime, to service and volunteering. The declaration asked Americans to help strengthen their communities and to get involved in public and service related activities, by becoming active and engaged citizens. In a December 2005 report released by the Bureau of Labor, Americans' strong commitment to volunteering was noted. Highlights of the report outlined the following:

- Between September 2004 and September 2005, about 65.4 million Americans engaged in volunteer work. That number represents an increase of more than 5 million volunteers over the same period 3 years before.
- Volunteers spent on average 50 hours a year engaged in volunteer work. Religious organizations (34.8 percent) are where volunteers spent the highest percentage of their time followed closely by educational and youth services organizations (26.2 percent).
- 40 percent of volunteers became involved with an organization due to their own initiative while 42.8 percent were asked by an organization to become a volunteer.

The corporation for National and Community Service, in the United States outlines that, 4 out of every 5 charities use volunteers. 81 percent of charities (an estimated 174,000 organizations) use volunteers. These estimates do not include the nearly 400,000 small charities, virtually all of which are run by volunteers. Finally, a commissioned study conducted by the Urban Institute revealed that volunteers were instrumental in reducing costs, improving the quality and service provided by non-profits and for raising awareness of the organization in the community.

So the way I read these numbers is that if it wasn't for volunteers many of the non profit organizations would not be able to provide the services they do. Think about it, in our Zarathushti community alone without volunteers the FEZANA Journal would not come to you 4 times a year, Congresses that bring the Z-community together would not be held, Z-youth camps and local prayer classes for the kids would not be conducted. This is just in our religious community. Volunteers, at large, help non profits do their invaluable work by lowering personnel costs, providing skilled labor and using their practical business knowledge to help raise community awareness of the non profit thereby allowing the organization's services to be well utilized and continue helping the community.

Canadians, like Americans and others across the globe, are equally committed to volunteering and enhancing the growth of their communities. The 2004 Canada Survey of Giving Volunteering and Participating said:

- 11.8 million Canadians volunteered their time to charities and other nonprofit organizations.
- Volunteers contributed almost 2 billion volunteer hours to organizations — the equivalent of 1 million full time jobs.
- Canadian volunteers contributed an average of 168 hours in 2004.
- The top three reasons for volunteering were: to make a contribution to the community, to use one's skills and experiences, and being affected by the cause supported by the organization.
- 83 percent of the population, aged 15 and older, helped others directly, without going through a charitable or other nonprofit organization.

The same study indicated that Canadian volunteers serve as coaches for children and youth, advocates who raise funds for the causes in which they believe, provide important social and human services in their communities, support arts and culture, work to protect the environment and wildlife and provided health care and education, and much more.

I believe volunteering is something very personal. It depends on who you are; what you believe; and how willing you are to share of your self, your time and your resources with those

around you. As Zarathushtis we are asked to give of ourselves selflessly to those who may be in need around us. The Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer translated very simply, asks us to be helpful and kind and to always remember that those less fortunate than us need to be looked after. Portions of the Jaso Me Avanghe Mazda as translated and explained by Ervad Kavasji E. Kanga states, "I praise the true conceived thought, I praise the true-spoken word, I praise the well-done deed. I praise the excellent religion of Mazda worship, which is quarrel-removing, weapon-lowering, self dedicating and holy."



We are asked to exercise and practice Manashni (Good Thoughts), Gavashni (Good Words) and Kunashni (Good Deeds). Volunteering accounts for all 3 of those tenets, the good thought that motivates you to give of yourself, the good words you use to encourage a child, a senior or a government official who helps the non-profit stay in business and the good deeds you obtain by simply being a part of someone else's life.

So what exactly does a volunteer look like? One of the best things about being a volunteer is that everybody qualifies; young, old, rich, poor, handicapped, educated and uneducated...you get the point! The only obstacle is taking that first step and making a commitment to get involved and realizing that no contribution of your time, no matter how small, will ever go unappreciated. There is an elation that comes from sharing your spirit, sharing your time and allowing yourself to be enriched by those you are assisting that is just completely unexplainable in words.

Outlined below, some of our Zarathushti friends share their thoughts on volunteerism. At the end of this article, you will find websites that will help you match your interests to appropriate needs and the Fezana website address in case you would like to get involved with a local or national Z-group.

I encourage you to find your passion, define your interests, believe that you are needed and then just step up! It is truly that easy. ***I ask you, American, Canadian, or from anywhere else around the globe, do you have 4,000 hours over the course of what remains of your lifetime to dedicate to selfless service?***

## ENRICH YOUR LIFE by Bella Tata (Vancouver)

Every youth or adult is a volunteer even once in their lifetime - whether or not they know it. Volunteerism can be through an organizational structure or personal. It is about giving and not expecting anything in return. The focus is on creating, improving or maintaining positive results.

I have always volunteered: I did not need any motivation - I just felt I wanted to help. I have had some leading roles as a volunteer, and some worker-bee roles: both have been uplifting. However, my volunteering is what my interests were at the time. I aim for perfection, giving more as a volunteer, and being a good example to others who are less focused or inspired.

I have gained more from volunteerism than I have given. I have grown through the experience of volunteering, and increased my network of wonderful contacts. I am a much 'richer' person.

I do believe, however, that it is necessary for each Zarathushti to volunteer to help the community for at least a few years in their lives. Giving our time and talents unflinchingly to our small but beautiful community must be considered a privilege. You can enrich the lives of others by **BEING A COMMITTED VOLUNTEER**

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY by Anahita Daryushnejad (Toronto)

My motivation is my way of contribution to my community while helping to empower other youth and be a good role model. It helped me make many great friends that have been a great support to the community and I know that we will continue to be friends for a long time. What motivates me also is that I learn a lot from all the other volunteers and improve and enhance my knowledge not only about the community but also in my personal life and careers. Being a volunteer for ZSO has certainly made a big difference in my life, and this change of being a better and a successful person has motivated me to contribute more and more time to my community. I also volunteer as Asst Sec. for FEZANA



Volunteers are people from all walks of life, all ages and stages. What is common to volunteers is the desire to make a difference in their community-

and their own life- by giving of the time and expertise. I started volunteering because I was a new Canadian and volunteering offered me the chance to gain the Canadian work experience, to practice my language skills (Farsi, English, Gujarati) and to integrate into a new community. Adjusting to a new life in Canada was challenging. Volunteering for my community was the perfect way to build social networks, gain work experience, and develop the important sense of attachment and belonging to a new community. It is because of the support of my fellow volunteers and community members that today my family and I have come a long way in Canada and are successful.

### THE CHEER OF A VOLUNTEER by Meher Amalsad (California)

A volunteer is a soul that has reached the goal of giving others **HIS** love – A soul that is focused on “**Making A Difference**” with one soul at a time.



For me, volunteering has been an opportunity to **change myself** for the better. It has been a part of me since the time I used to play “Gilly-Dunda” (Ha Ha).

As a child, my grandmother’s motto: **Helping Others Helps You**; was instrumental in motivating me to become a volunteer.

There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer but it’s the volunteer with a heart who makes a difference, fosters personal development and connects people with opportunities for effective community service.

My purpose in life is to live a life of purpose. In pursuit for that purpose, I have crossed paths with many who were sick and tired of **BEING NOBODY** or **HAVING NOBODY**.

My involvement has made them realize that:

In life, you’ve got no one but yourself. That’s all you need.

So, **BELIEVE IN THE STAR YOU ARE** and keep in mind that:

**NOBODY IS NOBODY BECAUSE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY.**

This life-transforming spirit of volunteerism has allowed me to treasure a pleasure that’s beyond any measure.

### GIVING OF YOURSELF by Sherry Unwalla (Georgia)

Volunteering comes naturally to me. I have volunteered since I was in High School –visiting orphanages and reading to the blind. Later on, I volunteered at my children’s schools. It is a way of giving yourself to a cause that is close to your heart. It is a way of making a difference to an individual or to an association with the satisfaction in knowing that you are helping others.



It is also a way of meeting people, camaraderie and broadening your horizons. Volunteering for our Z. Association is very rewarding to me. It gives me a feeling of joy and satisfaction to see our community members come together. It is also a sense of duty to my community that keeps me going.

I feel truly blessed to have a wonderful life and think it is important to be able to give my time and energy for a worthy cause. Volunteers do not expect much in return. The payback is in seeing happy faces, a feeling of satisfaction and pride. It is also very rewarding to be respected and appreciated.

### LIVING THE VOLUNTEER WAY by Dustyn Shroff (Florida)

I have to admit that volunteering for me did not start out to be a voluntary act all in itself. In order to graduate from my high school it was required that I complete 15 hours of community service each year. I started volunteering at a local hospital, the summer before my freshman year of high school, and it was then that I gained the realization that the act of volunteering was much more than a high school requirement. I volunteered in the Emergency Room working side by side with some of the best health care professionals in their respective fields. The knowledge, experience, and ability to converse with patients in all sorts of various conditions were my true motivations for volunteering through that summer.



The first summer that I volunteered in the Emergency Room was the summer that I realized medicine and healthcare was where I saw myself in 10 years. I met people of different religions, nationalities, and places from around the world. I



witnessed life and death firsthand, and it was this that gave me the understanding of how precious one's life truly is. Volunteering soon became an essential part of my life. I continued to volunteer throughout my high school days and managed to give close to 5,000 hours back to my community. Volunteering is what has given me the drive and incentive to push myself forward and excel in the future to someday become a successful physician and truly "live" my volunteering days everyday.

### DOING OUR PART by Nairika Cornett (Georgia)

Having been born a Zarathushti, my parents instilled in me, from a very young age, the importance of community service. This was further reiterated by my primary and high schools which was called 'Socially Useful Productive Work'. Whether it was reading to the blind, playing with mentally challenged children or planting patches of greenery at the Doongarwadi, I thrived under such conditions. The smallest deed gave me greatest of pleasures. Soon this became a way of life and I became involved in organizing a children's band that visited the wards at the Parsi General Hospital, on weekends. It was this experience that had the most profound impact on me. I realized that one did not have to have disposable income to bring happiness to the needy. One has to realize a need and find happiness in satisfying it, and ever since, I have involved myself in community matters. It is most important for all to commit at least some part of their time and money to causes that are dear to them. If each one of us did our part fewer in the world would be needy, there would be less violence, and more for us to look forward to in our future.



### CHOOSING TO VOLUNTEER by Narius Dastur (British Columbia)

Within the Zarathushti community, I mostly volunteer with the **Zpeakerbox** youth site. I also run the local ZSBC website for the Zoroastrian Society of BC, and I'm currently re-designing that website. The latest congress website (Zeestan 2005) was also designed by me, with Afreed dealing with the content. Outside of our religious community, I spend a lot of time volunteering with my local police department. I volunteer with their crime prevention unit, assist at community events,

and I'm also working with them on re-designing their website.

I choose to volunteer for several reasons. I feel it's a great way to gain experience in my field of study (Computing Science), it also opens a lot of doors, and it's often a very rewarding experience. Through my volunteering within our religious community, and outside, I've been able to meet a lot of interesting individuals and have learned a lot through the experience. Being a full-time student, I don't always have time to commit to a part-time job, but instead I can work on smaller volunteer based projects.



### BUILDING A SOCIETY by Sharon Batliwalla (Ottawa)

I once tried to convince myself that volunteering was something I should do merely because it would look good on a resume. But after involvement with various groups, my incentive changed and it was no longer about beefing up some silly paper; it was about conquering new challenges, trying new experiences and working with different people.



Currently, I volunteer as one of three administrators of **Zpeakerbox**: The Zarathushti Community's First Online Youth Magazine. I have watched, what was once, a tiny little website grow into something that is now part of everyday lingo amongst my Zarathushti peers.

**Zpeakerbox** allows me to experiment with creativity at varying degrees, and develop interpersonal skills I wouldn't normally build in person. When off-line, I help organize and teach religion classes with a small group of Zarathushti youth in Ottawa. Teaching is a challenge in itself and it keeps me motivated in a setting I'm not entirely accustomed to.

Outside of the Zarathushti community, I volunteer at the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre. I cannot emphasize enough how rewarding it is to have helped a child, even if only for a few moments, to independently perform a skill, they are normally dependent on others for.

Volunteering has helped me grow as a person, and shown me not only what I can do for myself, but what I can provide for others. This is by no means an end; I look forward to continuing my active role as a builder of society.

Websites that match You and Your interests with the needs of Your community:

**For Canada:**

<http://www.volunteer.ca/volworks/index.htm>

<http://www.volunteer.ca/index-eng.php>

**For America:**

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/index.asp>

**Internationally:**

<http://www.cie.uci.edu/iop/voluntee.html>

<http://www.idealists.org/if/idealists/en/AdvancedSearch/VolunteerOpportunity/default>

**FEZANA Website:**

<http://www.fezana.org/>

**Freyaz Shroff**

*was born and raised in Bombay, India. She has been in the United States for 19 years and currently resides in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Over the years, Freyaz has dedicated much of her time as a volunteer who has served primarily children and women. She has overseen successful community building projects and is most recently involved in supporting a charter school in her local community that serves teenagers at-risk for not graduating high school. Educationally, she has a Bachelors Degree in Sociology and a Masters in Business Administration*



*Let your thoughts be positive, for they will become your words.*

*Let your words be positive, for they will become your actions.*

*Let your actions be positive, for they will become your values.*

*Let your values be positive, for they will become your destiny.*

*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

## Volunteers. . . . .

Volunteers do not serve with hope for recognition or reward, but often their services do get recognition and here are some:

**Meher Amalsad**

FEZANA PLAQUE at the FEZANA AGM 2006, reads "In appreciation of communal contributions and service." This is in recognition for many years of service as chair of the first North American Youth Congress and the first World Zoroastrian Congress, for establishing and nurturing the "Helping Hands" committee of the Zarathushti Youth Network.

**Anahita Daryushnejad**

Volunteer appreciation award from the Ontario Provincial Government for five consecutive years.

**Dustyn Shroff**

Recipient of The Delray Medical Center Teen Volunteer Scholarship from the Delray Medical Center for serving the community for 4 consecutive years during high school.

**Freyaz Shroff**

Inducted into the Senior Order: honoring outstanding leadership and service to the community.

Leadership Grand Strand Award: honoring outstanding community service and contribution as related to the local abused and neglected children's shelter home.

**Bella Tata**

Canada's 125 Year Commemorative Medal for significant contribution to the community; awarded in 1994

The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal given to heroes for significant contribution in improving the lives of their fellow citizens awarded in 2002

The Pacific Federal Council's Community Contribution Award in 2005

The Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Award

**"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."**

-Etienne De Grellet



### ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

#### Camp Yasna 2006 – July 21-23, 2006 Darbe Mehr TORONTO

##### Development Of Our Youth

This year, the 34 campers, ages 8-15 years were challenged to think about ideas surrounding poverty from the local to global levels. They were taken on a private tour of the Daily Bread Food Bank, an organization serving the poor of the community, giving them a rare, behind the scenes look at the 'who', 'why', 'where' and 'hows' of the organization. Our inquisitive campers surprised everyone with their countless thoughtful questions.

The campers were also exposed to ideas about global poverty (focusing on water) by the McMaster "Engineers without Borders" team. They were given a taste of global politics, role-playing as different countries from Uganda to the United States and were challenged to build real water filters with only the resources their countries could afford. This was a great success as the campers witnessed how factors such as literacy, economy, trade, the environment and education impacted the ability of a country to provide one of the basics of life to its citizens: clean water.



The campers outside the Darbe Mehr with camp counselors Armita Zohoor, Mantreh Atashband, (third row second and third from left) Shekufeh Zonji (third row extreme right with blue cap).

"All work and no play makes Jamshed a dull boy" and so the campers had plenty of playtime as well. They splashed and splashed all day at Ontario Place, had professional Latin Dancing lessons, enjoyed an evening at the Carnival where they were treated to a Spa, played sports, learned the art of beading, made gimp bracelets, finger painted, played cards, got henna tattoos, listened to stories on the magic carpet and watched movies. If that wasn't enough play, an afternoon at LaserQuest was sure to suffice.

Camp Yasna closed with the Talent Show that the campers were preparing for from the first day. They performed dances, skits, sang songs, came up with commercials for obscure items and told jokes. Awards were distributed, phone numbers and emails of new friends exchanged, and reluctant goodbyes said.

Camp Yasna was an extraordinary success which would be impossible without the organizers, Armita Zohoor, Mantreh Atashband, Shekufeh Zonji, the counselors, the cooks, the parents, the presenting organizations, Kanoun, ZSO, and of course, our talented campers. We can all rest peacefully knowing that our children are some of the most creative, intelligent and empowered individuals around. Thank you. Mission accomplished

**Report by Kerman Katrak.**



### ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### **Muktdad/Gatha & Khordad Saal Prayers – August 15 to 19, and 25, 2006**

The newly elected board of directors of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia led by President Sharook Kapadia organized for the first time in many years the annual Muktdad/Gatha Prayers at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr in Burnaby (Vancouver) from Tuesday, August, 15th to Saturday, August, 19th to great enthusiasm and excitement from Zarathushti members. This event was the initiative of our new director Mehernosh Kasad.

Prayers were conducted by Ervad Adil Antia and Ervad Firdos Balsara who have been serving the community for many years. The prayers invoked blessings for the entire congregation that participated and also commemorated the departed members of the community. It is believed that during this festival the departed souls (Fravashis) visit their loved ones in the physical world. The priests perform special rituals over cooked food, fruits and fresh flowers invoking the souls of the departed to seek their protection and blessings, in this world.

After the prayers the mobeds led the congregation in reciting "Humbandagi" prayers in which not only the old but youth and children participate eagerly in the prayers. Special food was prepared and sponsored by members of the community which in turn was eaten in religious fellowship by people who attended the prayers. President Sharook Kapadia in his address to the congregation urged members of the community to donate sandalwood, loban and sandalwood chips (Tacho) to support such ceremonies in future. ZSBC Ex-President Mrs.

Perviz Madon in her address urged the youth of the community to take an active role in the affairs of the community and to volunteer their services.



Statistics of this 5 day event:

- Number of Vases for Muktdad : 36 vases
- Number of names recited during prayers: 180 names daily
- Number of dedicated volunteers : 20 persons
- Number of people attending the prayers: 650 in 5 days (avg. 120 persons per day)
- Number of sponsoring family for meals : 30 families (avg. 6 families per day)
- Number of people catered : 600 in 5 days (avg. 120 persons per day)

Khordad Saal (Prophet Zarathushtra's Birthday) was celebrated with a jashan ceremony followed by a dinner at Darbe Mehr on Friday, August 25, 2006 with 120 people attending the function..

**We thank all the volunteers who dedicated their time and efforts to make this event a success**



## NEWS FROM ASSOCIATIONS



ZARTHOSTI ANJUMAN Q'F

NORTH -RN CALIFORNIA

P B (4568) F TE, CITY, CA 94404



### Weekend "Camping" trip to Yosemite

A group of 50 ZANC members spent a lovely weekend in July indoor camping in Yosemite. There were families, grand-parents, kids and youth who went hiking or just sightseeing into the Yosemite Valley and had two nights of fun, camaraderie and lots of eating.

Being in a youth hostel we could use the community kitchen – so everyone enjoyed good parsi akoori for breakfast after which everyone

did their "own thing" before meeting up for dinner, followed by cards and games.

This is the 3rd time that ZANC has organized a summer camping trip and we hope to make it an annual event. Next time we would like to invite members of ZAC (Zoroastrian Association of California) from Southern California to join us, or for that matter any FEZANA member association.



## The Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana

Hello to our Fellow Zoroastrians around the world!

The Zoroastrian Association of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana celebrated Navroze on 19th August with a Gatha nu Jasan and muktad prayers for the dear departed souls in the families of the ZAKOI community. This was the first time our community had such a jasan or muktad prayers. We now have three priests in Ohio (Fred Desai, Yezdi Dastur, & Urmez Hozdar) who are registered with the State of Ohio as Licenced Ministers who can perform Zoroastrian weddings in Ohio, whereby the couple does not have to go through a court marriage.

We also have been having religion camps and monthly religion classes in our community for past two years. My husband, Fred Desai and I teach religion classes to children ranging from three to 15 years. We have a class for the young ones three to seven year olds, and a youth group of children from eight years and over.

We hold a Religion Camp once a year in summer for both the groups on separate dates. If any child would like to join us for our Annual Religion Camps, they will be welcome. Parents can contact me at [bfdesai@aol.com](mailto:bfdesai@aol.com) All the members and patrons of ZAKOI here join me in sending their good wishes to all the readers around the world!

A Message from Bakhtavar Desai



On Sunday, September 17, 2006 Team ZAGBA for the 5th successive year took part in the Annual Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk, to fundraise for research and patient care at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The official registrants of Team ZAGBA included Darian,

Myra, and Zenia Bhathena, Darius Chikliwala, Zarius Dubash, Mihir Edulbheham, Kitayun Ghista, Yezad Nalladaru, Armeen Nanavaty, Kayanush and Malcolm Patel and Perinaaz Wadia with siblings and parents also joining the walk. There were two year olds in strollers, but the three-five year olds walked the entire 3 miles. And some brave team members walked 13 miles, half the route of the Boston Marathon!!

There were some creative fund-raising efforts by the team children, 8 year old Darian Bhathena (for the 3rd year in a row) asked people to donate to the Jimmy Fund for his birthday instead of bringing him presents!! And 7 year old Zarius Dubash had a 'Toy and Book Sale' in his driveway after putting up signs around his neighborhood.

The combined efforts of Team ZAGBA raised around \$2500 to support cancer research and care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

## **SAM KANGA**

**150 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 303, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1E8 Canada**

**Tel 416 414 2043**

**[sam.kanga@sympatico.ca](mailto:sam.kanga@sympatico.ca)**

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## NEWS FROM ASSOCIATIONS



### ZAF meets with the President of FEZANA, Dr. Rustom J. Kevala

On Sunday, September 17, 2006, 32 individuals from the Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF) and the governing Board of ZAF invited Dr. Rustom J. Kevala, President of FEZANA, to a luncheon where he made a presentation, followed by a Question & Answer period.

Rustom (as he prefers to be called) presented the three point platform and action priorities for FEZANA:

- To build a united Zarathushti community
- To make Zarathushti presence an integral part of the North American landscape and
- To develop a viable infrastructure that can serve our community

He elaborated upon each as to how they shall be accomplished. In addition, Rustom described various operating committees, their role and structure and how the local chapters can contribute to, and derive benefits from them. Interactions and initiatives with extra-FEZANA organizations, such as NAMC, WZO, WZCC were also discussed.

The presentation was informative and authoritative and gave an opportunity for a truly meaningful dialogue during the Q & A period. The feedback indicates that ZAF had a very successful and worthwhile afternoon together. The visit helped to create a better understanding of FEZANA's vision, role and the path forward. The local chapters, such as ZAF, can and should be using FEZANA as a resource, a communication forum (e.g., FEZANA magazine and website) a benchmarking mechanism, a coordinator for disaster relief efforts, and referrals on best practices for cultural and religious education. The audience also recognizes more clearly where FEZANA can help and which are the areas where a local chapter must resolve its own local issues and challenges.



Standing left to right: Mrs. Jeroo Irani, Jo Ann Dastgheer, Mrs. Nancy Daruwalla, Mrs. Perin Patel and sitting: Mr. Nari Patel.

### California Zoroastrian Center - 8952 Hazard Ave. Westminster, CA 92683 USA

Shahriar Afshari, the new and vibrant President of the California Zoroastrian Center, Board of Directors shares the following vision statement on behalf of his board:

"California Zoroastrian Center strives to facilitate a healthy and vibrant Zarathushti community by providing, a center for religious and cultural ceremonies, a central location for the elders of our community to meet, a forum for religious and cultural training of our Zarathushti youth; a base for religious knowledge with awareness about our religion, culture and tradition to Non-Zarathushtis. At CZC we are also committed to strengthen the bonds among all members of our Zarathushti community and encourage our youth to take on leadership roles with Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

The new committee (see photo) from left to right: Nasrin Ordibeheshti, Manijeh Ardeshtiri, Hooshang Farahmand, Shahriar Afshari, Ardeshtir Baghkhani, and Armiti Yazdani



Gatha 30-9: May we be those that re-new this existence!

Bravo Shahriar for sharing this vision and we wish you and your CZC Board the very best in accomplishing this wonderful vision for our Zarathushti community in Southern California. ...ED



### ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA, MUKHTAD

#### The Festival Of The Souls

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According to Dasturji Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal - our High Priest from Mumbai, India:

“Mukhtad, in Sanskrit, means liberated soul. During these days, the spirit of the departed souls comes down on earth. To put it simply, it is a festival of the souls. Ceremonies are performed for departed members and prayers are recited. The last five days known as the Gathas are the holiest days of the year. The hymns sung during these five days can be found in the holy book of the Zarathushtis called the Yezashne.”



Mobed Zarrir Bhandara with son Zerkxis, soon to be ordained as a priest.

Thus, **Mukhtad – The Festival Of The Souls** is a 10-Day vital ceremony dedicated to the spirit of those who have entered eternal life.

For the past 15-years, the Zarathushti community of Southern California, USA; participate in this very special prayer ceremony conducted under the guidance of APRO Mobed Zarrir Bhandara.

I am proud to inform that some dedicated Zarathushti families commute over 100-miles to attend this prayer ceremony.

It is believed that during this annual festival, the Fravashis of the departed ones visit their family and friends. Their spirits are invoked to seek protection and these prayers become a source of reflection for the living.

During these 10-days the living must keep their homes extra clean and be in a state of heightened consciousness to experience the presence of spiritual beings.

The 10th day of Mukhtad or the last day of the year is called PATETI – a day of repentance with introspection of our deeds during the past year.

On the dawn of **NouRouz – the Day of New Life**, the Fravashis depart from this physical world and return to their spiritual abode. And we begin with an enlightened New Year.







Sarosh J. H. Manekshaw

***The Sasanian empire had so strongly tied church and state together, that the demise of the empire resulted directly in the destruction of the Zarathushti religion as well.***

The Library Committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) organized a 3-day seminar: **When Iran was Zoroastrian: From the Medes to the Muslims**. The seminar was held over the Labor-day weekend, September 2-4, 2006, at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston.



The seminar was free and open to all, with a charge of \$10/day (\$25 for all 3 days) for lunch. Aban Rustomji, the Chairperson, and the entire ZAH Library Committee must be complimented on their hard work and dedication for making this seminar a success. It paid off handsomely with approximately 85 to 110 attendees on each of the 3 days.

The seminar was presented by Dr. Rashna Writer from the United Kingdoms. Rashna Writer received her Ph.D. in International Relations from the London School of Economics, served as a Research Assistant at Manchester University, and has been a Lecturer in Pre-Islamic Iran at Birkbeck College, London University, and at Richmond College, London. She is currently Head of Global Risk and a Senior Assistant Director at the Merchant International Group, London.

Rashna who has presented several talks and lectures on Zarathuhsti Din and the history of Pre-Islamic Islam at numerous conferences, is the author of: *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation*, University of America Press, and the co-author of *The Memoirs of Keikhsrow Shahrokh*, Edwin Mellen Press. And her latest book *From Zarathushtra to Muhammad: The Re-Shaping of Iran*, is in press.

Each of the 3 days was devoted entirely to one of the three major Zarathushti empires:

Day 1 – **The Achaemenians:** Founders of the Iranian State;

Day 2 – **The Parthians:** Wrongly overlooked by history, and

Day 3 – **The Sasanians:** The apogee of Zarathushti Iran.

### The Achaemenians

Dr. Writer first briefly reviewed the Medean dynasty, from Daiaukku (836 BCE), to the last Medean emperor Astyages (585-550 BCE) whose daughter married **Cyrus I**. It was their son, Cyrus (Kurush) II the **Great (558-530 BCE)** who set about to expand the Achaemenian empire. His first military conquest was Media where he defeated his grandfather Astyages. But probably his most famous conquest was that of Babylonia, in which he liberated the Jews from captivity. For this act, and for his promise to pay for the rebuilding of the Jewish temple, Cyrus is mentioned in the Bible in Second Isaiah.

Cyrus II's son **Cambyses II (530-522 BCE)** continued to expand his father's empire with the conquest of Egypt. Cambyses II is given extremely bad press from historians, but his history is gradually being corrected as more positive information about him comes to light. When returning from Ethiopia, Cambyses II heard that Bardiya had usurped his throne and later died.

**Darius I (522-486 BCE)** overthrew Bardiya and became emperor. While Cyrus II conceptualized the idea of a Persian Empire, it was Darius who followed in his footsteps and consolidated it. These two great emperors were true visionaries. Darius instituted many social, legal and economic reforms.



There followed a series of emperors, including **Xerxes I (486-465 BCE)**, **Artaxerxes I (465-424 BCE)**, to the final Achaemenian emperor **Darius III (336-330 BCE)**.

By the time of Darius III, the Achaemenian empire was in trouble for two important reasons:

First: The Achaemenian bloodline was depleted through internecine warfare (brother killing off brothers and other potential heirs who could be perceived as threats to the throne), and second: the populace was unhappy because of the onerous tax burden placed upon them by the emperor. The empire was also weakened by the continuing warfare with the Greeks.

The Achaemenian empire thus fell easy prey to **Alexander, the Macedonian, who conquered it in 330 BCE, and defeated Darius III.**



### The Parthians

After the death of Alexander, his empire was divided into three parts amongst his generals. Iran was briefly ruled by the Selucids, but they were soon defeated by **Arsaces I (247 / 238-217 BCE)**, and the new empire was known as the **Arsacid or Parthian empire**, because the Arsacids came from Parthia (as opposed to the Achamenians who were from Persia).

Unfortunately, much of the history of the Parthians has been destroyed – mainly by the Sasanians who followed them as the next Zarathushti empire. The Sasanians, like the Achaemenians, were from Persia, and felt that the Parthians (from Parthia) were outsiders who had usurped the empire from the Persians.

**Mithridates I (171-139 / 138 BCE)**, was the greatest of the Parthian emperors whose empire stretched from the Euphrates to Bactria (essentially the same as that of the Achaemenians at the height of their empire.) His history is also very similar to that of Cyrus the Great. Mithridates established his capital at Ctesiphon, just outside present-day Bagdad and was constantly at war with both the Greeks and the Romans and had a difficult time holding on to their empire.

A long list of Parthian emperors follows who, towards the end of their empire, like the Achaemenians before them, were weakened by internecine warfare and internal bickering amongst the aristocratic families. The later Parthian emperors never could establish a strong centralized state.

**Artabanus IV (213-224 CE)** was the last Parthian emperor who was overthrown by a ruling family from Persia.

### The Sasanians

**Ardeshir I (224-242 CE)** was the grandson of a Persian High Priest, Sasan. Hence the family came to be known as the Sasanians. After defeating Artabanus IV, Ardeshir I traveled to Ctesiphon to be coroneted as emperor and once crowned, he set about to consolidating his empire.

The Sasanians learnt from the Parthians that not establishing a strong central state had been one of their weaknesses. To ensure a strong central state, the Sasanians went one step further by tying religion directly to the state. Thus, the Zarathushti Din became the state religion of the empire.



Ardeshir

retired and established his son **Shapur I (242-272 CE)** as his heir. Shapur I continued to centralize governmental authority, developed a functioning administration and continued to expand his empire, moved into Kushan, modern-day Peshawar and in 260 CE had a brilliant victory by overthrowing the Roman emperor Valerian. **During Shapur I's reign, the Persian empire was a world power to be reckoned with.**

Over the next approximately 30 years, there was a quick succession of some 6 emperors, until the rule of **Shapur II (309-379 CE)** who re-established control over the Kushans in the East and recouped territory lost to the Romans in the West. With the introduction of Christianity into Rome, a new confrontational dimension to Perso-Roman relations was added. Armenia converted to Christianity and established close relations with the Byzantines. Christians in Iran were considered to be the fifth column – not as a religious problem but as a political problem (they were perceived to be the cause of political instability), and for this reason they began to be persecuted.



A succession of several non-entity emperors followed the death of Shapur II. **Yazdgird I (399-421 CE)** married a Jewish lady and improved relations with the Christians, resulting in their being treated better. **Vahram V (421-438 CE)** (Gor – the Bull, because he was immensely well built) came to the throne with the help of an Arab prince. This set a dangerous precedent of foreign meddling in Iranian affairs. The Iranian Christians declared independence from their fellow Byzantines and were no longer considered as a fifth column in Iran. Vahram V was a staunch Zarathushti and tried unsuccessfully to convert Armenia back to the Zarathushti Din – a move which was strongly opposed by the leading families of Armenia.

It was during the reign of **Peroz (459-484 CE)** that conditions in Iran start to unravel. There was a famine, Peroz remitted taxes, which impoverished the royal treasury. He appealed to Rome and left his son Kavad as hostage to the Ephthalites, who become virtual masters of Iran.

The royal families were in revolt and **Kavad (488-531 CE)** inherited a very weakened empire. The Mazdakite movement (a communist-like movement for total social and economic equality) started at this time and was a serious threat to the empire. Kavad at first appeased the Mazdakites but was deposed. He went back for help to the Ephthalites, regained the throne, and then opposed the Mazdakites.

Kavad was succeeded by Khoshrow I (**Anoshirvan**) (**531-579 CE**) under whose rule the monarchy emerged victorious and the Sasanian empire reached its zenith. He was handed a decrepit empire by his father, he consolidated power, with all the classes, once again recognizing the power of the king.

**Khoshrow I** rebuilt the infrastructure and passed legislation for fiscal and tax reform, and improved the administrative system. It was the later Arab conquerors who, in fact, put in place this same administrative structure when they took power. He also consolidated his foreign affairs, dividing his empire into four commands for military purposes. He instituted compulsory military service and established a standing army. He gave religious freedom to the Christians. But during this period Rome established an anti-Iranian coalition and started harassing Iran. He invaded Mesopotamia and won, but it was during this period that he died.





He was followed by two other notable emperors – his son **Hormizd IV (579-590 CE)** and **Khoshrow II (Perviz) (590-628 CE)**. In 610 CE Khoshrow Perviz regained Armenia, and in 611 CE he attacked and captured Damascus, Antioch and Jerusalem. He sacked Jerusalem, killed many Jews and brought the “True Cross” to Persia. In 616 CE he captured Gaza, invaded Egypt, and went as far as Ethiopia and captured Constantinople. The frontiers of the Sasanian empire now resembled that of the Achaemenian’s.



However, the reaction of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius to Khoshrow Perviz was swift. He attacked Azerbaijan and destroyed the great Atash Behram, Adur Gushasp, one of the three most revered Zarathushti Atash Behrams. This was a major blow to the Persians and suddenly the Sasanian empire was ready to collapse.

There were only 14 years between the death of Khoshrow Perviz and the last Sasanian monarch. And during this 14 year period a quick succession of nine rulers followed, with two amongst them being queens. In fact there was so much internecine feuding amongst the royals that they had difficulty finding an heir who still had Sasanian blood. They found it in **Yazdgird III (633-651 CE)**, who was too weak and it was too late to save the situation.

The Arabs succeed in battle against the Persians and rapidly advanced into the interior of Persia. **Yazdgird III** was finally assassinated in Merv in 651 CE, and the last great Sasanian empire came to an end. Because the Sasanian empire had so strongly tied church and state together, the demise of the empire resulted directly in the destruction of the Zarathushti religion as well.

The main causes of the downfall of the Sasanian empire may be summarized as follows:

- Over 4 centuries of war had sapped the peoples’ strength;
- Internal dissensions had weakened the fabric of the ruling class;
- Feudal lords were anxious to recover their privileges;
- Powerful military leaders who coveted supreme power were in revolt;
- There was despotism and violent rivalries around the throne;
- This gradually weakened the authority of the throne;



Members of the Library committee from left to right: Jangoo Mistry, Arnavaz Sethna, Rustom Engineer, Behroze Daroowalla, Rashna Writer, Aban Rustomji (Chair person), Magdalena Rustomji, Shahnaz Sidhwa, Arnaz Mistry and Zubeen Mehta. 2nd row Sarosh Manekshaw, Purvez Rustomji, Meheryar Rivetna - Missing members Yasmin Pavri, Darayus Kolah and Mani Surkari





- Class warfare – the Mazdakite movement – shook the foundations of Iranian society.

That approximately 100 people sat through 3 days of lectures, over the Labor Day weekend, is a credit to the speaker. Rashna Writer is an eloquent presenter with a charm and wit to make, what is typically considered boring history lectures, fascinating. She made the topic

interesting and held the audience captive through out the 3 days. She was asked numerous questions and was swamped during the breaks, unable to get even a few minutes of relaxation in between sessions.



It is difficult to condense over 1,000 years of history into a 3-day lecture series, but Rashna managed to do it by sticking to the high points and avoiding the minutia. She did, however, present a sufficient number of interesting anecdotes to bring out the character of some of the more

important emperors in Persian history.

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston presented Rashna with a commemorative trophy, and since she was in Houston, with a Stetson, which she said she proudly wore on her way back to London.

We, in Houston, learned a lot about our history and the character and traits of our Persian and Parthian ancestors – and we feel strongly that all other Zarathushtis should be knowledgeable about this history as well.



**Sarosh J.H. Manekshaw** has been a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston since 1978 and served for 4 years on the Executive Committee. He has conducted Sunday School classes for the youth, and adult education classes. Currently he is an active member of the ZAH Library Committee, which is building a leading research library on Zarathushti issues.

He was the Co-Chairman for the Second Gatha Conference, Houston, September 1996, and the Editor of the Proceedings from that Conference. He was Vice-Chairman of the Seventh World Zoroastrian

Congress, held in Houston, December 2000.



Sarosh has served as guest editor of the FEZANA Journal, for the "Date and Time of Zarathushtra," and "Treasures from the Avesta: Our Daily Prayers."

issues. He has actively participated in many other Zarathushti and interfaith activities; spoken to church groups; presented papers at several conferences; and published numerous articles in the FEZANA Journal.



## EVENTS AND HONOURS



### UWM Biologist Wins One of Two Shaw Scientist Awards

MILWAUKEE — A biologist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has been awarded one of two Shaw Scientist Awards given by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation for her research into how the central nervous system becomes interconnected during early development and how it regenerates in fish. Supported by the James D. and Dorothy Shaw Fund, the award is usually given annually to researchers in the fields of biochemistry, biological science and cancer research at both UWM and UW-Madison.

Assistant Professor Ava J. Udvadia, who has a joint appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences and the Great Lakes Water Institute, was chosen from eight finalists by a panel of scientists from major research institutions throughout the U.S.

The Shaw Scientist Awards were created in 1982 and have provided more than \$9 million to fund the work of 50 Shaw scientists. The award provides \$200,000 in unrestricted funds for each scientist.

Udvadia and her research team are doing work that could eventually help develop new therapies to treat diseases that affect the central nervous system (CNS). Using zebrafish as models, she studies how neurons form connections in the developing CNS in vertebrates, and how damage to such connections can be repaired.

Unlike mammals, fish and frogs are able to regenerate parts of their CNS after injury. The ultimate goal of Udvadia's studies is to understand, on the molecular level, the difference between neurons that can regenerate and function again and those that cannot. Her aim is to apply that knowledge toward developing treatments that will stimulate functional regeneration in the human CNS.

Ava J. Udvadia



### Zubin Mehta's Musical Zeal Zooms to New Zenith

**JOHN F KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CELEBRATES THE 29th ANNUAL NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS ON DECEMBER 3, AT KENNEDY CENTER'S OPERA HOUSE**

**"Conductor Zubin Mehta's profound artistry and devotion to music make him a world treasure" says Chairman Schwarzman.**

"This year we honor five extraordinary international artists whose abundant contributions to their fields are remarkable. They have transformed the culture of our country and of the world," said Kennedy Center Chairman Stephen A. Schwarzman

The five outstanding artists, to be honored at a gala performance of stars from around the world, in the presence of the President of the United States and Mrs Bush are musical theater composer and producer Andrew Lloyd Webber; conductor Zubin Mehta; country singer and songwriter Dolly Parton; singer, songwriter and producer Smokey Robinson; and film director and producer Steven Spielberg.

The Kennedy Center Honors will be bestowed the night before the gala on Saturday, December 2, at a State Department dinner, hosted by the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

The Honors recipients, recognized primarily for excellence in their lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts—whether in dance, music, theater, opera, motion pictures or television—are selected by the Center's Board of Trustees.





### BIOGRAPHY OF ZUBIN MEHTA

During 2006, several notable events take place in the extraordinary life of maestro Zubin Mehta. In April, Zubin turned 70 and his German-language autobiography titled, *Zubin Mehta: Die Partitur meines Leben: Erinnerungen* (The Score of my Life: Memories) was published. It is the 50th anniversary of one of his first acclaimed public performances, where he conducted an entire concert in Vienna to benefit Hungarian refugees while still a student. In December, he will receive a prestigious honor from the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, its chairman asserting, "Zubin's profound artistry and devotion to music make him a world treasure." And finally, Zubin will once again conduct the famous Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's concert, broadcasted in over 50 countries.

A Parsi from Mumbai, Zubin has dominated the world podiums of western classical music. Born in a musical family, his father Mehli was India's leading violinist, co-founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra, and founder of the American Youth Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles. Zubin's renowned performances and recordings have brought musical delight to audiences worldwide. Zubin's orchestral performances in the U.S. have been vastly popular while his musical visits to India give him almost rock-star status and his operatic concerts in Europe are unforgettable. The name Mehta and classical music have become synonymous around the world.



Conductors spend a lifetime achieving what Zubin achieved early in his career. By his mid-20s, Zubin had already conducted two of the greatest European orchestras – the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics. He was Music Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (1961-67) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, (1962-78). He was named Music Advisor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in 1969, its Music Director in 1978, and its Music Director for Life in 1981, conducting more than 2,000 performances with IPO musicians on landmark tours across five continents. In 1978, Zubin became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, where his 13-year tenure would become the longest in the orchestra's history. Zubin is the chief conductor of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino since 1985 and 2006 marks the completion of his tenure as Music Director of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich.

Zubin's triumphs include the extremely successful Three Tenors Concerts in Rome and Los Angeles, brilliant performances of Turandot in China's Forbidden City, and exceptional concerts in war-torn Sarajevo, Tel Aviv during the Gulf War, Moscow's Gorky Park during the twilight of the Soviet era, and India, with his Israeli musicians breaking a decades-long absence of cultural and diplomatic ties. Zubin's passion even brought together for the first time the Israel Philharmonic and the Bavarian State Opera Orchestra for a historic performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony No. 2 in what had been a concentration camp in Weimar. Zubin's interpretations of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, Wagner, Verdi and Puccini are legendary and part of his musical genius.

In the thousands of articles on Zubin Mehta over the past 50 years, it is remarkable that one will always read three unique references that one rarely reads about other maestros: first, his Parsi or Zoroastrian heritage; second, his Indian nationality, and third, his father Mehli Mehta, all great sources of pride. This brief write up is no exception.

by Shahrokh Mehta

Dinyar Vania, made his lead tenor debut as Rudolfo in *La Boheme* with the New York City Opera on October 14th . It was also staged at New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center, on 17th, 20th and 25th 2006.

# IMPACT

## *Unleash the Spark Within*

TORONTO

2007

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) is very pleased to host the XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress "IMPACT – Unleash the Spark Within!" The Congress will be held in Toronto, Canada from Friday June 29 to Monday, July 2, 2007 and we invite you to come feel the IMPACT! This article provides details on the Congress, registration, social activities, hotel booking and travel reservations information.

Our Congress theme is **IMPACT – Unleash the Spark Within!** The Congress will feature innovative speakers and thought-provoking topics encompassing the impact the Zarathushti Deen has had on civilization. IMPACT will also showcase leadership within our community. The Congress will help you make connections with people, knowledge, and ideas. IMPACT will highlight success amongst Zarathushti leaders in different spheres while providing networking and inspiration to the next generation. Content and activities will focus on everything from religion to culture, to commerce, to arts; all with a Zarathushti backdrop. We will offer activities and presentations targeted to individuals of all ages, with a parallel track designed specifically for youth. In addition, we will also feature artistic and musical talent from within the community.



**Register early before January 31, 2007 and maximize your savings!**

**All Congress sessions have been created to deliver IMPACT.**

The North American Zoroastrian Congress is being chaired by Phee Vania, whose event management experience will be an asset to the planning of this Congress. She recently represented FEZANA at a United Nations (UN) Conference and was invited to

join the UN planning committee for their next Annual Conference. The Vice-Chairs for the North American Zoroastrian Congress are Zarine Chenoy and Mehroo Chothia. They are working with a Congress Committee of creative and

dedicated individuals to create and deliver a Congress with IMPACT. Delegates will have the opportunity to choose amongst a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Media portrayal of the Zarathushti Deen
- Zarathushti Social Justice and Social Contract
- Interfaith Influences and Interactions with Zarathushti Deen
- Profiling Zarathushti women
- Entrepreneurial spirit in Zarathushtis
- Being a single Zarathushti in North America

IMPACT will have you walking away with a sense of pride and admiration for Zarathushti Deen and for those who embrace the religion. On the first day the 'main tent' event will showcase prominent Zarathushtis, their contributions and their thoughts on our community. This memorable session will allow delegates a chance to interact with very high profile speakers, an incredible opportunity that should not be missed!

**A parallel youth track has been planned for youth, by youth.** Some of the interactive youth sessions will focus on:

### **IMPACT Congress Registration includes:**

- **Friday, June 29, 2007:** Welcome Package and Complimentary mini-reception
- **Saturday, June 30, 2007:** Congress sessions, morning coffee break, FEZANA Awards Lunch and entertainment, afternoon coffee break;
- **Sunday, July 1, 2007:** Congress sessions, morning coffee break, afternoon coffee break, Gala Banquet Dinner with a performance by a specially assembled Zoroastrian Orchestra;
- **Monday, July 2, 2007:** Congress sessions, morning coffee break, Jashan and closing ceremonies.



- Growing Up with a Zarathushti Identity
- Selecting the appropriate University in North America and applying for scholarships
- Theatre and Arts
- Self defense training

All work and no play? NO WAY! The Congress youth committee has planned tons of social activities for the youth to enjoy. Our fun and exciting **Friday Evening** Patio Party will kick off the youth activities at the Congress. On **Saturday evening**, the youth will enjoy an offsite outing designed specifically for the youth. Come and see what else we have planned for you!

#### **Preliminary Program**

Below is an outline of the activities for the Congress. Please note that this is not the final agenda and a more detailed program will be provided in future communications.

- **Friday June 29, 2007:**

Daytime: World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) event

Evening:

Congress Registration and Complimentary Mini-Reception

Youth activity: Patio Party at Sheraton Hotel

Persian Night offsite (Optional)

- **Saturday Jun 30, 2007:**

Morning: Official opening followed by multiple break-out sessions

FEZANA Awards Recognition Lunch with Entertainment (included in Registration)

Afternoon: Multiple break-out sessions

Parallel track sessions for Youth throughout Saturday

Evening:

Tour of Toronto & CN Tower Dinner for Adults (Optional)

Social offsite activity for Youth (Optional)

- **Sunday July 1, 2007:**

Morning and Afternoon: Multiple break-out sessions

Parallel track for Youth throughout Sunday

Gala Banquet Dinner and performance by a Zoroastrian Orchestra (included in Registration)

- **Monday July 2, 2007:**

Multiple break-out Sessions

Jashan Ceremony

Official Closing Ceremonies

Evening: Visit to Toronto (Optional)

- **Tuesday July 3, 2007:**

Day trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Casino (Optional)

**Your Congress Registration includes an extravagant Gala Banquet with exceptional entertainment.** This elegant evening is your opportunity to dress to impress and to see and be seen. The Gala will be organized by Dr. Dhun Noria, who has a reputation of hosting stellar extravaganzas for the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. We are especially proud to announce that a Zarathushti Orchestra will perform at the Gala. We promise a Congress Gala Night full of entertainment, great culinary delights, and socializing to create memories you will cherish for many years.

See our website for information on Talent Showcase, placing an advertisement in our brochure, renting a table to display and sell your goods or submitting an entry for our Sparks Wall of Fame.

**For the closing ceremonies, IMPACT will be holding a very elaborate Jashan ceremony that will assemble Mobeds from across North America.** Visiting Mobeds who are attending IMPACT and who wish to participate, please e-mail Ervad Jehan Bagli at jbagli@rogers.com.

Let's make this a spectacular conclusion to the North American Zoroastrian Congress with one of the largest Jashans to be performed in North America.



**The Congress committee will unveil details of a Mentoring Program that is being piloted globally.** This unique program is being sponsored by FEZANA and is the first of its kind at any Zarathushti Congress. For more details, contact Phee Vania or Zarine Chenoy at Zoroastrian\_Congress@hotmail.com. Visit [www.zoro-impact.com](http://www.zoro-impact.com) to interact with successful members of the community and find a mentor or protégé who will impact and guide you to discover how to unlock and unleash your inner spark!

**On June 29, 2007, the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) will be hosting a full day of networking and learning for those who wish to unleash the entrepreneurial spark within! The Toronto chapter of the WZCC, along with Big Fish Interactive – Canada's leading trainers in innovation, management, and entrepreneurial development – has designed a highly participative session that you will not want to miss. The rate for IMPACT early-bird attendees to attend this WZCC event is ONLY \$69 Canadian (full-time students) and \$99 Canadian (adults)[See Congress registration form].**

**The Congress Tourism Committee has planned off-site events that will allow you to take in the cultural sights and sounds of the city of Toronto and its surroundings.**

Optional outings include:

- Friday evening: Persian night
- Saturday evening: Toronto Tour & CN Tower Dinner
- Saturday evening: offsite youth activity
- Tuesday, July 3 Day Trip: Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls & Casino

**Come and enjoy Toronto, a world-class, multi-cultural cosmopolitan city.** Home to more than 100 cultures, Toronto offers exciting cultural and culinary adventures and excellent shopping for all tastes and budgets. Some of Toronto's attractions include:

- CN Tower -- the world's tallest above-ground free-standing structure
- Canada's Wonderland theme park
- Distinctive cultural shopping areas
- Art galleries and museums
- St. Lawrence Market -- one of the world's 25 best food markets (Food and Wine magazine).

**Coming to this congress couldn't be more affordable or easier!** We are securing low rates not only for your hotel stay, but also for your airfare. The Congress will be held at the luxurious, newly renovated **Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel and Conference Center.** The hotel offers North Toronto's largest conference facility with an onsite shopping center! The Sheraton is walking distance to local trendy restaurants and cafes and a short

ride away from the city's downtown core. For more information, please visit [www.sheratonparkway.com](http://www.sheratonparkway.com).

The Sheraton Parkway Hotel staff is ready to welcome you and make your stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. Starwood Preferred Guest members can collect SPG points when you stay at the Sheraton. Special rates have been negotiated for Congress attendees from three days prior to three days after the Congress. The Sheraton room rate of Canadian \$120 per night accommodates up to four persons per room and includes free indoor / outdoor parking, free use of the Parkway Athletic Club, complimentary high speed internet access in all rooms, complimentary in-room coffeemakers, mini refrigerator, hairdryers, irons & ironing board and



in room movies. Special rates have also been negotiated with the adjoining **Best Western for Canadian \$110 per night, with each room accommodating up to four persons.** Best

Western guests are entitled to use most of the amenities of the Sheraton while enjoying economically priced accommodation in traditional rooms. Best Western rooms also all have a microwave and mini refrigerator.

Both hotels offer ample space for networking and socializing and both hotels are connected to the Conference center. The hotel front desk can provide tickets to Paramount Canada's Wonderland, Ontario Science Centre, VIP Coupon/discount card for local dining and Vaughan Mill Shopping outlets.

**To make your reservation at either hotel, please contact 1-800-668-0101 / 905-882-3108 or e-mail your request to**

**reservationsmanager@sheratonparkway.com. The booking code for the Sheraton Parkway is ZSO629 and 629ZSO for Best Western, or identify yourself as a Zarathushti Congress attendee. Hotel reservations should be made directly with the hotel.**



More than 60% of the population of the USA is within a 90-minute flight of Toronto. Your Congress committee has negotiated fantastic deals for your travel needs. Millennium Travel Canada Inc. (American Express) is our official travel agent for the North American Zoroastrian Congress. They are a well reputed Zarathushti owned travel agency that has secured very reasonable airfares for Congress guests. Staff has been exclusively trained by IMPACT committee members to handle the needs of Congress delegates. They will guide and advise you with accurate information and respective flight reservations to ensure you maximize your enjoyment at the Congress. For more information on how to secure the best airfare to attend IMPACT please call: 416-962-2200 or toll free 1-866-398-8080 and ask for Sandy Lee, ext 221 or Hilda Nazareth, ext 222, Imran Ahmed, ext 224 or visit: [www.mtci-travel.com](http://www.mtci-travel.com).



Your Congress committee is making every effort to ensure that your visit to Toronto will be

memorable. Complete and send in the enclosed registration form today. **Register early before January 31, 2007 and maximize your savings! Send your questions to [zoroastrian\\_congress@hotmail.com](mailto:zoroastrian_congress@hotmail.com).** For more details on all aspects of IMPACT, please visit: [www.zoro-impact.com](http://www.zoro-impact.com).

**We look forward to seeing you in Toronto in 2007!**

***With warmest regards and an invitation to join us,***



*Phee Vania*

**Phee Vania,  
Chair, 2007 North American  
Zoroastrian Congress**

*Phee Vania holds a Bachelor of Arts Honors Degree, with a Major in English Literature, from the University of Toronto. A Certified Professional Development Trainer with a certificate in Designing Instruction, Phee has extensive experience evaluating, managing and delivering a variety of educational solutions for internal and external clients. She has been with IBM for the past 18 years and currently is on loan to the IBM Worldwide Corporate Learning Team with the mission to help the US, Canada, Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific deploy the Your IBM new employee orientation program to 164 countries.*

#### **XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress IMPACT Committee:**

Phee Vania  
Zarine Chenoy & Mehroo Chothia  
Sam Vesuna  
Russi Surti  
Mantreh Atashband  
Daraius Bharucha  
Dr. Dhun Noria  
Kermin Mehta & Diana Katgara  
Kevin Mancherjee  
Niloufer Kavarana  
Perin McKnight & Freny Engineer  
Phiroze Dotiwalla  
Sam Meer  
Aimee Karanjia, Anahita Daryushnejad & Mickie Katgara  
Kamlu Mehta, Dilshad Kershaw & Roshni Captain

Chair  
Vice-Chair  
President of Zoroastrian Society of Ontario  
Ex Vice-President of Zoroastrian Society of Ontario  
Marketing and Communications Sub-Committee Lead  
Program Sub-Committee Lead  
Gala Banquet Sub-Committee Lead  
Youth Sub-Committee Leads  
Audio Visual Sub-Committee Lead  
Volunteer Coordination Sub-Committee Lead  
Registration Sub-Committee Leads  
Finance Sub-Committee Lead  
WZCC Liaison Lead  
Tourism Sub-Committee Leads  
Support and Hospitality Leads

# Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra

## Attention Musicians --- Performance Opportunities

The World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra invites you to be a member of the WZSO that will perform at the North American Zoroastrian Congress in Toronto on July 1, 2007. Professionals as well as amateur musicians of all ages who have attained a sufficient level of proficiency to perform in a symphonic setting are invited to apply. The repertoire will be chosen by our music director and the music will be sent several months in advance. All participants are expected to have become proficient with the repertoire prior to the conference.



We invite those who performed in our previous concerts, and other musicians, to participate in the orchestra as well as perform as soloists. Composers who wish to have their works showcased are also invited to apply; ditto for conductors. Please e-mail your request for an application to [cyrusmehta@aol.com](mailto:cyrusmehta@aol.com). If you have already participated as a member of the WZSO in Houston or Chicago, sent an application previously, or spoken to one of us about your interest, there is no need to complete another application but please do confirm your intent. . ZSO performances in Houston and Chicago were largely considered as one of the major highlights by congress attendees, and we hope to continue to enlarge as well as enhance the standards of the Orchestra.

Cyrus Mehta, *Administrative Director*

Farobag Homi Cooper, *Music Director*

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### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone / E-mail: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following on your personal performance history

How many years have you been playing your instrument?

List at least three major works in your repertoire?

Have you played in orchestras or other ensemble settings?

Are you currently performing with an ensemble?

How often do you currently practice?

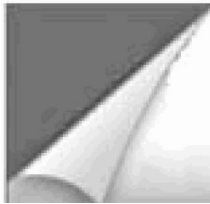
What is your sight-reading ability?

Any additional information you would like to offer?



Forward your application to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cyrus Mehta at [cyrusmehta@aol.com](mailto:cyrusmehta@aol.com) or by mail to 160 Claremont Avenue, Apartment 2 I, New York, NY 10027. For further information, contact Cyrus Mehta at 212-686-1581 (W) or 212-662-0932 (H).**



# **Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra Fund**

**Special Premium**

Are you interested in having a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be on the podium and conduct the WZSO in a short work at the 2007 North American Congress in Toronto ? A donor whose contribution exceeds \$2500 can have such an experience! Only a dose of love and courage is a requisite. The Music Director will introduce this special person to the art and craft of leading an orchestra and will work towards ensuring an enriching experience.

FEZANA has established the WZSO Fund to help assist with the Orchestra's performances at the North American and world congresses. All donations are 100% tax-deductible and high visibility is assured .

Please send your donation check payable to FEZANA marked "WZSO Fund." and mail to the Treasurer, Katayun Kapadia, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054. Contact Farobag Homi Cooper for further details at [cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org](mailto:cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org)

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## **Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra**

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**Administrative Office: 8627 Meadowbrook Drive - Burr Ridge, IL 60527**

The WZSO wishes to enhance upon the successful interplay of Zarathushti musicians and professionals, initiated at the 2000 World Congress with members of the Houston Symphony, by increasing the number of participating Zarathushtis as well as expanding the professional base so that each Zarathushti could sit side-by-side with a professional. Contrary to popular conjecture or misplaced Zarathushti pride, the WZSO is not intended to be a showcase exclusively for Zarathushti musicians, either amateurs or professionals. The orchestral setting continues to offer a unique pedagogical and motivational setting for our Zarathushti musicians irrespective of their degree of proficiency. Hence, the funding for professional musicians is paramount to the mission of the WZSO.

The WZSO continues its efforts to enhance the cultural atmosphere at congresses by performing at the 2007 North American Congress in Toronto and the 2009 World Congress held in Dubai. We are delighted that FEZANA has assisted us in word and deed by voicing a mandate and by partially underwriting our venture in Toronto with \$10,000

**FEZANA** has established the WZSO Fund to further help assist with the Orchestra's performances at the North American and world congresses. All donations are 100% tax-deductible and high visibility is assured for corporate sponsorships.

Please send your donation check payable to **FEZANA** marked "**WZSO Fund.**" to the **Treasurer, Katayun Kapadia, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054.** Contact Farobag Homi Cooper for further details at [cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org](mailto:cpas@chicago-philharmonia.org)

## FAROBAG HOMI COOPER

Music Director of the Chicago Philharmonia since 1985, Farobag Homi Cooper is also the Artistic Director of the Chicago Performing Artists Series and principal conductor of its resident professional ensembles, the Mostly Mozart Chamber Players and the Camerata Virtuosi. In addition to the symphonic repertoire, Farobag Homi Cooper is a skilled interpreter of Baroque literature. As Music Advisor to the Baroque Masterplayers, Cooper's stylistic renditions concatenate period performance techniques with modern instruments thus creating a unique voice within the realm of 17th and 18th- century repertoire.

Farobag Homi Cooper has performed on the piano at Carnegie Recital Hall and participated as a chorus member in over 100 performances with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Accepted as a scholarship student in violin at the Manhattan School of Music's preparatory division, he continued studies in piano, theory, and conducting at the Eastman School of Music while simultaneously enrolled at the University of Rochester as a degree candidate in mathematics and philosophy.

Music of the twentieth century has been highlighted through the Performing Artists Series' Composer-in-Residence program which have drawn prominent composers such as Richard Nanes and Helmuth Fuchs to record their works since the program's inception in 1995. The Illinois Bureau of Tourism has also featured Cooper and the Camerata Virtuosi through television commercials that have been aired throughout the North American continent.



### ZOROASTRIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

#### CALL FOR MUSICIANS

The WZSO invites musicians, professionals or amateurs, to participate as part of the North American Zoroastrian Congress held in Toronto, Canada, on July 1, 2007. Composers and conductors are also invited to apply.

WZSO performances in Houston and Chicago were largely considered as one of the major highlights by congress attendees, and we hope to continue to enlarge as well as enhance the standards of the Orchestra.

Contact Cyrus Mehta  
at [cyrusmehta@aol.com](mailto:cyrusmehta@aol.com) to voice  
and/or confirm your intent.

# Will The Vultures Ever Return To The Dokhmas?

Dr. Ardeshir B. Damania

University of California, Davis

During March of 1993, the Sudan (in Africa) was gripped by a severe famine. Kevin Carter, a South African photographer took a picture of a less than 2-year old emaciated Sudanese toddler crawling, with the last ounces of strength it could muster, towards a United Nations food camp located a little over half a mile away. There is also in the picture an obviously well-fed vulture, intently stalking patiently only a few yards away, waiting for the child to die (a vulture, however hungry it may be, will never peck at any creature till it is completely dead). The photo [see <http://www.huaren.com/UnitedNations/photo-1.htm>] earned the photographer the 1994 Pulitzer Prize. But the picture spelled doom for all three individuals involved: the little child was never heard of again, the photographer, who was heavily criticized in the press for taking the photo and leaving immediately without trying to remove the child to safety, committed suicide less than three months after the picture was taken, and the vultures have disappeared from the Sudan including the one in the famous picture. And this is what brings me to my present story.



## BACKGROUND TO DOKHMAS

The Zarathushti Towers of Silence (also called the “dokhmas at Doongerwadi”) on Bombay’s Malabar Hill were built by Seth Modi Hirji Vachha in 1672 with a land grant from the British on a 999-year lease through the good offices of the Governor of Bombay, Gerald Aungier. The “bunglis” were built several decades later. In the early days, whenever there was a death in Bombay, the funeral prayers were carried out at home or in a special room, “aramgarh” reserved for this purpose at the Parsi colonies and baughs. The “Khandhias” (hereditary corpse-bearers) would then be called to carry the corpse through the city streets to Doongerwadi and consign the same to the Towers almost immediately following a brief exposure of the face of the departed to the male relatives and friends. In those days females generally did not accompany the funeral procession to Doongerwadi.

## DECLINE OF THE VULTURE POPULATION

The South Asian vulture is crucial to the survival of the “Dokmenashini” system of disposal of the Zarathushti dead in India. Up to the 1960s there were plentiful vultures at Doongerwadi. In fact, they were so aggressive that they would start pecking at the corpses even before the Khandhias (literally, “those who carry on shoulders”) had fully exposed the body on the “pavies” (or indentations in concentric circles where dead bodies are laid inside the Towers). The Khandhias had even lovingly given most of the bigger vultures pet names. At one of the funerals in the 60s, I had even heard a Khandhia shouting to a white-backed named Tehmool to hold back till he had withdrawn from the tower and closed the entrance door. I am not sure if Tehmool obeyed!!!!. A vulture feeding frenzy usually reduces a human corpse to bare bones in a matter of 20-30 minutes.



Unfortunately, the vulture numbers on Malabar Hill started falling in the 1970s and 80s and today they are non-existent. The disposal of corpses speedily and efficiently is in grave doubts, according to some Parsis who have attended a funeral at the towers in recent years especially during the rainy seasons. Higher floor residents of 'Spenta' and 'Grand Paradi Apartments' that lie in the wind path on the east and west, respectively, of Towers of Silence have also complained from time to time about the distinctive foul odor.

The appearance of the Eurasian griffon vultures in large numbers in Rajasthan in February of 2006 was, therefore, supposed to be good news for the vulture culture enthusiasts among the orthodox Parsis as well as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Unfortunately, the jubilation is premature says Professor Rhys E. Green of the Department of Zoology at the University of Cambridge, UK. The Eurasian griffon vultures (*Griffon Gyps fulvus*) that were observed in Rajasthan were mostly immature birds on a migratory path from Central Asia, Mongolia, or Tibet. In Tibet, the smaller griffon vulture comes to the aid of those Buddhists who choose the 'sky burial' for their departed, i.e., exposure of the body on a flat rock on top of a hill. The body is hacked to pieces to accommodate smaller birds in performing their scavenging function rapidly and efficiently, so that in an hour or so only the bones remain. I have witnessed first hand, from afar, such a disposal of the dead in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, in 1993. Witnessing of sky burial is banned for foreigners in Tibet by the Chinese authorities.

## THE DICLOFENAC CONNECTION

In India, we had three species of vultures which were endemic to South Asia, viz., the oriental white-backed vulture, the long-billed vulture, and the slender-billed vulture. These three species are spread from Afghanistan to South-East Asia, but their numbers were concentrated in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. At present their numbers have declined to less than 3% of what they were only about a decade ago! And the decline continues. In fact, there is now substantial scientific evidence, unearthed by the U.S.-based Peregrine Fund, that the cause of the decline of vultures in South Asia is the widespread use of the veterinary anti-inflammatory drug 'Diclofenac' that is also widely used in human medicine. Diclofenac is a drug prescribed for reduction of pain, inflammation and stiffness caused by several conditions such as, osteoarthritis, abdominal and menstruation cramps, and spondylitis. The drug is sold under many brand names, e.g., "Arthrotec" "Cataflam" and "Voltaren", in pharmacies. The vultures ingest this drug that has remained in the body when they feed on human corpses, carcasses of cows or water buffalos that have been medically treated with the drug.



The Eurasian griffon vulture is just as susceptible to Diclofenac as its three South Asian cousins and hence before long even they will be affected. The drug causes renal (kidney) failure in the vultures that feed on a single infected corpse or dead cattle, making them sick and droopy, till they die within weeks after ingestion. However, till now the decline of the griffons has not been observed since it is very difficult to monitor the flocks of these birds, and those that die in India are replaced by new flocks arriving from Central Asia. Ultimately, the numbers in Central Asia are expected to fall.

However, in March 2005 the Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, announced a total ban on the veterinary use of the drug Diclofenac, in India, and called for a universal ban elsewhere. The results of experiments on alternate drugs, such as 'Meloxicam', are promising as the trials have shown. The birds treated with alternate drugs have not yet shown any symptoms of kidney failure. Nevertheless, how long will it take for the vulture populations to rebound to the levels a decade or more ago remains anybody's guess. Therefore, knowing that this question is one of the utmost in the minds of orthodox Parsis, I asked Professor Green if the vulture populations will return in South Asia in the near future. His reply is extremely interesting and I reproduce it here for our community:





**White backed vulture**

"Thank you for your interest. If Diclofenac is banned as effectively as Government of India can practically achieve, it will still be quite some time before the environment is sufficiently free of it to allow any remaining viable vulture populations to increase and begin to re-colonize lost ground. The drug is also widely used in human medicine and I suspect that some of this will be diverted to use on livestock for a while. Because vulture populations are declining by between 20% and 50% per year, I think we can expect lower populations than now and local extinctions even with a ban in the medium term (say within 5-10 years)."

"If there are still substantial populations (say >30 breeding pairs) left in 5 to 10 years in some regions when (if) the ban is fully implemented then I think that vulture numbers can recover. However, I do not think that there will be tens of millions of vultures in India and Pakistan again within the next 50 years, or maybe ever. Nevertheless, if conservation efforts now underway go well there might be hundreds of thousands of vultures and the former breeding range might be more or less fully occupied. But first we need Diclofenac to be totally removed from use in humans and livestock."

I might add, this has not yet clearly happened on an all-India basis. Also, the drastic decline in the vulture populations has led to an increase in the number of feral dogs, rats, and crows which in turn has led to an increased incidence of rabies! There have also been reports that there has been an increase in human Anthrax cases all over northern India that has been attributed to the decline in vulture numbers and the non-disposal of animal carcasses. Anthrax most commonly occurs in wild and domestic lower vertebrates - cattle, sheep, goats, camels, antelopes, and other herbivores. But it can occur in humans when they are exposed to infected animals or tissue from infected animals that are dead.

### **ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE THE VULTURE POPULATION**

Some Parsis, led by Khojeste Mistree - a Zarathushti scholar, back a proposal to build a giant aviary at Doongerwadi with British expertise and breed a captive population of vultures to serve the Towers. But reservations about the cost of the project as well as doubts about whether it would work, have put the plan on hold for the present. The estimates, call for \$250,000 for the first aviary and thereafter \$50,000/year for its maintenance. Vultures breed very slowly. Typically a mating pair produces only one chick per year and it takes 4 years for it to mature to full size. Also, even if the birds bred in an aviary survive to adulthood, a single corpse, that has been taking drugs with Diclofenac, can knock out a healthy flock in weeks. This realization could be one of the reasons that the project has not gone ahead. But all is not lost just yet. Recently, the alternative drug, Meloxicam, has been introduced in Nepal. The initial results are very encouraging and the vultures are expected to revive from the brink of extinction in that country according to local experts. Both, the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have called for Meloxicam to be made freely available at subsidized prices to encourage its immediate use and replacement for Diclofenac.



Also, the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) has decided to take up, on a war footing, the task of breeding vultures, which can later be transported to various parts of the country. Parsis from the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad say that there could be a pile of bodies in the two Towers of Silence located in Bhoiguda and Parsigutta as vultures were last seen in Hyderabad two decades ago! According to the CCMB plan, which got kicked off to a good start recently, white-backed vultures would be reproduced through artificial insemination. To this end, the Central Zoo Authority is about to transfer a flock of vultures from Gujarat to the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad. Captive breeding will take place in the new aviary that will come up at the zoo.



## ALTERNATE DISPOSAL METHODS SUGGESTED

But for the moment, that still leaves the Parsis of Mumbai in dire straits as far as disposal of their dead are concerned. Homi Dhalla has tried his best to make the solar panels work in place of the vultures. But the solar reflectors take days to desiccate skeletons with the skin and dried flesh still clinging to the bones. Dhun Baria, a 65-year old Parsi lady staying in Mumbai, who often accosts BPP trustees to urge them to build an Aramgarh at Doongerwadi, for those Parsis, who wish to be cremated, affirms, that the solar panels are extremely delicate and require constant maintenance. Very recently, Ms. Baria distributed handbills showing photos of bare and rotting bodies of the deceased piled one on top of the other. Several Parsis, including this writer, have begun to doubt if disposal by solar panels amounts to death with dignity. Khojeste Mistree, with a sizable following among the conservative Parsis, sees the reflectors as little more than a solar-powered crematorium. And high priest Firoze Kotwal agrees saying "From a religious point of view, this method is not very proper." I would like to propose to the Mumbai Parsi community to build, in addition to an aramgarh, an electric crematorium at Doongerwadi (or elsewhere) for the exclusive use of the Parsis and allow progressive priests to conduct funeral prayers. I am aware that Zarathushti scriptures do not mention any other method of disposal other than "Dokmenashini" and "Khurshed nagirishni", but we live in modern times where this method is no longer very practical for those Zarathushtis who do not live near a dokhma or where the dokhma does not attract any vulture or other carrion birds for a speedy disposal of the deceased.

Faramarz B. Sethna of Gandhidham in Kutch has come up with a novel idea of using wolves, hyenas, alligators and crocodiles in place of vultures (Parsiana, Aug. 7, 2006). Also, when a school of piranha fish is



in a feeding frenzy in the Amazon River the water appears to boil and churn red with blood. Piranha attack with such ferocity, that they strip an animal carcass of its flesh within a matter of minutes. A sizable pond or a cement tank be excavated at Doongerwadi, filled with water, and populated with a large number of piranha fish imported from the Amazon, alligators from Florida where lately they have become a menace, and crocodiles from all over India can also help in the rapid disposal and would make ecological sense. This could take care of three corpses, (about 400 lbs of flesh) on an average, that is brought to the Towers daily for disposal. The bones left behind could be retrieved and buried in the pits beside the Towers. The above suggestions, though farfetched, may have some merit, such as disposal of the body speedily and for giving

sustenance to another one of God's creatures.

Having your body freeze-dried and then shattered to make a soil-enriching powder could provide an ecologically-friendly alternative. A Swedish ecologist is proposing the idea of a "green burial" as an environmentally friendly alternative to sky and ground burials and cremation. "If you come from the soil, you



*Ardeshir B. Damania born in India, received a Bachelors Degree in Botany and Zoology and a Masters Degree in Plant*

*Ecology from the University of Bombay, and a Masters and Ph.D. in Plant Genetic Resources from the University of Birmingham, England. He worked for Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, and then for 10 years was the Cereal Curator, based in Aleppo, Syria for the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).*

*He is currently Associate Research Geneticist with the Genetic Resources Conservation Program at the University of California, has edited over 15 books and authored over 120 papers on wheat improvement and conservation of genetic resources .*

*In addition to his research Dr Damania takes a keen interest in Indo-Persian history and matters pertaining to the Parsi community and the Zarathushti religion.*

**"Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or of members of the FEZANA Journal's editorial board."**

should also give back to it," says Sweden-based ecologist, Susanne Wiigh-Masak. Her method safely returns all organic compounds to the soil within six months. Wiigh-Masak has tested her technique on dead pigs and cows. She immerses the carcasses in a bath of liquid nitrogen at less than -196°C, while bombarding them with ultrasound waves to crack open the tissue so the nitrogen can penetrate and deep-freeze the carcasses right to the core. Applying a vacuum, removes water from the remains. What is left is a hygienic, odorless powder that is less than one per cent water. A body weighing 150 lbs is reduced to about 36 lbs of dry powder, which can be returned to the soil with beneficial results. It is estimated that the cost of freeze-drying bodies will be comparable to that of cremation. (See Aspi Manecksha pg 57)

Despite the drop in Parsi population in India from a high of 91,000 in 1971 to 71,000 in 1981 and less than 50,000 in the 2006 census, several Parsis are not inclined to take talk of their impending disappearance too seriously. However, in view of the census figures mentioned above, this attitude may seem complacent, but the Parsis have an impressive record of resilience, single-mindedness, and their adaptability is almost proverbial. May be it is not yet time to write the final chapter in their glorious history in India and abroad.

## **9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time"**

December 28-31, 2009, Dubai, UAE

"It gives me great pride in confirming that the 9th World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Dubai from December 28-31, 2009. Formal permission to host the Congress has been received from **His Excellency Shaikh Hasher Maktoum**,

**Director General, Department of Information, Government of Dubai.**

"The Committee seeks your valuable inputs to make the Congress a purposeful and meaningful event. Please submit names of persons from your area to serve on the extended Congress team. We are also seeking individual and corporate sponsors to keep the fee structure low. Dubai being the centre of commerce and trade, sponsoring companies will receive tremendous benefits.

"We, the Zarathushtis of Dubai welcome you all, our Mobeds, heads of various anjumans, community visionaries and Zarathushtis around the world to Congress 2009" With blessings of Ahura Mazda,

Meher Bhesania, Chair, Congress 2009  
besania@emirates.net.ae



## **"An Ecological and Environmental Friendly method of Disposal of the Dead"**

**An ecological method of disposal which does not involve the use of fire, does not pollute air, water or the soil, and can be easily adopted to our religious ways and practices.**

Aspi Maneckjee Poonawala.

The Zarathushti method of disposal of the dead is called **DAHKMA-NASHINI**, and go back to pre-historic times to the ancient religion of the Aryans known as Mazda-Yasna. Previous to that, the Aryans left the corpse on the mountain tops.

In an article "A guide to funeral ceremonies and prayers." by K. H. Antia (FEZANA Journal-Winter 2005, Zemestan 1374 YZ, Vol.18, No.4. pages 53-57) discusses the rituals and prayers as practiced by the Zarathushtis in India today. In the same issue (page 80), Er. Jal Birdy writes "When the soul separates from the body at the time of death, it is like a newborn infant, alone, fragile and vulnerable. It remains in this delicate state near the body for 3 days and 3 nights. On the dawn of the fourth day (Chahrum), the soul begins its journey toward the spiritual world".

### **Consequences of the Disappearance of the Vulture Population**

Prior to 1990, there used to be 10 million vultures in the Indian subcontinent; since then, 95% of vulture population has been exterminated because of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug called "Diclofenac" used for the veterinary treatment of cows and goats. A post-mortem examination of vultures who ate the remains of the drug-treated animals showed extensive damage by uric acid crystals, to their kidneys, liver and spleen a condition called visceral gout. In Doongarwadi at Mumbai, and other Dohkmas, the vultures have also disappeared, and due to increased urbanization the 5% of the remaining vultures have not returned to these Dohkmas.

Bombay Parsi Panchyat (BPP), has taken various steps to compensate for the lack of vultures, which include use of solar concentrators to dehydrate the corpse, use of herbal scented powders containing microorganisms and lime to increase the rate of decomposition of the corpse. However during the monsoon season these measures do not work due to lack of sunshine, and the rain washes out the added powders and lime. Foul smell of the decomposing corpses, has caused a major problem for the occupants of the recently built high-rise apartment buildings nearby the Dahkma in Mumbai.

A Parsi woman from Mumbai Ms. Dhan Baria recently went public, and distributed a CD containing pictures, and a 15 minute video of decomposing bodies in the Dohkma. This has hurt the sentiments of many Parsis in Mumbai, and BPP trustees have been blamed for not managing the Dohkmas properly. I myself have sympathies for the trustees, as they are doing their best under the circumstances. It is easy to criticize them than to do something to resolve the problem. Various alternate suggestions have been made to the BPP Trustees, which included cremation and burial. However, these methods of disposal are not accepted in our religion, as they pollute the fire, air, and soil of Mother Earth. Herewith, I am presenting an ecological method of disposal which does not involve the use of fire, does not pollute air, water or the soil, and can be easily adopted to our religious ways and practices.

### **Promessa, an alternate method of freeze drying the body**

In DISCOVER Vol. 27 No. 09 September 2006, it was mentioned that a Swedish company, "Promessa", will freeze dry the body in liquid nitrogen, pulverize it with a slight mechanical vibration, and seal the resulting powder in a cornstarch coffin. They claim this "ecological burial" will decompose in 6 to 12 months.

**DAHKMA-NASHINI** utilizes solar energy to dehydrate the body, and this new method uses freeze drying to dehydrate the body. The technology will be available next year, (2007). The process is completely automated, no human touch is required for the corpse once it is placed in the chamber. The equipment is named "Promator" and can separately process 4 or 8 bodies per day, and the larger plant costs around 1 million Euros. The company can also lease "Promator", so the initial investment can be minimized.



*Dr. Aspi Maneckjee Poonawalla a retired biochemist/toxicologist, lives a simple life with Asha or righteousness in rural Nova Scotia, Canada. He lives alone and does reading, writing, organic gardening, Parsi cooking, and keeps fit and healthy by exercising. He can be reached at amaneckjee@yahoo.ca*

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The web-site ([www.promessa.se/index\\_en.asp](http://www.promessa.se/index_en.asp)), gives all the information with illustrations on the process. Briefly, the corpse is first chilled to - 18 deg C., then is placed in a chamber and cooled with liquid nitrogen (-196 deg. C.). The body then becomes very firm and brittle, and a 5 mm mechanical vibration at certain defined frequency prepares the remains for freeze drying. The cellular water in the solid phase (ice) evaporates to water vapor under vacuum. What is left is approximately 30% of the total weight of the corpse as dust (as ~70% of the body mass is water, which is removed by freeze drying). Mercury (from dental amalgams), and all other metals (from "spare parts") are then removed from the dust, using well known techniques. The remaining dust is then placed in a coffin made of corn starch/potato starch, which when placed in the top soil, decomposes within 6 to 12 months and becomes fertile soil. A tree or a shrub can be planted on the grave, which will use the nutrients from the compost and grow as a symbol or memorial. The "Promessa concept" is presently marketed in Sweden, UK, NL, Germany, South Africa, Korea and soon in both USA and Canada (Canadian representative in Vancouver is E. Lees Associates).

### **Adaptation of Promessa to Dahkma-Nashini**

I suggest the following modification which can be incorporated into our Zarathushti Dahkma-Nashini system in Mumbai. After the prayers the body can be placed into the Dohkma for up to 3 days for the protection of the soul, then removed and processed in "Promator" according to the above described method. The dust can then be placed back into the central well of the DOHKMA.

I may have hurt the sentiments of many traditional minded Parsis throughout the world by writing this article, as they might think that I am helping out the people who are concerned about the dignity after death. This is not true. The traditional Parsis consider **DAHKMA-NASHINI** as one of the pillars of our religion, and the traditionalist insist that the practice should be continued, despite the fact the bodies are piled up as depicted in Ms. Baria's photographs and the 15 minute video. Traditionalists are asserting that the photographs and video are fake. In my own opinion traditional Parsis are not willing to face the reality, and instead of working with the BPP elected Trustees to resolve the issue they are hindering the process of improving the practice of Dahkma-nashini.

I leave with you a question. Why have Zarathushtis (not all), stopped living by the most important pillar of our religion-- the tenet of Asha or righteousness, as presented in our Ashem Vohu prayer. The highest value known to these New Age Zarathushtis, is the self, and the service of self at the cost of the suffering of others has become the ultimate modulus of successful life to them. Our ancestors have left us a legacy of righteousness, which should be continued, and is most important for the survival of our small community. I strongly suggest that different sectors of our community work together with honesty and integrity to resolve the issue of **DAHKMA-NASHINI, as working together works.**

Amen.

## **ZARATHUSHTI DIRECTORY ON LINE**

The largest Zarathushti Directory is being created online by Yazdi Tantra and Ader Gandi. Originally inspired by Ader, there are now over 53,000 names and addresses from published and public sources from all over the world and from individuals registering directly online at [www.zoroastriandirectory.com](http://www.zoroastriandirectory.com)

It is a wonderful resource of finding old friends and reestablishing contacts. And by registering we can even know how many Zarathushtis there are in the world!!!

If you have access to any directories online or offline or if you could help in furthering the process, please do let Yazdi Tantra know and Ader and he will assist in getting that data online, including conversion of data into electronic form, if need be. You could also publicize the directory amongst your members and encourage them to enroll for this one of a kind project.

If you have a website provide a link to [www.zoroastriandirectory.com](http://www.zoroastriandirectory.com)

### **Celebration for providing 50-years of Dasturship with dignity and integrity** (October 3, 1956 - October 2, 2006) **at the Zarathushti Anjuman Atash Behram in Mumbai** **The first priest of the community in Mumbai to complete such a long tenure.**

On October 3, the high priest of the community, Dastur Saheb Khaikhusroo Dastur Minocher Jamasp Asa, of the 109-year-old Anjumana Atash Behram at Dhobitalao, completed 50 years of Dasturship (high priesthood). Khaikhusroo is the first priest of the community in Mumbai to complete such a long tenure.

600 Parsis-Iranis attended the felicitation function at the Regal Room of the Hilton Towers in Mumbai which had been spearheaded by WAPIZ. (World Appliance of Parsi Irani Zarathuhstis).

Dastur Kaikhusroo is the great grandson of Dasturji Dr. Jamaspji Minocherji Jamasp Asa, the first Dasturji Saheb of the Anjuman Atash Behram. Dastur Dr. Jamaspji, Manpatra, a scholar of international repute was an authority on rituals Khambatta, Chairman, WAPIZ on right. and several agiaries in Mumbai, Surat and Pune were consecrated under his supervision. He also compiled the Pahlavi Dictionary.

In 1956, Dastur Kaikhusroo at the young age of 24, took on the onerous responsibility of assuming the mantle of the "Dasturi Gaadi". In 1966 he obtained his doctorate from Bombay University under the supervision of Dasturji Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza.



Dasturji Jamasp Asa, wife, Dr. Bakhtawar, son, Dr. Ervad Jamasp, daughter, Dr. Shirin



Dasturji Jamasp Asa (center) receiving the Saman in a silver scroll of honor. Mr Areez Khambatta, Chairman, WAPIZ on right.

Since 1960, along with Dasturji Mirza, he taught Avesta and Pahlavi at Sir J. J. Z. Zarthoshti and Mulla Firoz Madressas. Since the early nineties he became the Principal of the Madressas and served in that capacity till 1999. At present he supervises Ph.D. students in Avesta Pahlavi at the Mumbai University. Dasturji Kaikhusroo walked in the footsteps of his illustrious great grandfather and has carved out a niche for himself in the international academic arena as well as within the hearts of the Parsi community in India and abroad. Dasturji has edited academic volumes and books. In 1965-66 and in early 70s he was a guest lecturer at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, West Germany where he also worked with Prof. Helmut Humbach.

In 1974 he was invited by Prof. Mahyar Nawabi of Shiraz, Iran, and he edited 50 volumes of Avesta and Pahlavi manuscripts. At present he is closely associated with Prof. John Hinnells in writing a book about the History of Bombay Parsis.

His great grandfather had a rich collection of manuscripts which were referenced by scholars from all over the world including Dr Martin Haug. Dasturji Kaikhusroo has preserved most of this unique collection

Recalling the day he was installed the high priest in October 1956, Dasturji Khaikhusroo said: "I never imagined that I would have the honor to serve my community for such a long time. However, it has been a happy, eventful and fulfilling journey."

But despite his achievement, Dasturji is worried about the decline in the Parsi population, inter-caste marriages and over-secularization. He said *"for those who have strayed away from the religion of their birth, for those who have sought to abandon our traditions and Parsi way of life, and for those who have stopped wearing their sudreh and kusti,*

I would like to say to them most reverently, come back into the fold, and we will welcome you with open arms. So that we may once again be united in strength and remain committed to our Mazdayasni Zarthoshti faith.”

{Acknowledgement to Dr Ramiyar Karanjia for reference to his article in the Jame Jamshed on line. Acknowledgment to Khojeste and Firoza Mistree for the Photos }

FEZANA President Dr Rustom Kevala and all the officers, joined hundreds of other people in felicitating Dasturji on this glorious achievement . The letter sent to WAPIZ is reproduced (below).

#### THE JOURNAL WISHES

Dastur Dr. Kaikhushroo Minocherji JamaspAsa, High Priest, Anjuman Atash Behram all the very best in health to continue guiding the spiritual life of the community .

[I send my personal felicitations to Dasturji, He performed my marriage and has been involved with many of the religious events in my family... Dolly Dastoor, Ed.]

October 3, 2006

### FELICITATION LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF FEZANA

**Respected Dastur Dr. Kaikhushroo Minocherji Jamasp Asa**

**High Priest, Anjuman Atash Behram**

FEZANA thanks the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis, WAPIZ, for the opportunity to send this message and share our thoughts on this joyous occasion.

FEZANA extends its felicitations to you, Dastur Dr. Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa, for your 50 years of service and leadership of the Anjuman Atash Behram in Mumbai. Your contributions to the spiritual life of Zarathushtis, your scholarly publications, and your efforts to maintain, preserve and uphold the traditions and religious practices of the Mazdayasni Zarathushti faith, are appreciated and admired all over the world.

Today, Zarathushtis are facing many issues and challenges that require judicious deliberation and courageous leadership. The issues are complex and often defy simple solutions. Zarathushtis are perplexed and worried by the open and constant warfare in the media, on the Internet, and even in courts of law.

We in North America are searching for ways to unite our community so that we can move forward with dignity and respect in the free and open society in which we live. We are seeking the spirituality, fellowship and healthy relationships that a religion should provide; and we are always open to in-depth direction from the religious hierarchy. Collaboration in this area between the learned Dasturs in India and Iran, and the dedicated mobeds and laity in North America would be a welcome step in the right direction. FEZANA offers its full resources to facilitate this process.

We wish you and your family a long and harmonious life and pray that your services and wisdom will continue to enrich our far-flung community for a very long time.

On behalf of FEZANA's Board of 25 Zarathushti Anjumans and the widespread Zarathushti community in North America,

*Rustom Kevala, Ph.D., President,*

*Bomi Patel, Vice-President,*

*Katayn Kapadia, Treasurer,*

*Rita Engineer, Secretary,*

*Anahita Daryushnejad, Assistant Secretary*

### MEHRGAN CELEBRATIONS in IRAN

Amongst the Monthly Festivities ( The coincidence of a Roj with the Maah) the Mehrgan Festivals used to be celebrated, by our forefathers, with a grandeur only next to the "Nowrooz". One aspect of it, mainly from the point of view of our agriculturist ancestors, has been that whereas the Nowrooz heralded in the spring season and, with it, the blooming of vegetation and agricultural products Mehrgan heralds in the autumn and second half the year when the main crops are harvested and the cattle have increased by their utmost, for that year. The Mehrgan Festivities are also related to coincide with the, mythical, public uprising against the tyrannies of Zohak, led by Kaveh the blacksmith and the subsequent crowning



of the just king Shah Fereidoon (Traethaona).



"Mehr" meaning love, fidelity, and a symbol of the sunlight (The halo around the sun, and thus the shape of the wedding ring and the ancient tool, held by the parties, during the sealing of any "Bond") has been regarded as the guardian of justice (Mainly as the presiding judge over the soul's *Judgment Day* as well as the Yazata who watches over the

maintaining of fidelity, promises and *deals*. Any breach of promises, including a break up of marital engagements was considered a *Mehr o Droj* (Lying to Mehr) and was believed to involve the highest punishments.

Even upto the recent past (60 years back) Jashn e Mehrgan used to be celebrated between five and seven days. Feasts with sumptuous ceremonial food, mainly involving roasted lamb and home baked Naan, was rampant, and would be distributed to far away friends and relatives, who could not attend their feast. On the fifth day a group of musicians, continuously, playing traditional wind instruments with tambourine etc. and flocked by a joyful group, would stop at the houses of prospective Behdins, who were already expecting such visits and would invite the group in to entertain and send them off with bundles of dry fruits etc.

Nowadays Mehrgan is, still, celebrated at home, mainly with roast chicken as the main dish, and in community halls with joyful dances, music and informative speeches. Z schools observe a holiday and these functions are very well attended.

The pictures forwarded, had been taken at the Tehran Pars Marker Hall, where over 500 had attended including some Muslims mainly University staff and research students, who had, previously, justified their presence with the Tehran Z Anjuman, the main organizer of this function. Similar functions have been held in various parts of Yazd and in Kerman.



**Mehraban Firouzgary, High Priest of Iran**



# THE PALLONJI SHAPOORJI HOME

FOR SENIOR CITIZENS OF THE B. D. PETIT PARSEE GENERAL HOSPITAL

**Inaugurated August 25th 2006 (Khordad Sal) with a Jashan.**

**A viable option for people wanting to retire in India.**

Recognizing the fact that the aging profile of the community as well as the migration of the younger segment, has put a heavy strain on the older generation to continue living alone in their relatively large homes, due to health and safety reasons, the Pallonji Shapoorji Trust, built and equipped The Pallonji Shapoorji Senior Citizens Home of The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in the precincts of the hospital at Cumballa Hill, with its own dedicated gardens filled with fruit trees, fragrant flowers and medicinal and insect repellent plants. Patsy Pallonji Mistry, was the main person overseeing the needs of the centre.

## GROUND & FIRST FLOORS:

The Ground floor will accommodate the poor and needy seniors free of charge. The first floor will be subsidized at a reduced rate of about Rs. 3500/- per month, which includes morning and afternoon tea, breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

## SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS:

The second and the third floors are designed for seniors who can afford to pay. These floors have a separate entrance with their own elevator, together with a separate section of the garden. There is a common living room, dining room and a writing room, an attendant's room with its own bathroom, on each of these floors for the use of servants employed by the residents. The second floor has fully furnished, eight double rooms and three single rooms with large attached bathrooms. (double room Rs. 18,000/- per month approx. and single room Rs.12,000/- per month approx.)

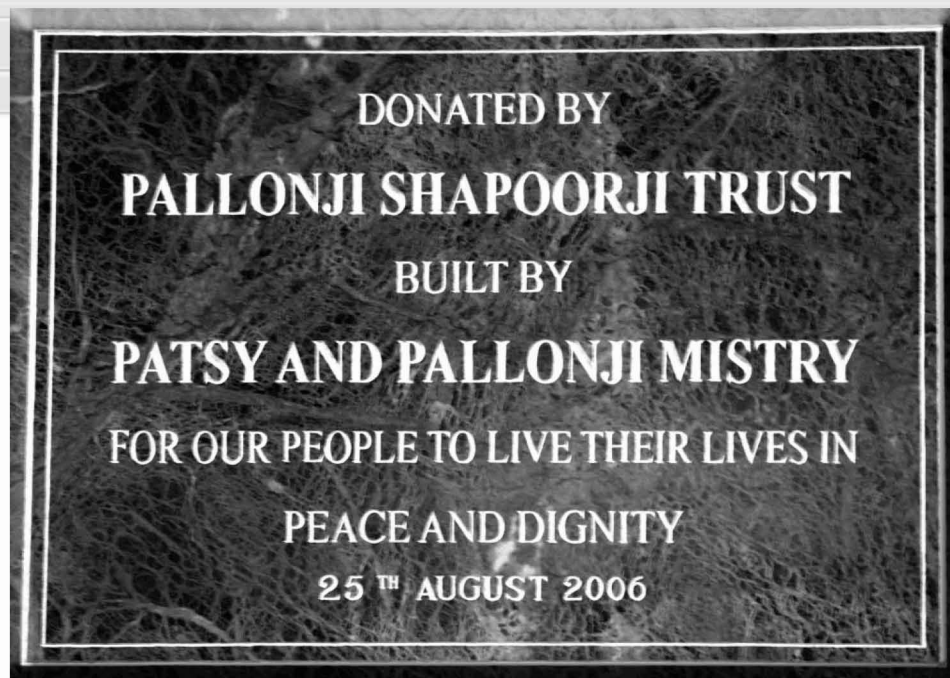
The Third floor has six apartments of 800/900 sq. feet each, consisting of a living-cum dining room, a kitchen, a bedroom and a large bathroom with all superior amenities. (approx cost Rs. 50,000/- per month which is less than the going market price )

Residents of the second and third floors may either order food from the main kitchen or make their own arrangements. Laundry and cleaning facilities is provided for a fee.

This 58 bed home is meant for people 65 years and over, with no serious disabilities. Being close to the hospital, medical help will always be available. The residents can pursue their leisure activities either within the home or outside it.

The Home is managed jointly by members of Pallonji Shapoorji Trust and members from the Managing Committee of The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital.





This home was built to give seniors the comfort of living in a good locality with congenial surroundings amongst members of their own community which hopefully would avert feelings of loneliness, anxiety and apprehension and allow them to spend their twilight years in comfort, peace and dignity.



From left: Homa and Aban Petit, Shapoor, Pallon, Patsy and Cyrus Mistry, Hector Mehta, Zarir Bhathena

Mr. & Mrs. Pallonji Mistry, are great philanthropists with deep feelings for the Zarathushti community, who have facilitated many worthy causes over the years and continue to do so. Their elegant taste, as well as their concern for the comfort and enjoyment of a better life for the under privileged of our community is amply displayed in this building which is now open for use of Zarathushtis.

If interested to find a comfortable and secure residence for your family member or for yourself if you wish to retire in India, contact Mr. F. K. Bhathena, Pallonji Shapoorji Charity Trust, Telephone: 011 91 226749 0000 Fax: 011 91 22 6633 8176 OR The President, The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital Fax: 011 91 22 2367 6652

***PHOTOS COURTESY PARISANA Publications, India***





# INTERALIA

## FEZANA NGO Delegation to the United Nations DPI/NGO Conference

By **Phee Vania**  
and  
**Shara Godiwalla**

On September 6-8, 2006, over 1,600 participants representing almost 600 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) attended the 59th annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization (DPI/NGO) Conference at the United Nations Headquarters in

New York. Five Zarathushtis from North America -- Homi Gandhi (Glen Rock, New Jersey), Shara Godiwalla (Silver Spring, Maryland), Behram Pastakia (Bethesda, Maryland), Diana Vania (Toronto, Canada - youth), and Phee Vania (Toronto, Canada), represented FEZANA at the United Nations Conference.

"The practice of religion differs widely. But at heart we are dealing in universal values. To be merciful; to be tolerant; to love thy neighbor: no religion can claim a monopoly on such teachings. Such values are deeply ingrained in the human spirit itself. It is little wonder that the same values animate the Charter of the United Nations, and lie at the root of our search for world peace." ---

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, August 2000



The purpose of FEZANA's participation at the United Nations is to promote world peace.

*The delegates, (Left to right: Behram Pastakia, Shara Godiwalla, Diana Vania, Phee Vania and Homi Gandhi),*

determined to raise awareness of Zarathushtis, dressed in traditional Zarathushti clothing to make a visual impact. It was a very effective way to network, provide information on the Zarathushti Deen and share our vision to work together.



The conference was entitled "Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development" and the unfinished business references the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, eliminate gender inequality and environmental degradation, and ensure access to education, healthcare and clean water, by 2015 (see related article in this issue). The Conference roundtables and workshops addressed the following themes: science and technology for education; emerging approaches to health care, including gender-based HIV and AIDS; human security: responsibility to protect and the

# INTERALIA

peace building commission; civil society and global partnerships for development; commitment to reducing extreme poverty and hunger, and promoting respect for cultural diversity in conflict resolution. With an emphasis on strategic partnership building, this Conference facilitated networking and the exchange of best practices between Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society representatives.

The opening session included an address by Mr. Jan Eliason, President of the United Nations General Assembly. In his speech, he reflected that “Without passion nothing happens in life and without compassion, the wrong things happen in life.”

We also had the opportunity to hear a report from Mr. Hans Blix, Chairman of Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. He warned that while stagnation and government indecision is contributing to nuclear weapons proliferation, he highlighted that small arms are the ones that are killing people (not nuclear arms). He urged NGO’s and society to appeal to their national politicians to seek ways of moving disarmament forward. In response to Mr. Homi Gandhi’s question, Mr. Blix further elaborated on his views of Iran.

*1600 delegates from around the world participated in the Conference. Fortuitously, on the opening day of the Conference, an article on “Zoroastrians in the Western Diaspora” was published on the front-page of the New York Times, helping us raise awareness of Zarathushtis.*

Ms. Michaela Walsh, founder and past president of Women's World Banking, a worldwide network that encourages women's economic self-sufficiency by helping them start businesses, spoke passionately about civil society being an actively involved community (global/local) that takes action to help improve society. In response to Ms. Shara Godiwalla's remark that it was important to define civil society, Ms. Walsh informed the assembly that civil society can be interpreted to mean that it is every individual's responsibility to get the basics (water, food etc) to those who do not have it.

Behram Pastakia offered a visionary suggestion in the session chaired by Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, H.E., Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), United Nations, for the UN to work towards designating a season of peace between September 11 (the anniversary of the birth of M.K. Gandhi's satyagrah movement in South Africa) and September 21 (International Day of Peace.) Mr. Chowdhury was very receptive to this idea. It would indeed be wonderful if such a “season of peace” can be declared by the United Nations.



The Conference afforded an excellent opportunity to network. Both Behram Pastakia and Homi Gandhi, having attended previous UN Conferences, have established an enviable network of well-placed individuals from around the globe. It was heartening to see the respect and affection with which they were greeted and they were truly great ambassadors for Zarathushtis. They introduced the newer members of the FEZANA delegation to their established network and now Phee Vania (Chair of the North American Zoroastrian Congress to be held in Toronto in 2007) has been accepted to the planning committee for next year's United Nations conference.

This year, for the first time, the UN Conference required one youth participant for each delegation. However, the Conference did not provide sessions specifically designed for youth, nor did it feature a variety of youth presenters for the workshops and roundtables. While the UN is now grappling with how to engage youth, FEZANA has been committed to grooming and involving youth in this and other endeavors for a long time. For the past four years, FEZANA has sent youth to the Conference. This year, our youth representative was Diana Vania. She will be organizing a UN-sponsored STAND UP event at her high school in October to raise awareness of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. In addition, Ms. Vania will, as an on-going project, with Mr. Behram Pastakia's guidance, work for Operation Eyesight; to collect used eyeglasses and distribute them to the needy in developing countries.



Throughout the Conference we were pleased to meet some very interesting persons: the Prince of Morocco, performer and activist Roberta Flack, Speed-skating Olympic Gold Medallist Joey Cheek and the very dedicated and gracious Mrs. Nan Annan. While there were many luminaries at the Conference, no one's arrival was more eagerly anticipated than that of Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, and the crowd's pulse jumped when he entered the Conference room. He thanked the NGOs at the Closing Session for strengthening his hands while approaching many

diplomatic missions. Hundreds of people paid their respect for his worldwide work towards improving world dignity, development and security.

Attending the United Nations was as much a privilege as an obligation. We, who can, must help others. Demonstrating the true Zarathushti legacy of philanthropy, members of the FEZANA UN-NGO team will continue to work towards improving the human condition. Those who would like to join us, please contact us at the following:

**Contact Information:**

**Behram Pastakia:**

**E-mail: [BPastakia@aol.com](mailto:BPastakia@aol.com)**

**Homi Gandhi:**

**E-mail: [homidgandhi@gmail.com](mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com)**



# Zarathushti Youth at United Nations Conference

Diana Vania

This September, I had a great opportunity to attend the 59th Annual Department of Information/Non-Governmental Organizations (DPI/NGO) Conference at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The title of the conference was Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development. 1600 NGO representatives from all over the world attended the conference. I was the youth representative for the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA). I attended with four adult representatives from FEZANA, and they gave me excellent guidance that helped me maximize my experience at the Conference.

Every day the participants had the choice of attending one of ten workshops, each relating to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The sessions I attended focused on networking for effective partnerships, nurturing science and technology in young females, gender-based HIV/AIDS, and reducing poverty and hunger.

- **Networking:** I learned that in order to network well, people must find a common ground between them and they have to be accepting, understanding, and willing to listen to each other's ideas. I tried these new techniques at the Conference and made lots of great contacts.
- **Science and Technology in Young Females:** High school girls show very little interest in engineering, and think of engineering as a 'man's profession'. We need to customize the message about engineering for girls, and show them that they are able to pursue a career in engineering, and that they can succeed.
- **Gender-based HIV/AIDS:** This is a topic that interests me very much. The Conference was very much about empowering women, and helping the public overcome the stigma surrounding gender-based HIV/AIDS. I learned that women are three times more likely to be HIV positive than men, and that 50% of HIV/AIDS patients are women. Did you know that 75% of new HIV infections of 15-20-year olds are in girls and young women? I heard about the ABCs of AIDS: Abstinence, Be faithful, use Condoms.
- **Reducing Poverty and Hunger:** The real difference between people is not the color of their skin or the language they speak, but the opportunities they have. Every night, 824 million people go to sleep hungry. Something must be done to put a stop to this.

There were many high-profile people moderating and presenting at the sessions. Some of the people I met include the Prince of Morocco, an Olympic Gold-medallist, and diplomats from all over the world. The conference attendees were very committed to achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals.



# Zarathushti Youth at United Nations Conference



*Diana Vania with Moulay Hicham Ben Abdallah el Alaoui, His Royal Highness Prince of Morocco, who moderated an extremely interesting and informative session on Commitment to Reducing Extreme Poverty and Hunger.*

My favourite part of the conference was the Evening Reception, where I met a lot of interesting people from around the world. I practised the networking skills I had learned in a seminar that day and I made friends with a university student from Switzerland, and three high school girls from Ohio who participate in the Model UN Club at their school. I met a lot of interesting people who are working towards achieving the MDGs. Before the conference, I was not aware of all the different NGOs around the world, and that they too are trying to put a stop to poverty. It was a special honour to meet Mrs. Nan Annan, wife of Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.



*From left Diana Vania, Phee Vania, Homi Gandhi and Mrs. Nan Annan*

I wanted to come away from the UN and make a difference in my community and for the world. At the conference, I learned about an event that is being run by the Millennium Campaign, called STAND UP Against Poverty, Stand Up for the Millennium Development Goals. The UN is trying to get thousands of people to physically stand up and take a pledge against poverty on October 15th-16th to set a Guinness World Record. The event will raise awareness and send a clear message to political leaders worldwide to keep their MDG promises. I brought this idea back to my school, and on October 16th, we are all going to stand up and pledge to create awareness about poverty.

A lot of youth think that it is difficult to help with the MDGs because they are such big goals to be achieved, but it is really simple if everyone thinks globally and acts locally. One great way for youth to get involved in achieving the MDGs is to create awareness about the poverty, hunger, and disease that people are living with all over the world. Our generation can make a difference. Please take the time to visit the UN website at <http://www.un.org/>.



*Diana Vania with Mr. Salil Shetty, Director Millennium Campaign*

I am interested in working with other youth who want to make a difference. Some of my volunteer work includes: CIBC Run for the Cure (Breast Cancer); 30 Hour Famine; Locks of Love; and Character In Action club to raise \$6000 to build a school in Kenya. I donated my money to Free the Children to buy a water well, sanitation system & medical supplies for a village in India. You can contact me at [diana\\_kv@hotmail.com](mailto:diana_kv@hotmail.com).

I realize that the United Nations Conference was an amazing opportunity for me, as I know many other youth do not have this chance, and I am very grateful to have attended.



IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

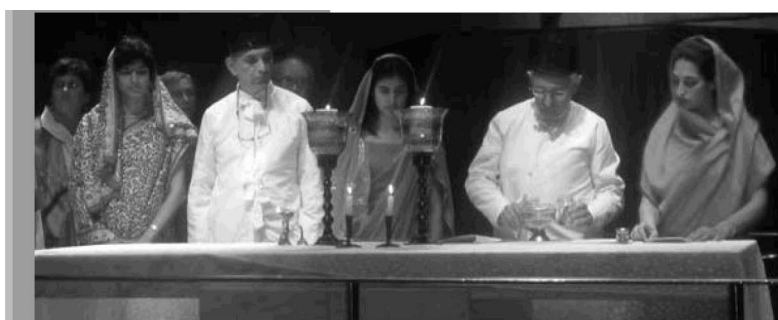
# ZARATHUSHTIS AT INTER-FAITH EVENTS IN NEW YORK CITY

By Homi Gandhi

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*

Inter-faith events take place throughout the year but the month of September brings a special season of such events. May be it is because of the beginning of the new school year. Or is it because the new session of United Nations General Assembly starts at this time of year?

As in the past, for Zarathuhstis the season did include the attendance at the Inter-faith meeting for the new UN General Assembly. However, this year's season



of Inter-faith prayer meetings began with an invitation from Rev. Kathleen Stone, Chaplain of the Church Center for the UN, to participate in the service on September 7, 2006 to celebrate the theme of the 59th UN-NGO Conference—"the Unfinished Business". The service was titled "A Ballast for Partnership by Religious Leaders". The program was woven around Humata, Hukhata, and Huvarashta and all five FEZANA UN-NGO

Team representatives Diana and Phee Vania, Shara Godiwala, Behram Pastakia, and Homi Gandhi,(photo above) recited the Ashem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Atash Niyaesh prayers in unison, along with an explanatory translation, after lighting a fire on an Afarganyu. Garbed in our garas and daglees, we made a visual impact that received much interest from the congregation of over 200 souls attending the service who filled the hall to capacity. The handout distributed at the event identified Zarathushtis as being bridge builders. Christians, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, Bahais, Buddhists, and Unitarians participated in the prayers, each in their own faith traditions, as part of one human family. Dr. Robert Orr, Assistant Secretary General for Policy and Planning in the UN Secretary General's Office, thanked the religious communities on behalf of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and in his remarks indicated that working and being together in harmony was what the mission of the UN was all about. The Sikhs graciously provided langar,(meal) as they had so memorably done at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain.

This was followed by participation in the "9/11 Unity Walk", arranged in collaboration with Religions for Peace, USA on Monday, September 11, 2006. Prior to the walk, Rev. Suzue Nitobe, Shinto Priestess, recited a "Prayer of Flowers". The 3-mile walk started from Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Union Square Park in New York City and weaved through the streets of the city ending finally at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, a stone's throw away from the "Ground Zero". During the walk, the group stopped at Hare Krishna Society Headquarters, Eldridge Street Synagogue, and Sufi Order place. There were over 100 persons walking at one time or another and they carried a large quilt made by American Muslims in remembrance of the 9/11 victims. The quilt is made in the colors and design of stars and stripes and includes all 3024 names of the victims. At St. Peter's Church, there was a closing Inter-faith ceremony, where prayers were offered by all faiths. Homi Gandhi was requested to close the ceremony and he





offered the Yenghe Hatam prayer with Ahem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo and their translations. The Sikhs again provided the langar (meal) on this day as well.

And on September 12, 2006 there was an Inter-faith prayer service honoring the Opening of the 61st UN General Assembly at St. Bartholomew's Church, in New York City, where Ervad Rohinton Dadina (photo left) rendered a Zoroastrian prayer from Kem-Na-Mazda with English translation. It is the testament of the high honor the United Nations is held in all religious communities that religious leaders from over 30 different religious communities come together each year and pray for a successful year, blessing each and every member state which is represented at the United Nations.



*Homi D. Gandhi has served as the President of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) since 2002 and as Treasurer (1986-1988) and as the Treasurer and Chairman of the Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple - the religious corporation that owns the Arbab Rustam Guiv Dare Mehr in Pomona, New York. Homi has been recently appointed as the Chair of the FEZANA Inter-Faith Committee and has been the Co-Chair of FEZANA'S UN – NGO Committee since its inception in 2003. As an NGO, he is FEZANA's main representative at the United Nations. Recently, Homi has been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee of the Religions for Peace Inc. USA.*

## *Our Aussie Jamboree!*

### **G'day Our Fellow Zoroastrian Youth of the World!**

We've come to invite you all to the best thing to happen to the World Zoroastrian Community in recent years!

It's another gathering of the clans where each and every one who wants to truly excel and "Go For Gold" will be Celebrating Life Downunder in December 2007!

### **So come on down for The Fo\_rth World Zoroastrian Yo\_th Congress -2007!**

What was that? Something seems to be missing!

Is it U? - And another U? Gosh! How can we ever do without U and U?

Without U there with US we could sally FORTH of course

~ But what's a YOTH worth without U in it? - So be sure to turn up and help us fill in the blanks

~ To make "OURS" the Best Congress Ever!

**Delara C Mistry: Vice Chair; Shirin J Mistry: Hon Secretary; Khushroo N Patel: Financial Controller; S. J. Mistry, Chairman, "Ushta Tai," 11 Tamarisk Avenue, Glen Waverley, VIC – 3150, Australia. - Telephone: ++ 61 3 9562 0543, Email: [chairman@4wzyc.org](mailto:chairman@4wzyc.org), Website: <http://www.4wzyc.org>**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Unity Walk** in Washington DC on Sunday 10th September 2006

**ZARATHUSHTIS JOIN**

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*



**Sending a message of peace and understanding to the world from Embassy Row**

Unity Walk held in Washington, DC and in New York successfully brought together over 1,500 people, leading religious leaders, celebrities and activists to spread a common message of compassion and hope, in commemoration of the 5th anniversary of 9/11. The second annual Unity Walk was formed around grassroots partnerships with over 150 organizations, congregations and advocacy groups, who locally and nationally work tirelessly for a more just and sustainable world. The dream and vision of the Unity Walk once again proved that it will only foster more peace and spread it's method into other communities in the future.



Walkers (photo above) from diverse faith traditions on the last leg of the Unity Walk in Washington DC, to Mahatma Gandhi's statue on Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC. The event commemorated the 100th anniversary of the launch of the **Satyagrah movement** in the Transvaal, South Africa. A message of hope and peace from Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi was the highlight of the closing ceremony held in front of the Embassy of India in Washington DC.

Copies of the autobiography of M.K. Gandhi "*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*" sent from India were distributed to the walkers by Zarathushti youth volunteers Shara Godiwala, Zal Damkevala and Dinyar Patel at the conclusion of the walk. These books were donated in a gesture of international solidarity by Gujarat Vidyapith, the University established by Gandhi in Ahmedabad, India in 1920. Costs of the shipment to the United States were shared by the Gandhi Smirti and Darshan Samiti, Rajghat, New Delhi. FEZANA President, Rustom Kevala has written a letter of thanks to Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar, Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, India, for his help in facilitating participation from India in this remarkable event.

The message of hope and togetherness was carried by influential media publications from around the world! BBC, Al-Jazeera TV, Al Arabiya, CNN, NBC, Bridges TV, Voice of America, (Urdu Station and India Station) the Washington Post, India Times, Christian Post, Washington Jewish Weekly, Washington Diplomat, Kuwaiti News Agency.

A film of the event in Urdu and English is available on the internet at <http://www.911unitywalk.org/> Efforts are underway to have the film translated into many more languages so that this message of peace, solidarity and friendship between individuals of diverse faith traditions is shared worldwide.



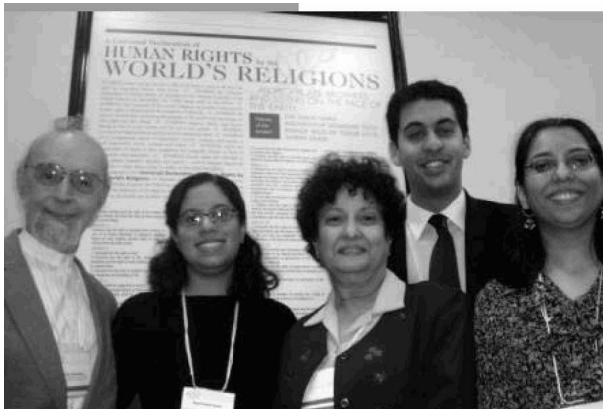
Zarathushtis with the Organizers of the 9/11 Unity Walk in Washington DC at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi – Left to right: Dinyar Patel, Shara Godiwala, Daniel Tutt, main organizer for the 9/11 unity walk, Zal Damkevala and Victor Miller from South Africa who helped us with arranging the distribution of the books.



A Global Conference "The World's Religions After September 11th" was held in Montreal from September 11th -15th bringing together nearly 2000 people of all different faiths from

across the world. Since 9/11, religion has routinely and inappropriately been used as a divisive tool that exacerbates and sometimes instigates international conflicts. McGill University Religious Studies Professor and President of the conference, Arvind Sharma, discussed the transformation that took place after 9/11. In his message to the congress, he writes, "The ground may not have

shifted under our feet at the moment but the very concept of religion underwent a paradigm shift for many of us. Instead of standing for virtue and piety, and peace and harmony, the word religion was launched on a semantic trajectory which would make it a byword for evil, aggression and terror." McGill University hosted this conference with the intention of reuniting our divergent world community so that we can find common ground among all humanity. The conference had a diverse mix of religious historians, religious leaders, lay people, students, and human rights advocates, all with an interest in spirituality and religion.



From left Jehan Bagli, Roshni Kasad, Dolly Dastoor, Nikan Khatibi, Farishta Dinshaw, in front of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions unfurled by 2003 Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi

Among the Zarathushtis attending were Dolly Dastoor (Montreal), Jehan Bagli (Toronto), Farishta Dinshaw (Toronto), Nikan Khatibi (Laguna Niguel, CA), and Roshni Kasad (Berkeley, CA).

A wide range of notable personalities spoke at the conference. On the opening night, Shirin Ebadi, 2003 Noble Peace Prize Winner from Iran, spoke from the perspective of a Muslim woman in Iran and the role Islam plays in human rights issues. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Movement, spoke about the connection between spirituality and religion. His most memorable line was his simple explanation of how religion is like the banana peel and spirituality is like the fruit of the banana within. Throughout the week, we also heard from Deepak Chopra, Karen Armstrong, and many others. In addition to noteworthy speakers, break-out sessions addressed a range of topics from the role of religion in family law to religion and feminism.

The Zarathushtis hosted a panel discussion entitled "Responsibility Beyond Borders--a Zoroastrian Perspective." Dolly Dastoor introduced the topic and the Zarathushti Deen. Nikan followed by discussing the oneness of mankind according to Zarathushti values. He gave his perspective that all people are of



equal worth because we were all created equally by God. By accepting this idea can we live in harmony with each other.? We must not use religion or nationality as a basis for self-worth; otherwise, inequalities are inevitable. We must adopt the viewpoint that "religions are different paths to the same Reality."

Farishta, a former teacher in Karachi, spoke about our responsibility in passing on the value of peace to our children. She emphasized that schools should not just engage in tokenistic peace activities like planting peace trees and engaging in letter campaigns with children of other nations; instead, peace education should be an integral part of the school culture and may be built on Zarathushtrian principles of humata, hukta and hvarashta where children are taught self-reflection and how to identify bias, how to communicate respectfully, and how to translate ideas into reasoned action.

Referencing my own experiences working on a year-long education projection in rural Gujarat, I spoke on the value of engaging in cross-cultural communications. By interacting with and connecting to people of different cultures, we are more likely to see ourselves in others and see others in ourselves. Recognizing the oneness of all people will compel us to treat all people with equality.

Jehan Bagli concluded the presentation emphasizing the major tenets of Zarathushti Deen and the idea that oneness of mankind is in essence, to be one with God. He concluded with, "We have a responsibility to the souls of those who died in the catastrophic event in New York, in wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and in natural disasters to root out all that divides us."



All in all, the conference was a wonderful opportunity to connect with people of different faiths and to listen to new perspectives. We all agreed though, that the conference by nature, attracted people who already have an open-mind about different faiths. The goal now is to go out into our own communities and bring everyone into this circle of brother and sisterhood.

*Roshni Kasad originally from Downingtown, PA, graduated from the University of Delaware in 2002 with a B.A. in Biology. After completing an internship at the National Institutes of Health researching type II diabetes, she traveled to India as an Indicorps Fellow. In rural Gujarat, she spent a year working on a pilot education project called 'Hands-on Science.' Roshni is now in her third year as a graduate student in the Molecular and Cell Biology program at the University of California, Berkeley. Upon graduation, Roshni hopes to work in the field of education. She can be reached at roshnikasad@gmail.com.*

# Celebrating a Season of Peace:

**9/11 to 9/21**

*Religions Working Peace Justice*

Zarathushti Women Participate on the National Mall in  
Washington DC at a Prayer Vigil for the Earth, September 16, 2006

Shirin Shahriary Abadian was invited to participate in a "Sacred Water Ceremony" during the Opening Sunrise Ceremony for A Prayer Vigil for the Earth, Saturday, September 16th on the grounds of the Washington Monument, in Washington DC.

The ceremony began with a traditional drum call followed by strong spiritual women gathering around the fire in an inter-religious dialogue; saying a prayer to bless the water from each of their own faith traditions. Shirin spoke of the Zarathushti Deen,



From left to right:..... PARVIN GHEIBI,  
SHAHNAZ GHEIBI, IRANDOKHT  
SHAHRYARY, SHIRIN SHAHRYARY  
ABADIAN, SIMIN ABADIAN, and an unnamed  
American Indian

"The Zarathushtis believe in Good Thoughts, Good Deeds, and Good Words, guiding all aspects of Zarathushti life. The religion also gives great importance to Free Will allowing Zarathushtis to choose good over evil using their god-given ability to think and decipher good from bad. This profound philosophy was conveyed through Zarathosht, who lived about 3,500 years ago in present day Iran, where the Zarathushti community resided and prospered until Islam's invasion of the Persian Empire in 636 A.D. Instead of accepting Islam, some Zarathushtis chose to keep their faith and live under oppression in a largely self contained community in Iran. Some chose to flee to India and practice

their faith there. Majority of zarathushtis still reside in Iran, India, and large number have formed their own communities across the globe including a local community: Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington."

Shirin then read the translation of the "Ashem Vohu" prayer & asked 5 other Zarathushti ladies that had accompanied her to chant "Ashem Vohu" 3 times. It was a truly moving experience. She then read a few paragraphs from the Gathas blessing the water.

After the ceremony, everyone was complimenting us for the fantastic, educational speech & how they had never heard of Zarathushtis before. They were all impressed with the philosophy of the religion and keen to learn more about it.

There was a table at the Mall with fruits & vegetables very similar to our Mehregan table, called the "Harvest table". Shirin added a statue of the Farvehar & Agarbatis to the table. We found common themes, in our various faith traditions, in caring for creation.

**Photo and report by Dariush Jamasb**

## ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006

*Over Labor Day weekend, the Parsi community participated in the 2006 World Gujarati Conference in Edison, New Jersey. The conference brought together members of the North American Gujarati diaspora for three days of workshops, cultural performances, and good Gujarati jamvanu. The Parsi community contributed by creating a very popular exhibit, staging a natak, and participating in a fashion show. The conference helped remind Parsis that--despite centuries of internal migrations in India and immigration to the West--their community retains the unmistakable cultural imprint of Gujarat.*

*Homi Gandhi, President, ZAGNY; Nawaz Merchant, VP. ZAGNY and Dinyar Patel, community volunteer from neighboring Washington DC, ZAMWI write of their perspectives of the Conference.*

ZAGNY has written a new chapter in the history of the Diaspora in the new millennium. We, on this continent, have our own Associations, Federation and have been involved in the North American Zoroastrian and the World Zoroastrian Congresses for most of the second half of the last century. But this is the first time that we have been invited by another community on this continent to join in the celebration and showcase our community. And that another community happens to be the Gujaratis, who have renewed our contacts and have rejoiced in our achievements. Over 1300 years ago, our forefathers looked for shelter and got it in Gujarat.

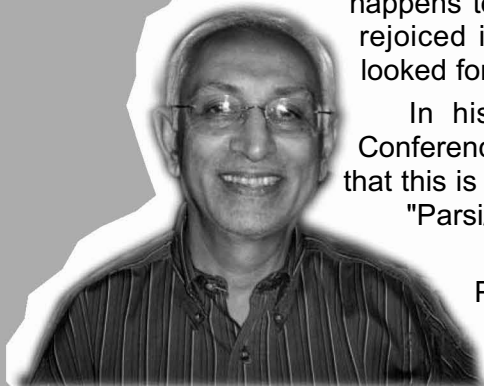
In his concluding remarks, Dr. Navin Patel, Chairman of the Conference Planning Committee, acknowledged our presence by saying that this is the first time that they were able to share this Conference with "Parsi/Zoroastrian community participation with the help of ZAGNY".

A phone call in May 2006 through the contacts of Framroze Patel led to a meeting with Sunil Nayak and Dhiraj Parekh of the Association of Indian Americans of North America (AIANA). Messrs. Nayak and Parekh mentioned that AIANA was hosting a World Gujarati Conference, Sept. 1-3, 2006 at the

Raritan Center Expo Hall in Edison and invited the Zarathushtis, to participate in this venture. With the help of Dr. Lovji Cama and Framroze Patel, the ZAGNY Board of Directors was encouraged to participate and the Board decided that our community would participate.

And then there was a drive to prepare for this event. We tried to obtain information and panels from India, North America and other centers. Finally we had a very successful participation at the Conference by holding an exhibit of our history and Parsi contribution to Gujarat and India, by performing a true "Parsi Gujarati" play, and showcasing our attire in a fashion show. For this, we have many to thank; Noshir Kassad for making beautiful panels, Arshish Pastakia and Mehru Medhora for making innumerable contacts, Ervad Hathiram, Dasturji Dr. Peshotan Mirza, Dr. Ratan Marshall, and Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani for delivering and recording the video messages, and Ajay Agarwal for bringing all these materials from India safely, expeditiously and without any charge.

What ZAGNY has created here is unique. By our involvement in this conference, ZAGNY has built resource materials for our community's future participation in North American events. This resource, in my opinion, should be the community property



**Homi Gandhi,  
President,  
ZAGNY**

# ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006

and, as such, be available for future presentations at, or by, any Zarathushti association in North America. After creating an inventory of items, ZAGNY will post the same on its website.

Throughout those three days of conference and for days before, a band of willing volunteers helped to make this event a real success. As there have been many volunteers, I will not recite all names here but I say here one more time “a big thank you to all volunteers” as without their help, this whole effort would not have been so successful. Please allow me here to say my personal thanks to three individuals, Framroz Patel, Lovji Cama and Nawaz Merchant, who worked diligently each day to make this, their personal event. I cannot thank them enough.

The dedication and sacrifice many months before and during the Conference, for showcasing our community is the testament to our strength which is why our miniscule community has survived and prospered for these long number of years. **And I truly believe that the best of this community is yet to come!**

## Zarathushti Participation at the World Gujarati Conference 2006

**Nawaz Merchant. VP, ZAGNY**

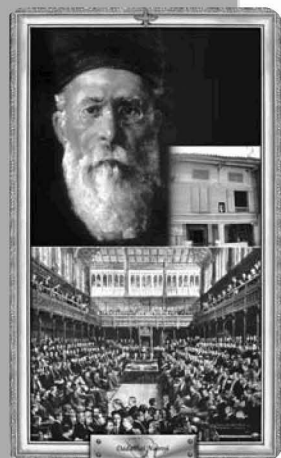
Parsis are a conservative people by nature, I think, rarely comfortable with ‘making waves’. Most of us live our ‘good lives’ under the radar, so to speak, quietly doing what we can to make things better. So when we were invited to participate in the World Gujarati Conference, we embraced the opportunity to bring our community some much-needed exposure within the Indian community and North American world.

### Our participation took two forms:

Our own ZAGNY group of amateur Parsi actors produced a delightful comedy entitled “Tehmulji in Turmoil” which was presented in the WGC Conference main hall and gained a very favorable response. Key players were Farokh Daruwala, Firdosh Mehta, Armaity Patel, Vispi and Percis Daruwala and Micky Todiwala. They were supported by Kamal Daruwala, and Meher Hodiwala who doubled as production assistants and prompters. Daily rehearsals held were at Farokh and Kamal’s residence, as well as Vispi and Percis’ home. Timing is crucial in order to deliver comedic lines, and the team worked incredibly hard to achieve the split-second timing. This effort required a hundred percent commitment from all players, and each of them rose to the challenge, despite personal and work responsibilities.



# ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006



We displayed Parsi and Zarathushti cultural panels and artifacts in a booth entitled "The Parsis of Gujarat and India". Historical Panels were contributed by Lovji and Mehru Cama, Framroze Patel, and a set of Posters on Parsi Traditions was built by Ashish Mirji and Nawaz Merchant. Then came the quest for genuine artifacts that displayed the Parsi culture. I began to feel like the curator of a museum as individuals loaned me their priceless family heirlooms for this rare display. And with it came the responsibility of ensuring the security of our community property. For this I am indebted to the booth volunteers. They were asked not to leave until their replacements arrived. Well, not only did they wait for replacements but stayed long after. And the booth received a steady stream of visitors, well past the time we intended to close it down!

Community members like Armaity Patel, Meher Hodiwala, and Minoo Bengali generously loaned their heirlooms to join my own artifacts for this display. Framroze and Armaity Patel, Lovji and Mehru Cama, Arnaz Manekshana and Roshan Mountwala stayed with us from 8 pm to 1 am to create the panels and display tables, and brought both artistic talent and willing hands to the team. Kerman and his daughter Tina hung all the panels (and the corresponding write-ups), one by one, on the walls of the booth. Homi, as our main contact with the organizers, had the exhausting task of coordinating activities, and finding organizers when needed, and locating materials we needed to reinforce our booth.

A set of five tables lined the walls of the booth. At the center stood an Afarganyu (Upon a pedestal made by Noshir Baria) and adorned with a delightful red and white 'Har' made by Roshan Mountwala and a traditional bead toran. Beside it hung the traditional 'Jamo' of a Zarathushti Priest (courtesy of Ervad Pervez Patel).

The tables surrounding the Afarganyu were: 1) Books on Religion, Culture, History and cooking 2) Traditional items of prayer and devotion, and a section on traditional headgear and another on childhood traditions. 3) Traditional clothing – genuine jhablas embroidered in the style of garas were displayed with a section on Lagan ni Jori – Parsi traditional bridal clothing. 4) Parsi sarees – incredible ancient garas, kasab kors and teeli embroidery was artistically placed on display. 5) Zoroastrian artifacts such as Asho Farohar and Winged Lions in metal, porcelain and glass were displayed along with traditional silver vases.

The set up was done with the help of Mehru and Lovji Cama, who offered their help and guidance in innumerable ways. Ashish Mirji and my son Cyrus set up a cordon around the tables for security and taped down each post to the floor to hold against the press of eager visitors. Each of the four nights, the displays were carefully packed into suitcases by Jasely and Kerman Dukandar and their daughters and taken back home for safe-keeping. Each morning they arrived before 9 am to unpack each artifact and restore the displays. I can only say Thank You to all these families for their service to our community.

Neighboring Zarathushti Anjumans of ZAPANJ and ZAMWI joined us wholeheartedly as volunteers. In all, our community came together to donate their time and effort in a very creditable endeavor.

The delicious (but served late!) gujarati food and beautiful displays were very impressive. Despite organizational hitches, AINA mobilized troops of volunteers to man the parking lots, registration booths and tables. The Conference was so



# ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006



inundated on Saturday that the organizers had to turn people away at the gate. Even on Sunday, usually a day of low turn-out, the volume of visitors did not cease.

As I stood in the booth, many people came up to me to say we had done a good job. They often spoke of other Parsis they had known in the past, and now remembered fondly. A flight instructor from Delhi, a colleague from Nagpur, an old neighbor from someone's childhood: each time I was struck by the affection that, somehow, we Parsis have earned. These visitors told me about the Parsis they had met, and how dear they were, even now, thirty years later: and I was reminded, yet again, how fortunate I am, to belong to such a well-respected community. We can only try to be worthy of it.

*Nawaz Merchant Vice President of Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York. (ZAGNY) is an active member of the New York- New Jersey community organizing numerous donations drives to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina, the South Asia Earthquake and Afghanistan. In addition she volunteers on the District Advisory Council for her local school district, and as a volunteer piano teacher to disadvantaged children. She is a participant and an advocate of Locks of Love, a program of the American Cancer Society. As an amateur writer, she focuses on stories of immigrants and interpersonal relationships.*



*Nawaz immigrated to the US from Mumbai in 1991 and with a Master's degree in Economics, she has a career in business analysis. She is a Manager within the Pharmaceutical Division of Johnson & Johnson. She met and married her husband Hosi in 1992 and they have two boys, Sam and Cyrus.*

## World Gujarati Conference 2006

**Dinyar Patel**

With the remnants of Hurricane Ernesto blowing through New Jersey on Labor Day weekend, the scene outside of Edison's Raritan Expo Center was a dreary mix of gray skies, fierce wind, and pelting rain. Inside, however, was a colorful microcosm of Gujarat. Thousands from the Indian-American community traveled to the Expo Center for the 2006 World Gujarati Conference, sponsored by the Association of Indian Americans of North America (AIANA). In addition to a packed schedule of performances and speeches by dignitaries, the conference featured a number of cultural exhibits, including one organized by the Parsi community.

## ZARATHUSHTIS AT WORLD GUJARATI CONFERENCE 2006

The World Gujarati Conference, in more ways than one, transported the visitor into a very Indian environment. At the entrance to the Expo Center was a re-created traditional Gujarati village scene, with elaborate torans hanging over the doors of simple tile-roofed houses. On center stage was a mix of Gujarati music, drama, and song, ranging from the Parsi natak to garba performances. Kitchens—staffed by chefs flown directly from Gujarat—churned out buckets of aloo dum, raita, and dal. The entire conference hall was simply packed with people—fire marshals turned away an estimated 2,000 people from the entrance after the Expo Center filled up to capacity. On more than one instant, crowds were so great that I felt the flat of a palm, on my back trying to push me forward, making me wonder if I were truly in Edison or on a busy sidewalk in Mumbai's Fort area. Thanks to the stormy weather, we even experienced a brief power cut!

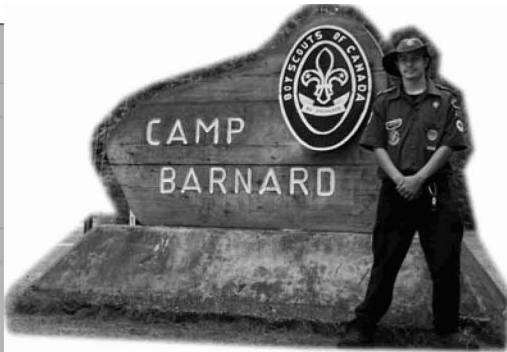
Parsis received a very warm welcome from conference organizers and attendees. One Gujarati participant took aside ZAGNY President Homi Gandhi and asked him, "Why don't you [Parsis] increase your numbers? We need more people like you!" Others recalled Parsis they had known in the past, or mentioned their affiliation with Parsi firms or schools. Lovji Cama spoke with a man whose father, a Tata employee, always kept a picture of Jamsetji Tata in their house. "He wanted to remind his family about where their food came from," the man told Cama. The Expo Center was festooned with massive posters of famous Gujaratis, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It was gratifying to see Jamsetji Tata amongst them.

Hormuzd Katki, who traveled from Washington, DC to attend the conference, felt that Parsi participation was a good way to maintain links with the Gujarati diaspora. "Despite what Parsis like to think, many Gujaratis—and especially those who have grown up outside of Gujarat—know very little about our community," Katki mentioned. "Being a part of the World Gujarati Congress is a good way to create awareness amongst Gujaratis and also remind us of our Gujarati heritage. In the United States, we tend to downplay our connections with Gujarat. We have surprisingly few relations with Gujarati organizations. The fact is, however, that we have been Gujarati for over a thousand years. Embracing this heritage helps us find meaning."



**Dinyar Patel** (left in Dagli Hormuzd Katki of Washington DC area on right) lives in Washington, DC where he works on foreign policy issues for a government consulting company. He graduated from Stanford University in 2004 with a B.A. in International Relations. At present he is applying for graduate programs and hopes to complete a Ph.D. on Parsi involvement in the Indian nationalist movement. His main interests are contemporary politics and history in South Asia, political and economic development in East Asia, and dragging friends and family along to strange new ethnic restaurants (he recently subjected his aunt and uncle to Beijing-style Islamic Chinese cuisine).

## ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE



Shiraz Daraius Sorabji 17, from Campbell, Ca, is a third generation Boy Scout and a Senior Patrol Leader with BSA Troop 330 and Vice President of the Venture Crew. The whole family is involved in the scouting movement.

Shiraz had volunteered to serve food at a homeless shelter in San Francisco, and while waiting for the school bus he saw an elderly homeless woman rummaging through waste bins searching for scraps of food and discarded containers with left over drinks. He also noticed wounds on the woman's legs and the bare feet were covered by plastic grocery bags. Haunted by this image for days, Shiraz eventually decided on his Boy Scouts Eagle project of providing shoes for the needy.

Shiraz is soliciting donations of cash & new shoes from individuals and from shoe companies and large departmental store chains. Any kind of shoes and sizes, for men, or women, are welcomed, but NEW shoes only, for hygienic reasons and for maintaining dignity. Your donation of shoes will help keep feet warm, dry and safe, protect from hypothermia and sharp objects on the roads.

Make your donation checks to: Boy Scout Troop 330 Shoe Drive, P.O. Box 932, Campbell, Ca 95009 USA and mark SHOE DRIVE

Donate NEW Shoes: Your tax deductible donations of new shoes will be given to the homeless via the Glide Memorial clothes closet.

Contact info: [shoedrive@troop330.org](mailto:shoedrive@troop330.org)

[WWW.TROOP330.ORG](http://WWW.TROOP330.ORG)

***Thank you for your support. Shiraz***

## Zarathushti Youth without borders:

Service Opportunities in India.

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY TO BUILD 100 HOUSES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN INDIA (INDIA BUILDS) October 29-November 3, 2006**

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter led nearly 2,000 volunteers from around the world during the week of October 29-November 3, 2006, to build 100 affordable houses for low-income, mostly women-headed households in Lonavla, just outside of Mumbai. This is the Jimmy Carter Work Project, a partnership between Habitat for Humanity India Trust (HFH India Trust) established in 1983 and Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI).

visit [www.habitat.org/jcwp/2006](http://www.habitat.org/jcwp/2006) for more information.

Source: **GOPIO Newsletter**

### INDICORPS - JANUARY FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE :

Join a team of committed, talented Indians from around the world who are dedicating a year or more of their time engaged in intensive service for India's development. As an Indicorps Fellow, you will join a community of individuals who constantly test their limits for collective impact

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Visit the Indicorps website ([www.indicorps.org/apply](http://www.indicorps.org/apply)) for detailed information on the Indicorps vision, program, and application process.

Contact Roshni Kasad ([roshnikasad@gmail.com](mailto:roshnikasad@gmail.com)) for details.

(Roshni spent one year in Gujarat, India on this project. ED)

## Introducing.... The Zarathushti Social Justice Network

Dr. Mehraban Shahriari, Bai Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia, and Dadabhai Naoroji. These are just a few of the Zarathushtis throughout history who have put forth their energy, resources, and passion towards promoting socially just causes and whose legacies live on in the thoughts, words, and deeds of many Zarathushtis today. In honor of those Zarathushtis who have paved the way for social change and those who are following in their footsteps, we'd like to introduce the **Zarathushti Social Justice Network (ZSJN)**. The goal of the ZSJN is to create a supportive network of Zarathushtis who are interested in the principles of social, environmental, and economic justice and to provide a forum through which we can share our experiences and ideas. We have many thoughts on what this group could offer, but we'd like to start by creating a database of Zarathushtis who integrate some form of justice work into their daily lives (for instance, via their career choice, volunteer activities, or philanthropy). With this database, we hope to provide a resource that we can all use to connect with other Zarathushtis who may be involved in a type of justice activity that we'd like to explore or pursue. For example, an economics student interested in international development could search the database for someone who works in that area and who may be able to offer career advice or opportunities for learning more about the field.

In the future, we hope to introduce a ZSJN newsletter and website where people can exchange comments and news stories on different justice issues, share helpful websites, post job openings, and feature note-worthy organizations. As a group, we can organize youth trips to expose our community to opportunities to serve both in the U.S. and abroad. The possibilities are many – but we need your help!

First, if interested, please sign up for the ZSJN yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ZSJN1>. And, if you would like to be a part of the database, [zorosocjustnetw1@yahoo.com](mailto:zorosocjustnetw1@yahoo.com). Please include as much of the following information as you can:

- Name
- Location
- Contact info (email and/or phone number strongly preferred)
- Social or Environmental Justice area of interest or expertise
- Examples of projects you have been involved in that you would be willing to talk about
- Whether or not you would mind if this information is included in the database

Please note that you don't have to have had any prior experience in any particular social justice field or activity to be included in the database or to be part of the ZSJN – your interest in these issues is enough! If you have any ideas or questions, please feel free to email us at [zorosocjustnetw1@yahoo.com](mailto:zorosocjustnetw1@yahoo.com). And, as a coming attraction – and inauguration of the ZSJN – please be sure to look out for the next FEZANA Journal: an issue which will be dedicated to an exploration of the textual, historical, and contemporary links between Zarathushtrianism and social justice.

Thanks!

*Shireen Cama and Vishtasp Soroushian*



**Shireen Cama** is a second year medical student at Harvard University and the 2005 FEZANA SCHOLAR. She has worked with the underserved in US, India and Nicaragua.



**Vishtasp Soroushian**, a graduate of the University of California Berkeley, currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. He has been involved with a non-profit organization aimed at improving working conditions and wages for low-income individuals

# YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

## The Power of One

'To help means to assist with the expectation of getting something in return – but to serve, means to give yourself to others in hopes of making a difference in someone's life and not expecting nothing more in return.' –Nikan

It was close to one and a half years ago that I was entering my freshman year in medical school. My friends and I were sitting in my living room catching up on stories from college. Everything seemed fairly normal until I got that one phone call about 15 minutes later.

It was my good friend Sahar calling from down south. All I could remember was hearing the sad, low tone of her voice. Hurricane Katrina had hit the coast of Louisiana and hundreds of thousands of Americans had become homeless over night...and she and her family were one of them. I found myself to be speechless.

For the next few months, I along with millions of people world-wide bared witness to one of the greatest tragedies the United States had seen since 9/11. So many people had suffered disease, economic turmoil, and malnutrition to say the least. Hurricane Katrina had become the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since 1928. With over 2000 people dead, thousands homeless and over \$82 billion dollars in damages, no one could imagine things would turn around.

But in fact, things did turn around for the victims of Katrina when the public decided to take matters in their own hands and not wait for government assistance. The meaning of community service had reached a new height. Millions of people from all around the world poured in donations with the goal of instilling hope

and pride back to the people of the South. Cities organized rallies, charity drives, and even coordinated trips for people to be bussed down to Louisiana to serve in whatever capacity they could. I was one of them. I felt a personal calling to serve my larger community, the United States of America. With only the desire to instill hope and faith in people, I worked days and nights to make sure I did my part to serve my fellow Americans. My experience with Katrina has been one I could never fail to look back on. Especially now, when I think of the millions of people who woke up that day and were ready to serve their community knowing that even one person could make a difference in another's life.

My fellow Zarathushtis, the power of one stands for hope, for justice, for the ability to serve and make a difference in another individual's way of life. Although these acts of community service which we have all witnessed on a massive scale whether it be during the fall of the twin towers or the catastrophic events during Katrina, one lesson that needs to be learned is the importance of community service. It is the inspiration that drives you to perform an act of kindness and generosity for others with no hopes of gain. Any community service, my friend, starts at the local level with your Zarathushti community.

One person can make a difference. One person can start a wave of events that can change an entire community, state, and country. That one person is you – the difference starts with you and me. Get involved in your local Zarathushti community today and start the wave towards righteousness.

*Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA, Nikan2@aol.com, Tel: (949) 842-9628 Graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a Bachelor in Science (B.S) in 2004 and then spent a year earning his Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Nikan is currently in medical school pursuing a career as a physician. In the future, he envisions himself practicing medicine for some years before taking on a position as a member of the United States Congress.*



# Charity sees the need, not the cause

Farah Minwalla

**Giving a monetary donation to any charity is respectable, but does the signing of a check provide a warm fuzzy feeling? Don't underestimate the power of a helping hand.**

Helping those who are unable to help themselves is one reason why many choose to devote time, money and energy to make a difference in the life of another human being. Every Zarathushti knows that the tenants of our religion are good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. However how one chooses to incorporate those three, simple guidelines are different for each and every person. Whenever I hear the words charity or community service I am reminded of the quote by architect Albert Pike who said, "What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others, remains and is immortal". Giving back, the theme for FEZANA JOURNAL this Fall, is an especially important issue because the society we live in, is at times not fully representative of what people could make happen.

When disasters such as Hurricane Katrina plague our nation, people open their wallets, and I cannot help but wonder if money is the solution towards solving all of the problems in the world today? In truth, there is no definite answer to what aids, communities in this day and age need the most, but I find that people underestimate the power of a helping hand. Indeed charity does begin at the home, but it should not stop there. Giving a monetary donation to any charity is respectable, but does the signing of a check provide a warm fuzzy feeling? Charity means not only cash but more importantly acts of random kindness towards all human beings, animals and

the environment.

Personally, for the past two years I have spent endless hours at the Boys and Girls Club and the Ronald McDonald House of Las Vegas and every time I leave, I feel like I have made a difference. I can view the positive effects of my volunteer work right before my eyes, which makes me further believe the greatest methods of giving back do not have to be immense. The small things in life, like holding a door for another person or even helping an elderly person cross the street is charity.

Besides our Zarathushti tenants of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, charity should start and end at the same place, the heart. One can give all the money in the world to an aid organization, and still live a life of despair.

Has giving back to the community of Las Vegas made me feel like a better human being? Absolutely, I would not be the person I am today without my volunteer work. I have always felt that if I have a roof over my head, food to eat, and clothes to put on my back, that is a blessing in itself which I need to share with others.

One person can not do everything, but one person can do something, that is worth acting upon. No one is expected to be another Mother Theresa, but that should inspire people even more to make a difference in the world.

And above all, the one sentiment that will save the world from itself is compassion towards others and faith that good will conquer evil. That the poor will survive and that the rest of humanity will be ready to help. **It is by far more blessed to give than to receive.**

*Farah Minwalla, has lived in Las Vegas for the past 10 years and is a junior at Palo Verde High School, Las Vegas. Since she started school Farah has been a free lance reporter working full-time for five different magazines that circulate around Nevada. An award winning journalist in column writing for her articles, she is a passionate public speaker, the editor-in-chief of her high school newspaper and an intern and reporter for a magazine based at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).*

*A varsity member of her school's competitive speech and debate team, vice-president of National Honor Society, Farah enjoys traveling, meeting new people, yoga, writing, being with friends and volunteering. Her motto: What goes around comes around, which is how karma and fate play in her life. PMinwalla@cox.net*



# UNLOCK THE FUTURE

## The Zoroastrian Youth Leadership Conference – 2007

The Zarathushti community is growing in influence. As it progresses in its maturation the community will be in great need of dynamic young people with vision and leadership skills. The community needs young Zarathushti Americans to educate themselves on the complex national and local issues that affect our community, to understand the internal issues of our community in helping to bridge generation and cultural gaps and to be good role models in leading others by example. The future and quality of our community and its standard of living will be directly proportional to the quality of leadership exhibited by our people.

The objective of the Zoroastrian Youth Leadership Conference (ZYLC) is to create a venue where our young people can gather to share ideas, values, and common goals. ZYLC is an educational leadership conference and its programs are designed to inspire today's outstanding young adults to reach their full leadership potential. This conference offers talented young people the most authentic leadership opportunities in a real world setting today by testing abilities, improving confidence, and developing skills in a dynamic, hands-on atmosphere that will be both challenging and fun.

This will be a truly unique experience as we hope to inspire, empower, and enlighten you with amazing keynote speakers, interactive workshops

and interaction with your peers that will hopefully lead to the building of lifetime friendships. So please join us on this journey as we look ahead and bring together those who will be the keys to "Unlock the Future".

ZYLC will be held during the late summer of 2007 at The University of Missouri, Kansas City (UKMC). Details to follow.

At this time we are asking members of the Zarathushti community to step up and make a difference – we are asking you to sponsor a youth for the entire conference by donating only \$50 dollars. By donating today, each sponsor will be formally recognized throughout the conference/public events and a follow up package will be sent to you for your generosity. You can make a difference, please do it today!

Please send all donations to the Zoroastrian Youth of North America:

c/o FEZANA - ZYNA

3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

Thank you in advance for all your support,

**Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA**

Chairman, Zoroastrian Youth of North America

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# READERS Forum

**Promote understanding to derive and provide useful  
out-comes of conflicts.**

Via E-mail: [dollydastoor@sympatico.ca](mailto:dollydastoor@sympatico.ca)

With regard to the disquiet on Zarathushti burial customs on the Internet, the following came to my mind:

Ms. Dhun Baria did well to record what she feels are legitimate issues without satisfactory resolutions [Badam, R.T.; Sept 7, 2006; India funeral ground photos stir anger, [boston.com](http://boston.com), , ©Assoc Press]. The Lady living next to the Dokhma needs peace and good smells and views in and out of her home. Ms. Sarah McDonald must have free speech regardless our motives ascribed to her words. I understand anger stirred by strong feelings, and I see no desecration in open discussions of our customs Mc Donald, S.; 2002; Holy Cow An Indian Adventure; Bantam Books, NY].

The issue of final disposal needs amicable resolution. Populations have expanded; high-rise dwellings soar above our towers of silence; and visions of decomposing bodies are troubling. Furthermore, Zarathushtis should not be ashamed of the practice of leaving the deceased for consumption by other species as the last act of commitment to preserving environmental balance.

Let us promote superior dialog and ask persons in strife to explain their wants and interests behind their words. Then, create forums wherein each person feels welcome, secure, significant, responsible, and willing to give the same to the other, so follow-through is jointly afforded with responsible commitment. People see and feel things differently, and when disagreements arise, facilitate legitimate methods of resolving differences by finding self-evident truths, so each disputant sees what the other is saying and his/her precedents behind them.

These thoughts for conflict resolution are in Roger Fisher's, William Ury's, and Bruce Patton's book, 1991; Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In; Penguin, NY. I studied from the first edition (1981) in Graduate school at Case Western Reserve University and raised our son Cyrus (born 1983) according to principles therein and those of Eric Berne, Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward. Cyrus evolved well, attends law school at Case; and so should we all enable ourselves and others to emerge well! For group discussions please examine methods by Susskind, L.E. and Cruikshank, J.; September 2006; Breaking Robert's Rules, The New Way to Run Your Meeting, Build Consensus, and Get Results, Oxford University Press.

So, enjoy life in peace, good health, happiness, and keep good discussion alive!

Warmest regards,

Navzer D. Sachinvala, Ph.D., MBA,  
Harvey, LA

## ANNOUNCEMENT

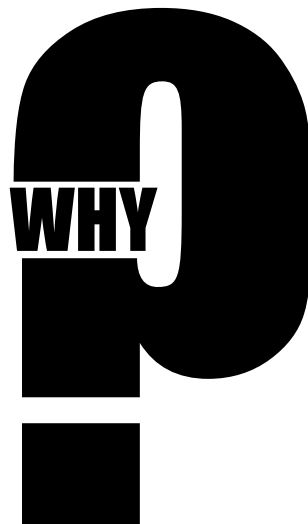
**CALENDAR ON CD for FASLI YEAR 1385 - Send address and \$10 cash  
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[m\\_goshtasbi@yahoo.com](mailto:m_goshtasbi@yahoo.com)**



September 4, 2006

Thank you for your contributors of the Spring '06 issue:  
Generation Why.

## GENERATION WHY



My main concern is personal but may reflect those of others: Do we have room for people like me who are genuinely interested in re-learning our traditions from the inside-out and yet are presently out of the loop? I distanced myself as a teenager from daily prayers and wearing the kushti because I wasn't comfortable being different. In my twenties, I began seeking more information about our traditions, trying to find the inner meaning behind our rituals and prayers; this has proven to be challenging because I no longer live near my family or in an area with a high concentration of Zarathushtis. This said, over the years I have found myself attracted to the spiritual path, spending almost ten years as a disciple of a guru and the last few as a Sufi seeking ordination as a minister. I simply began looking in other areas since I did not find what my heart needed in our religion.

I also have concerns about the ongoing debates and conflicts in our community regarding mixed marriages, conversion, and acceptance of children of mixed marriages. I myself married "outside the fold" and while my family have been accepting, both here and abroad, I am wary about engaging the local community even though I believe, as Jimmy Antia said in his article, "The Death of Zoroastrianism?" that these issues are becoming increasingly irrelevant if we generation "why-ers" don't have a solid grasp of our customs, rituals and prayers. While I've done a good deal of fascinating reading on our religion, my study is fodder for naught if I am not connected to and dialoguing with my community. Buddhists don't call spiritual community one of their Three Refuges for nothing!

Generation Why is a very timely issue and I believe those of us in this generation need to begin conversing about the thoughtful challenges posed by the feature writers. What I would most hope for the outcome of our conversations is not merely a renewed commitment to practicing our religion (as if that were not enough) but a spiritual revival, a renewal of the spirit of our faith as made manifest and relevant for Generation Why and their children. I don't know, maybe this is already happening and I just don't know about it. If so, please drop me a line. **Blessings of peace,**

**Ferzin Irani Wagner - mwagner@triumphcares.com**

### **The NEW NAMAJ CD released for worldwide distribution**

Due to overwhelming response and interest in the Persian version of Namaj CD, a new version containing English translations has been released by [www.Oshihan.org](http://www.Oshihan.org). The CD contains the most frequently said prayers extracted from the gathas and other parts of the Avesta plus one devotional composition (monajat). It also contains Yasna 31.8 and notes on the Zarathushti Deen. All translations are accompanied by traditional background music played on Tar, Setar, Tambour, Kamancheh and Divan.

The Avestan prayers have been recited by and recorded in Iran by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary and Mobed Korosh Niknam, the instruments are played by Zarathushtis.

The CDs make excellent gifts for family and friends. For details or to purchase on line visit <http://www.oshihan.org/namajE>



## UNITE UNDER ONE CALENDAR

Dear Reader,

Some of you celebrated the 20th August as a special festival day - so to those I wish a hearty celebration. Actually Parsis celebrate many days such as Divali, Christmas, Christian New Year, 4th July, Bastille Day (14th July) -- so why not the 20th August.

The Parsis consider themselves one of the most educated communities in the world. So it is a real conundrum why some of them fight shy of acknowledging that the year is almost a quarter day longer than 365 days. They (the Shenshahis) are afraid to acknowledge the leap year, and prefer to celebrate a day in August (which shifts every 4 years) rather than the first day of Spring which is a fixed day celebrated in Iran (Persia) since the time of King Jamshed of the Peshdadian dynasty, for the last five thousand years (approx.)

While I am sure most recognize this fallacy, they wait for some one else to recognize the Fasli calendar as the most correct of the three now in existence. Who will that someone else be? The BPP Chairman, the FEZANA President, the WZO President and/or Chairman, Dasturs Kotwal and/or Jamasp Asa, the Dastur of Udvada ? None of these worthies seem inclined to move in the right direction. Dr. Jehan Bagli, the President of the N. American Mobed Council had advocated this action more than five years ago but it failed, at the time, to motivate the community to action.

I have decided to be one of those who will take the step, regardless of whether any of the so-called leaders of our community give their approval or not. Perhaps some of you would like to join me to form a nucleus for change in the right direction, so that the community may eventually unite under one calendar which is in sync with the sun and the seasons, so that our seasonal celebrations fall in the right season (at least for the Northern Hemisphere) and do not shift against the seasons even for the Southern Hemisphere.

A community does not make a change like this overnight. All changes start with a nucleus, which will grow as more and more people feel encouraged to join, because they perceive the wisdom and correctness of making a change. One thing appears certain; the change will have to come from the North America, since the Parsis of India, Pakistan and England seem content to plod along with the absurdity of a minuscule community (less than 300,000 worldwide) employing three different calendars, celebrating three different New Years day and three different birthdays of the Prophet.

Perhaps this may be the year when the shift to the Fasli calendar begins.

Atha Zamyat, Yatha Afrinami

*Jamshed R. Udvadia*

*Lansing, MI, USA*

# Laugh & Be Merry

Three men were sitting together bragging about how they had set their new wives straight on their duties.

The first man had married a woman from Delhi and bragged that he had told his wife she was going to do all the housework without expecting any help from him. He said it took a couple of days to see some action but on the third day he came home to a clean house and the dishes were all washed and put away.

The second man had married a woman from Bangalore. He bragged that he had given his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, cooking and washing. The first day he didn't see any results, but the next day it was better. By the third day, his house was clean, the dishes were done, and he had a huge dinner on the table.

The third man had married a Bombay girl. He boasted that he told her it was her sole duty to keep the home neat and clean and that he did not want to see any dirty dishes or clothes or things out of place when he came home from work. He said the first day he didn't see anything and the second day he didn't see anything but by the third day some of the swelling had gone down so he could see a little out of his left eye!

**[Forwarded by MEHER D. AMALSAD , CA]**

A very religious man lived right next door to an agnostic. While the religious one prayed five times a day, and was constantly on his knees in communion with Ahura Mazda, the agnostic never entered an agiari (Zarathushti church) but nodded good-humouredly at the building as he passed.

However, the agnostic's life was good. He had a well-paying job, a beautiful wife and his children were healthy and good-natured, while the pious man's job was strenuous, his wages were low, his wife was getting fatter every day and his kids wouldn't give him the time of day.

So one day, deep in prayer as usual, the pious man raised his eyes upwards and asked: "Oh Mazda, I

honor you every day, I ask your advice for every problem and confess to you my every short-coming; yet my neighbor, who doesn't even believe in you and certainly never goes to the agiari, seems blessed with every happiness, while I remain poor and suffer many an indignity. Why is this?"

Then a great voice was heard from above:

**BECAUSE HE DOESN'T BOTHER ME ALL THE TIME!**

**[Anon]**

Church Bulletins are put out by volunteers who do not always have professional expertise. This often results in unintended humor. Here are a few examples:

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Pot luck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM – prayer and medication to follow.

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the BS is done.

**[forwarded by Firdosh Mehta, TX]**



# Rustam & Tahmineh

Rustam had become a living legend... one of the greatest warriors the world had ever known. He was undefeated and all his triumphs were recounted a thousand times by the Iranians. Rustam led a content and happy warrior's life with Rakhsh, his horse, as his one, constant companion.

One spring day, Rustam was relaxing in a forest and he happened to fall asleep. While he was sleeping, Rakhsh, his horse, wandered off to a distant meadow. Some Turkish youth playing there found him and, amazed by his beauty, they rode him off in to the kingdom of Samangan where they hailed from. When Rustam awoke, he was dismayed to find his horse gone. He soon found himself in Samangan, where the horse's trail led him. Still, there was no sign of the horse itself.

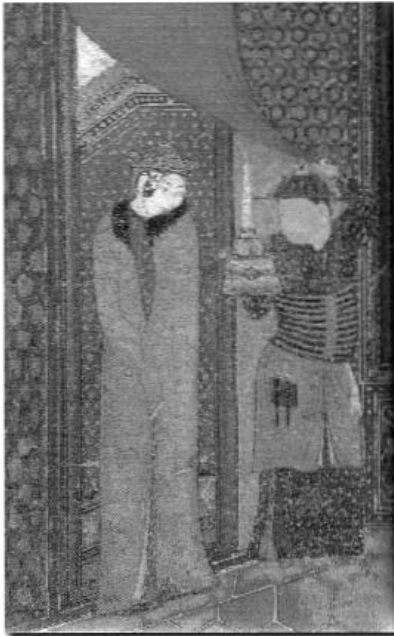
The King of Samangan heard that Rustam was in his kingdom and he went out with his courtiers to welcome him. When he heard Rustam's story, he assured him that his horse would be found soon. Then, he invited Rustam to dine with him and stay at his palace.

Late at night, while Rustam was asleep in his chamber in the palace, a beautiful young princess entered his room. Her name was Tahmineh and she was the daughter of the King of Samangan. She told Rustam that she had heard so many stories about his triumph that she had loved him all her life. Rustam himself soon fell in love with Tahmineh and "so in secret the two passed the long hours of the night together."

In the morning, Rustam's horse had been found and Rustam prepared to return to Iran. He gave Tahmineh a clasp which he wore on his upper arm and said to her, "Take this and if you should bear a daughter, braid her hair in it as an

## SUNDAY STORIES FROM THE *Shahnameh*

omen of good fortune; but if the heavens give you a son, have him wear it on his upper arm, as a sign of who his father is. He'll be a boy like Sam, the son of Nariman, noble and chivalrous; one who'll bring down eagles from their cloudy heights, a man on whom the sun will not shine harshly."



Tahmineh gave birth to a son. Since his face shone bright with laughter, Tahmineh called him Sohrab (bright-visaged). Sohrab grew up as Rustam had: when he was a month old, he looked like he was a year old. At three, he played polo. At five, he took up archery and practiced with a javelin. Tahmineh was afraid that if Rustam knew how quickly Sohrab was growing up, how strong he was becoming and how warrior-like

he was, Rustam would take him away from her to Iran and train him to be a warrior. So in her letters to Rustam, Tahmineh only told him that he had a son and that he was like any normal child: just a young boy not yet concerned with warfare.

By the time Sohrab was ten, he had defeated many of the champions in the land. He noticed he was very different from other children his age. He asked his mother repeatedly, "Tell me truly now, why is it that I am so much taller than other boys of my age? Whose child am I? What should I answer when people ask about my father?" Tahmineh finally told him the truth.

Sohrab's heart was filled with pride when he heard he was the son of the great warrior, Rustam. Tahmineh asked him to keep his lineage a secret, but Sohrab refused: "This is not something to be kept secret; the world's chieftains tell tales of Rustam's prowess; how can it be right for me to hide such a splendid lineage? I'll gather a boundless force of fighting Turks and drive Kavus from his throne and give the royal mace and crown to Rustam. I'll defeat the King of Turan too... If Rustam is my father and I am his son, then no one else in all the world should wear the crown; when the sun and the moon shine out in splendor, what should lesser stars do, boasting of their glory?"

Soon Sohrab had gathered up an army of Turks and set out to march against Iran. But where he hoped to bring triumph to his father, he only brought him tragedy.

Next time: Rustam & Sohrab



**Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi**  
lives in Marina Del Rey, CA .  
*She writes as a hobby*

*Notes: Photo Tamineh comes to Rustam's Chamber, Painted by unknown artist in the Herat style c. 1410, Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums.*

*Gift of Mrs. Elise Cabot Forbes, Mrs. Eric Schroeder, and the Annie S., Coburn Fund. (1939.225)*

*Photo appears on page 210 of The Lion And The Throne, Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Vol. I.*

## A Persian Fable From The Shahnama Of Firdausi\* Dr Ardeshir N Irani

# The Story Of Zal

Our story begins in Seistan,  
Which borders Southeast, on the Land of Iran.  
Never before hath the Maker's Hand,  
Ever fashioned a more wondrous land;  
Lush with gardens, fed by mountain streams,  
Such beauty, as only seen in dreams.  
This land hath borne many great heroes,  
Who protected her borders, and fought off her foes;  
Of one such hero do we begin this saga,  
Of Zal, the son of Saum, the Pehliva.

For Saum, the son of Nariman hath seen,  
Many a foe felled, while not yet a teen.  
The stories of his valor traveled far and wide,  
And mighty warriors flocked to his side.  
Even the great Shah of Persia, when he was threatened,  
To fetch Saum, his soldiers would be hastened.

But for all his feats of prowess, and fame,  
It seemed to all indeed but a shame,  
That the House of Saum should have no offspring,  
No heir to inherit it, no princeling,  
To fill it's walls with songs and laughter,  
And carry forth his name till ever after.

So for many long years, night after night,  
Saum had a dream that filled him with fright,  
Which interpreted by every seer,  
The meaning of which filled all with fear,  
For Saum, though destined to have an heir,  
Would soon reject him, for the color of his hair.

And so when the winter snows had melted many times over,  
And the snowfields had given way to meadows of clover,  
There was born one fine day, in the House of Saum and Nariman,

A babe, whose face shone like the sun.  
Stronglimbed, with a back straight like the cypress,  
And cheeks like rose petals, which the dew dare not caress.  
Although perfect in face and limb, he presented a revolting sight,  
For his hair, like an aged man, was silvery white!!

So shocking was his appearance to all the women,  
For white hair in an infant was considered a bad omen,  
That for seven long days none had the desire,  
To reveal the news to the infant's sire.  
Until on the eighth day, the infant's nurse,  
Went before Saum, fearing the worst,  
And bowing low in the dust before his feet,  
Pleaded of him the boon of speech.

Which being granted, she then proceeded,  
To give him tidings, with joy exceeded.  
For Mazda had granted him his heart's desire,  
And blessed him with a son, with eyes like fire;  
A moonfaced boy, with the heart of a lion,  
A beautiful heir, a wonderful scion;  
Except that by a cruel twist of Fate,  
Pure white was the color of his pate. (head)

Descending from his throne, Saum soon arrived,  
At the house of women, where he was shown inside,  
Where he beheld an infant, of beauty extraordinaire,  
But a shocking appearance, by the color of his hair.  
Appalled at the sight and filled with despair,  
Saum departed with barely a moment to spare.  
Overcome by grief, he reached a sad conclusion;  
To cast out this infant, would be the only solution.  
This child was named Zal by his grieving mother,  
Who clasped him to her breast, as long as they were together.  
So come next morning, Saum rose before dawn,  
And carried infant Zal to a place most forlorn;

High up on the Alburz mountain,  
He laid the babe on rocks, where he was certain,  
The creatures of the wild would appease their hunger;  
And this demonic child would live no longer.

But unknown to Saum on Mount Alburz there dwelt,  
Simurgh, the Bird of God, whose feathers were like felt;  
Pure gold in color, with powerful talons,  
Which could tear open cliffs, and carry mastodons.  
Her eyrie perched out on a crag impregnable,  
Where she fed her chicks with ox and sable,  
And tended them with loving care,  
A place where to set foot, no man would ever dare.

***This original poem written by Ardeshir Irani will be serialized in three issues. All Rights Reserved Copyright 2006***



*Dr. Ardeshir Namdar Irani, MD born in Mumbai, obtained his MBBS, DCH and MD before moving to the US in 1995 after training for 2 years in the UK. as a pediatrician. Fascinated by Firdausi's Shahnama, he took up writing poetry as a hobby and through the medium of verse, hopes to stimulate an interest and appreciation of our great past and glorious culture. Ardeshir is involved in the religion classes of the Zarthushti Youth Group Of Michigan(ZYGOM). He lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his wife Shekufa and children Sanaya and Sarosh.*

# Personal Profile

**Soroosh Sorooshian**

## Making a Difference



Soroosh Sorooshian, Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering at the Henry Samueli School of Engineering at the University of California, Irvine, holds the title of Distinguished Professor, the highest campus-level faculty distinction. He chaired the National Academy of Sciences' Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment panel for six years and heads its Science Steering Group. He has served on numerous advisory committees, including those for the National Research Council, NASA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

A National Academy of Engineering member, he has authored 130 refereed journal articles and conference proceedings, is the recipient of numerous awards and citations and is respected world wide for his knowledge of hydrology. Amongst his numerous citations the one where he was elected to the US National Academy of Engineering (NAE) is the highest honor accorded to an engineer. NAE has only 2000 members and Soroosh Sorooshian is the only Zarathushti. Soroosh Sorooshian is someone who is making a difference in the world.

### What has he done to achieve such status in the engineering world?

Soroosh Sorooshian is well renowned for developing a method to forecast floods and global rainfall world wide. His research in water resources has revolutionized the field. In the late 1970s, Sorooshian broke new ground in the field of hydrology by creating the first methods to accurately forecast floods. Hydrological modeling has an important role to play in aspects of water and environmental management. These include the sustainable development of water resources, the integrated management of river basins, flood design and flood management, water quality management and the protection of ecological systems. Today, his methods are used by the National Weather Service and other organizations worldwide. Called on nationally and internationally for his expertise, Sorooshian has testified before both the U.S. House of Representatives and

Senate on water resource issues.

*"As you already know floods are considered to be the worst of all natural disasters"* emailed

Sorooshian on his flight to Rome. "My early work involved in the development of mathematical models for predicting floods before they occur and result in loss of life and property. One of the biggest limiting factors was the lack of accurate rainfall observation, a problem in many regions of the developing countries. So in 1990, I started work on how to get rainfall information from satellites. With support from NASA I have developed computer models that convert satellite information to measure rainfall. This system has appropriately been named **"PERSIANN"**, a name that is now used widely as a source of rainfall data".

Dr Sorooshian holds two doctorates both in Engineering from UCLA, one in 1977 and the other in 1978. He then worked as an assistant professor at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland and in 1983 was a professor at the University Arizona before joining UCLA Irvine.

### Family Background.

Born in Kerman, Iran, Sorooshian comes from an illustrious family that can be traced back four generations. His late parents, Jamshid and Homayoun Kianian Sorooshian, were both active members of the Zarathushti community. His father Jamshed, served as the president of the Zoroastrian Anjuman in Kerman for many years. Family, community and traditions have always played a key role in his life. He found the simple but fundamental teachings of Zarathushtra to be his guiding principles in life, one that he and his wife Shirin have followed, raising their two US born sons, Jamshed and Armin.

Soroosh Sorooshian's interest in nature and the environment was one that was greatly influenced by being born into a family that was involved with farming. His brother Mehrborzin Sorooshian and sisters Mahvas, Armita and Anahita

all grew up in the arid region of Kerman where small amounts of rain would bring happiness to everyone as then they were not faced with draughts and water shortages. His sense of the environment was heightened through his formal years of education where he appreciated the Zarathushtian importance of preserving, and keeping clean, the four elements namely: earth, water, fire and air. His love for nature continues as he enjoys hiking with his wife and sons as a source for relaxation. Digital photography is an added asset as he travels in connection with his job and collects photos from all around the world.

### Sorooshian's reflections on the contemporary Zarathushti Community

His interest in the Zarathushti community has been a life long commitment and he feels migration influences and marrying "outside the faith" may cause our youth to loose the Zarathushti identity as we become more fragmented". But on the positive side he finds it remarkable to see a re-birth of interest in the teachings of Zarathushtra in recent years, especially among Iranians not born as Zarathushtis. It is his belief that this "new surge of interest is what will play a key role in preserving our religion. And while the very conservative and orthodox Zarathushtis may resist the acceptance of these "new comers", I am afraid they are unwilling to face the reality of our times".

Sorooshian strongly feels Zoroastrianism will not die but... "we must adapt to the realities of our time. If we advocate the notion of remaining a pure religion maybe we are swimming against the currents, hydrologically speaking. But that is not to suggest that we launch a proactive campaign to convert people, rather work on an inviting approach for those who have, on their own, discovered the value of religion and wish to join, is my preference".

A strong academic, Soroosh Sooroshian is pleased to see Zarathushtis pursuing their advanced degrees and encourages youth to pursue careers in academia. "You may not become a millionaire, but the fact that you enjoy the benefits of academic freedom, be your own boss, and always work with young and bright students is a reward in itself".

Soroosh Sooroshian's NASA Distinguished Public Service Award in 2005 reads: "For your distinguished record in providing scientific leadership for global water cycle research and assuring that NASA science is well integrated into international program". We take inspiration from him.

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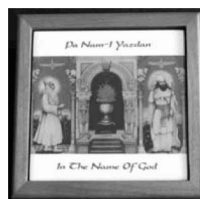
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# OBITUARY

## CC Remembering Cyrus

**Cyrus Bakhtyar Rastegar**, age 24, born December 12, 1981, in New Orleans, LA; died in New Orleans, following a motorcycle accident, Monday, October 2, 2006, 2:40 PM. He is survived by his parents Roxana & Bakhtyar Rastegar of Campbell, California, and brother Zubin, 18, freshman at LSU, Baton Rouge, LA.



Cyrus had recently returned from a post-Katrina assignment at Riverside Hospital in California, and was in the Graduate Nursing Program at Loyola University, on work-study scholarship from Tulane University Medical Center.

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 2005, Cyrus afforded people and lost pets aid, comfort, refuge, and hope (Fezana Journal Reference, Fall issue 2005). The family however, lost their home and all its contents, relocated initially to Austin, TX, and then to Campbell, California (suburb of San Jose).

Friends and family remember Cyrus as independent, adventurous, witty, playful and humble. He loved music, cars, motorcycles, travel and pets. He is an irreplaceable loss to his family and the community. We pray Dadar Ahura Mazda give his soul peace, happiness and strength.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bakhtyar, Roxana, & Zubin Rastegar*

*3685 S. Bascom Ave., Apt.53, Campbell, CA 95008,*

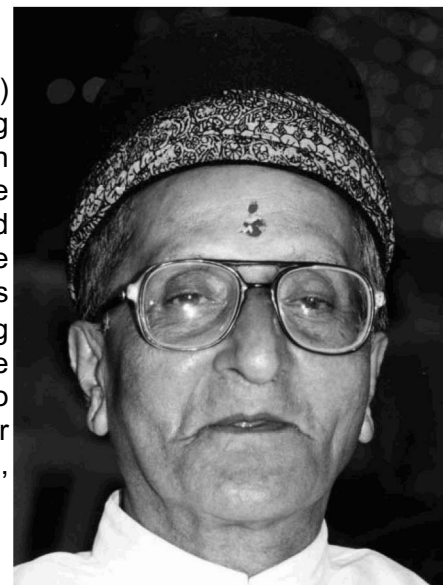
Tel: 504-881-6130 (Bakhtyar), Tel: 504 -388-6257 (Roxana), E-mail: [Cyrastegar@juno.com](mailto:Cyrastegar@juno.com)

## In Memory of my Dad, Sheriarji Shapurji Talavia (1926-2006)

My dad was born and lived most of his life in Saronda (near Sanjan) making the long journey from Saronda to Boston often, despite his failing eyesight and hearing. Devoted to his village, he was the Sarpanch (Mayor) for years and worked to build wells for drinking water, improve roads, and create better living conditions. A devout Zarathushti, he served the Saronda agyari and the Udvada Pundol Adarian, praying at the change of every Geh, regardless of where he was. Sheriarji was passionate about persian history, often narrating and recording Shahnameh stories for his grandkids. A generous man, who gave to the poor even though he didn't have much, he and my mom worked hard so my sister and I could have a good education for which we are forever grateful to them. With fondness and respect, all my friends called my dad, "Puppa."

We remember him often and know that we have his blessings.

*Firoza Farhad Panthaki*



# Dr Parrin Nariman Shroff (1909 – 2006)

Dr. Parrin Nariman Shroff (nee Ruttonjee) daughter of well-known philanthropist Hormusjee Ruttonjee of Hong Kong, was born on September 22, 1909

At age 21 she graduated from the University of Hong Kong Medical school as one of the first batches of lady graduates, heralding an achievement for a woman of that day and age.

She worked for the Government of Hong Kong, she was chosen as one of the physicians in charge of running the St. John's Ambulance Brigade of Hong Kong, during the second world war. Her father, with whom she had a very special bond, died during the war.

After the war she met and married her husband Dr. Nariman K. Shroff in 1946, moved to Bombay (Mumbai) and finally settled in Karachi, Pakistan where she brought up her two sons Homi and Burjis Shroff.

While in Pakistan she continued to practice medicine on a voluntary basis in her specialty of gynecology/obstetrics. She started the first Family Planning Center in Karachi, with the assistance of her very dear friend and colleague Dr. Zarina Fazalbhoy. At this center, she not only practiced voluntarily, but also shared her expertise in the education of the local doctors in the practice of family planning. She represented Pakistan at the World Family Planning seminar in the late 50's, in Germany.

She volunteered at the Ida Rieu School for the Deaf and Blind and tutored students, preparing them for their BA degrees. An active member of the Banu Mandal of Karachi, she was invited to tour Iran as a guest of the Shah of Iran.

Dr Parrin, an accomplished linguist; was fluent in five languages: Cantonese (the language of her mother Alice Ruttonjee), French (taught by the French Nuns in the Convent), English, Gujrati and Urdu. She was a well liked and respected lady, by all who knew her and came in contact with her, maintaining ties with many of her childhood friends from Hong Kong till the end.



Sitting Late Dr Nariman and Dr Parrin,  
standing from left, Homi, Hovi and Dr. Burjis

In 1990 she retired to Boca Raton, Florida, with her husband and son Homi, to be close to her younger son Burjis Shroff, MD and his family. In June 2003, she lost her life long love and husband of 57 years, Dr. Nariman K. Shroff. She passed away peacefully on the morning of September 9, 2006 at age 96 at Boca Raton. She is survived by her sons Homi and Burjis, her daughter-in-law Hovi and grandsons, Dustyn and Kevyn Shroff.

Amen.

# Nargis Nowrooz Minocher-Homji

**1919 – 2006**

Nargis Nowrooz Minocher-Homji, wife of Dastoorji Nowrooz D. Minocher-Homji, passed away peacefully on September 1, 2006, in Mumbai, India.

Nargis, daughter of Meherbanoo and Major Sohrab R. Bamji of Dadar Parsi Colony had met the young Nowrooz at the J.B. Vachha High School in Dadar where, as a young woman, she was enrolled in a diploma course in home science and he was teaching the basic tenets of the Zarathushti Deen to the school children. They were married in 1942 and were parents to four daughters—Yasmin, Zarin, Deenaz, and Nahida. Their married life began at the Boys' Town School in Nasik where Nowrooz was a school teacher before they moved to Secunderabad in 1950 when Nowrooz was ordained High Priest at the Chinoy Agiary.

The family moved to Mumbai in 1957 when Dastoorji took over the mantle of leadership at the Petit Fasali Atash Kadeh at Churchgate where the family remained until his death in 1988.

Nargis imbibed the essential spirit of the religion during the long partnership she shared with her husband. She attended his discourses regularly and assisted in the editing of his prayer guides and in the recording of his lectures and prayers over the years. In many other ways, too, she supported him as he discharged his various commitments while coping with many financial constraints.



Nargis had a keen mind and was a promising student of the Alexandra Girls' High School in Mumbai. Unfortunately, during her final school leaving examination, she was not allowed to appear just as she had not been allowed every month to go to school during her monthly menstrual cycle. In spite of the then British principal of the school going to her home to persuade her father to let her appear for the examination, his orthodox values prevented her from stepping out of the confines of the home. This resulted in her academic career being cut short, a fact which she regretted all her life. However, some good did come out of it. Her three

younger sisters were all later permitted to continue with their higher studies and they have had distinguished careers.

Nargis was a fiercely independent woman and held strong opinions on many public and private issues. Her deep study and understanding of the essential tenets of the Zarathushti Deen made her the person she was. We will deeply miss her liberalism and humanism.

*May her soul rest in peace.*

## **Graduation announcement**

Armaiti Khorshed May received the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine on June 19, 2005 from the University of California, Davies. She is grateful to Ahura Mazda and the people who helped her along the way, including her late loving brother Daniel Byram May. For the past year she has been practicing at McClave Veterinary Hospital in Reseda, California.



## REMEMBERING GRANDSON OF ZARATHUSHTI PIONEERS



Our beloved late Daniel Byram May and his family owe much to his late, visionary grandfather Soli Byramji Daruwala and his scholarly grandmother Naju Soli Daruwala, who came to the United States in 1957. They were one of the first Zarathushtis to settle there to give their family a better future

Soli Daruwala (1916-1983) and his grandson Daniel were creative, courageous, compassionate men of faith and spiritual practice. They both shared the middle name Byram, signifying victory. Both were concerned about the treatment of animals. Because of Soli and Naju's commitment the Daruwala family abstained from flesh foods except seafood and eggs. Now years later some family members (including Naju) are vegan.

Soli and Daniel, knowledgeable in physics were teachers (as was Naju). After leaving India, in 1947 Soli and Naju ran their own school in Penang, Malaysia, taught for five years in Jamaica, BWI and were principals of an elementary school in Bahamas. In the US, Soli taught physics and chemistry and later worked in industry for many years. Naju continued teaching and pursued graduate studies at New York State University. After arriving in California, Naju worked for various insurance companies and became a Chartered Life Underwriter. After retiring, she taught English on a volunteer basis for fifteen years. In 1990, Naju, Daniel and others visited the Atashbehrams of Udvada and Navsari

Daniel graduated from UCLA with a B.S. in Physics and received a Chancellor's Service Award. Prior to his graduation, Daniel assisted in the development of an intra-operative imaging beta probe, helped with free electron research and researched Chinese medicine. As President of UCLA's undergraduate Physics Society, he revived the organization, participated in UCLA's Marching Band and was a camp counselor for Unicamp (UCLA's official charity). Soon after graduating, Daniel designed a course on compassion for the UCLA curriculum.

Daniel was very dedicated as an inner-city 4th grade ESL teacher and was awarded a certificate of appreciation. He took pupils on trips, including Saturday trip to Disneyland in a limousine for nine top students (some of whom indicated it was the happiest time in their lives). Daniel designed "God bless America" bumper stickers, and wrote a research-based patriotic book. Daniel and his grandfather Soli were very patriotic to the United States, the land Soli long felt had been "calling" him. Daniel's website (AngelsWeekly.com) showcased inspiring deeds via its on-line newsletter. He helped with food drives, promoted recycling, started a medical research business, and helped musical bands. In 2001, Daniel attended the Kuma Mela in India.

Daniel had been a practicing Zarathushti attending religious classes and community events for several years while maintaining ties with Self Realization Fellowship (SRF) as camp counselor, audio/visual committee member, choir member and Sunday school teacher. His e-mail address Zarathutri@onebox.com evidences his loyalty to his Zarathushti heritage.

Daniel loved the wilderness and at about age 27, may have made his transition to the other world, in a beautiful forested area in Malibu, California (where some of his skeletal remains were discovered-suggesting a Zarathushti mode of bodily disposal had occurred) Soli and Daniel had been true to the significance of their shared middle name, Byram, as they had been victorious in rendering service. Through God's grace and guidance may these gentle souls be ever victorious.

## **Lt General (Retd) Adi M Sethna, passes away (1924-2006)**

A visionary soldier who inspired us to higher levels of community service.

Lt General (Retd) Adi M Sethna, passes away (1924-2006)

A visionary soldier who inspired us to higher levels of community service.

As the sun set on New Delhi, India, on Monday, October 17th, 2006, so did it on the life of one of its illustrious citizen and valiant soldier, Lt General Adi M Sethna, whose mortal remains were then being laid to rest in "the Garden of Eternal Peace", The Parsi Ahramgah ( Cemetery ) at Prithviraj Lane New Delhi.

The General passed away that morning, after a brief illness. Khorshed, his wife of 55 years and daughters, Niloufer, Rukshana, Shernaz and Shireen with their families were at his side. At the funeral prayers, with solemn salutes from a very large number of senior officers, a very impressive requiem was performed by the Military. A fitting final "Retreat" to the Heavenly camp.

The General born 11th November 1924, retired as Vice Chief of the Army after a long and distinguished career and receiving numerous Distinguished Services awards i.e., Param Vishist Seva Medal, Ati Vashist Seva Medal.

He was schooled at the Doon School and graduated from Allahabad University. He saw action in Malaya in World War II, following which in 1949 he was appointed ADC to the first Governor General of free India, Shri.C. Rajagopalachari. Later in 1950 he was ADC to the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, a very prestigious position for a young officer. He was one of the few officers of the Indian Army to be selected for both the Staff College, Camberley and the Imperial Defense College in the UK.

Lt. Gen Sethna was actively involved in the Bangladesh War of 1971 under that legendary Zarathushti, General Sam S.H.F.J.Maneckshaw, MC.

Another high point of his career was the IXth Asian Olympiad, when as the Deputy Chairman of the Special Organizing Committee and Chairman of its Ceremonial Committee he was in charge of the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the Games. For the timely planning, execution & success of the spectacular show he was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1983

In 1986 Lt. Gen Sethna was elected President of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, a position he held till his

death, with distinction, dynamism and foresight that enhanced not only the image of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, but the zarathushti community throughout India and Worldwide. He had the welfare of the zarathushti community at heart. With his influence and persuasive powers he succeeded in directing the attention of the Government of India to matters of Zarathushti concern. An important project was the planned development of UDWADA, and its infra structure, the holiest place for the Zarathushti Community.

Adi Sethna was the main architect and the founder President of the UNESCO PARZOR Foundation, which today is a world-wide movement for the revival & preservation of Zarathushti heritage. He was nominated on the Government of India, Minorities Commission as a representative of the Community, a position he held for three terms.

WZCC owes General Adi Sethna a debt of gratitude for jump-starting the organization.

In December 1999 expressing his concern about the future he wrote:-

"The Zarathushti.culture and heritage is.... in danger of being subsumed under the weight of the mono-culture of globalization. The critical mass required in holding up our own is a matter of great concern...for this reason that we look back at the example of our small Anjuman over the past decades and hope that some of the strands on which the ethos of our Anjuman has been built may provide a valuable pointer for the community in the next century."

He was one of those persons who extend our vision and inspire us to higher levels of community service. Zarathushtis World-wide owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for his untiring contribution to the Community.

Mr. Rohinton Rivetna remembers him:-

"The General is no more, but ,his avant garde spirit will never die. It will be with us forever. His many kindnesses and his contribution to our community is permanently enshrined in our memories and in our hearts. The many activities and traditions that he spawned will be a legacy in his memory."

**MAY AHURA MAZDA REST HIS SOUL IN PEACE**

**Rusi R. Sorabji**



# M I L E S T O N E S

as of October 15, 2006

## BIRTHS

Zane, a boy to Firooza (Jamaji) and Zubin Irani, brother to twins Darius and Cyrus, in Portland OR on January 27.

Maya Dholloo, a girl, to Neville and Kaynaaz Dholloo, sister to Zal in Vancouver, BC on March 16.

Zoish Behram Byramji, a girl, to Dilshad and Behram Byramji, sister to Xenia, granddaughter to Shirin and Sarosh Byramji and Shenaz and Kersi Banaji (Karachi) in Mississauga, on May 2.

Ruby Elizabeth, a girl to Sally and Dinshaw Guzdar, sister to Maya and Nathan, granddaughter to Adi and Rutty Guzdar of Framingham, MA in Buffalo, NY on May 5.

Daria Bulsara, a girl, to Zubin and Shahnaaz Bulsara, sister to Daryush in Vancouver, BC on May 5.

Boma Amjadi, a boy, to Tooka Shahriari and Famaraz Amjadi in Vancouver, BC on May 6.

Freya Munshi, a girl to Gerlinde Strukhamp and Kaizad Munshi in Brighton, MA on May 18.

Elian Anklesaria, a boy, to Abish and Elaine Anklesaria, grandson to Mahyar and Vera Anklesaria on May 24.

Shania Birjie, a girl, to Pareezad and Anand Birjie, sister to Yohann in Fremont, CA on May 31.

Darien Appoo, a boy, to Zavera and Farshad Appoo, grandson to Naomi and Farokh Ghadially (Mississauga, ON) and Paricher Faram Appoo (Karachi), great grandson to Homai Minwalla and Pearl Ghadially in Toronto, ON on June 8.

Nariman Patel, a boy to Niloufer Ataie and Rohinton Patel in Boston, on June 8.

Cyrus Kanga, a boy to Jasmine and Darayus Kanga, brother to Zara, grandson to Aban and Eruch Mistry (Toronto) and Dogdo and Minoo Kanga (Mumbai) and great grandson to Daulat Vandrewala (Toronto) in Oakville, ON on June 8.

Iyanah Desai, a girl, to Renata and Darius Desai, granddaughter to Nicky and Rusi Pavri (Mumbai), Hirra and Sammy Desai (Toronto), great granddaughter to Jer Khan (Mumbai) in Mumbai on June 10.

Lilah Charlotte Amato, a girl, to Shehnaz and Joe Amato, granddaughter to Perin and Soli Pardiwala (Toronto) and Vincenza and Orazio Amato in Ottawa on June 21.

Zain Alexander Moos, a boy, to Maria and Zach Moos, brother to Dylan, grandson to Perviz and Phiroz Moos, in Montreal, on June 21.

Behzad Karai, a boy, to Winifer and Viraf Karai in Mississauga, ON on June 23.

Aaryan Farzad Yektaie, a boy to Robina Kapadia and Farzad

Yektaie, in Mississauga, ON on June 24,

Liam Lemay, a boy, to Ayesha Anklesaria and Willaim Lemay, grandson to Mahyar and Vera Anklesaria in Toronto on June 25.

Benaisha Choksi, a girl, to Homiyar and Roshni Choksi of Chesterfield, VA, granddaughter to Noshir and Rati Choksi and Pervez and Gulshan Daver (Mumbai), in Mumbai on June 25.

Aryana Mehin Mehrkhodavandi, a girl, to Armity Mehin and Farhad Mehrkhodavandi in North Vancouver, BC on July 10.

Farhaan Shroff, a boy, to Malcolm and Dilnaz Shroff, grandson to Aban and Keki Shroff and Zarin and Farokh Kanga in New Brunswick, NJ on July 10.

Anahita Sarah Lakdawala, a girl, to Emily and Darius Lakdawala of ZAC (California), granddaughter to Rhoda and Noshir Lakdawala on August 3.

Zehan Mistry, a boy, to Roxanne and Zubin Mistry of ZAC (California), grandson to Behroze and Noshir Vadoli of Woodland Hills, CA and Dinshaw and Rhoda Mistry of Mumbai on August 3.

Armaan Jangi, a boy, to Borzu and Niloufer Jangi in Vancouver, BC on August 12.

Kierahn Xerxes Karkaria, a boy, to Zal and Abigail Karkaria, grandson to Shirin and Gev Karkaria (Montreal) and nephew to Zia Karkaria (Montreal) in Montreal on August 26.

Rayhan Tushad Driver, a boy to Tushad and Persis Driver, grandson to Navaz and Percy Driver and Mahafid and Lavji Mistry of Mumbai, great grandson to Tehmi Fatakia, in Chicago on August 28.

Namya, a girl to Anahita and Amit Mantri, in New York on August 31.

### NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Cyrus Patell, son of Freny and Syavux Patell, grandson of Soonie and Bahadur Patell (Toronto) in Philadelphia on June 4.

Tanushka Doctor, daughter of Rukshana and Nozer Doctor in Richmond Hill, ON on July 1.

Neville and Natasha Dusaj, (below) children of Khursheed and Shailendra Dusaj in New Jersey on July 2



Darayus Irani, son of Mehnaz and Feroze Irani in Mississauga, ON on July 2.

Ariana Rudina, daughter of Viloo and Solee Rudina, in Basking Ridge, New Jersey on July 22.

Pearl Bengali (below), daughter of Dinaz and Minoo Bengali, of New York, on July 16. at the West End Hotel, in Mumbai, India.



Sanaea and Zarine Kakalia, children of Simonil and Sohrab Kakalia of Fremont, CA in Mumbai on July 29.

Anaida Mama, daughter of Gooli and Burzin Mama in Mississauga, ON on August 5.

Ayesha and Farah, children of Vera and Jemi Anklesaria in London, ON on August 5.

Nasha Sethna, daughter of Cyra and Shahveer Sethna (Markham, ON), granddaughter of Katy and Rustom Sethna and Yasmin and Fram Sethna in Richmond Hill, ON on August 6.

Hafshin Irani, son of Kashmira and Kaikobad Irani of Brampton, ON on September 8.

### WEDDINGS

Mahafrin Daruwala, daughter of Jasmin and Mehernosh (Atlanta, GA) to Ruzveh Mehta, son of Mahnaz and Rayomand Mehta in Mumbai on January 9.

Zubin Daruwala, son of Maki and late Pheroze Daruwala (Vancouver, BC) to Aimy Pudumjee, daughter of Kaikobad and Dinky Pudumjee (Pune, India) in Pune on March 7.

Rohann Mehta, son of Maharukh and Firdosh Mehta (Springfield, NJ), brother/brother-in-law of Parynaz and Khushroo Vimadlal to Feroza Master (Calgary, Canada) in Berkeley Heights, NJ on May 21.

Shireen Hormazdi, daughter of Dilshad and Bomi Hormuzdi (Houston) to Billy Carroll in Azul, Mexico on June 19.

Sunita Khambatta, daughter of Sarosh and Farida Khambatta (Chicago) to Goshtasb Forughi, son of Perin and Sohrab Forughi (Los Angeles) in Chicago on June 24.

Hoshi Vazifdar, son of Aban and Pesi Vazifdar (Chicago) to Annette Torres in Chicago on July 1.

Faramaz Romer, son of Kiumars and Freny Romer (Mississauga, ON) to Sarah Ann Sullivan in Mississauga, ON on July 1.

Sejal Kaji, daughter of Zarina and Bankim Kaji (Los Gatos, CA) to Arrian Binnings, son of Dr. and Mrs. Clem Binnings (Roanoke, VA) in San Francisco, CA on July 29.

Kamal Kanga, daughter of Shirin and Viraf Kanga (Chicago) to Sarosh Saher, son of Amy and Bahadur Saher on July 29.

Rostam Jarrah, son of Iran and Keki Jarrah (Markham, ON) to Lisa Christie, daughter of

Roseanne and Lloyd Christie in Antigonish, Nova Scotia on August 19.

Zarin Daruwalla, daughter of Noshir and Katy Daruwalla (Chicago) to Bruce Mitchell in Chicago.

Zubin Zarolia, son of Nergish and Kobad Zarolia to Sunita Singh, daughter of Oma and Kaishyo Singh, in Toronto, on September 3rd.

Ruby Panthaky, daughter of Noshir and Jai Panthaky to Michael Bald in Mississauga, On. on September 3.

Rohena Elavia, daughter of Arnavaz and Dara Elavia to Gautam Ullal in Chicago, on September 3.

Sheroy Mehta, son of Kim and Hosi Mehta, to Sarah Wende, in Chicago, on September 9.

Rahnuma Panthaky, daughter of Jal and Meher Panthaky to Michael Molto in Toronto, on September 23.

## DEATHS

Shavax Shapurji, 94, father of Fi Dastoor (Vancouver, BC), Rumi Shapurji (USA), Dhan Shapurji (USA), Nergish Manecksha (Malaysia) and Hillan Sethna (England) in London, UK on March 8.

Mehrdad Ashooian, 39, husband of Shideh Khorasheh, son of Aflatoon and Parvin Ashooian, brother of Mahabanoo Ashhoian, brother-in-law of Mehraban Mehr in North Vancouver, BC on April 30.

Cyrus Kehani, husband of Parvaneh Kehani (Houston) on May 6.

Hira Busha, 98, mother of Banoo Bharucha, mother-in-law of Rusi Bharucha, grandmother of Kersasp Bharucha and Zarrin Dadinatha (Coquitlam, BC) in Port Moody, BC on May 21.

Nariman Rustam Khursigara, husband of Hutoxi Khursigara, brother of Mani Pajnigara (Brampton, ON), Homai Minwalla (Mississauga, ON) and Khorshed Divecha (Brampton, ON) in Karachi on May 25.

Freny Sethna, mother of Aban (Cyrus) Grant and grandmother of Karl and Shanaya (Chicago) in Coimbatore, India on May 30.

Jamshed Mody father of Diane (Keki) Mody, grandfather of Darius, Jeannie and Gustad, in California, on June 7.

Pillamai Kaikhushroo Patrawala, mother of Behroz (Minu) Dutia, grandmother of Tanaz and Farzad, in Mumbai, on June 10

Phee Divecha, wife of Jal Divecha, mother of Michelle and Ashley, sister of Zarina Bharucha, daughter of Banoo and Sam Bharucha in Toronto on June 19.

Sheriarji Shapurji Talavia, 79, husband of Perin (Saronda), father of Kashmira Sarosh Bala (Mumbai) and Firoza Farhad Panthaki (Boston), grandfather of Sharmin, Natasha, Zaal and Sanaya, in Mumbai, on July 8th

Colonel Hosi Ranji, father of Shiroy Ranji (Jeroo) of ZAGNY, grandfather of Farhad and Sarosh in Pune, India on July 11.

Pesi Commissariat, father of Viraf Commissariat (Maharukh) of ZAGNY, grandfather of Persis and Neville in Mumbai on July 12.

Homi Kaikobad, father of Sarosh Kaikobad and grandfather of Rashna Kaikobad (Houston) in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on July 15.

Tehmi Nusserwanji Anklesaria 92, sister of Aloo Anklesaria (Toronto), and late sisters Khorshed F. Dalal (Zanzibar), and Jer M. Challa (Mumbai) and brother Naval N. Anklesaria (Mumbai), in Toronto, on July 17.

Khorshed G. Marawala, 85, mother of Perin and Zarir, grandmother of Dina, Zachary, Ryan and Rory in Hayward, CA on August 10,

Gool Avasia 85, wife of Boman Avasia, mother of Jasmine (Maneck) Kotwal, grandmother of Natasha Roselli and Zarina Kotwal in New York on August 15.

Feroze (Frank) Moos, husband of Shireen, father of Sunyatta Guild, Fram Moos, Laila Moos, brother of Ronnie Moos and grandfather of Zoe Moos, in Mississauga, ON, August 17.

Aspi Jamula, 87, husband of Roshan Jamula nee Dinshaw, father of Pervez (Karachi) Uncle of Mani Divecha (Tuscon), Feroze, Nari and Sam Nargolwalla, Dinaz Rustomiji (Canada) in London, UK on August 29.

Nargis Nowrooz Minocher-Homji, 87, wife of Dastoorji Nowrooz D. Minocher-Homji, mother of Yasmin Adi Khambatta, Zarin Johny Pinto, Deenaz Rustom Damania, and Nahida Dinyar



Mehta, passed away peacefully in Mumbai on September 1,

Boman Avasia 88, husband of late Gool, father of Jasmin (Maneck) Kotwal grandfather of Natasha Roselli and Zarina Kotwal on September 2.

Dr. Parrin Ruttonjee Shroff, 96, wife of the late Dr. Nariman K. Shroff, mother of Homi and Dr. Burjis (Hovi), grandmother of Dustyn and Kevyn, passed away peacefully in Boca Raton, FL, on Sept 9,

Bahadur Burjorji Patell, husband of Soonie, father of Syavux (Freny), Mahrukh and Lilly, grandfather of Freddy and Cyrus Patell, Crystal and Jonathan Creamer, brother of Zarin Zaheeruddin (Pakistan), uncle of Nargis and Darius Patell, Dinaz and Minoo Giara, Shehlah Zaheeruddin (Pakistan), Anoo Aga, brother-in-law of Khorshed Patell and Homi Patell (Pakistan) in Etobicoke, ON on September 11.

Dinshaw Sachinwala, husband of Gool Sachinwala, father of Nozer, Zarin and Rohinton, father-in-law of Villy, grandfather of Diana and Cyrus in the State of New York on September 24.

Cyrus Bakhtyar Rastegar, age 24, son of Roxana & Bakhtyar Rastegar of Campbell, California, brother of Zubin, following a motorcycle accident, in New Orleans, October 2.

## ANNIVERSARIES

Freny and Jehan Bagli, of Toronto, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 16th September 2006 in Toronto

A celebration dinner was hosted by their son Dr Darius Bagli, of Toronto



***Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, mmotafram@msn.com, Tel: 262-821-5296. NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies "within the past 12 months."***

## MATRIMONIALS

Female, 27, 5' 7", very attractive, with excellent job in Mumbai. Studied in USA. Willing to relocate to North America. Contact jimmy.dholoo@aeroflex-weinschel.com, cell: 240-481-9236. [F05-26].

Female, 31, B.Com. (Hons), LL.B., solicitor, England & Wales, presently employed as Senior Executive, (Legal and Corporate) with Tata Company in Mumbai, prefers to settle in India. Loves to listen to Western music and socialize with friends. Life partner should be educated, pleasant and good natured with strong family values. Contact: solib@sympatico.ca. [F06-11].

Female, 25, B.A. (Hons), Business Management from UK, presently working as a Management Trainee with Tata Company in Mumbai is willing to relocate abroad. Loves to cook, entertain, listen to popular western music, outdoor activities and socialize with friends. Life partner should be educated, pleasant and good natured with strong family values. Contact: solib@sympatico.ca. [F06-12].

Male, 46, M.E. and M.S., well-settled, professional Environmental Engineer and Adjunct Professor at US University. Divorced with two daughters. Enjoys traveling, gardening, Western classical music, opera, Broadway shows and sporting events. "I am compassionate, open and honest, and have taught my children values in life, and the importance of our religion." Interested in meeting a caring and loving Parsi/Irani lady, willing to locate in the USA. Contact 410-227 9274, vdalal@yahoo.com. [M06-14].

### Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services,  
<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com> - [www.TheParsiMatch.com](http://www.TheParsiMatch.com)  
[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com), Mrs Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai  
[goolpesi@gmail.com](mailto:goolpesi@gmail.com), Mrs Serah Kotval, Dadar, Mumbai  
Tel 91 22 2142 3570



## WZCC *Our Five Years Story*

WZCC is now in its sixth year of existence and we have had many success stories. The foundation is now in place. At the AGM we will have a change of guard, the founding members will fade away allowing for new blood to pour in and take our Chamber to the next level.

On December 30th 2000, a cold and damp day, during the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, Texas, the Chamber was launched. In spite of the depressing climate, one should have been there to see the standing room only crowd who were ready for an economic surge within our community.

The Chamber is here, networking has begun, local Chapters and especially their chairs are making a concentrated effort to bring in additional members. One has to understand that the strength of any company or organization lies in its numbers. As much as I can boast about WZCC being there and having done wonders let me say that I am particularly dismayed at the lack of interest within our community.

Here we have a vehicle which can transport one from a measly salary paying job into the business world and not even 2% of our community are members. We have some die hard members who do not miss a single meeting and at the same time we have the stragglers who look in once and then fade away into oblivion.

How can we bring back an economic revival within our community, how can we transform people into entrepreneurs? How can we attract investment? These are the questions which came to our mind when we jump started the Chamber. Now all I can ask is how can we get more members?

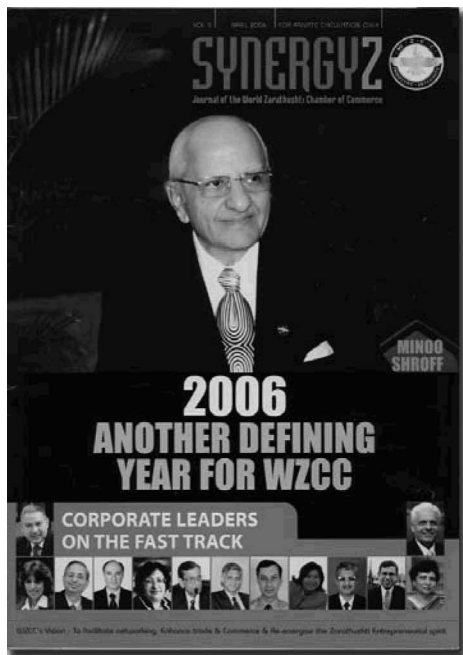
WZCC is now a global organization and a pride for every Zarathushti who cares! One does not have to be in business to become a member and interact. All one needs, *is to have a dream, a desire and the zeal for success*. Without these three virtues I do not see any reason why one should become a member. We can beg, plead or pull our hair but that is not the principle behind which the Chamber was constructed

WZCC's membership is open for individuals who are in business, but, we also want the professionals, the educators, the corporate leaders. This is the nucleus which will help us transform WZCC into a virtual business networking device. We offer mentoring services at all Chapter levels. We have amongst our membership roster individuals who have gone down the path of entrepreneurship and who are there,

waiting for you to ask a question. Have you used them? That is the salient power of WZCC, we are there for you to use and make a success of yourself, your company and thereby bring in prosperity to your company, family and community too.

How often have you visited our website [www.wzcc.org](http://www.wzcc.org) which is an incredible site put together by Yazdi Tantra of Mumbai, check it out, at least just once. We receive hits on a daily basis and are you one of them? Then we have the Zchamber List that was created and is being managed by Zareen Karani Araoz of Boston. Send out a mail to the complete WZCC list by using this mode of communication. Yes, yes, it's for free! Finally we have a quarterly issue of SYNERGYZ, our slick WZCC magazine created, designed and issued by Meher Bhesania and her team in Dubai!

What I am trying to get across to you, my dear friends, is the fact, that it costs just \$50 to be a member. That is a meal ticket for one dinner when you dine out ! How about giving up just that one treat a year and





# World Zarathushti Chambe of Commerce



spending that \$50 for a year's worth of news, business news and a chance that your dream could transform into reality? Try it for a year?

There is no doubt that we need more members, I am looking for economic strength within our folds and that can be derived by belonging to WZCC. Support your local Chapters and for those of you who do not have any Chapters in your city, take the lead, start a chapter. We will help you jump start one, put your city on our world map of Chapters. But, do this **ONLY** and only if you believe that this is the right path.

Look at our charter document on the website and see that WZCC is being set up for the use and the direct benefit of our children. We, the initiators realize that we are the vehicle that is building the foundation for the economic wellbeing of our community and its success lies in **YOUR** hands!

That was our goal, we will ensure its longevity as long as we can but what we need is an infusion of new blood, young blood, new thought patterns and of course **NEW DREAMS**.

In ending, let me quote what a wise one once told me. **"A goal is a dream with a plan"**. Our dream began 8 years ago with a plan and today we have reached our goal, WZCC!

## **Best Wishes**

**Homi Manchershaw Davier,**  
**Vice president, WZCC**



## World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Building the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

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A free worldwide listing of  
Parsis /Iranis & Zoroastrians

**WELCOME WZCC**

### New @ WZCC

» WZCC-to hold its **AGM** in the first week of January 2007.

» New **"Enterprisers"** Interest Group started



WZCC  
AGM-2006

### News of Interest

○ Collecting **data** for the largest Zoroastrian Directory in the world, online.

Yazdi Tantra (yazdi@on-lyne.com) is in the process of collecting data for the largest Zoroastrian Directory in the world, online. He has already aggregated more than 50,000 names and addresses from published / pUblic sources from allover the world. Please do take some time o11to have a look at [www.thellarsidirectory.com](http://www.thellarsidirectory.com). register yourself and your friends and relatives. Ifyou have access to any directories online or offline or if you could put Yazdi in touch with someone who can help in furthering the process, he will assist in getting that data online, including conversion of data into electronic form, ifneed be.

○ WZCC New York Challter is hosting a Seminar on "CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER" The Guest Speaker is Dinyar S. Devitre, SrVP and CFO, Altitra Group, inc.

○ The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario is very pleased to announce that the North American

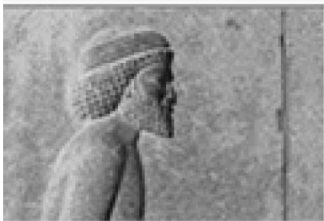


## 2006 AGM Announcement

We normally identify the venues for our Annual Meetings at least a year in advance. We had identified Mumbai as the venue for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the WZCC. The date chosen was January 7, 2007. WZCC - India and the Mumbai Chapter have been busy planning this event.

It is customary for us to have along with our Annual Meetings other events for those who wish to participate. A four day event has been planned in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. We owe our thanks to WZCC - India and the Mumbai Chapter, principally Zarine Commissariat and Yazdi Tantra for the careful planning which almost assures us four days filled with electrifying speakers, stories and networking for business worldwide.

We have planned for two board meetings; one before the Annual Meeting with the existing Directors and one following the Annual Meeting with the New Directors who shall be installed at the Annual Meeting. Agendas for the two Board meetings have been prepared and distributed by our secretary Edul Davar. For those of you who have made plans to attend, let me personally assure you, one more time, that your presence will be very much appreciated and will help make the meeting a success.



**Best wishes,  
ROHINTON RIVETNA  
President  
WZCC**

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## Eminent Parsis 1964 – 2005

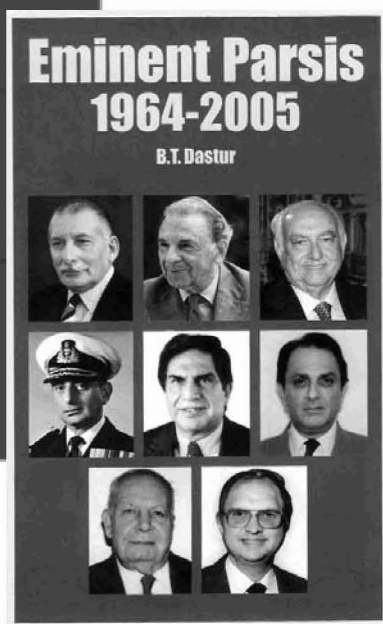
By B.T. Dastur

ISBN 81-7525-713 xX, Price Rs 500 pgs 262

Reviewed By : Hoshang B. Shroff, Vancouver, Canada.

BOOKS

ARTS



This book celebrates the achievements of many Parsis. We are all aware of the many well known names like Dr. Homi Bhabha; Shapoorji Jokhi; “apro” Zubin Mehta; J.R.D. Tata and others. The book correctly mentions the names in alphabetical order thus leaving the evaluation to the reader. However, there will also be great joy and pride in reading about so many of our community members, not necessarily in the front rank, but who have nonetheless contributed much to society.

Our community members now reside in several continents and one may occasionally not be familiar, with a fellow Zarathushti worthy of esteem, residing in another continent. The book is centered in Mumbai as it is still one of the larger urban centers of our community, but it also covers many from outside of Mumbai and India. For example there is Cowasjee Dinshaw of Aden whose family was associated with the steamship company. His great grandfather had established an Adaran in Aden in 1883 and Cowasjee at personal cost had the fire flown in a chartered aircraft from Aden to Mumbai in 1976 to prevent its desecration following the take over by the

communists of South Yemen.

I have selected at random a few of the personalities described in the book.

### Dr. Framroz P. Antia:

A son of the head priest in the fire temple in Deolali. Framroz became a medical doctor in 1941 being the first Indian gastroenterologist who was awarded the FRCP (London). He is described in the book as an “avid reader, he loved languages and was well conversant with Persian, Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi Sanskrit and English with a smattering of Latin and French. Classical literature and poetry were devoured passionately, and as an adult he could quote at will when the situation so demanded.”

### Kekoo Minocher Gandhi:

He started Chemould as a frame manufacturing firm in Mumbai in 1941 and then went on to open Chemould, one of the first galleries in Mumbai to promote and sponsor contemporary art.

### Homai Vyarawalla:

She was born in 1913 into a priestly family in my favourite town of Navsari, Gujarat. The article on her among other things states as follows: “Vyarawalla’s political photographs are a vivid document of the turbulent years that heralded and followed Independence. Her striking images following the death of Gandhiji and the visits of international dignitaries such as Ho Chi Minh, Queen Elizabeth II and Jackie Kennedy were stamped on public memory. A quaint sight in Lutyens’ Delhi of the 1940s and 1950s, the sariclad Vyarawalla bicycled around the town and clicked some of history’s most unforgettable images of

people and events. She carried her cumbersome equipment herself, kept a low profile and discouraged people from focusing on her.”

## BOOKS & ARTS

I am looking forward to reading a book recently published about her.

The final example I have chosen is of a person who will remain anonymous in this review in order to arouse sufficient interest to purchase the book. He is described as a “businessman, philanthropist, barrister, accomplished violinist” and to boot: “Honorary Knight of the Society of the Round Table” Let it never be held against our eclectic community that we have not contributed our mite even to an association connected with medieval Europe!

An odd feature of the book is the overwhelming number (at least about one third) of the Zarathushtis belonging to the armed forces, chiefs of staff, Vice/Rear Admirals, Lieutenant Major Generals, Air Marshals and Air Vice-M Marshals. Some of them in my opinion would require charitable disposition on the part of the reader to be described as “eminent”. If the book were stored in a time capsule, the Parsis of the 20th century risk being dubbed merely as providers of senior personnel in the Indian armed forces. I trust that in the next edition of the book there will be active participation from all the Zarathushti organizations in Canada, United States and other places and thus portray “majis” and “bawajis” not necessarily connected with the armed forces.

Eminent Parsis will clearly uplift the spirit of our tiny community which is seriously concerned with its survival in the future. Any discussion of our dwindling numbers is of course outside the scope of this review; but despite our small numbers it is good to be reminded of so much merit. May we long continue to provide many examples of our central tenet: good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

*Hoshang B. Shroff, Q.C.*

*Completed his early schooling in Gujarati, in Navsari before going to Karachi. He was refused ordination as a priest as he was not from a priestly family even though he stood first in his class for reciting navar and martab prayers. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, England and practiced law for 10 years in Nairobi, Kenya. Came to Canada in 1968 and is Queen's Counsel in British Columbia where he has been living and practicing. He is married with 2 daughters and three grandchildren. He enjoys classical music, both Western and Indian, literature, particularly Shakespeare, yoga and racket ball.*



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# Understanding & Practice of Obsequies

Jehan Bagli & Adi Unwalla

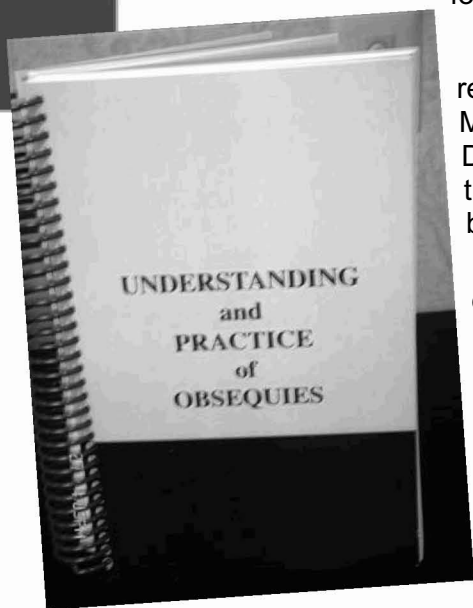
341 Pages + 1 Illustration + 2 Diagrams

Published by FEZANA, NAMC and Bapasola family

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS

Congratulations to the authors Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Adi Unwalla for producing such a welcome book. "Understanding and Practice of Obsequies" is both simple and unique, and admirably fulfils the special needs of our young priests in the West. Many have undergone their Navar initiation with very few Yasna Ha-s compared to the full syllabus of the Athornan Madressa and the Cama Institute which teach the Khordeh Avastā, the 72 Yasna chapters and the Visparad – all to be learned orally, and the full Vendidad to be fluently read in the Avastan script.

Now, packed into this one book the authors have compiled all the outer liturgical rites for step-by-step guidance on the funeral ceremonies.



Included are all the Farziyats (obligatory prayers) required for recital before each ceremony: Srosh Bāj, the 5 Gahs, Khorshed and Mehr Neyāyeshs, Ātash Neyāyesh, Doā Nām Setāeshne, Chahār Disā no Namaskar, Srosh Yasht Hādhokht, Srosh Yasht Vadi, and the Patet-i Ravan. All these prayers with their pronunciations have been accurately printed.

The Zarathushti perspectives on death have been clearly explained which should greatly assist our ervads to satisfactorily respond to queries on this subject. The authors have used the Gathic "merethyaush-" from the root mar-, "to die". J. J. Modi had explained the death process as "Astaschabaodhascha vi-urvisyat": the (time of) separation of the mental and the physical elements at the end of life.

I like the way the story from the Dina-i-Mainog-i-Kherad is given: the righteous soul's own deeds meet it at the Chinvat Peretum (Crossing) in the form of a maiden of all-surpassing beauty. J. J. Modi cited Martin Haug who believed that this allegory suggested to the Islamic prophet Muhammad "the idea of celestial Houris". (It seems to me additionally that their numbers to 72 was not coincidental, but referred to the 72 pure teachings of the Yasna). On the dawn of the fourth day (the Cheharum) the soul sets out along the spiritual path to its final destination. The three angel powers Mehr, Rashn, and Ārshtāt awaiting at the Chinvat precisely judge the nature and quantity of the actions of the deceased in life. Should the good works outweigh by the slightest its misdeeds, then it passes over the Chinvat to Paradise. Were its deeds and misdeeds to be weighed equal, then it is directed into Hamestagan, the Stationary Place. If, however, its misdeeds at all exceed its good actions, then the end for it is to be cast into Hell. These early beliefs on the fate of the soul make the fourth day dawn prayers especially important. They were piously thought to strengthen and comfort the soul before embarking on its final journey, and intended also to reassure the family and friends of the deceased.

The flower ritual and other preparatory rites have been thoroughly explained. It was surprising and gladdening to see comparisons with burial and cremation being so thoughtfully presented. This reviewer agrees that where there is no facility for proper Dokhmenashini, then disposal of the remains by cremation is definitely to be preferred over burial.

May one respectfully ask why the authors have left unmentioned the eventuality of the deceased, if married in life, when the Jore-ni ("for the couple") ceremony is performed with 2 sudrehs, 2 kushtis, and preferably before 2 afarganyus (fire-holders). If the other partner is living, then his/her name should be offered with the Nāmchesti Zindeh Ravān. The first line of the Dhup Nirang: "Ba nām-e Khoda, ba nām-e yazad, bakhshāyandeh, bakhshāyasar meherbān", during this ceremony, has been unaccountably omitted.

**BOOKS  
&  
ARTS**

It is an excellent idea to have given the equivalent Iranian rituals alongside. During the last World Conference, it was joyously noted that Mobad Firouzgar was well versed in the Iranian rites. The harmony between Irani and Parsi ritual and practice extends further than is generally believed, and that is of happy consequence for Zarathushti Deen in the West. It should encourage religious studies among both Irani and Parsi Zarathushtis.

In conclusion it must be said that the layout and presentation of this fine book is both excellent and welcome also for its systematic explanations. All Zarathushti anjumans worldwide are recommended to purchase copies for the information and further religious education of all our young mobeds and ervads. I offer my felicitations and best wishes to the ervads Jehan Bagli and Adi Unwalla for the success of their jointly produced volume.

**Ervad Rustom Bhedwar, London, U.K.**

**Senior Zarathushti Priest of UK & Vice President of ZTFE**

## **"THE MOTHER AND OTHER SHORT STORIES"**

**By Khorshed R. Javeri**

A book of short stories that has caught the fancy of the reading public. The style is reminiscent of authors like Ruskin Bond and R.K. Narayan-simple but compelling; as are the commonplace characters and situations to which every reader can relate.

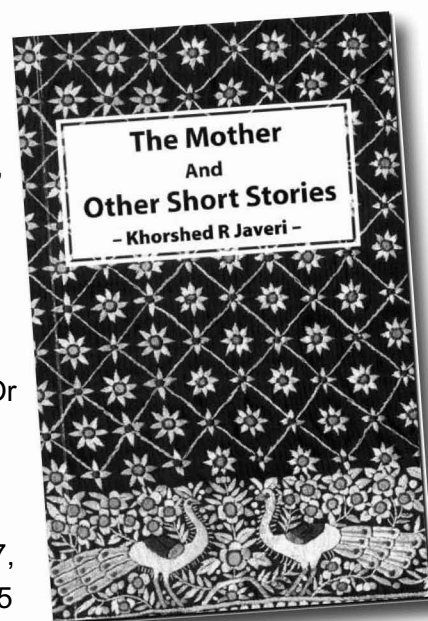
The stories have a delightful Parsi flavor. They satisfy in the older reader the yearning for old world values, which sadly today are disappearing before his or her eyes. The young, will by reading them discover the world of their parents and grand parents. A "must-read" that will delight both young and old.

Reprinted in Nine Months

Available in the U.S U.K and Canada at [www.khorshedjaveri.com](http://www.khorshedjaveri.com). Or by calling (425) 427-0525.

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Strand Book Store -022-2661994, Oxford Bookstore-022-56364477, Parsiana Book Shop-022-22074335, Khorshed Javeri-022-23644935





# India In Focus

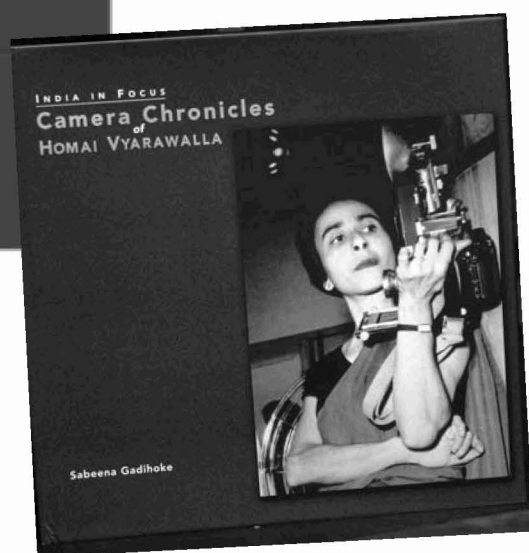
BOOKS  
&  
ARTS

Camera Chronicles of Homai Vyarawalla

Published by the Parzor Foundation in association with Mapin Publishing, 2006, 231 pages

By Sabeena Gadihoke, Review by Sam Kanga, Toronto

Who was Dalda 13



Sabeena Gadihoke has written a magnificent book chronicling the life of a Parsi female photographer working when photojournalism was still in its infancy. Fortunately the reader is also presented with what turns out to be a rather unique self-portrait of India in the twentieth century.

Born in Navsari to a Parsi family, Homai Vyarawalla (nee Hathiram) was India's first female press photographer. Introduced to the craft by her late husband Maneckshaw, she became a skilled documentary photographer working under the pseudonym Dalda 13, a cryptic combination of her year of birth, the age at which she met him and her first license plate.

Vyarawalla documented India's tumultuous twentieth century, photographing the events and characters that played a role in the birth of the new republic as well as the parade of visiting dignitaries that followed. Indeed, a

Navsari Astrologer accurately forecasted when she was two "she is destined to walk among royalty and important people".

Pandit Nehru and later Indira Gandhi granted her easy access to themselves and their families. She would capture a cigar smoking Jinnah the day before he left for Pakistan, and was scolded by Mahatma Gandhi about the popping of her flash bulbs. Incredibly, she would have been present at Birla House when Gandhi was assassinated were it not for a last minute suggestion by Maneckshaw that they go together the next day. She still regards this as the greatest picture that she missed taking. Though the event was a great tragedy, she truly would have been in the right place at the right time, the hallmark of a great photojournalist. The American photographer Margaret Bourke-White had been there, and even the great French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson had left the prayer meeting moments before the shots were fired. Vyarawalla would have been there, with a movie camera no less!

From Jackie Kennedy to Martin Luther King, President Eisenhower, Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, the list of dignitaries and personalities she photographed is startling. She documented the 1961 Royal visit by Queen Elizabeth II and was at the Nathu La pass in north Sikkim when the Dalai Lama walked across the border into India. Of all the people she photographed, she was particularly impressed by the simplicity and humility of Ho Chi Minh.

During the volatile days surrounding partition Vyarawalla and her family would protect their Muslim owned building from being burned down, deciding to remain on the balcony laughing and talking to give the impression it was a Parsi building. Her comical photos of British "expats" and their Gymkhana antics

are tempered by the observation - "They lived like maharajas with their liveried servants in India and wanted pictures that they could show their families back home. I have seen wives of diplomats in tears at the time of leaving India. They had enjoyed the best of everything during their stay here and dreaded the thought of drudgery back home".

Living alone in Baroda now at age 92, she still retains her independence. Having lost both her husband and her only son, she continues to do her own shopping and chores. She still drives, does her own carpentry, plumbing and electrical fixes. A spiritual person, she believes each one of us has a guardian angel and often feels the presence of her husband and mother, both long dead. Recently she has been having recurring dreams where a man with a long beard tells her she will be gone on November 9th, but she is not ready to give up as yet, proudly stating "When I go, I want to go with my boots on."

**BOOKS  
&  
ARTS**

*Sam Kanga, Toronto, October 2006 - sam.kanga@sympatico.ca*

*Born in Bombay in 1959 Sam came to Montreal at age 6. From the age of 12 he was interested in photography, strongly influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson and his colleagues, including Sam Tata. At present Sam is a Toronto based photographer – has photographed a wide range of subjects and travelled to England, France, Corsica, India. He also worked for many years in advertising as Senior Account Director. Married with two children Sam recently opened his own agency - RedGap Communications Inc. offering a full range of services from creative & design to photography, printing, web design etc.*



## **Gaavo Mari Saathe Singalong A Treasure Trove of Parsi Songs**

208 pp., paperback Rs 150/-

Available from Marzban Giara, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014.

Or order from Parsiana book shop. e-mail: parsiana@vsnl.net Tel.(022) 2207 4335 or 2207 4347.

Marzban Giara has compiled 265 Parsi songs - 60 Zarathushti devotional songs in English, over 100 religious songs in Gujarati, 40 songs for festive occasions and 65 Parsi comic/folk songs. It contains a bibliography of books on Parsi music. The back cover has names of music audio cassettes/CDs of interest to Parsis as well as from whom they can be purchased.

Comic songs like papri-papetana lagan, soonabai lamba, kaka kalingar jeva, goolan maari gol gol, hun chhu uptodate fashionable naari, My name is Jeejeebhoy Jamshedji are included. Also included are Parsi garbas, monajats, and many songs that will rekindle pride in being a Parsi and revive the rich tradition of Parsi music. The tunes for the song are also mentioned where possible.

The book was launched September 4th 2006 at K. R. Cama Oriental Institute where selected songs from the book were sung during the musical program .

The first book Jarthosti Gayan Sangrah a collection of 101 devotional songs has been s sold out.

**Source Marzban Giara**

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