

JOURNAL

Dae-Behman-Spendarmad 1384 AY (Fasli) • Amordad-Shehrever-Meher 1385 AY (Shenshai) • Shehrever-Meher-Avan 1385 AY (Kadimi)

Stewardship of the Environment

ayâ manivâ varatâ yê dregvâ
achishtâ verezyô
ashem mainyush spênishtô
atcâ tõi vaêm khyâmâ yõi îm
ferashêm kerenâun ahûm

Of the twin spirits, the
deceitful chose the worst
While the bountiful holy
spirit chose the truth
So may we be like those
who shall heal
this world towards
perfection.

Ys 30.5,9



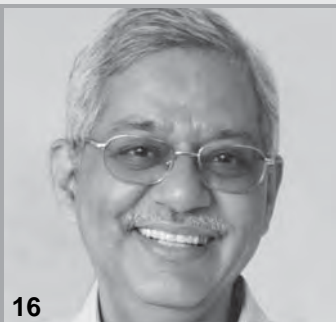
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FEZANA JOURNAL

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SPRING 2016

The Kurds and Zoroastrian Roots

Guest Editor Dr Daryoush Jahanian

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A Word from the Editor

The Winter 2015 issue has been interesting to put together; it is rich with news, events and ideas, as so many events have occurred since our FALL Yalda issue, which was a happy issue.

The cover story of this issue started with Zoroastrian Banking, guest-edited by Yazdi Tantra, because we wanted to inform our readers regarding the history of the Co-operative Zoroastrian Bank. Three giants of the finance world share their vast experience in this article: Minoo Shroff, Hoshang Sinor, and up and coming Mehrabi Irani; Yazdi Tantra provides us with a fascinating history of banking.

But then, the Paris massacre and the November 30, COP 21 meeting on Climate Change garnered our attention. Climate Change was vigorously debated at the Parliament of World Religions held in Salt Lake City. Everybody, or almost everybody, agrees that climate change is largely manmade—with 2015 being the hottest year on record since 1880. In this decade alone, each year has been hotter than 1998. An alarming statistic is the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide is forty percent higher than it was at the beginning of the industrial revolution

In my editorial of Fezana Journal, Fall 2015, I raised the question whether we Zarathushtis could or would do something about preserving and conserving creation... as our religion entrusts us to. The second encyclical of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (*on care of our common home*), which resonates with and highlights many of the issues raised by our Prophet regarding mankind's obligations to preserve and conserve the environment. In his insightful article, Khosro Mehrfar sets the stage. In this issue we have gone further in our quest for the Stewardship of our Environment. We invited Jehan Bagli, Neville Panthaki, Khosro Mehrfar, Mehrborzin Soroushian, Edul Davar, and Shahin Bekhradnia to discuss Zoroastrian perspectives and what we need to do. Wrapping up our discussions on the environment, Mehr Sidhwa-Pastakia, a young mother living in Mumbai, contributed a powerful and passionate piece on the environment—she was one of the four people who represented the Religions for Peace, USA, at the Paris Convention.

It is said that the greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it. Not so. It is about time that each of us in our own little or big way do our part.

In October, several of us attended the Parliament of World's Religions in Salt Lake City. We had a booth that was well-visited, we had several panel presentations, and FEZANA spear-headed the petition for the Establishment of a Religious Arm of the United

Editorial



Nations. One of the most popular and meaningful events was when Ervad Bagli and Mobedyar Bhujwala demonstrated a Jashan, which was presented to an overflow audience—at 7:00 AM! However, we were severely disappointed that the Parliament's program book failed to mention the Zoroastrian religion; also, our iconography was omitted. A strongly worded letter pointing out the oversight was sent to the Parliament's organizers, who acknowledged the omission. We thank co-chairs Shernaz Minwalla and Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala of FEZANA's interfaith committee for coordinating this event.

On October 3, 2015, the Bhagarsath Anjuman Atashbehrum of Navsari celebrated its 250th anniversary of the enthronement. Taking this opportunity, we requested noted Parsi historian Marzban Giara to document the history of Navsari, the bastion of Zoroastrian heritage.

This issue also features the conferences organized by the Library Committee of Zoroastrian Association of Houston, the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism, the exhibition in Honolulu, Hawaii, of Zoroastrian Textiles, which was co-curated by the art historians Pheroza Godrej, Firoza Punthakey-Mistree, and the much heralded Udvada Utsav.

As I write this we are coming to the closing days of 2015, a tumultuous year with highs and lows. We hope and pray that 2016 will bring peace and stability among all religions and all people,

Wishing you dear readers the best of health and happiness always!

A Message from FEZANA

Dear Presidents of Member Associations, Corresponding Members, Committee Chairs and Fellow Zarathushtis
It has been an exciting Q4 2015 for many Zarathushtis in North America as we participated in various events domestically and internationally:

Twenty Zarathushtis from USA & Canada actively participated in the Parliament of World's Religions in Salt Lake City, Utah October 15-19, 2015. FEZANA sponsored and conducted five panels & presentations as well as an exhibit booth. To be an integral player in this world class event was indeed an honor as can be seen from the coverage of this event in this Journal.

FEZANA maintains a collaborative approach towards other Zoroastrian associations in India and around the world, respecting their autonomy while at the same time coming together to celebrate our commonalities. In that collaborative and cooperative spirit, FEZANA has been an active participant in the Global Working Group (GWG) of the worldwide Zoroastrian organizations. I had the honor & privilege to represent FEZANA and participate in the Global Working Group (GWG) meeting in Udvada, India on December 25-26, 2015. The GWG is an informal body made up of leaders of Zoroastrian Associations viz. FEZANA, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP), representatives of United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and other global organizations like WZCC and WZO Trust Funds of India. We decide on 4-5 projects, discuss challenges that we are all facing and come up with solutions working in consensus to achieve the goals and create a progressive trend towards the Zarathushtrian community worldwide. The GWG decided to award the 11th. World Congress in 2018 to Australia.

For the North American Zarathushti diaspora, Udvada has always been and will always remain the "homing beacon" the place where we all yearn to come visit and pay our respects to the Iranshah when a visit to India beckons. So twenty Zarathushtis from North America including myself participated in the inaugural Iranshah Udvada Utsav (IUU) in Udvada on December 25-27, 2015. Thanks to the efforts of Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor and his wife Havovi in conjunction with Dinshaw Tamboly, the IUU was a big success and it was very heartening to see more than 3,000 Zarathushtis from all over the world actively participating and enjoying this event. Read more about this event in this Journal.

Thirty-five Zarathushti youth from North America sponsored by FEZANA attended the Sixth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (6WZYC2015) in Auckland, New Zealand in end of December 2015. The next



World Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held in U.S.A in 2019. Request for Proposals to member associations to host this 7WZYC in USA. Will be sent soon.

FEZANA was founded with the purpose of giving the growing North American Zarathushti community a united platform to plan and control its future. FEZANA's mission is to preserve our religion on the North American continent by providing a cohesive force. Our core values are being recognized and enhanced through a strong emphasis on education, economic stability, and volunteerism. As we nurture a love for humanity and promote our Zarathushti way of life, we are increasing awareness of our religion and culture domestically and globally.

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to do all this and much more. The work of deciding and distributing the scholarships, making sure that your donations are used wisely to help those in real need, planning and coordinating religious education, workshops, sports, seminars, publications, etc. is done by committees made up of numerous volunteers who freely give their time, and often their money. To continue this work and prepare for our future, we need to continually raise funds.

Your generous donations are vitally needed to the FEZANA General Fund to enable FEZANA to continue to actively work towards and participate in various activities (Youth Congress, Religious Education, Sports, U.N., Inter-Faith, etc.) as showcased in this Journal and monthly bulletins.

I request that all of us continue to follow the **5-STAR Guiding Principles for FEZANA: Teamwork, Respect Diversity, Innovation, Empowerment & an Optimistic 'Can Do Attitude'.**

Greetings and Best Wishes from the FEZANA Family to You and Your families in 2016. Let us all begin the New Year with love and understanding towards all Zarathushtis worldwide as well as all humanity and live in peace and harmony in the years ahead!!

Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA-President

ATTEND THE 2016 FEZANA AGM IN MICHIGAN

Friday, April 29 – Sunday, May 1, 2016

PRE-AGM Friday (April 29)

Holiday Inn & Suites Farmington Hills – Novi Conference Room from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. with dinner following at Village Oaks Club House (Novi Hall) – volunteer drivers will take participants to the hall and back. Association Presentations will take place during Friday evening dinner so we can all share in our accomplishments

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) April 30-May 1.

Will commence on Saturday (April 30) from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and continue on Sunday (May 1) from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

ZAOM GALA

Saturday, April 30 at 7:00 p.m., Farmington Hills Manor: See the attached flyer

ACCOMMODATIONS

Holiday Inn & Suites Farmington Hills-Nov

37529 Grand River Avenue, Farmington Hills, MI 48335 P: 248.477.7800, F: 248.478.3799

Group Room Rate is \$112 for King; \$122 for double beds – breakfast included

Reservations by: Phone directly at 248.477.7800 (Ask for Monique) or on website: Holidayinn.com/farmingtonhill Special Group Code: FRB; Group Name: FEZANA

TRANSPORTATION

Gary Airport Transportation: (248) 747-0314

\$40 one way

RSVP by March 1, 2016

FEZANA Administrator, Zenobia Damania, at admin@fezana.org

With number of AGM attendees & Gala guests, contact and travel information

For Further Information or Questions

Contact Shernaz Minwalla, ZAOM President at sjminwalla@gmail.com or (586) 216-3341

Sight Seeing

Enjoy the motor city with its museums, theaters, and restaurants.

THE HENRY FORD is home to Greenfield Village, The Henry Ford Museum, and The Ford Rouge Factory.

<https://www.thehenryford.org/>.

In MIDTOWN within walking distance of each other, you will find:

The **Detroit Institute of Arts Museum**: <http://www.dia.org/>





ZAOM Gala

Enjoy a fun-filled evening
with dinner and dancing
on Saturday, April 30, 2016
at 7:00 p.m.

at Farmington Hills Manor
23666 Orchard Lake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

\$35 per adult

\$25 per child (3 – 10 years)

RSVP by March 1, 2016

Checks made out to ZAOM, and mailed to Despina Mehta,
1759 Chase Dr., Rochester, MI 48307

(Please indicate the number of adults and
children on the check)

HUVARASHTA: ADDRESSING THE ISSUES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

DMZT (DAR-E-MEHR ZOROASTRIAN TEMPLE) STARTS SOLAR ENERGY INITIATIVE



Zoroastrian values embody respect for the environment and action to revert Climate Change.

Looking back many of our customs and traditions were designed and aligned with these modern concepts.

All Zoroastrians who support and encourage these values will be pleased to learn that the new, New York Dar-e-Mehr is planning to do its part and working towards considering **Solar Energy** as it's source of electricity. Not only will this be the '**right thing to do**' but will also be a major practical asset to eliminating electricity cost and reducing the overall cost of maintaining the building.

DMZT (Dar-e-Mehr Zoroastrian Temple) has established a special account for people wanting to promote such a cause.

Please forward your tax deductible donations to **DMZT - Solar Fund** by going to www.dmzt.org/solar or making a check to **DMZT (Solar Fund on Memo line)** and mailing it to C/O Minu Dutia, DMZT Treasurer, 1 Broadview Drive, Medford NJ 08055. If you have questions or ideas you would like to discuss contact eduldaver@gmail.com Thank you for your support in living our lives in consonance with a very Zoroastrian tenet of living in harmony with nature.

WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE, BUT KNOW NOT WHAT WE MAY BE

What's in a name? What is FIRES (FEZANA Information Research Education System)? In the year 2007, FEZANA had an ambitious dream of creating an entity that would be the focal point for all things Zoroastrian; an entity that would be library, database,

resource center, preserver of rare documents and artifacts, and much, much more. ZAH Library was chosen to be the architect of this vision. Eight years ago FIRES was a mere pipe dream, the brainchild of a few visionaries, spearheaded by Rustom Kevala. In fact the idea of FIRES was considered by some to be so ambitious as to be unfeasible. Nevertheless, as the bard told us: *Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.* Zoroastrians are not known to accept limitations or to allow fear of failure to hold them back. The FIRES taskforce did indeed dare to launch this project, and FIRES was born; its mission: "to serve as a centralized location in North America of books, manuscripts, literature, scholarly materials and collections of artifacts pertaining to the Zarathusthi faith, as well as to promote Zarathusthi education and research by disseminating this information to the public."



Your presence makes us rich: In 2007 Rustom Kevala and his team identified the pressing need for an organization such as FIRES in North America. They in turn invited Aban Rustomji at the helm of ZAH Library to channel her deep love and vast experience of libraries into giving the concept of FIRES vision and shape. .

It is however the unfailing generosity of people from so many walks of life that breathed everlasting life into FIRES. A huge debt is owed to five major donors who turned over entire collections to FIRES – these are the jewels in the crown. Each of these donations comes with its own story of passion and poignancy. The late **Cyrus Mehta** of the United Kingdom was the first to entrust his complete collection to FIRES. What started as a series of early morning Saturday conversations with Aban Rustomji developed into a glorious bequest of books to FIRES. Then in 2008, **Rustom Kevala** entrusted his extraordinary collection to his brainchild FIRES; the collection includes a complete set of **Ushta** newsletters, as well as invaluable notes and conference material from early FEZANA days now preserved for posterity.



In 2014 **Firdosh Mehta** of Alberta/British Columbia generously presented a large part of his private library to FIRES; among his collection are several valuable out of print books. FIRES is also indebted to **Soli Dastur** of Florida, who donated a full set of DVDs of the ***Humata Hukta Hvarsht Tele-Serial Episodes*** from the Frohar Foundation. Most recently **Shapur Irani** of Indianapolis put his faith in FIRES by donating more than 14 boxes of books from his eclectic library. This gift includes a magnificently illustrated ***Shanameh*** donated to FIRES in memory of Shapur's beloved parents. In addition to these collections, FIRES also has on permanent display in ZAH Library a collection of Dhalla memorabilia, generously placed by several members of the family of Dastur Dr. M.N. Dhalla. Beyond the large collections, FIRES has been, and continues to be, the fortunate recipient of many other donations of books and artifacts, as well generous monetary contributions. (Dhalla cabinet see page 7)

Let me count the ways: FIRES is not an ivory tower, it is an organic entity, eager to grow, and to be sought out. Yes, FIRES receives, FIRES collects and FIRES preserves, but its intention is also to share and give back. FIRES goal is to be the one-stop destination in North America of the cultural "wealth" of Zoroastrians, to preserve this wealth for posterity, and to provide liberal access to all its treasures. FIRES is a two way street. A gift to FIRES is a gift to all who seek knowledge of this Zoroastrian "wealth" in its widest sense. FIRES is, as the proverbial slogan says, "*the gift that keeps on giving*". To this end FIRES urges all FEZANA Associations to list their collections online in the FIRES catalog that can be accessed at the website: www.fezana-fires.org. ZAH Library started the ball rolling with its collection of over 900 books forming the core of the FIRES collection. Other associations like ZAC, ZANT and ZAC-LA have now listed their collections online. FIRES however is more than a repository of books and artifacts. In the last two years, FIRES has successfully launched the Oral History Project in Houston in partnership with Rice University; interviewers have recorded and archived the "coming to America" stories of over 30 Zoroastrians. Another 30 Zoroastrians have been identified to expand this project; their histories attest to the grit and resourcefulness of the Zoroastrian community in North America. Upcoming FIRES projects include a video on the Navjote ceremony, and the digitizing of several valuable original Zoroastrian manuscripts. Furthermore, FIRES continues to organize lectures and seminars to raise awareness and to promote Zoroastrian thought and discussion within the community and beyond.

Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness: We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many munificent donors who continue to help expand FIRES. We have the infrastructure to house and maintain large collections, and feel privileged that so many have chosen to make FIRES the destination for their treasured personal collections. No matter the size or form of the gift, we at FIRES are aware of the honor, as well as and the heavy responsibility that comes with each gift. We are cognizant of the sacred trust placed in us by each donor, and promise to cherish, preserve and share each item in accordance with our mission. At this time of thanksgiving, to all those who have given so generously to FIRES in so many ways, and who have helped make FIRES a shining beacon of its kind:

***I can no other answer make but thanks,
And thanks; and ever thanks ...***

- Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, (III, iii)

Zubeen Mehta received a B.A. (Hons.) in French and an M.A from the University of Oxford, England. She also has a post-graduate certification in Education from Westminster College, Oxford. Presently she works with children and adults who have learning differences, providing targeted cognitive therapy to optimize their learning. Zubeen is an active member of the ZAH Library/ FIRES committee. She and her husband Meheryar Rivetna live in Houston, TX.

ZAH LIBRARY'S ANNUAL GALA TACKLES SIGNIFICANT ISSUE

JANGOO MISTRY

The ZAH Library (Home of FIRES) hosted its 3-day annual event in Houston starting on Friday, October 9, 2015. The theme: ***"Survival of Zoroastrians in North America: Potential for a Positive Outlook"*** addressed a burning issue that is also hotly debated these days in India. The dwindling population of Parsis in India has raised serious concerns, leading to *"Jiyo Parsi"* – a scheme supported by the Government of India to arrest the population decline of the Parsi Zoroastrian community there. The ZAH seminar's focus, however, was primarily on how the diaspora in North America can thrive and remain a vibrant force in the coming decades.

Two outstanding experts, who have studied the issues and presented viable alternatives, were featured: **Dr. Rashna Writer from France, and Roshan Rivetna from Chicago.**



Friday evening was a meet-and-greet opportunity for the community, organized mainly for the speakers to introduce themselves. They gave the audience a glimpse of their background and what they were going to cover the next day. Rohintan Rivetna gave a short presentation on FEZANA's Infrastructure Project, followed by a gala pot-luck dinner.



Saturday morning began with the introduction of the first speaker **Roshan Rivetna**. Roshan, who is a nuclear physicist and computer engineer by training, is well-known in the community for her tireless service, her stewardship of the FEZANA Journal for 15 years, her several publications, and her extensive research on Zoroastrian demographics spanning several years.

Roshan's talk was titled **DEMOGRAPHICS DETERMINES DESTINY**. She presented fascinating, but alarming, statistics on worldwide Zoroastrian population trends, births, deaths, fertility rates, conversions and immigration patterns. As most of us are well aware, the worldwide Zoroastrian

population has been declining for several years, due to substantial declines in India, in spite of growth in the U.S. and Canada. Even in the West, the fertility rate is only 1.9, short of the 2.1 needed for replacement. Zoroastrians marrying non-Zoroastrian spouses have doubled in India (from 20% to 40% since 1991) and tripled in North America (from 20% to 60% since 1991).

Roshan's demographic study has been presented in detail in the FEZANA Journal, Fall 2013. Based on this data, Roshan posed the question: "Are we transforming our faith and traditions with thought, or through carelessness?" She noted several points:

1. Our customs have changed a lot. We have given up our food, dress, language, and traditions like ses, toran, chalk. These items identified us as a community in India and should not be lightly discarded. After 1000 years of separation, Zoroastrians from Iran and the Indian sub-continent are together in North America. Rather than giving up beautiful customs from both cultures, we should blend them and evolve new traditions here.

2. There is a decline in religious practice. The first generation wanted to stay together and built Centers where we could meet to socialize. Now we need to address our need for places of spiritual solace. Houston is taking the lead on the building of a stand-alone Atash Kadeh.
3. Are religious teachings and core beliefs the only things that matter? Some people think that the Tadjiks or some other group will emerge to keep those beliefs alive. The challenge is to find a balance between keeping only core beliefs and maintaining traditions.

Roshan observed that today “community is not a priority”, and we need to reverse the “negative effects of assimilation, disinterest, disengagement, and apathy”. Comments and suggestions to stabilize or reverse the declining trends came from over 70 first and second-generation Zoroastrians through a survey. These have also been published in the addendum to the Fall 2013 issue of *The FEZANA Journal*. They reveal diverse thoughts and opinions from an interested cross-section of our community, and are worth reading.

Roshan urged the Zoroastrian Association of Houston to accept a leadership role in this effort and involve other Zoroastrian Associations across North America.



The second speaker, **Dr. Rashna Writer**, (photo left) was introduced as the author of several books, with her latest book interestingly titled: *The Reshaping of Iran from Zoroastrian to Muslim*. She has participated in international conferences and lectured extensively in the UK, USA and India on Iranian history. A political scientist by training, she has acted as risk advisor to major English, Austrian and German companies on war and terrorism risks, and has garnered a long list of awards.

Rashna Writer’s talk was titled: **DECADES HENCE: WHITHER NORTH AMERICA’S ZOROASTRIANS**. She noted that the challenge before the community was daunting, and Zoroastrianism could lose its identity in the multi-religious, multi-cultural society of North America. She drew comparisons between early Zoroastrian settlements in China that died due to a hostile setting, but flourished in India due to a more tolerant political and social environment. After India – the first major Zoroastrian diaspora – Zoroastrians settling in America is the second major diaspora in the Western world. Using the Indian experience as a template, we have a good building block for survival in North America. For example, Zoroastrians in Calcutta, where Rashna grew up, flourished with a strong infrastructure, even though they were a miniscule minority of 500 inside a city of 14 million.

British rule favored Parsis who created tremendous wealth. The wealthy Parsi families had a sense of obligation to the community. Panchayats were formed so the community could rule itself. Although the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) administered them, the seed capital for the various Parsi properties, such as funeral structures and residential baus, was raised from within the community. Karachi and other cities replicated the Mumbai story.

But we cannot and should not aim to replicate the Indian experience in the USA or Canada. Rashna urged listeners to analyze the subject from a micro and a macro perspective. She praised the Zoroastrian community in Houston as being exemplary at the micro or local level. Home provides the important beginning of the Zoroastrian identity, with the child imbibing Zoroastrian values through osmosis. But it consolidates and thrives with the support and involvement of the outside community. Rashna cited the role played by recreational centers for Parsi youths to gather, along the lines of the Parsi clubs in Calcutta and Bombay.

At the macro level, a regional as well as a global structure of governance is essential if the dispersed

Zoroastrian groups are to avert the problem of atomization. The transformation of the Zoroastrian identity is already under way, and there is a palpable fear of total assimilation. Rashna charged us with “keeping a miniscule community intact and remaining distinct and distinguishable”. Inter-marriages are becoming a fact of life, and whether one accepts it or not, “you cannot put that genie back in the bottle”. It is not unusual for British, Indian and American Zoroastrian members to be in the same family. Widespread dispersal of Zoroastrians in a dynamic and mobile North American society will lead to atomization that will enfeeble the diaspora. Ties at the wider global level and “a global mindset” will prevent that from happening, and help to chart a healthy future for Zoroastrians everywhere.



An audience of over 100 attendees filled the main hall of the Zarathushti Center of Houston to hear the presentations by Roshan Rivetna and Rashna Writer. The involvement of the listeners was evident from the spirited and insightful questions that they posed to the speakers..



Panel: left to right Sarosh Manekshaw, Tannaz Machhi, Nozer Dungor, Zia Anklesaria

After lunch, the group gathered again to hear from a panel of three younger members of our community. The panelists, Zia Anklesaria, Nozer Dungor, and Tannaz Macchi, shared with us their perspective of the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. Married, with children, the panelists were carefully chosen to represent a cross-section of youngsters in their age group. One was born and raised in the U.S. Two had Zoroastrian spouses, the children were of different ages, and they had had varying levels of involvement in community affairs. The audience was fascinated and impressed with the varied viewpoints and the suggestions made to enhance the experience of people in their age group in the community. All three panelists are bringing their children up with awareness and practice of the religion. Suggestions included: home environment and

examples set by parents are very important, Zoroastrian Associations in college campuses, if organized, would continue to keep college-bound kids in touch with other community members, virtual connections through a Facebook page of young Zoroastrians along the lines of the one for New York, and behavior that welcomes and accepts non-Zoroastrian spouses during ZAH events.

The third day of the event was a 2-hour informal discussion with Rashna Writer. Rashna began the discussion by noting that loss of certain traditions and rituals leads to what she called “reductionism”, or a gradual lessening of the ties that bind. She further stressed that for Zoroastrianism to thrive in North America, it is vital to keep the second-generation immigrants (grown children of first-generation immigrants) involved in the community. Without them, all is lost, and survival of Zoroastrianism would be impossible. Animated discussion among the attendees followed, with personal experiences related, failed attempts to have religion education classes for adults, and various strategies proposed to get younger people involved after they leave for college, often outside the state. There are no easy answers, and follow-up actions have been assigned. This issue will continue to be addressed at a broader ZAH level rather than by the ZAH Library which has a more narrow charter.

The three-day event was an unqualified success, with very positive feedback from those who attended. The importance of the topic is well recognized, and this seminar provided the first serious attempt to start serious discussions and initiate action.



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE WITH SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

Sitting from left Rohinton Rivetna, Roshan Rivetna; Aban Rustomji (Chair) Dr Rashna Writer

Standing Jangoo Mistry, Arnavaz Sethna, Yasmin Pavri, Meheryar Rivetna, Nozer Dungor, Zubeen Mehta, Tannaz Machhi, Pearline Collector, Zia Anklesaria, Yezdi Engineer, Sarosh Manekshaw.

Jangoo Mistry worked at Ford Motor Company for 32 years. He is now retired and living in Houston. He serves on the ZAH Library Committee and is on the Board of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce's Houston Chapter.


SSZ
***Society of Scholars of
ZOROASTRIANISM***

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago

(Supported by Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, FEZANA)

This year it is our distinct honor and privilege to have

**Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor,
High Priest of Iranshah Atashbehram, Udvada**

Our featured guest and speaker

Amy Sumarivala

On September 19, 2015, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) hosted the 2015 Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) Conference, supported by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, (FEZANA). The conference was held at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Burr Ridge, IL.

Over 60 enthusiastic participants were in attendance. Our Vada Dasturji, Khurshed Dastoor, the High Priest of Iranshah Atashbehram of Udvada was the honored guest and speaker. ZAC congregation eagerly awaited the arrival of the honorable guest with silver khumchas and ses with coconut, rice, and flowers. ZAC ladies welcomed him and his lovely wife, Havovi at the front door with achu-michu sagan while others sang "Mubarak Mubarak", a traditional Parsi Gujarati song often sung at joyous occasions. Everyone had big smiles as our Vada Dasturji stepped in.



The Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) is an initiative that promotes study and scholarship of the Zarathushti Religion, formalized during the Eighth World Zoroastrian Congress in London in 2005. The mission of the Society is to revive the tradition of scholarship within our community among athornans and behdins alike, and to promote interaction among academicians, theologians (priests), educationists, lay scholars, and practitioners of Zoroastrianism, through roundtable discussions, conferences and publications. The aim is to make SSZ a prestigious organization on par with scholarly organizations of other faith communities, and merit affiliation with international bodies such as the American Academy of Religions.

SSZ Conferences have been held in Chicago each year since 2006, when noted scholars and students present their research papers or make presentations on religious topics. To encourage Zoroastrian studies within the community, these SSZ conferences also include sessions on Zoroastrianism 101, which are

delivered by community members, especially the next generation. Persons/Associations interested in the mission and vision of the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism are invited to host future Conferences in their areas. SSZ will provide assistance as needed. The organizers enjoy complete autonomy in programming and organizing the Conference. All community members, students, scholars, and members of interfaith communities are invited and encouraged to participate. The attendees seek to be enriched and the attendees' enthusiasm and interest provide support to the speakers. Feedback and panel discussions following the presentations are always encouraged and used as a tool to enhance future conferences for the benefit of the academicians and community.

The all-day program on September 19, 2015, was interesting as well as informative; it kept the attendees focused and engaged. After a hearty breakfast of a variety of delicious food prepared by our volunteers, it was time to settle down and illuminate our minds.

Mobedyar Boman Damkevala began with the blessing and prayers which was followed by a monajat, **"Asho Jarthos, Paygambar"** and **Ahura**—an enchanting chant, which was beautifully sung by *Mani Rao*, a celebrated singer from the Chicago community. *ZAC President, Ervad Rayomand Ravji* gave a welcome speech that was followed by an introduction to SSZ by Rohinton Rivetna.

SESSION 1: Chaired by Ervad Rayomand Ravji, ZAC President

Khursheed Ichaporia gave a very interesting presentation on the **"Performance of Rituals, an Essential Element of our Faith."** Her speech encouraged considerable audience participation as she weaved through rituals and ceremonies and the inner and outer liturgical ceremonies practiced by Zoroastrians.

Kamal Saher presented **"An Enumeration of our Rituals and their Significance"** and Persis Driver and Tina Mistry presented **"Love of Zarathushtra Borne out of an Understanding of Zarathushtra's Teachings."** These next generation Zoroastrian speakers did an admirable job, keeping the attendees engaged. All presenters clearly took the time and effort to research their respective subjects and enlightened the attendees with their impressive presentations. Vada Dasturji Saheb was very pleased with the presentations and complimented the presenters.

Ervad Rayomand Ravji spoke on **"Role of priests in North America."** Rayomand gave a historical context that traced the religious practices in ancient times to the modern era, including an overview of how community fire houses or Atash Gahs developed where a fire was tended all hours of day by fire keepers. The fire keeper's responsibility eventually became the responsibility of the community priests. Atash Gahs of those days led to the building of the Atash Behrams, our Agiaries and Dar e Mehers. The presentation touched on the differences between the older generation priests to the challenges facing the new generation of Zoroastrians in North America.

Vada Dasturji and his wife were honored with a floral garland and bouquet of roses by ZAC members Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna and Dinaz Weber, recognizing Dasturji Saheb Khurshed Dastoor's commitment and support of the North American Zarathushti community. (photo page 15)

After acknowledging ZAC's welcome, Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor Kaikobad Dastoor gave a brilliant talk on **"Living a Zarathushti Life Centered around our Dar-e-Mehers."**

Vada Dasturji spoke on the socio-religious ceremonies, purification ceremonies; initiation ceremonies; the liturgical ceremonies: the Inner Liturgical Ceremonies (Pav Mahel); the Outer liturgical ceremonies (Hoshmordi); and the consecration ceremonies, such as, the Navjote, Navar, and Martab. After Vada Dasturji's very enlightening presentation the group broke for lunch cooked by ZAC's talented volunteer chefs. During lunch, the attendees watched the screening of the feature film "The Path of Zarathushtra" by Oorvazi Irani.



SESSION 2: Chaired by Kayomارش Mehta. The first speaker of the afternoon was Dr. Dastoor Kersey Antia who spoke from the heart on ***“How Can We Continue to Keep the Light of the Faith Alive in Future in North America?”*** a topic that is discussed often, and the daunting challenges facing the North American Zarthustis today.

Panel discussion, was moderated by **Rohinton Rivetna** and focused on the **“Future Directions for Practice of the Faith in North America.”** The participants included Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor, Dastur Kersey Antia, Mobedyar Boman Damkevala, Er. Freddie Gonda, Mobed Keikhosrow Mobed, Kayomارش Mehta, Er. Rayomand Ravji, Er. Pesi Vazifdar, and Er. Kobad Zarolia. This was an earnest dialogue that deliberated on the issues facing Zoroastrians at the present time, dwindling population, fading interest in the religion, and reduced participation in religious activities, while balancing work-life priorities. The panel

participants shared their honest opinions, brain-storming on the next steps to steer the youth in a positive direction, revive the Zoroastrian faith, and motivate the youth, a topic of interest as well as genuine concern for the Zoroastrian community.

Ardibesht Mah-Ardibesht Roj jashan hosted by Nilufer and Phiroze Darukhanavala. was performed in the evening after the conference.



From left Ervad Zarolia, Ervad Vazifdar, Mobed Kaihosrow Mobed; Dastoor K Antia; Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor; Ervad Ravji, Mobedyar Boman Damkevala, Moderators Kayomارش Mehta and Rohinton Rivetna at the mike

Amy Sumariwalla is a nuclear forensic scientist, who retired Sept. 30 and has moved back to Idaho

Banking.....

Finance & Banking

Guest editorial Zoroastrian Banking Yazdi Tantra



When Dolly Dastoor first asked me to work on an issue on Finance & Banking for FEZANA Journal, I was wary. Bankers & Finance people are secretive by nature. Always trained to keep secrets, including their clients' activities and finances, they are unwilling to share much of their careers and personal anecdotes. Hence when they were approached, they preferred to stay quiet! A few of them, however, opened up and shared their personal insights with a human element built-in. And that is what we have to showcase in this issue.

Minoo Shroff needs no introduction. An economist by training and a multi-faceted personality, his experience and exposure to finance is superlative. With over sixty years in the field with large corporations, he emphasizes the importance of relationships and networking, in order to succeed. The personal touch in such fiduciary relationships is the key to achieving whatever you want.

Hoshang Sinor has seen banking in India in all its hues. Starting with Central Bank of India, before nationalization, moving to Union Bank of India as a nationalized bank, moving back to Central Bank of India after nationalization and then cutting across to the largest private sector bank in India, ICICI, he has seen it all. His is an inspiring career worth emulating - from humble beginnings as a clerk to his retirement as the top honcho at ICICI. A wonderful roller-coaster ride – read about it in his own words.

I have rarely seen a finance fiction writer from our community reach a bestseller status, at a young age of 39 years. . Mehrab Irani minces no words about the state of affairs with most people's finances. *"Everyone wants to have money and be rich, but few go about it the right way,"* he says. *"If you speak to people connected to the stock market, they will ask for a tip — a tip is not for the stock market, it is for waiters."* His book "Mad Money Journey" should be amongst the MUST READS in your list.

Zoroastrian Bank is the lone financial institution founded and still being run by the community. Although a relatively small organization, it encompasses all the facets of a Banking Institution. Add to that the typical old-fashioned mix of Tradition and Trust, with a dash of Parsi Board of Directors, you get an impeccable institution with probably the lowest NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) by the country's standards. Read all about their story as it unfolds from 1927 to date.

All in all, it was an exciting journey and I enjoyed every bit of it. Thanks to Dolly Dastoor and FEZANA JOURNAL for having given me the opportunity to participate in the presentation of these stories in my own small way.

Yazdi Tantra is a Chartered Accountant by training, Computer Consultant by Profession, Entrepreneur Developer by hobby and Trainer in his leisure time. Yazdi writes a regular weekly column for a community newspaper on Android apps for efficiency at the workplace. He is currently Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the IT Committee of Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Ltd. He runs a medium-sized Computer Company ON-LYNE for the last 24 years, developing websites, portals, payment gateways, sales and service of computer hardware. He is also the ex-director and Technical Chair of World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce.



ZOROASTRIAN BANK

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Ltd.

(Multi-State Scheduled Bank)

The Bank that is Big on Tradition & Trust

SINCE
1927

YAZDI TANTRA

Indian banking, as it is known today, started during British times. Although British Banks were established in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were British-owned and not favorably disposed to Indian borrowers. For example, the Bank of Bombay was operated by Europeans and often discriminated against Indian borrowers. A few banks were founded by Indian shareholders in response to local Indian businesses' need for basic banking services; however, some were taken over by British traders and businessmen over time. Economic volatility during the period from 1913 to 1918 saw at least ninety-four Indian banks fail. The first commercial Indian bank—wholly-owned and managed by Indians—was the Central Bank of India, which was established in 1911, by Sir Sorabji Ponchkhanawala. The Co-operative movement started in Southern India, mainly by small traders and businessmen as an alternative to moneylenders.

The Zoroastrian Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. was founded as the very first Zoroastrian community bank (and, perhaps the only one so far) during these financially turbulent times by a group of like-minded people with the forward-looking concept of community savings banking. As a Co-operative Credit Bank, the objective was to let its members save small amounts regularly and borrow as their business or personal needs required. The bank was established on June 17, 1927, under the Co-operative Societies Act at Sardar Building, Apollo Street with an authorized capital of Rs.10 lakhs.

The first Zoroastrian Co-operative Credit Society's Board of Directors were also founding members who had sharp business acumen and sound integrity. All of them were prominent Zoroastrians. Amongst these notables were:

Mr. Hormasji Cowasji Dinshaw (Adenwalla), the Bank's founder. He was the son of Cowasji Dinshaw Adenwala and was a prominent banker and pioneer of steam navigation in Western India. He was an important member of the Zoroastrian community and was knighted by the British in 1922.

Mr. K. R. P. Shroff, the Bank's first Chairman. He was the erstwhile chairman of Native Shares & Stock Brokers' Association who had relinquished his position in view of a British Order not to support the Indian freedom movement. He later served as a Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) President (1923 to 1966) and is known as "Father of the stock-market in India." As BSE became the first exchange in India to get permanent recognition through his leadership, Mr. Shroff was later awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India.

Mr. A.B. Godrej, the founder of the current Godrej Empire.

Over time, the bank was fortunate to have eminent Parsi persona serve on its board and provide the leadership required to ably manage the bank.

The bank, which was initially a Co-operative Credit Society, was converted to a Cooperative Bank under the Reserve Bank of India Act in 1994. Later, in 2003, the bank acquired the status of a Scheduled State Co-operative Bank, which permitted full-fledged banking activities.

Until 1985 the bank had only one branch; subsequently, it added eleven branches at strategic locations in Mumbai and Thane, and then one in the heart of Pune City. Continuing the growth story, the bank acquired the Citi Co-operative Bank in Surat and added six more branches, which made it a multi-state Scheduled Co-operative bank in November 2013. Strategic plans are in place for widening the network of branches by opening new facilities in the future.

The bank's first products were targeted to the needs of individuals and businesses from within the community; since 1964, its coverage has expanded to include all communities in India. Today, the bank caters to the needs of a variety of clients, big and small. The focus still remains on individuals and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that prefer a

Banking



personal touch in banking and require expert financial guidance and care. Most big banks are unable to provide this level of individual attention. Almost forty-eight percent of advances by the bank are related to SMEs from diverse business sectors, such as: manufacturing, trading, and services.

The core of banking and finance is built on trust. Bankers have a fiduciary and confidential relationship with their clients. When analyzing a client's financial data, bankers always advise their clients using industry-best financial strategies, melded with the client's unique situation and goals. When counseling the entrepreneur, bankers often advise caution and prudent risk-taking, which protects the client from inadvertent risks and avoids financial crises.

Rounding out their portfolio of services, banks also cater to foreign exchange business, as well as assisting its customers to get the most appropriate insurance coverage at the best price.

Building on the bank's tradition of trust with its community clients, banks have become the preferred financial institutions for deposits from many large trusts and not-for-profit organizations. Most bank depositors come from within the Zoroastrian Community and have implicit faith in the bank's decades-long tradition of honesty and old-fashioned values. For those customers from the Zoroastrian diaspora, the bank also accepts NRE deposits in Rupee terms at attractive rates of interest.

With an initial capitalization of Rs.10 lakhs, the bank has grown several times over and, today, the total business volume has risen to over Rs.1400 Crores. The bank has a unique and uninterrupted record of dividend payments to its shareholders of 15% for the last decade.

More now than ever before, there are two pillars for the success of any financial institution: its people and technology.

Zoroastrian Bank is a technology leader in Indian banking with its modern computers, software, security controls, and a well-trained staff at all levels. The most modern systems, coupled with world-class real-time infrastructure, helps the bank service its customers with efficiency, speed, and security. All eighteen branches

of the bank have been efficiently networked to the bank's information services hub. Besides, RTGS/NEFT facilities have been successfully implemented for the instant transfer of funds within and outside the bank. Introduction of SMS alerts, Point of Sales (POS) technology, and our ATM cum debit card round out our customer service and product strategy.

The bank continues to recruit and retain the best quality staff for its customer-facing and back office operations; staff enjoys industry-leading continuing education and motivational programs, all with the goal of providing the best customer experience and value to every stakeholder.

The bank is headed by professional directors, each an expert in their field. The Chairperson, Shernaz Mehta, is a Chartered Accountant, banker, and professional consultant. The board and its various sub-committees meet regularly to ensure that the bank's strategies, tactics, goals, and objectives are being met. It is their dedication and support that enables the bank to achieve its short- and long-term goals.

The future looks bright and promising. Very soon, the bank will enter its ninetieth year of service to the Zoroastrian Community. The management team is evaluating multiple organic growth opportunities; for example, the retail business sector is picking up in India due to the boom in consumerism across the country. The bank expects to establish a niche by offering retail loan services for consumer durables, housing, automobiles, etc. with its popular personalized services and optimum pricing policies. As the India growth story unfolds and gets into higher gear, management is also optimistic of financing and supporting the SME segment, which promises to be an engine for the growth of trade, services, and industry in the country. Inorganically, the Bank is looking at opportunities at multiple locations for takeover targets which would provide the geographical spread and the synergy in the growth of the institution.

We are looking at exciting times ahead! Come, be a part of our growth.

SOME INTERESTING MILESTONES IN ZCBL HISTORY available from the author at

Yazdi@on-lyne.com



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HOSHANG SINOR

From Clerk To Jt. Managing Director Of A Private Bank, An Inspirational Story Of A Career Spanning More Than Three Decades

Hoshang Sinor
Jt. Managing Director

EARLY DAYS

I was born in December 1944 in Bhavnagar, the youngest of four siblings and a posthumous child. My mother, who was not well-educated, was a very courageous and strong person who provided for our needs by teaching students embroidery and sewing at two girls' schools. She championed education and pushed us to get properly educated. My eldest sister (who died last year) earned her Masters in Arts and Education and became the principal of the same school where my mother had worked. My eldest brother received his diploma in Automobile Engineering and is an independent insurance surveyor. My second brother became a dentist and is presently practicing in Bhavnagar; he is also the president of the Bhavnagar Parsi Anjuman. After my schooling and first two years of college, I moved to Mumbai and graduated with degrees in commerce and law.

BANKING CAREER

After graduating, I took the first available position—clerking at the Central Bank of India. In those days, it was not difficult for a Parsi, having a graduate degree, to get a job in banking. During this period, the Central Bank was at its peak and was considered the ultimate in banking. In those days, Parsis dominated the Central Bank and most Bombay-based and foreign banks.

I was lucky to be at the right place, at the right time, and work with and learn from the right bosses and mentors—such as Mr. Kulkarni, my first boss at the Central Bank, who taught me the ABCs of banking. My first career move was to the Union Bank in 1969, where I worked for 28 years and had the privilege of working closely with chairmen of the Union Bank who were motivational leaders that instilled a strong value system, the importance of empathy for colleagues and juniors, and need for melding intelligence with hard work. While working at the Union Bank, I met my soulmate and future wife, Nekcheher. We have been happily married for 43 years—she has been

my true friend, guide, philosopher, and pillar of strength.

In 1996, my career came full circle when I rejoined the Central Bank of India as their Executive Director, which was a short stint. After seven months, I was offered an opportunity to join a private sector bank, the nascent ICICI Bank. I had to make a choice: to rebuild an old bank, the Central Bank, which was in distress or build a new institution. Happily, I opted for the latter.



My six-year tenure at the ICICI Bank—of which, five years were as its Managing Director and CEO—turned out to be mutually fruitful and rewarding. Under my management, the bank had its first IPO and rapidly expanded its branch network, technology-enabled its systems, became a leader in most areas of banking activities, and became the first Indian commercial bank to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. During March 2002, I had the proudest moment of my career when I rang the Exchange's opening bell. When I joined the ICICI Bank, its asset size was about Rs 100 million; when I retired in 2003, its assets were over Rs 1 trillion, becoming the largest private sector bank and second largest in the system after the State Bank of India.

Following my retirement from ICICI Bank, I became the spokesperson for the Banking Industry by joining Indian Banks Association as its Chief Executive. After completing that assignment over five-and-a-half years, I took up a similar assignment for the mutual funds industry, also over a five-year period. As of last September, I have hung up my boots, though I continue to be on the boards of a few companies as



an independent director.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

There were huge cultural differences between private sector banks and public sector banks. Private sector banks are more professional—80% of management's time is spent developing strategies for growth and business. Whereas, public sector bankers spend 90% of their time thinking of how to duck the issues; government officials avoid documenting their decisions.

HISTORY, WORK CULTURE, AND ROLE OF PARSIS

Parsis once dominated the banking sector; CBI, UBI, and BOI all had a majority of Parsis, who always received preferential treatment, such as, promotions and not being transferred. The rationale for this was their reputed honesty in money matters. They were straightforward in their approach and their integrity was unquestioned. Cashiers and chief accountants were always Parsis, whether in local or foreign banks.

On the flip side, Parsis were not necessarily hardworking. Their constant partying and fun-and-games became ingrained in the work culture to the extent that their co-workers began acting like them! And, of course, because of their predominance, Parsis were not chastised. Unfortunately, education was never a compulsion. Many rose through the ranks because of community connections rather than their education.

THE PENALTY OF NOT CHANGING

During the 10 years following nationalization, banks were forced to add branches and grow (with an emphasis on rural and suburban expansion); competition was intense as they struggled to move from stagnation to vigor. Unfortunately, many Parsis were not willing to change during those critical years. Having become complacent in their comfort zones, they did not want to leave their sinecures and abandon their fun-loving, casual lifestyles. They shunned the acquisition of the critical skills—risk-taking and educational—needed to adapt and prosper in the “new world.” As such, they did not want to move into pan-India Banks. Resultantly, their hegemony

decreased over the years. CBI's current situation is a result of these attitudinal issues.

BANKERS ROLE IN THE ECONOMY

Bankers have an important role in the building of national economies and command tremendous respect as the keepers of money and providers of capital. It has been said that no social party could be complete without a banker. There have been many situations during my career where lives were transformed when a banker was there at the right time and right place—particularly for the poor customer seeking capital, these chance meetings were invaluable. It has also been said that friendship with a banker is worth more than a concession of 1/2 to 1 percent. Help from a banker, at a critical time has been a life-saver in several instances. For the rich, it was more a transaction for a price but, for the poor and the downtrodden, the banker has always an angel who saved their day.

The growth of trade unions and corruption reduced the respect of bankers. After the sub-prime crisis, bankers lost respect globally. Today, bankers do not have the popular respect they once had.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Banking has undergone a great change. As in all business sectors, banking has seen disruptive technology that has changed the way it is perceived and practiced. Today, all banks have to find and be the best in their respective niches. Business models will change. Telecoms hold large amounts of money without interest (monies prepaid by customers for future services); some telecoms have more money than banks from their large subscriber bases. However, the resting place is always the bank.

If you are strong on technology and have good people skills, you will make money on payment banking. Payment banking is a new concept floated by RBI that grants banking licenses with limited functions. It is viewed as a game changer that can facilitate spreading banking throughout the country, most likely through the mobile banking infrastructure.*

When mutual funds were introduced, bankers

Banking



feared they would lose money, now they make money on mutual fund fees.

These are exciting times; banking is a major pillar of support that floats and sustains the growth and diversification of the industrial and service sectors.

BANKING AS A CAREER OPTION

Banking is a wonderful career option. My advice to our youth is: get a good education, constantly compete, maintain a rigorous continuing education and skills improvement regimen, and embrace all segments of society (from the poorest of poor to the richest of rich and people engaged in agriculture, real estate, and foreign businesses). The world is your market. It is your future!

Anything and everything you are doing now, can be improvised with technology. So many other avenues and opportunities are coming up and being made available to those with the right skills and attitudes. Banking is certainly an area that I really

encourage youngsters to consider as their chosen vocation. Be advised that banking is no longer a cushy job, it takes work; that is, unless you want to remain a lifelong clerk.

* For additional information regarding payment banking, go to <http://www.thehindu.com/business/all-you-need-to-know-about-payment-banks/article7561353.ece>

Mr. Hoshang Noshirwan Sinor, B.Com., LL.B., has been Chief Executive Officer of Association of Mutual Funds in India since February 2010. He has had exposure to the working of both public and private sector banks and has had the experience of the phases of nationalization and liberalization in this sector. He served as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. since June 1, 1998, and Joint Managing Director of Domestic Banking from May 3, 2002, to June 1, 2003. Since May 31, 2003, he joined Indian Banks' Association as Chief Executive on June 1, 2003.



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MEHRAB IRANI

General Manager—Investments with Tata Investment Corporation

We are all born into genius. Sadly, most of us die in mediocrity. We all are going to someday shed our earthly bodies and leave for another voyage—the journey of the soul. But then, does the journey of the soul begin when we actually die physically. Is the soul actually alive when we are here on this planet? A child knows what it wants to accomplish in life. At that point, everything is clear and everything seems possible. As children, we are not afraid to dream and yearn for everything. But, as time passes, a mysterious force begins to convince us that it is not possible. By repeating the same pattern again and again, are we moving towards the death of our very soul?

Everyone has a “personal calling.” This is the promise between God and us. It is the promise each one of us makes to God before embarking on our earthly journey. Whoever you are, you have a personal calling, a desire that originated in your soul. This is your mission on earth! The purpose of your very existence on this planet.

In this physical world, financial slavery is one of the prime reasons that prevents humans from achieving the purpose of their soul. Take the example of a young teenage boy who is very good at cricket and wants to become a cricketer. Maybe his very purpose of embarking on this earthly journey is to play cricket and entertain others. However, the whole world, including his parents, teachers, elders, and others are busy advising him to quit playing cricket and concentrate on his studies to become a doctor or engineer and live a “safe secure life.” In the name of this so-called illusion of “financial security” the boy is pushed into leaving his dream and living a life of slavery. This is what pains me and was the reason why I wrote the book “Mad Money Journey.” Its purpose is to free humanity from financial slavery and enable them to achieve their true, higher purpose and commitment to God—that is, to fulfill the very reason for their existence on this planet.



TODAY, THE WORLD HAS BECOME OVERWHELMINGLY MATERIALISTIC—WHERE A PERSON'S SUCCESS IS DEFINED BY THEIR BANK BALANCE AND ASSET VALUE. HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

As mentioned earlier, each and every soul has embarked on this earthly journey with a specific mission. Some have come to cure others, some have come to teach and guide others, some to entertain others and some have come to keep this world a clean and beautiful place. Yes, bank balances and asset values do bring some kind of power and respect—however, they're transitory and ephemeral, they (and superficial relationships) fade away once the bank balance is lost. Instead, think of the power of “self” if everybody were to concentrate on their true, authentic powers of a special talent or unique gift that is utilized for the common good. For example, let us look at the person who sweeps a road. That person is not just a sweeper; he is an artist who daily expresses his highest creativity on a canvas that others call a road. His professional dedication is no less than an artist; his canvas, media, and talent proudly keep the



road, city, community, and country clean. Because of him the environment is kept clean, which, in turn, helps others to carry on with their work. Hence, the sweeper is not just a sweeper, but is a person who contributes to nation-building. Therefore, I believe that true success can be found in the person who has recognized their true purpose, answered their soul's calling, has achieved their soul's higher self-actualization goals, and is in the process making their uniquely invaluable contribution to humanity.

LATELY, THE NUMBER OF WEALTHY MUMBAI BUSINESSMEN COMMITTING SUICIDE HAS INCREASED. DESPITE THEIR IMMENSE WEALTH, THEY HAVE THEY BEEN DRIVEN TO MAKING THE ULTIMATE POOR CHOICE. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Money, in and of itself, can never give a person happiness. Money is the single most important factor coming between a person and their dreams. Hence, the objective should be to earn money so as to achieve financial freedom, which will help the person pursue their higher self-actualization goals. However and unfortunately, most people spend their time earning money to achieve "happiness." When they find that money hasn't produced happiness, they double their efforts to make more money to achieve the elusive goal. The viscous cycle continues and the need for money becomes a drug. Remember that even if a person wins the rat race, he is still a rat. Sometimes a rich person is so poor that, besides money, he does not have anything else. His emptiness often leads to depression and anxiety, which cascade into more serious mental, psychological, and physical problems—all of which, unfortunately, culminate with suicide. Therefore, money cannot and should never be made an end in and of itself; it should become a facilitator of one's higher self-actualization goals.

THE BOOK EMPHASIZES THAT PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BECOME A SLAVE TO MONEY; RATHER, THEY SHOULD BECOME ITS MASTER. HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD CONSIDERING OUR HEDONISTIC TENDENCIES?

Money is a very good slave but an incredibly terrible master. And, if one is a slave to something then they can never be its master. Hence, become a

master of your money. Instead of being a poor person who hates the rich, be a rich person who wants to help the poor. Use the power of money for the common good. Working for money is a sad way of trading one's (limited) time for money, which is available in abundance. People spend their time earning money that they don't value, take loans that they can't repay, and buy things that they don't need, only to impress people who don't matter. Money is important to me as far as it is able to provide me with financial emancipation. If a person just keeps accumulating wealth without actually understanding the real meaning and positive power of money, then it's a very sad way to spend their life. Our time on earth is a limited, we must utilize every second judiciously and earn money that can be used for noble purposes (after all, money is in abundance... time isn't). Today we see there is only one Sachin Tendulkar, one Amitabh Bachan, and one Shri Narendra Modi. While each of us have the talents and capacity to become like them, God has given each of us a special gift, a unique talent. It's up to us to recognize their respective gift and to develop their talents, then use them for the common benefit. Money should be treated as a facilitator of good, never an end unto itself.

SOMETIMES, TOO MUCH MONEY CORRUPTS THE MORAL FIBER OF THE UNWARY, GENERATING EVILS LIKE GREED, GAMBLING, AND DRINKING, WHICH OFTEN LEAD TO MORAL AND FINANCIAL BANKRUPTCY. HOW SHOULD ONE MAINTAIN A LEVEL HEAD WHILE MAKING THE BIGGEST BANG FOR THE BUCK?

Money is a drug! It is perhaps the biggest and the most powerful of all drugs. People born rich often don't know what it is like being poor; without proper money skills, they are most likely to destroy their ancestral wealth. You might have heard stories of how children of rich people have destroyed their wealth. Rarely does wealth continue after the third generation because earlier generations were not able to handle this potent drug-money addiction.

Similarly, a poor person who suddenly gets a windfall lottery win or large inheritance is more likely to squander the wealth and get into debt because of the "new money high." These people often do stupid things with their newly acquired wealth and, amazingly,



get deeper and deeper into debt. Rather than solving their problems, they have become exacerbated—money has become a problem for them, a drug that they are unable to handle.

The only way to properly handle the powerful drug of money is by acquiring sound financial knowledge—the understanding on how money functions. Earning money is meaningless unless the person is able to manage the “money high.”

MADE MONEY JOURNEY PRESENTS A SOUND LOGIC ON HOW INVESTMENTS IN LAND OR CLUB-MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOT WISE, YET PEOPLE CHOOSE TO INVEST HEAVILY IN THEM AND REAL ESTATE. WHY IS THIS?

Whatever the text books might teach us, I believe that an asset is something that puts money in my pocket, whereas a liability is something that removes money from my pocket. There are various things that are classified as assets in the traditional accounting context but, according to me, they are cash-guzzling liabilities. Take the example of a car—it immediately loses nearly 20% once it is driven out of the showroom; then, we incur expenses for fuel, maintenance, driver's salary, etc. Hence, a car is a luxury item and certainly not an asset. The same might go for a holiday home, club membership, land, and so forth. Just because the price of something might increase because a “greater fool” may pay a higher price, this does not turn a cash-guzzling liability into an asset. Learning to distinguish an asset from a liability will go a long way in helping you allocate your money properly and thus achieve financial freedom.

THE BOOK EMPHASIZES THAT MORE THAN EARNING MONEY, ONE SHOULD POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO MANAGE AND PROTECT IT. HOW OUR ASSETS BE PROTECTED FROM UNSCRUPULOUS PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS, AND COMPANIES?

As the world moves forward technologically, people continue to move backwards financially. Although we may enjoy modern financial facilities like online banking and investing, credit and debit cards, access to financial information, and easy loans, our financial knowledge is diminishing. Today, we see young, educated people earning very good incomes but

failing to adequately protect their money from financial predators. Yes, they may honor their obligations to the government and banks, pay their utility bills on time, and make certain their children's school fees are paid. However, they don't pay themselves! Budget surpluses are often spent on nonessential whims; clearly, they need to cut frivolous spending and focus on getting rich. For example, they should protect their assets with financial insurance, learn the difference between saving and investing, and understand that negatively leveraged liabilities are often masked as assets. Without sound financial knowledge, many of our best and brightest are becoming “slaves of money”—wage slaves of employers, tax slaves of government, and loan slaves of banks.

If one truly aspires to achieve financial independence, they need to develop the right attitude towards money—not only the earning of money but, more importantly, protecting it. Once someone earns money there are lots of people out there willing to steal it. Mind you, I am not talking about the thieves or dacoits in India, but those entities that legally and systematically siphon our assets. For example, the government is the biggest financial predator of all. It legally takes money from our pockets in the form of taxes—not only at the time of earning money but even at the time of saving, spending, investing, or taking insurance. There are other financial predators such as bankers, brokers, corporate retailers, legal eagles, love predators, etc. We have to learn how to protect ourselves and our money from these legal financial predators.

THE RACE TO ACQUIRE MONEY AND ASSETS IS LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON, IF ONE HAS NOT PACED THEMSELVES (THROUGH RUNNING OR BUDGETARY DISCIPLINE) THEY WILL NOT MAKE IT TO THE FINISH LINE. CONSIDERING THAT MANY PEOPLE FAIL TO REALIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT BUDGETING AND FIND THEMSELVES SHORT OF RESOURCES TOO SOON, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?

Today, we pay everybody, the government as income tax, the banker as loan EMI, children's school fees, doctor's medical bills, and even our milkman. But, we forget to pay ourselves. Unless we budget for ourselves and our future, regardless of how high our income, money will always come

Banking



in one hand and go out the other—with none of it retained in our own pocket... we will be doomed to financial servitude with no chance of achieving financial freedom. Yes, achieving financial freedom is like running a marathon race wherein we have to regularly nourish our own selves and conserve our energy. Budgeting is the function that helps us conserve our money and nourish our own bank balance (and future life). Without proper conservation of energy, a marathon race cannot be won and, sans proper budgeting, it's almost a cinch that one would not be able to reach their financial nirvana.

ACCORDING TO THE BOOK'S THEME, LIFE'S LESSONS CAN BE LEARNT FROM THE MOST UNCONVENTIONAL PEOPLE AND IN UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES. DO YOU THINK THIS REALLY HAPPENS AND HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE A "LEARNING MOMENT?"

Certainly, yes. Life is uncertain and always has its own methods of teaching us. In school, we may have defined subjects like math, science, history, and geography, taught by teachers who strictly teach to a rigid curriculum.

Actually, the fault lies not with the teachers or parents but with our education system, which is based on the system of elimination—the focus is not on advancing the stronger students but on holding back the weaker ones. It encourages lower performing students to believe there is not enough for everyone to win and someone must fail. It is an attitude born from the belief that the world has finite assets and opportunities—if there are winners, there must be losers. The book's theme is that life is full of resources and opportunities... enough for everyone. Rather than making future generations fear that the world is full of scarcity and for them to win, somebody else has to lose, we should teach them to work in harmony and abolish the education system that creates rivalry, jealousy, and hatred amongst children. Rather than developing the very best in each and every person, the system has mercilessly pitted people against each other in this wild "game of education" where there is nothing but the survival of the fittest. It is a game in which winners just get the degree, but many times lose the game of life because the greatest teacher of all is life itself. However, life is mysterious and

nobody knows what its curriculum is. It's only when the student is ready that the master will automatically appear; many times from non-expected places and in the least expected form.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS? WILL WE READ OR VIEW MORE OF MEHRAB IRANI'S STIMULATING THOUGHTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

I have always liked to connect with people. Books have been my primary medium, but I'm finding that talks and speeches, TV and radio shows, press and media, and movies are effective vehicles for my messages as well. I continuously learn while connecting with people; it helps me to understand their real needs and problems. And, I want to connect with the masses. That is why I write articles, appear on various TV shows, and author books. However, books have a limited reach as some people simply don't like to read. Hence, to connect with those people I am exploring media like movies and TV shows. I expect to explore the idea of converting "Mad Money Journey" into a movie. I am also planning to do a TV show on money and finance that will be very different from the rest. It will be a thrilling, yet emotional, show that will explore and connect people with their dreams and show them how poor money and finance skills are preventing them from achieving their highest self in life. The show will not just teach to earn money; it will help to fulfill dreams.

Mehrab Irani is the General Manager – Investments with Tata Investment Corporation. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant, Company Secretary and CFA (level I). He is the author of the well acclaimed book "10 Commandments for Financial Freedom" as well as India's first finance thriller book "Mad Money Journey" which instantly became a "National Bestseller". He can be contacted at mehrabirani10@gmail.com. He writes a popular blog www.intelligentmoney.blogspot.com or Facebook on www.facebook.com/authormehrabirani or his Twitter handle at @RealMehrabIrani or on Instagram at www.instagram.com/mehrabirani



Figure 1 Actual scene at one of the sessions of the Parliament [1]

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS AND THE ROLE OF ZOROASTRIANS

ROSHAN RIVETNA

1893 THE PARLIAMENT OF WORLD'S RELIGIONS, CHICAGO

This great religious gathering, never before possible in the history of the world, nor even now perhaps, possible anywhere else than in the great 'city by the unsalted sea' was inaugurated in the Art Palace on Monday, September 11, 1893, ...

The World's Congress of Religions at the World's Columbian Exposition, Ed. J. W. Hanson, 1894.

The first Parliament of Religions was convened as an auxiliary event with the World Columbian Exposition, billed as an exhibition of humankind's prowess and mastery of the sciences. This was a climactic event in the history of the world, as it was felt at that time that "Everything that can be invented has been invented." The religions of the world were not to be left behind in making their presence felt, and the 1893 Parliament can well be said to have heralded the interfaith movement.

Over 400 persons from 41 religious traditions spoke to audiences of four to seven thousand each day. In his welcome address Charles Bonney, President of the Congress, expressed the hope that the Congress "mark the beginning of a new epoch of brotherhood and peace."

It was the first time that religions of the East and West had met! Henry Barrows, Chair of the General Committee, had proclaimed: "Welcome, Most Welcome, O Wise Men of the East and of the West ..."

Foremost among the speakers from the East was **Swami Vivekananda**, who arrived in Chicago on his own, with hardly any resources and no place to stay, and soon won over the assembly with his commanding presence and oratory:





I am proud to belong to a religion that has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance ... I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation ... Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant fanaticism have possessed long this beautiful earth ...

But its time has come, and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention, will be the death knell to all fanaticism, to all persecutions with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal ...

ZOROASTRIANS FEATURED AT THE 1893 PARLIAMENT

A very interesting account of Zoroastrian presence at the 1893 Parliament is given elsewhere [*Fezana J, February 1993*] indicating that while there were no Zoroastrians present in person, papers were presented and featured prominently in the Proceedings [1].

Figs. 2 and 3 are fragments of letters from the Dadabhai Naoroji archives in Delhi, researched by Dinyar Patel, Ph.D. Harvard University.

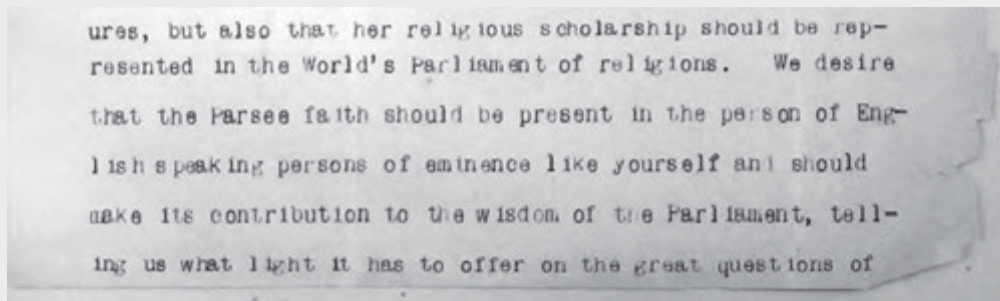


Figure 2 In a letter from the "World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition" dated Jan 2nd, 1892, and addressed to "Mr. Dadhabhai Naoroji", Chairman John Henry Barrows personally gives Dadabhai Naoroji a "most earnest invitation to be present."

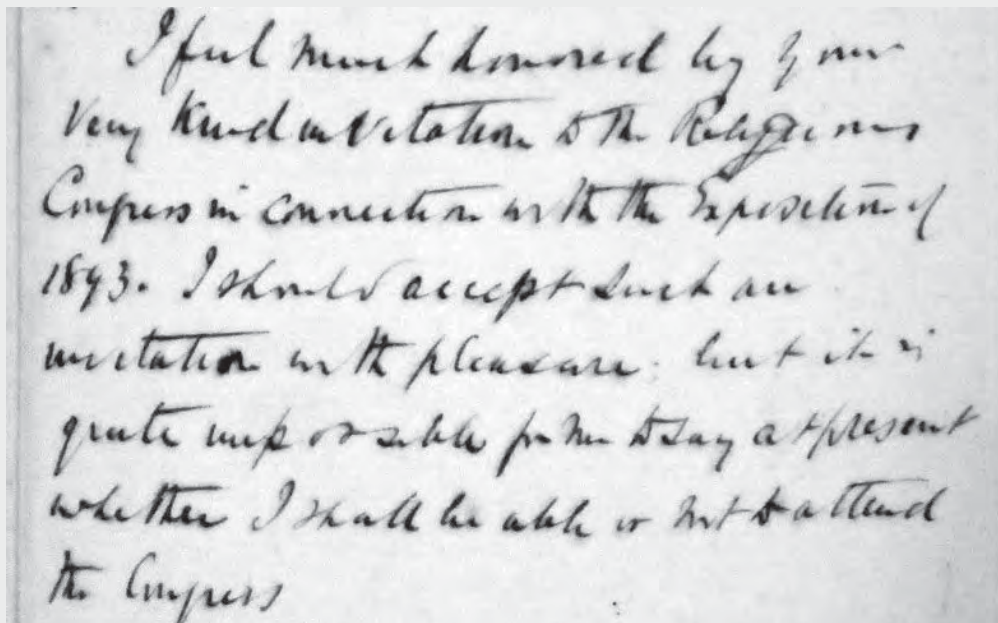


Figure 3 In his hand-written response, Dadabhai Naoroji directs Barrows to the Rahnumai Sabha whose President, K. R. Cama, subsequently asks Jivanji Modi to prepare a paper on the Zoroastrian Religion and Customs, which is featured in the Proceedings.



PLANNING FOR THE CENTENNIAL: COUNCIL FOR A PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (CPWR) IS FORMED

Spurred by Governor Thompson of Illinois' initiative to celebrate the Centennial of the 1893 Columbian Exposition, with a World's Fair in Chicago (which, after some initial attempts, did not come to fruition), in the mid-1980s, a small but committed group supported by Rohinton Rivetna, embarked upon the project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Parliament. The group met at the Vivekananda Vedanta Center, driven by a mission to commemorate the Centennial and celebrate the diversity of religions that Chicago had to offer. With Swami Sarveshananda playing a leadership role, they drafted an early Charter (based loosely on the charter of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago!). Gradually the core group garnered support from Bahais, Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Cardinal Bernadin's office. From these humble beginnings, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) took shape in 1987.

In the fledgling days, it was Rohinton's hope at least, to adopt the Zoroastrian model of volunteerism (as evidenced by all our Zoroastrian Associations). The CPWR, however, has now evolved into a model of many large not-for-profits, with a downtown Chicago office and staff, led by an Executive Director. The Trustees, from various faith organizations, are appointed to lend guidance and direction. Rohinton, a founding trustee and Vice President, now serves as trustee emeritus.

1993: CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS, CHICAGO

Years of planning came to fruition when over 7,000 participants from 150 faith traditions gathered at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, from Aug 28 – September 4, 1993 and at off-site events in Chicago's museums, churches and temples, including the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, to enjoy a rich and varied program of seminars, workshops, presentations, plenaries, ceremonies, performances and exhibits. There was a significant presence of about 50 Zoroastrians at the Parliament, including eminent Dasturs and religious scholars from India, Iran, Australia, UK, USA and Canada, along with a large supporting cast from the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago [see *Fezana Journal*, Winter 1993].



Figure 4 As one of 14 "Presidents of the Parliament," Dastur Dr. Kaikhushroo Jamasp Asa, High Priest of Anjuman Atash Behram, Mumbai, whose grandfather, Dastur Dr. Jamaspji Jamasp Asa, was featured in the 1893 Proceedings [1], participated in the Closing Ceremonies, alongside the Dalai Lama and heads of other major religions. It was soul-stirring to hear Dasturji recite Ys. 60.5, to the thousands gathered in Grant Park on the Chicago lakefront.



Several eminent Zoroastrians were among the 150 religious leaders who signed the document “Towards a Global Ethic” which was the culmination of the deliberations of the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that met for several private sessions concurrent with the Parliament.

1999: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

While the numbers were smaller than in Chicago (about 20), Zoroastrians, nevertheless, established a high profile presence at the Parliament in Cape Town, December 1–8, 1999, with Dr. Homi Dhalla, Dastoor Kersey Antia and Er. Parvez Bajan representing the Zoroastrian faith at the Plenary sessions alongside Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama [see *Fezana Journal*, Spring 2000].



Figure 5 Zoroastrians participated in a colorful procession through Cape Town terminating with a ceremonial lighting of the International Peace Flame, highlighting the saga of dispossession in the days of apartheid in South Africa, and triumph of the human will.

For three days during the Parliament, about 300 delegates, including several Zoroastrians, convened as the “Parliament Assembly” to prepare “A Call to Our Guiding Institutions” to address the critical issues of our times.

2004: BARCELONA, SPAIN

About a dozen Zoroastrians from India, UK, USA, and Canada, and the sole resident of Barcelona, Marzban Cooper, joined over 8,000 people of diverse religions and cultures at the 2004 Parliament from July 4–13, at the Forum Convention Center, in Barcelona, Spain, “to seek peace, justice and sustainability, and actively commit to work for a better world” [see *Fezana Journal*, Fall 2004]. The Parliament was preceded by a three-day Assembly of Religious Leaders, in the idyllic setting of the mountaintop abbey at Montserrat, when Zoroastrians participated with 300 religious leaders to develop a set of Commitments centered on the issues of religiously motivated violence, access to safe water, fate of refugees, and other critical and topical issues.



Figure 6 Khojestee Mistree (center) chanted the “Zoroastrian Blessing” accompanied by Zoroastrian delegates, at the Closing Ceremonies in the Edifici Forum Auditorium, Barcelona.

2009: MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, under the leadership of Perviz Dubash were very enthusiastically involved in organizing the Parliament event in Melbourne, December 3–9, 2009 [see *FJ*, *Spring 2010*]. About a dozen overseas Zoroastrian delegates joined a large contingent from ZAV in preparing exhibits for the Zoroastrian booth, and presenting prayer services, performances, papers and panel discussions on the



Figure 7 The Zoroastrian delegation with members of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria reciting Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Variyo led by Er. Kaivan Antia at the Convention Center in Melbourne. The recitation was preceded by a stirring orchestral performance of Also Sprach Zarathushtra by Strauss. Photo CPWR



theme of ***“Healing Each Other, Healing the World.”*** The Closing Ceremonies featured an Aboriginal elder presenting a gift of peace to the Dalai Lama who urged the participants to “draw closer and implement the dreams and possibilities that had been discussed at the Parliament.”

ROLE OF ZOROASTRIANS IN INTERFAITH WORK

While it is evident that participation by Zoroastrians in the interfaith arena has brought recognition and respect to the religion of Zarathushtra among a growing percentage of the larger population, it should be engrained in our minds that ***we do not engage in interfaith work to showcase our religion.***

Participation in interfaith activities gives us the opportunity to better understand the diversity of faiths (inter-faith) and serve as bridge-builders; whilst also spurring us to introspective understanding and interpretation of our own religious teachings (intra-faith).

The ultimate goal of interfaith work is to provide a forum to come together and dialogue with diverse religious traditions; for meaningful dialogue brings understanding, and with understanding comes respect for diversity of religious thought, and hopefully peace to the world.

REFERENCES:

[1] Rev. John Henry Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 2 vols, Chicago, 1893.

PHOTOS:

Unless otherwise specified, photos by Roshan Rivetna.

Roshan Rivetna and her husband Rohinton have attended all the parliaments starting 1993. Both of them are very active members of the North American Zoroastrian community. Roshan was editor of the *Fezana Journal* (1991-2005) and of *The Legacy of Zarathushtra* (2002) and *Zarathushti Connections with Judaism and Christianity* (2009).

Her latest book with Dinaz Kutar Rogers is *My mother used to say* (2015)

DATES TO REMEMBER

**2016 . 15th ZOROASTRIAN GAMES JUNE 30 - JULY 4, 2016,
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Brought to you by the ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO,
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**2018 11TH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
2019 7TH WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS, USA**



FEZANA PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

Shernaz Minwalla,

Co-chair FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee

How better to open the Parliament of the World's Religions than with Ervad Kobad Zarolia reciting and translating Aafreen-I Ardaa-fravash, the hymn of harmony:

*Hamaa zor baad!
Hamaa zor hamaa ASHO baad!
Hamaa zor hamaa NEKI baad!
Hamaa zor hamaa KHVOREH baad!
Hamaa zor Vesh-Kerfeh baad!
Hamaa zor Kam-gunaah baad!
Hamaa zor baad Zarthosht-Deen raastihaa bokhtaar baad!
Deen-I Maazda-yasnaan HAQIQAT dorost baad!*



*This is our joint Prayer for Unity, Understanding and Inner Strength!
May we live and work in Consonance with men and women of Merit and Virtue! And above all, Truth!
May we live and work in Consonance with men and women of Merit and Virtue, Benevolence and Goodness!
May we live and work in Consonance with the Souls, in Possession of Inner Light, Truth and Wisdom!
May we live and work in Consonance with Souls, whose Merit and Virtue are ever multiplying!
May we live and work in Consonance with Souls, whose Demerits and Faults are ever declining!*

Thousands of participants listened intently as the President of the Mobed Council, **Ervad Kobad Zarolia**, recited from the Avesta, many in the audience understood the moment's significance. Seventeen audience members (Ervad Jehan Bagli, Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala, Dolly Dastoor, Homi Gandhi, Rustom and Shirin Ghadiali, Firdosh Kavarana, Dr. Khosro and Roya Mehrfar, Firdosh Mehta, Shernaz Minwalla, Marukh Motafram, Behram Pastakia, Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna, Sam Vesuna, and Arzan Wadia) were dressed in their saris and daglis and watched with pride as Kobad represented the oldest documented monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism.



Inspired by Kobad's recitation, more than one hundred guests attended the early morning Jashan ceremony performed by Ervad Jehan Bagli and Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala. Following the twenty-minute Jashan, Ervad Jehan Bagli provided a detailed explanation of the ceremony to the audience, saying that the recited verses are from the hymns composed by prophet Zarathushtra—the Gathas. As part of his presentation, he translated specific verses from the Gathas and described the symbolism of each action such as the enactment of touching the fire with the ladle and how the flowers are arranged. Ervad Bagli concluded with: the good thoughts and proper choice in the conception of the Prophet are the guide for mankind to seek out the path of righteousness in life, Asha. Jehan's engrossing talk stimulated the audience to ask questions and, later, to visit our booth for more

information. As an American-born Zoroastrian, I have learned much about my religion through research, especially now that I teach it to our youths. However, I have never encountered a more succinct, clear, and concise explanation of the Jashan Ceremony; I know Marukh Motafram felt the same way, as we discussed it throughout the day. Every Zoroastrian community should hear this talk. (For the text of the Jashan see page 40.)



The group after the Jashan ceremony.

The Jashan ceremony led nicely into our first panel discussion regarding the various faiths' ***Relationships with the Divine***. At the Jashan Ceremony, people witnessed how Zoroastrians pray in front of a fire; this panel provided an overview of how other faiths "become one with God."

Dr. Susan Kopp (Christian) spoke of ***God—Love: The Experience of Chiara Lubich and the Focolare Movement***. In a world seemingly moving more and more into darkness, we have an increasing need for a divine presence—of something bigger than ourselves that will guide us and show to us the right paths to follow. Throughout Christian teachings, this vision of God manifests himself as Love. And, for the Catholic ecclesial movement, Focolare, and its founder, ***Chiara Lubich (1920 – 2008)***, this particular "discovery" of God-Love was, in the words of Pope John Paul II, during a visit to the



Movement's international center in Rome, the “inspiring spark” for all that would later come together under the name of Focolare. The guiding philosophy of Focolare is unity and universal brotherhood—a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Rabbi Michael Balinsky (Jewish) tells of a story in the Talmud Bavli, Sotah 14a (a compilation of teachings of 3-6th century scholars in Babylonia (Amora'im); final redaction in the 6-7th centuries):

*And Rabbi Chamah, the son of Rabbi Chaninah, said:
What does the written [verse] mean?
“You shall follow after the Lord your God” (Devarim 13:5).*

*Can a person follow after the Divine Presence [Shekhinah]?
Has it not already been stated?
“For the Lord your God is a consuming fire” (Devarim 4:24)!*

*Rather, [the verse means] to follow after the attributes of the Holy One,
Blessed be He. Just as He dresses the naked as it is written (Bereshit 3:21),
“The Lord God made leather garments for Adam and his wife and dressed them” so you
should dress the naked.*

*The Holy One, blessed be He, visited the sick as it is written (Bereshit 18:1),
“The Lord appeared to him [Avraham] at the Oaks of Mamre” so you should visit the sick.*

*The Holy One, blessed be He, comforted the mourners as it is written (Bereshit 25:11),
“Then after the death of Avraham, God blessed Yitzchak his son” so you should comfort the
mourners.*

*The Holy One, blessed be He, buried the dead as it is written (Devarim 34:6),
“He buried him [Moshe] in the valley” so you should bury the dead.*

Rabbi Balinsky explains that this is not totality of Judaism, but one approach to “reach” the Divine is to imitate the Divine as in the above examples. What do you give up to approach the Divine? These words of “choice” to emulate the Divine, resonate with fellow Zoroastrians as is later explained by Ervad Jehan Bagli.

Jasbir Kaur (Sikh) believes that we are surrounded by divinity, and nothing else. He teaches that the absence of love, respect, and positivity result in suffering, anger and depression. *Gurbaani*, (a term used by



Sikhs that refers to any compositions of the Sikh Gurus and other writers of Guru Granth Sahib) teaches a Sikh how to be positive, happy, brave, and truthful. If we learn the art of connecting to others and realize that we are children of One Father, we can share the great goal of experiencing everlasting bliss, joy, and embrace this life with the gifts and virtues that we need to survive. Gurbaani is a Guiding Light for our minds that can lead us to the understanding of the universe's unity. God Almighty, the Creator, nourisher and destroyer is omnipresent, the center of our being. **Again, Zoroastrians notice a common thread of light and mind.**

Many of us have first-hand experience with the Sikh *Langar*, which promotes the principle of equality among all peoples of the world, regardless of religion, caste, color, creed, age, gender, or social status. The philosophy encourages the elimination of extreme poverty in the world and the creation of "caring communities." In addition to the ideals of equality, the tradition of Langar expresses the ethics of sharing, community, inclusiveness, and oneness of all humankind—"... the Light of God is in all hearts." Thousands of guests shared the simple meals of daal, rice, naan, and raita every day of the Parliament. At the Sikh booth, we learned more about their philosophy and learned how to wear a turban; and Ervad Kobad Zarolia was seen parading his new look wearing a purple turban!

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli explained that the most realistic portrayal of the Divine is expressed in a text from the 9th century C.E. called ***Shay-Le-Shay*** (The Proper and the Improper). Chapter 15.1-2 describes a dialog between Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda. The Prophet says, "... give me a hand so I may grasp your hand" and the Divine responds with, "I am an intangible spirit: it is not possible to grasp my hand." Zoroastrians' relationship with God is through their Good Mind (Vohu Manah) and Good thinking. By having caring, righteous, and progressive actions, Zoroastrians can evolve to be God-like and, in doing so, they become "co-workers" of the Supreme Divinity, Ahura Mazda.

As co-workers of Ahura Mazda, Zoroastrians learn from a very early age the importance of the seven creations and their protectors. To underscore the importance of one of the Parliament's overarching themes, FEZANA organized the panel discussion ***Stewardship of the Environment***. The panel, moderated by Khosro Mehrfar, highlighted scriptures pointing to Ahura Mazda's teachings relating to the causes and solutions for current global environmental concerns.

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli explained that Zoroastrians regard **Nature** with the most profound reverence. In one of our prayers, we are reminded of the beauty and majesty of Nature, which we appreciate as a manifestation of the grandeur and glory of Ahura Mazda. Climate change is not only an environmental issue, but also has a significant impact on the most helpless and weakest members of humanity—making it a spiritual and humanitarian crisis.



Stewardship of the Environment Panel

(L-R) Ervad Jehan Bagli, Homi Gandhi, Khosro Mehrfar, Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala, and Firdosh Mehta.

Firdsoh Mehta focused his presentation on **water**. Haurvatat is the Avesta word for Perfection or Completeness {Y.34.11}—it is the next to last stage prior to immortality and is the Amesha-Spenta that acts as a Guardian of Water and brings about prosperity and wellness. To Zoroastrians, the preservation and protection of water is a tenet of faith requiring us to protect and not pollute our polar ice caps, glaciers, rivers, lakes, canals, oceans, deltas, aquifers, and all other of Nature's repositories. Firdsoh stressed that we should not engage in activities that may damage the environment, such as: the creation of greenhouse gases that result in global warming and the destruction of the ozone layer, the decimation of our forests, and any other activities that negatively affect water's fragile ecosystem. He advised that we should undertake research and development projects to produce more oxygen synthetically with genetically engineered vegetation. Some degree of progress in this effort is achieved, but it is obvious that more needs to be done.

Homi Gandhi questioned whether **economic development is in conflict with stewardship of the environment**. During the past century, damage to the environment was slow and went unnoticed as economic growth in the transportation, communication, and electronic manufacturing segments produced huge volumes of pollutants as by-products. Early on, responsible environment-focused organizations' public awareness campaigns heralded the dangers of uncontrolled pollution; harkening to public outcries, some countries created regulatory agencies, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to control pollution. The EPA and international counterparts started by issuing voluntary compliance guidelines but, when the producers did not comply, laws were passed and regulations strengthened. As governments reacted, businesses counteracted. Costs to comply with regulations were passed along to consumers (don't even think about reducing quarterly shareholder dividends or corporate profits!); risks to corporate bottom lines were offset with special funds and insurance coverages for losses and fines resulting from regulations. How often have we heard from big business that: regulatory burdens and fines are the cost of doing business? On the other hand, in a faux demonstration of businesses' desire to help save the planet, producers and distributors of certain products and by-products started charging fees and deposits for disposal of wastes and by-products, which added to their revenue. Other businesses were created to handle waste and by-product disposal in landfills (out of sight, out of mind) that further contaminated Mother Earth. Rivers, streams, and groundwater aquifers were polluted with the disposal of effluents and wastes; the earth and its seas were violated by indiscriminate dumping when big brother was not watching. The current episode of Volkswagen's acknowledged "cheating," using software to fraudulently mislead government emission tests on some 11million diesel vehicles, is the latest example of corporate greed.

Maneck Bhujwala shared a few conservation-action programs that we can all participate in: using biodegradable materials, supporting petitions against risky operations that could create massive pollution of earth and air, and making phone calls to congressmen and senators to express our concerns. He suggested schools should include reminders to children about the importance of preserving the purity of earth and air. He urges community members, especially youth to participate in environment events, like Earth Day.

In a detailed article in this issue, **Dr. Khosro Mehrfar** (see page 59) provides a synopsis of this panel discussion and explains the importance of starting environmental preservation at an early age. He also focuses on corporate responsibility with, perhaps, an incentive program for small, medium, and large corporations to design environmentally safe waste disposal processes and systems. Cities should provide incentives for small business owners who practice safe environmental practices.

The Parliament was a great forum to discuss issues such as the environment, role of women, hate, and the widening wealth gap. Just fifteen to twenty years ago, interfaith dialogue occurred in small gatherings, sometimes in people's homes. Now, across the world, people of various religious beliefs gather at larger local, national, and international conferences to discuss shared traditions, concerns, and next steps. This

growth is indicative of positive interests in learning about other faiths and finding solutions to stereotyping and hate. Where does this interest stem from? Is it the family, religious communities, or friends from other religious backgrounds? The one crucial source, which in my opinion is missing, is the education system.

In our panel discussion on ***The Interfaith Model: Does it Need Tweaking?***

I introduced mechanisms for improving cultural competencies in schools. In his book, *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (2nd ed. 1999), Professor James A. Banks, the Kerry and Linda Killinger Endowed Chair in Diversity Studies and Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle, states that there are five stages of multicultural curriculum transformation. *The Contributions Approach* reflects the least amount of involvement in multicultural education approaches. This is incorporated by selecting books and activities that celebrate holidays, heroes, and special events from various cultures. For example, Hindu children may provide a short presentation on Divali or Zoroastrian students may share their customs during Novruz. In the *Additive Approach*, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure. This involves incorporating literature by and about people from diverse cultures into the mainstream curriculum without changing the curriculum. For example, examining the perspective of a Native American about Thanksgiving would be adding cultural diversity to the traditional view of Thanksgiving. However, this approach does not necessarily transform thinking. The *Transformation Approach* actually changes the structure of the curriculum and encourages students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. For example, a unit on Alexander of Macedonia would become an entire unit exploring cultural conflict. This type of instruction involves critical thinking and involves a consideration of diversity as a basic premise. The *Social Action Approach* combines the transformation approach with activities to strive for social change. Students are not only instructed to understand and question social issues, but to also do something of importance about it. For example, after participating in a unit about recent immigrants to North America, students may write letters to senators, Congress, and newspaper editors to express their opinions about new policies.



The INTERFAITH MODEL: Does it need tweaking?

(L-R) Michael Terrien, Shernaz Minwalla, Tarunjit Butalia; Ervad Jehan Bagli, Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala

Maneck Bhujwala described ***Effective ways of Spreading Interfaith Education in our Communities***, which included an interfaith session at Zoroastrian Congresses, information on interfaith events to association members through newsletters, and reports on interfaith events we attend at association general body meetings.

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli claimed that the primary objective of the interfaith movement is to thoroughly know oneself and appreciate one's faith tradition. Only then one can genuinely cherish other faiths' traditions and gain a positive understanding of diverse traditions as they truly are. This can establish a more solid foundation for community life and action among people of various traditions. We live on a planet that is fast shrinking to a global village, where interdependence among mankind is inescapable. A strong interfaith organization should demonstrate its major concern to the growing gap between the rich and poor.

Bagli continued to point out that the principle of Nonviolence is a corollary that emerges from the Golden Rule. Zarathushtra proclaimed it, Gandhi and Martin Luther King saw it, and the time is now here for all humanity to recognize and respect this fundamental moral law. This basic value of nonviolence extends not just to the living but also globally to the entire creation. A strong interfaith body should generate means to

disseminate this principle by making it a clarion call in the classroom, churches, synagogues, and temples to provide a powerful foundation for global harmony in the workplace, families, communities, and nations.

Tarunjit Butalia, an educator at Ohio State University, said that we need to honor the holiness and sanctity of other faiths. Do unto others as they would want you to do unto them. Never compare the best in your faith with the worst in others. When in dialogue, speak for yourself. We need to value and honor our interdependence and shared security.

This notion of valuing and honoring other faiths and their shared security seems like a simple concept; yet, the world news is filled with hate crimes, terrorist attacks, and horrible disrespect for differences. Rohinton Rivetna led a panel: **A Petition for the Establishment of**

a Religious Arm of the United Nations. consisting of Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Gandhi, Dr. Khosro Mehrfar, Dr. Harbans Lal, and Satpal Singh. In his explanation for the petition, Rohinton points out that the United Nations' purpose is *"to maintain international peace and security"* but, the way it is structured, it is powerless to intervene when it comes to religion-based conflicts. It is also the aim of interfaith organizations to work for peace and their modus operandi is to create *"understanding through engendering dialogue."* They too are powerless and have no wherewithal to intervene. He expounded on religion-based conflicts: scriptural imperatives as interpreted, unreasoned dislike for the other, and incompatible ways of life. The panel collectively agreed that we need to provide the General Assembly of the United Nations with the wherewithal to intervene in religion-based conflicts through the creation of a *"Religious Arm"* or a subsidiary agency as permitted under Chapter IV Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations.

According to Khosro Mehrfar, the discussion and petition was very well-received; the committee that was formed afterwards is now in the process of collecting signatures through an online petition to be submitted to the UN for their consideration. Prior to the petition, we developed a plan, with a life of 18-months, during which a proof of concept would be developed, the success of which would be replicated in other areas of the world. Our committee received several hundred signatures supporting this noble cause from people around the world. A site dedicated to this initiative was created that provides information on the program and encourages online support as well: www.UNReligiousArm.org.

Amid the Parliament's exhaustive preparations and informative presentations, we did manage to have a lot of fun. We gathered for dinner at local restaurants, enjoyed each other's company, and were entertained by Firdosh's joke sessions. All of us attended an orchestral concert at the Mormon Tabernacle, giving us a chance to appreciate the beautiful setting and the music. Some of us were able to get away on a tour of Salt Lake City, during which we learned a lot about Mormon ways-of-life and how they manage to instill a sense of pride in their religion and its customs in their youth. Most importantly, we had an opportunity to brainstorm ideas for future FEZANA activities, learn more about each other and laugh.



Panel for Petition for the Establishment of a Religious Arm of the United Nations

Moderator Rohinton Rivetna, at back. from left Homi Gandhi, Dr Harbans Lal, Satpal Singh, and Dr Khosro Mehrfar

PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS



Shernaz Minwalla, in her role as Director of the Academic Research Program at University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, collaborates with her colleagues to ensure excellent, engaging, and ethical experiences for students and faculty. Shernaz continues to teach Genetics and Anatomy in the Upper School as well as the Academic Research Program courses. She is the advisor to several clubs involving interfaith, diversity and social justice issues. For over eleven years, Shernaz has utilized her educational philosophy and knowledge of pedagogy to develop lesson plans and actively engage students in the Zoroastrian Association of Michigan Youth Connections Religion Classes. As the President of the Zoroastrian Association of Michigan, Shernaz takes great pride in all of the festivities and initiatives the association offers to its families. She is co-chair of the FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee and a member of the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

JASHASN CEREMONY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

From a presentation made on October 16, 2015, immediately after the 7:00 AM ceremony

ERVAD DR. JEHAN BAGLI

The word Jashan means worship or an offering. A Jashan is performed to celebrate various types of occasions: festivity for a private family, celebration of a communal festival of Nature, celebration of a new venture, or for a memorial service. The prayers made during these ceremonies are appropriately modified to suit the occasion.

Jashan prayers are recited in the Avesta language, with some parts said in the later language, Pazand. The layout for a Jashan characteristically includes all the six elements of creation: starting with fire as the luminary, followed by water, earth, plant, animal, and humans.



Ervad Bagli on the right and Mobedyar Bhujwalla on the left

In all Zoroastrian rituals, Fire plays an integral role. It is present in all the ceremonies and is continuously tended with fragrant wood and frankincense. Fire is visualized as the **actual incarnation** of the Creator—Ahura Mazda—God of Zarathushtra. In certain places of worship, it is kept alive and ablaze to the fullest extent possible. In certain places of worship, the sacred fires are kept blazing 24-7-365.

As an incarnate of God, the sacred Fire is, absolute in purity, absolute in truth and benevolence, and commands the highest level of reverence in devotion. The offerings of the devout are thus directed to commune with the Supreme Divinity, Ahura Mazda. To preserve and maintain the highest level of purity and to avoid pollution of the sacred Fire's sanctity, Zoroastrian priests always cover their mouths with a cloth (*Padaan*) when praying in front of the Sacred Fire. During the demonstration at the Parliament, we started the worship with the liturgy specially composed for Fire. In this prayer, the Fire is addressed as the Son of Ahura Mazda, implying that it is the essence of the Supreme Divinity.

The verses we recited are parts of the hymns composed by the Prophet Zarathushtra (Ys 33.12-14); which are known as the Gathas. They say:

Arise unto me O Ahura and through Divine wisdom grant me
the desire for perfection. Through Thy Progressive mentality
O Mazda, grant me the strength through Global Righteousness
And unconditional love through Good Thinking.

O Ahura for my far reaching wisdom
Reveal unto me those incomparable gifts of Thy realm
As a reward for Good Thinking
Make us realize the innate Divinity through Righteousness

As a Consecration Zarathushtra dedicates

the life-breath of His whole being
as also the excellence of His Good thoughts unto Mazda
In righteousness, He offers His willful compliance,
And His deeds and words



The act of touching the Fire vase with a ladle, while joining hands at the beginning of the ritual, is symbolic of the completion of the circuit of existence between the spiritual and the physical worlds. This is done characteristically through the connection with the Divinity—the Sacred Flame.

Creation by Zarathushtrian theology is a composite of dual complements built within its oneness. Initially, it was the creation of the perfect Spiritual domain designated in the Avesta as *Mainyava* (*Menog* in Pahlavi). This was followed in the same manner by the creation of the “real” world, or the physical existence known as *Gaithaya* or *Getig*.

In a Jashan ceremony there is no limitation to the number of participating priests. However, it is always the two priests in front of the Sacred Fire who play the leading role. Of the two leading priests, one acts as the *zaotar* (senior priest, or invoker) and symbolizes the spiritual domain. The other is the *Raspi* or *Atravaksh* (junior priest) who represents the physical domain and usually tends the Sacred Fire.

The flower ceremony that was enacted also has a very important significance. Flowers are arranged in two rows; each consisting of two flowers arranged vertically at the bottom with the three other flowers placed horizontally above them. The number three of the horizontal arrangement signifies the execution of the **thoughts, words, and actions**. The two rows symbolize the spiritual and the physical components of the cosmos. These flowers are picked up during the prayers in a specific order.

At a certain point during the recital, the senior priest will, first, pick up the two vertical flowers, handing one to the junior priest. This is symbolic of the passing of knowledge and wisdom from the spiritual to the corporeal. This is followed by prayers that invoke blessings for virtuous thoughts, words and deeds. At this juncture the two priests exchange the two flowers reciting the words “*May it be so as I wish.*”

Then, at a specific time during the recital, the horizontally arranged flowers from the right row are taken up, in descending order, followed by those in the left row, which are picked up in ascending order. This ascending and descending order signifies the journey of souls descending from the spiritual domain with their thoughts, words, and deeds to the corporeal world; the ascending order is symbolic of the souls returning to the spiritual domain. Interestingly the three horizontal flowers are picked with the actual recital of the words good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in the prayers. That particular verse states:

Good thoughts, good words and good deeds performed here and elsewhere, in the present and in the past we extol, and glorify all that is good.

Mankind, in Zarathushtrian theology, is pivotal among all the creations, and is expected to play a crucial role in the preservation of this world. Mankind is gifted with the spark of the Divine—the Good Mind—that Zarathushtrian theology designates as *Vohu Manah*. Humans have the burden of responsibility to use this gift to nurture Good Thoughts and the freedom to make the Right Choice with moderation and reason.

Mankind must attempt to conform to the Progressively Benevolent Mental aspect that promotes the Divine Will in the creative process. Zoroastrians recognize it as *Spenta Mainyu*. It represents the thought process of the Creator and the principle that projects the creative will and the thinking of God—Ahura Mazda. Spenta Mainyu is the positive mental aspect of the Universal Mind. It symbolizes the ideal and perfect existence as conceived in thought by Ahura Mazda. Humans are the microcosmic creator that must emulate the path of positive thinking pursued by God—the creator of the macro-cosmos.

The Good thoughts and exercise of proper choices in the conception of the Prophet are the guide for mankind to seek out the path of righteousness in life. Zarathushtra, in his search for Truth, identified a Divine Order in Nature’s working. He designated that order as **Asha**. Although Asha is loosely translated as Righteousness, it is much more than that: *Asha is the Global truth*. It is not just the factual truth but also the truth of mind and spirit—it is the truth vested in the immutable order that governs the cosmos. It is the truth in moral dimensions of being righteous in daily life. It is the truth in the philosophical sense and the truth in the social measure of justice. It is “what is proper and correct” for any set of situations when considering the qualities of goodness, care, love, compassion, and justice. Asha is what fits at the right place, at the right time, and for the right



reason... in the right manner to produce the right results.

Asha is the truth that gives rise to the universe with all its animate and inanimate beings from the beginning of time. It maintains the universe during the time of its presence and it reincorporates it at the end of time. The universe is an indivisible WHOLE, completely permeated and intimately connected with *Asha* as its anchor.

The order of *Asha* is the guiding light for mankind to create the rule of truth and good-thinking in the corporeal existence. The theology designates that rule as ***Khshtira Vairya***. This dominion is the focus of strength to advance the truth to generate a sustained peaceful society. That is the path that leads mankind to wholeness or completeness. That is the perfection to which a Zoroastrian way of life must strive. This harmony between the spiritual and the physical in Avesta is ***Haurvatat***. This is the state that can evolve humanity from manliness to godliness of ***Ameretat***, which means “non-death-ness” but, colloquially, translates as immortality.

The “real” world is flawed and contaminated by the imperfect thinking of some humans; it is the duty, function, and responsibility of Good humans to reverse the process, to return this corporeal existence to its original pristine purity as it was when Ahura Mazda gave it life. It is incumbent upon mankind to follow that progressive mental aspect—***Spenta Mainyu***—and to use their Good Mind; for Divinity manifests itself through the kind, gentle, and benevolent actions of humanity.

Mankind on this planet is a brotherhood of diverse religious traditions that represent equally diverse concepts of God. Regardless, we must recognize that there is a common bond of Oneness and that that bond persists through the innate Divinity, **among all the members of the human race**.

It is important to recall that, at all times, we are a part of the universe and that all of creation is a part of us. Creation is connected through that single Divine spirit that permeates all. It is no exaggeration, if living through the meritorious precepts of ***Mazda Ahura*** percolates through the mankind, irrespective of their faith tradition, then we can feel the presence of that Divine Ultimate Reality in the form of just and lasting peace on earth.

It is only through harmony between the physical and the spiritual that we can attain the perfection of peace, as individuals and as a civilization. We can then relate with the spirituality among others to bring the Just Peace to the world at large.

TO BE ONE WITH GOD IS TO BE ONE WITH MANKIND

As the famous Iranian poet ***Sa’adi Shirazi*** wrote in one of his poems:

*Human beings are members whole
In creation one essence and soul
If one member is afflicted with pain*

*Other members uneasy remain
If you have no sympathy for human pain
The name of human you cannot retain”*

Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli was the Past President of the North American Mobeds Council. He is the author of several books on religion and presently the President of World Zoroastrian Organization Canada Inc.



IMPRESSIONS OF THE PARLIAMENT EXPERIENCE 2015

In this article, five members of the FEZANA team who attended the October 15, Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City share their impressions.
[Ed.]

FROM KHOSRO ESFANDIA MEHRFAR, Newport Beach, California

Close to 10,000 people from more than 80 countries representing 50 established religions as registered by United Nations, including our own Zoroastrian Religion, in addition to followers of dozens of other faiths and beliefs participated in this year's Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR). This was a weeklong global experience of understanding, tolerance, respect and international friendship.

The conference was planned and organized by the Council on the Parliament of the World Religions (CPWR) which was established in 1993 and held its first conference in Chicago in that year. After moving around the world in various cities including, Chicago, Cape Town, Barcelona, and Melbourne, this time it was held in Salt Lake City, Utah from October 15, 2015. www.parliamentofreligions.org

The whole conference looked like a mini world with various people from many different facets of life around the globe getting together with diverse backgrounds and a wide range of nationalities, ethnicities, race and religions all focused on peace and harmony. I could see the well-deserved pride in the eyes of my Zoroastrian delegates knowing that our Prophet was the one who very early on in Human history encouraged all to do good by being good and to care for our common home, the Mother Earth.

The opening ceremony was impressive with celebrities and distinguished leaders of the societies

around the world speaking on unity, peace and harmony so profound in Humanity. This year, his holiness the 14th Dali Lama was the keynote speaker, but unfortunately his health deteriorated a few days before the opening and he was rushed to the hospital. He managed to send a message which was read on his behalf. We pray for his quick recovery and complete health. Three Native American Chiefs from three separate tribes started the opening ceremony while some of their tribe members were beating drums and playing centuries old traditional songs.

FROM ARZAN WADIA, New York

The 2015 PWR was my first exposure to this global event. With over 9500+ participants it provided the breadth and width of practitioners of the world's religions and faiths. The opportunity to speak in person to so many people of such diversity was very meaningful to me. However, the flipside of it was that everyone was talking about solutions to current problems, and there was very little of actually getting to know about other religions and their teachings without the baggage of today's issues. The organizers also endeavored to create a no-controversy "politically correct" event that resulted in a lot of Islamophobia on display and also a lot of America bashing. Hopefully the irony wasn't lost on those speakers who could do it in the United States without worry of being threatened by outside forces.

Future Parliaments hopefully will have a less of a "Jamboree" feeling and will be smaller and more inclusive of actual teaching and practices of religion in everyday life, and also more of intra-faith introspection, if seeking results to current day political problems is the need of the day.

Besides having a great time with my fellow Zarathushti colleagues, the one endearing image I



will take away is the amazing *Langar* set up by the Sikh community. That remains my best memory of the 2015 PWR.

FROM JEHAN BAGLI, Toronto, Ontario

PWR 2015 was a far cry from the one I attended in 1993 in Chicago. Particularly the program was heavily packed with at least fifteen or more sessions going on at the same time. This made the job of selection for attendance monumental. This also led to some confusion in the assignment of the rooms. For example, one of our session that was scheduled in Ballroom H was incorrectly mentioned in the program book and this led people interested in the session to the wrong location.

Zoroastrian group and the booth organized by Roshan, Rohinton and coworkers who helped 'man' the booth reflected a Zoroastrian presence at the meeting.

After significant reservation of how many people will show up for the Jashan demonstration (at 7 am!!) it was indeed gratifying to experience the Grace of Mazda that brought the 'Standing room only' crowd to the session.

We were able to discuss matters of common interest with our Zoroastrian colleagues at places of dinner venue and in the cabs kindly organized by Shernaz Minwalla and Arzan Wadia. I would like to extend my appreciation for the kind assistance of Firdosh Kavarana and his family for their help in the arrangements at the booth.

Some of the speeches in the plenary sessions were much too unbalanced in condemning Islamophobia, with no mention of negative actions of ISIS or Sharia law practiced by some in that Faith

In general, it was an interesting experience and quite rewarding. The sessions I attended were quite stimulating. The disappointing aspect was that nowhere in the Program book Zoroastrian Faith was recognized. Even our sessions were not properly marked with a symbol of the Faith.

Perhaps this should be brought to the attention of the organizers.

FROM MAHRUKH MOTAFRAM, Seattle, Washington

It was my first time attending, and what struck me right away was that it didn't seem like a "parliament of world religions" forum, but a gathering of different religious entities. In fact, it seemed more like a fair, with many of the attendees displaying their wares.

On the opening day ceremonies, it was impressive seeing Ervad Kobad Zarolia, walk down the hall in his attire. Our sessions, especially the "jashan", conducted by Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Maneck Bhujwala was well attended by individuals who were aware of who we were and our beliefs. Also, the questions later were well founded and answered with a lot of dignity and class. I was proud to be one of the Zarathustis in that room!

In addition, it was awesome to have real-time web presence, since it gave us an opportunity to showcase our presence at this conference to our own Z global community. It is definitely a stepping stone to bigger and better things in the future.

However, with all due respect to individuals who have worked tirelessly and at such high level, I also got the distinct feeling that we were somehow overlooked as one of the major religions of the world. Even though we had a robust representation from FEZANA, it was a bit disappointing to see other religions being represented in larger numbers, participating in numerous other activities.

There may be another reason; which could be internal to our organization, FEZANA. It is an umbrella organization representing all our associations and, therefore representing the entire North American Z population. The lack of awareness among our own North American Z community regarding FEZANA is quite evident at this time. We do not have a collective voice; we seem to be splintered. The community at large needs to feel the need for FEZANA and support its mission. The lack of participation from others in the community, including young adults is probably due to the fact that they do not feel the relevance of having FEZANA in their lives. Individual member organizations are relevant to most, but it stops there. It needs to continue on to the national level and therein lies a definite disconnect. A forward thinking



leadership for FEZANA will have to address this issue to make the North American Z community a force to reckon with. Unity in numbers will give us a loud voice to announce our presence everywhere beginning right here in North America.

The best example I can give are the Sikhs; they had a huge presence at the conference. It was impressive to see the pride with which they serve their own community and the rest of us. They are united in their service to the community. They had the young and the old serving us free lunch each day; coming from all over in North America, Europe, and India. They came in large numbers to get their voices heard. I was envious to see this group, and wondered why we were not there!!

MANECK N. BHUJWALA, Los Angeles, California

The Parliament of World Religions is a historic event where we get to meet and interact with people from many different religions, and the opportunity to educate others about our own Zarathushti religion. As many previous such events have taken place at

distant places, I was not able to afford the expense. Luckily, the 2015 Parliament, held in October, 2015 was at a much closer location, and it was a dream come true to be able to finally attend it.

Towards the end of 2014, I was informed by my friends at the Southern California Chapter of the Parliament of World Religions (SCCPWR) that they were forming a group of ten people to get the group discount. I contacted our FEZANA colleagues who also tried to get a group of ten, but did not have commitments, so I joined the SCCPWR group and registered. Eventually, FEZANA also got a large enough group committed and registered.

Next, I added my name to FEZANA proposals as a presenter to two panel discussions and one Zoroastrian Jashan ceremony demo. I also made a separate proposal affiliated with the Claremont Lincoln University, where I am currently taking an M.A. course in Interfaith Action. All the proposals were accepted by the Parliament organizers. Shernaz Minwalla coordinated the FEZANA proposal drafts and communication with Parliament contacts.

In





January 2015, I obtained information on exhibit booths, and with guidance from Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Gandhi, and Dolly Dastoor, who had attended previous events, I proceeded to fill out the application forms with our selection of booth location, then sent it over to the FEZANA treasurer to complete the form and send it with a cheque to the Parliament office. Tax exemption application related to sale of books and items, was also made to the Salt Lake City government. Availability of copy services, electricity and WIFI was also confirmed.

With the purchase of a booth, two free tickets from the Parliament were given to FEZANA. In consultation with Homi, Shernaz and Rohinton, we decided to sell the tickets and recover some of our expenses. I was able to find customers for the two tickets at the discount rate of \$189 per ticket, and arranged the registration for them.

The booth purchased was just empty space with partition walls, and we had to apply and pay for the furniture separately. Again, in consultation with Rohinton and Homi, we decided what was needed, and I arranged for the application and payment with the help of the FEZANA treasurer. I also arranged for exhibit passes for a few people who were not registered, but helped at the booth.

Dolly Dastoor, Arzan Wadia, and Roshan Rivetna planned to bring posters, books and items for the booth. Behram Pastakia arranged to mail his items to Salt Lake City resident, Firdosh Kavarana, who later brought the items to the booth.

Another logistical item was finding an affordable decent hotel where we could stay in Salt Lake City. The Red Lion Hotel seemed the best choice to

FEZANA attendees. Most of us stayed at that hotel. Shernaz coordinated information on flight schedules of attendees and distributed it to the team.

My general thoughts on the Parliament are

- It was a great opportunity to make attendees from all over the world aware of our religion and community, with face-to-face communication at various sessions, through our presentations, at our exhibit booth, at other exhibit booths, at the Sikh langar (lunch), at the opening plenary session, and other places.
- Kobad Zarolia made a good impression representing our religion at the opening plenary session.
- The Jashan demo done by Jehan and I and Jehan's explanation of the ceremony impressed the large audience.
- Homi, Rohinton, Khosro Mehrfar, Jehan, Firdosh Mehta, Shernaz, Behram, and I made successful presentations.
- There was some interaction with the audience during question-answer sessions, but none during the plenary sessions.
- I did not hear condemnation of the genocide, raping, kidnapping, forced conversions, and torture conducted by ISIS in Iraq and Syria.
- I was disappointed with the absence of our religion in the list printed in the Parliament program book.
- The FEZANA team enjoyed the camaraderie developed at the booth, and at our dinners organized by Shernaz.

"If a person seems wicked, do not cast him away. Awaken him with your words, elevate him with your deeds, repay his injury with your kindness. Do not cast him away; cast away his wickedness."

—Lao Tzu (600-531) Philosopher

Climate Change

REPORT OF 21ST SESSION OF CONFERENCE OF PARTIES, COP 21, PARIS

MEHER SIDHWA



I followed UNFCCC (United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change) COP meetings as my clean energy career began with the UNFCCC's projects and the carbon markets. I never thought

I would end up attending one. Then, in early 2015, I was offered an opportunity I wanted to take advantage of- a climate change teach-in in New York, which was organized by Religions for Peace USA. They would pick four participants to go to the COP in Paris. Given my background on UNFCCC and my ability to link the science of climate change with my religion's (Zoroastrianism) teachings on environmental stewardship, I was



selected to be one of the four member team.

Our team represented Religions for Peace USA and consisted of a Mennonite (Christian), Jew, Muslim, and Zoroastrian (myself) from India. After numerous weekly conference calls to brainstorm various related topics and speak with a few think tank experts, it was time for us to travel to Paris and meet again.



Fig 1: RFP USA's Paris Cohort (l to r) Ethan Bodnaruk, Asma Mahdi, Itang Young and Meher Sidhwa

Following are some snippets of my week at the Paris COP. The day before we attended COP sessions, we experienced curiosity and apprehension; but, like they say, "As the carriage moves forward, the apples will fall in place." We spent the day with the CAN (Climate Action Network) representatives, listening to speeches by the heads of states. This, by the way, made COP 21 even more special, as previous conferences weren't backed with political will. Our hectic schedules started next morning when we arrived at Le Bourget for COP, there was so much happening around us that time flew and there was not a single dull moment. There were parallel sessions in numerous rooms and dedicated pavilions; each day was dedicated to the discussion of a single issue (forestry, gender equality, indigenous people's rights, education, oceans, resilience, water, etc.). There was an exhibit area, an open space to work, a place where electronic devices could be recharged, an informational area sponsored by Google that continually displayed new data projections of global climate change impacts, a food court that always had long lines at lunch hour, and, of course, the restricted negotiation areas. The conference also had various faith-based organizations representing their religion's respective environmental ideology; similar to how the Zoroastrian faith encourages environmental stewardship.

A faith-based panel spoke about how resource wastage is universally forbidden among the world's religions. Several religious groups conducted vigils and prayers to demonstrate their faiths hoped the world's leaders would reach a global agreement at the conference.

I personally enjoyed the knowledge exchange with many interesting attendees. I met with Bertrand Piccard, the Chairman and Pilot of Solar Impulse, the solar-powered plane that is traveling around the world. As I work on solar power projects, there was a lot for me to learn from his experience. The Solar Impulse sends out a strong message to the world that clean power is a practical alternative to fossil fuels. Although this plane is a light weight prototype and seats only one person, it has sent its message loud and clear as solar technologies and efficiencies continue to evolve. India unveiled its global Solar Alliance of 120 countries with the French president, François Hollande. The Indian government is investing an initial \$30-million (£20-million) to set up the alliance's headquarters in India. The eventual goal is to raise \$400-million from membership fees and international organizations.

It was interesting how the streets of the Champs Elysses were lit with Christmas lights using the power generated by a windmill; some solar panels; and a host of stationary bicycles, swings, and walkers powered by people. These practical demonstrations of clean energy were complemented by the green-lit Eiffel on the opening day of the COP. The street also had its annual Christmas market that added to the city's night life and attracted many visitors.



FIG 2: Discussing with Prof Jeffrey Sachs Columbia University

I attended a session by Professor Jeffrey Sachs who taught me, via his online course on Sustainable Development, during my maternity sabbatical. During his panel talks, I also had the opportunity to discuss with him some of the issues India faces in going carbon neutral because our country has not yet found the optimum energy mix to substitute coal which is our base power. Although we recently started to move towards nuclear, which is relatively cleaner than coal and could be the future.

He was also joined by Karin Wanngård, the mayor of Stockholm, Sweden who announced her plans to have the city carbon neutral by 2040. Also present was Mayor Monica

Fein of Rosario, Argentina. In another session by the Copenhagen government, the mayor of Copenhagen shared their goal of being carbon neutral by 2025.

One of the prime revelations came from the Marshall Islands, a group of 1,000 islands only two meters above sea level, with a population of around 70,000. They will be among the first countries to have climate refugees if the global temperatures rise by 1.5°C and not 2°C, which is so far considered the threshold temperature rise.



Fig 3: Prof Sachs with the Mayor of Stockholm (2nd from left) and Rosario (1st from left)

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The country's foreign minister Tony de Brum said: *"Anything over 2 degrees is a death warrant for us."* Another island, Tuvalu, which is home to 11,000 people and is 4.5 meters above sea level; it lost 95% of their agriculture output to cyclone Pam earlier this year. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) need special attention as they will be among the first ones to be affected as sea levels rise.

Other panel discussions that I attended included one on Corporate Social Responsibility with executives from Air France, SNCF, L'Oréal, and HEC. Interesting opposing opinions were offered by some US trade unions that explained their viewpoint as to why the world cannot completely abandon coal-based power generation.

Sunday was the official COP holiday and, as my team members prepared to return to the US, I spent the morning walking by the River Seine and in the evening met some Parsis who live in Paris. I met five Parsi ladies and a gentleman who live in Paris (their community is as few as ten families). They all make an annual trip to India to catch up with their roots, families, and Parsi food. Members of the community make time once a month to meet over drinks or dinner; that day was on Sunday and they were kind enough to invite me. After a hard laugh over the best crepes in the city (at Jocelyn's, near Montparnasse—it serves the traditional savory from Brittany), I returned to my hotel to figure out how I wanted to spend my extra day.

After having a fruitful first week at Le Bourget, I decided to accept an invitation to attend the UNESCO-IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) meeting at the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) headquarters in Paris. The meeting participants discussed key findings of IPCC's



FIG. 4: PARSIS OF PARIS

fifth assessment report and the amount of emission reduction needed to limit the 2°C temperature rise, which is now 1.5°C. Monitored historical data, with future emissions projections from several human activities like agriculture, land use, transportation sectors was provided in addition to the policy dialogue.



FIG. 5: View from the UNESCO headquarters

While the climate talks progressed, it was heart-wrenching to see photos of Chennai, India; flooded from non-monsoonal causes. Lives, houses, and livelihoods were washed away; this, according to the urban planners and citizens, resulted from an inept government administration that since 2009 ignored the suggested rehabilitation

of Chennai's waterways. India plans to achieve 100 "smart cities" moving forward; one hopes that climate resilience is made an important factor during their planning.

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As I bade adieu to Paris, I reflected on how much I learned and how much better informed I had become. My heart was filled with gratitude for Religions for Peace USA choosing me to represent them, with my colleagues, and for FEZANA 's support to attend the Climate Change Teach-in in New York and during my preparations to travel to Paris.



FIG. 6: At COP21 venue at Le Bourget

When I returned, COP was in its second week and the Paris agreement was being finalized. Unlike earlier COPs, this one achieved international agreement to a common good. Fortunately, the ball has started gathering momentum; it is important that diplomacy and the political leaders of all can safeguard this common good from corruption. This landmark agreement calls for 195 countries to commit to lower their greenhouse gas emissions. This COP saw the end of the USA/ China tug-of-war, with China, the largest polluter, agreeing to cut their emissions.

India joined with the global community in signing the agreement, which allows for common but differentiated responsibilities for rich and poor countries. Rich countries have promised to invest in the poor countries to help them transition into developed, but low-carbon economies. The agreement also addresses mitigating actions and the issue of loss and damage. The agreement and associated action plans are also subject to review every five years of the global stock-take. The agreement is to be ratified early next year. There are critics and activists that prefer to have a more stringent agreement; however, this is the beginning of a new unanimously agreed goal which I am hopeful will evolve and improve.

While there is a lot to achieve under this deal, it does send out a global message to end the use of fossil fuel. The targets of the agreement can be achieved with significant technological advancements in energy storage, nuclear power, and carbon capture. Now it is time for the countries to work on their commitments as the world has a lot to achieve to safeguard our future generations.

Meher Sidhwa-Pastakia is one of the four delegates selected at the Earth Faith Peace Climate Change Teach-in to attend COP 21 representing Religions for Peace USA. The other three were from the US.

She has a Bachelor's Degree in Instrumentation Engineering and a post-graduate diploma in Energy Management; she has worked in India since 2006 as a renewable energy professional. She has hands-on experience on sustainability projects under the Kyoto Protocol.

She is a mother, a backpacker, and believer of environmental stewardship, which forms the basis of the Zoroastrian religion.

TEACHINGS OF ZARATHUSHTRA & IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

ERVAD DR. JEHAN BAGLI



By definition, anything Divinely-enacted is Holy and sanctified; Creation is such an act and must be held sacred. Devout Zoroastrians regard Nature with the most profound reverence. The Avestan texts of our Niyaeshes, such as, Khorshed, Meher, Atash, Aban, and Mah, as well as, the corresponding Yashts clearly reflect Zoroastrian veneration for fire, the sun, moon, waters, plant, and life.

When we recite the second version in our daily prayers:

Sepas oi Bozorg hastian ke afrid avnid...

we thank the Architect of infinite strength and wisdom.

When we recite:

***o gerd âsmân, o khur tâvâ o mâh bâmî, o satare vash-
tokhm o bâd o andarvâe, o âv, o âtash, o zamin, o orvar,
o goshpand, o ayokhshast, o mardum***

we are reminded of the beauty and majesty of Nature, and that greatness directs us to the God of Nature through which we recognize and appreciate the grandeur and glory of Ahura Mazda's handiwork.

As the Prophet Zarathushtra begins to feel the source of the Best existence, while in communion with His God, he asks some rhetorical questions in Ys 44 of Gatha Ushtavaiti:

*Who determined the paths of the sun and the stars?
Who, but Thee, so arranged the moon to wax and wane?
Who so balanced the earth and heavens to keep them apart?
Who created the waters and the plants?
Who guides the winds in their uncharted courses?*

The prayers that we are taught as children clearly emphasize the principle of *nidhanai-thishem* (non-violence) in the prayer of *Jas-me-Avangahe Mazda* and also in Ys 32.10. This tenet is not just towards other humans, but is also directed to all elements of Creation.

Humans, in Zarathushtrian teachings, are the pivotal creation of Mazda and carry with them the responsibility to protect and preserve the elements of Nature. For we are a part of all that we encounter and all that we encounter is a part of us. This is just another way of saying God is in all of us and we are all in God. It is for this reason, that the very aspects of Mazda—the *Amesha Spentas*—are the guardians of various creations.

In Ys 29.1, of Gatha *ahunavaiti*, we read Zarathushtra's narration of the lament of the Universe's soul to Ahura Mazda, and how it is oppressed by *aeshemo* (anger), *hazas* (fury), *remo* (outrage), *deres* (aggression), and *tevis* (rapine). The soul pleads for a Divine Savior to restore order. This was some 3700 years ago. So, where are we some four millennia later?

Today, if we could hear the lamentation of the Universe's soul, we would hear of the widespread, global devastation caused by acid rain, the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, indiscriminate deforestation, pollution of our waters with chemical waste, and wanton contamination of plant and animal habitats by millions of gallons of oil spills—all because of mankind's erroneous judgment.

One of the worst overall results of a variety of these disruptions in Nature, is global warming. In 2015, we had the hottest May in the last 135 years; North America's west coast—from British Columbia to California—experienced its worst drought in history. This markedly affected crops, farming communities, and agricultural economics, which, in turn, affected national economies.

Forest fires in Alberta and Saskatchewan have caused more destruction this year than ever before, and have caused the evacuation of tens of thousands of people from their homes. Some people are even losing all their possessions. The same is true in the US, from Washington to California.

A common trend is to blame natural causes for climate change; however, there is enough evidence to focus a significant portion of the blame on human causes. Mankind's actions and erroneous judgments are largely responsible for climate changes attributable to increasing greenhouse gases.

Just to mention two recent cases:

1. In July 2013, the entire town of Lac Megantic was wiped out by an explosion of a rail tanker carrying crude bitumen. Why? Because of the human error—the railway car's brakes were not properly locked, resulting in its rolling down a hill, at over 100km/h, and exploded.
2. More recently, at Fort MacMurry, in Alberta, an oil pipeline leaked 5-million liters of crude oil, despite it being a double-walled pipeline with an automated leak detection mechanism. Why? The mechanism failed due to human error.

What are the main causes for the increase of greenhouse gases?

1. Carbon dioxide from fossil fuel burning power plant emissions.
2. Carbon dioxide from gasoline-powered car emissions.
3. Methane from farm animals.

Millions of cattle grazing on open pastures continually release methane as a part of their digestive process. Also, megatons of methane have been trapped in ocean bottoms and in polar ice caps. As a result of global warming, these methane pockets are being released into the atmosphere.

DEFORESTATION FOR FARMLAND AND WOOD

The plant kingdom is one of the best storehouses of carbon dioxide. Plants take in carbon dioxide and use it as part of the photosynthetic process. Deforestation removes these storehouses from the ecosystem, which results in higher concentrations of carbon in the air.

INCREASED USE OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

Use of chemical fertilizers leads to increased concentrations of nitrous oxide being released into the environment, further contributing to greenhouse effect.

The major results of the above causes are:

1. Global warming
2. Rise in global sea levels
3. More severe storms
4. Massive crop failures

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5. Widespread extinction of animal species
6. Disappearance of coral reefs, which adversely affects aquatic life, leading to its extinction

Energy is an issue that touches every person on the planet. It is time for us to become actively involved, to learn, and to rethink our choices of how we use carbon-based fuels, water, and Nature's elements. We clearly need to do more—to change our ways how we consume energy to help tackle the major ecological problem.

Just to give you some idea of what is happening around the world in the efforts to control climate change, here are a few examples.

GCEP (Global Climate and Energy Project), at Stanford University, is developing technology that can lead to a global energy system that could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Brazil has replaced forty percent of its automotive gas consumption by an emission-friendly energy source—sugarcane ethanol. Today, Brazil annually produces 4.5-billion gallons of ethanol from sugarcane, which has made the country nearly gasoline independent.

United Nation Environmental Program has established an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which assesses Climate Change. IPCC and former Vice President Al Gore shared the Nobel Prize for disseminating climate change data in 2007.

A project initiated in the laboratories at Berkeley, California, is directed to Renewable and Appropriate Energy. Their mission is to design, test, and disseminate renewable and appropriate energy systems. Their focus is to use these technologies at their full potential and thereby contribute to environmentally sustainable development in industrialized and developing nations.

At the “Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders,” held in Moscow during 1990, one of the world's foremost astrophysicists, the late Prof. Carl Sagan said, “... *there was a general consensus that humans have become predators on the biosphere, always taking never giving. We have NOT inherited the earth from our ancestors, but have borrowed it from our children.*” We need to take extreme care how we use something that does not belong to us

In bridging creation and religion, the professor continued, “... *there is nothing in the Judeo-Christian, or Muslim tradition that approaches the cherishing of nature, as in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition or among Native American. Indeed both western religion and science assert that nature should not be viewed as sacred.*” He further concedes that, “... *a poignant metaphor of stewardship has emerged recently... The idea that humans are the caretakers of the earth, put here for the purpose and accountable now and into the indefinite future, to the landlord ...*”—the Wise Lord.

These are the words of a highly regarded astrophysicist that echoes the message of the Prophet Zarathushtra. Zarathushtrian theology directs humans to be stewards of Creation and the co-workers with the Creator. Divinity in this physical world manifests itself through the divine and benevolent actions of mankind. Therefore, it is our duty and responsibility to maintain the environment and climate control of this world in a state so that our children and their children can enjoy safe and happy lives.

Zarathushtrian faith demands that we appreciate and hold sacred, the elements of nature—sun, moon, stars, water, earth, plant, and animal kingdom—and use them with moderation and reverence. Never to abuse them with excess, defile them with pollution, or diminish them with greed.

It is a fact that the climate of our planet is changing; we need to be prepared for severe weather events like damaging rain storms, ice storms, and other calamities. Global environmental disasters caused by

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earthquakes, storms, floods, drought, and forest fires have markedly increased during past three decades—from less than 400 annually to nearly 1000. Disastrous events due to climate change have risen in Canada, during 1960–1990, from about 30 to nearly 120.

The cost of the damages caused by these disasters has significantly impacted the overall economy of the affected areas. For example, the July 2014 rainstorm in Toronto cost \$1.07 billion, while the ice storm of December 2013 cost an estimated \$306-million. These figures include the insurance paid out for the damages and costs to the city.

Another very important point to remember is that the residents of low-income and poor areas of the city are the most vulnerable during these catastrophic occurrences. There are often more human casualties, suffering, and deaths in these poor and less affluent areas. The Canadian National Household survey of 2011 provides data that, of all the residents living in high rises in Toronto, thirty-two percent live in low income areas and are, therefore, more apt to become victims of climate change events. Further exacerbating their plight is that their residences are often in older buildings with inadequate or failed air conditioning, plumbing, or electrical systems.

For the first time in history, Pope Francis, the religious leader of 2.2-billion Catholics around the world has issued an encyclical (*Laudato Si*) where he stresses the poor's vulnerability as a major factor to be considered during disastrous climate changes.

Climate change, despite being an environmental issue, significantly impacts the most vulnerable segments of society; making climate change a spiritual and humanitarian crisis, as well. It is important for people of all faiths to be aware and prepared to address and plan for such eventualities—first, within the community and then for the community of the human brotherhood—this is our moral responsibility.

Beyond question, climate change is a global problem. We must not underestimate the fact that it would take actions from all nations to solve the problem. But, solve we must, before it gets beyond repair. However, each one of us must contribute our share by modifying our thinking and live a greener life through better choices.

It is interesting to note that what we Zoroastrians have been saying for years that *“humans are the stewards of the creation and coworkers of the Creator;”* today, this very statement resonates from almost all of the faith groups in a multi-faith chorus.

We must act now, not because I am saying so, not because we want to join the climate change bandwagon, but because it is the message of our beloved Prophet Zarathushtra who teaches us to do so. We need to do this as the last line of *Ashem Vohu* prayer *Ushta Ahmai hyat ashâi vahishtâi ashem*. directs us that it is the RIGHT thing to do. We need to start in a small way to show our readiness not just for ourselves, but also to help mankind at large.

Pope Francis, in his *Laudato si* says, *“Every person who lives in this world have to say our ‘Common House’ is burning due to excessively consumerist economics and social Model of our world.”*

Jehan Bagli is the past president of the North American Mobeds Council, and a co-author of the Understanding and Practice series on Jashans, Navjotes, Weddings, Obsequies, and the Concise Navar Ceremony. He is the field editor of the Zoroastrian section of the “Encyclopedia of Indian Religions,” published by Springer Publications. He is the President of World Zoroastrian Organization, (WZO) Canada.

In Commemoration of:

October 2, 2015 (Fasli Mehrgan: Meher Roj & Mah)–October 4, 2015

(Feast Day: St. Francis of Assisi)

On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis I (formerly Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires) released his second Encyclical (declaration to Catholics) entitled *Laudato Si*¹. The chosen title, "Praise Be To You," is purposeful for the association that it is meant to create and indicative of what follows, as it originates from the Canticum of the Creatures which is a medieval prayer composed by St. Francis of Assisi (1181–1226)². St. Francis, along with St. Catherine of Siena, are the two "national" patrons of Italy, and among the most popularly adored and venerated figures around the globe. This is not coincidental, nor is it unrelated to the present discussion to note that the majority of "popular" (admired, adored, endorsed) religious figures irrespective of creed, are those associated with acts of love, welfare and charity, rather than for their stringent adherence to dogma. Global spirituality is composed of figures who expressed their humanity in service, and their praise of divinity via the cultivation and conservation of the treasures of nature.

St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan Order, is venerated not only as patron of Italians (humans) but of animals (nature) and of lepers (the marginalized/downtrodden/outcaste). This provides insight as to why institutionalized global religions have been unsuccessful in banishing "popular" elements such as the "veneration of Saints," pilgrimage, *mela*, *urs* gatherings, or ritual re-enactment, despite judgements against their "blasphemous nature" and threats of excommunication against transgressors. One might discern that devoid of the physical expressions (exercise?) of love, encapsulated as a cultural

production of affirmation explicitly manifest as a communion with environment and fellowship with humanity, that religion is a reductionist philosophy of pedantic intellectualism whose scope is neither universal nor "popular" (elitist).

Even respected religious reformers such as Zarathustra and Martin Luther, admitted that elements of "popular" belief could not (and in fact, *should not*) be undone or unfounded with the stroke of a pen or commandment. Both Mazdayasni and Lutheran liturgical practises, by the authority of their very founders, retain many of the celebratory aspects of the systems which preceded them (Perso-Vedic Pantheon, Pre-Reformation Latin Christendom). There was an acute awareness that in "reforming" religion, the aim was to promote social welfare and transformation rather than remove popular engagement between people and their environment by creating a new dogma of oppression. Ritual and belief is only harmful when it restricts the human spirit and denigrates creation. Luther retained certain sacraments, ceremonies, vestments, and architecture of the church. Witness the *Khordeh Avesta* whose many *Yashts* begin with "Ahura Mazda spake to Zarathustra that....(insert deity or attribute of divinity) is worthy of worship"³. Ritual for the sake of popular commitment and expression is essential for the participatory and democratic nature of any fellowship system and is legitimate so long as there is a *holistic comprehension of the interdependence between all aspects of creation and their*

emanation from a single source.

The Pope chose to promulgate *Laudato Si* on Pentecost Sunday 2015 (May 24), significant because this day is considered the "birth of the Church," when the Holy Spirit descended fifty days after Easter to the Apostles and Mother Mary. Pentecost and Easter are among the only Christian calendar days that fluctuate annually, because they are set according to nature (the ecclesiastic celebration of Easter is determined by the calculation of the spring equinox, which would be Jamshedi-Navroz for Zoroastrians). The symbols of Pentecost are wind, fire and a dove. In Poland houses may be decorated with shrubbery, while in Germany *Das Pfingstbaumpflanzen* (the planting of trees) and *Der Pfingstochse* (first leading of adorned oxen to pasture) maintains the emphasis of Pentecost being a "green holiday." In the Baltic region, eggs are decorated in the same manner as at Easter (or for the Navroz table).

Laudato Si should thus, be viewed as a Papal (re-?) affirmation that the Church is firmly rooted (pun intended) in nature, as its protector, whose defense is divinely mandated as a "religious duty" no less than the salvation of the soul. The Pope's unfinished doctoral dissertation surrounds the work of Romano Guardini (1885-1968) who was the most important Catholic theologian of the 20th Century. The Vatican II reforms, with an emphasis on re-invigorating religion with social purpose through the social activism of the parish priest, can directly be ascribed to Guardini⁴. The Pope's academic

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background, his choice to take the name “Francis,” and his intentional promotion of *Laudato Si* with reference to Pentecost, creates the unmistakable image of someone who views environmentalism not as a 21st Century trend, but as the basis of faith-practise.

Laudato Si begins with the following quote from St. Francis of Assisi: “Earth is mother and sister who sustains and governs.” In this and throughout the encyclical we see Papal insight into *Spenta Armaity*. “We see ourselves as Lords and Masters, entitled to plunder” writes the Pope, but this is “devilish” and equivalent to sin⁵. Pope Francis may not be a Zoroastrian, but perhaps he is a fellow traveller. *Spenta Armaity*, the Earth, is indeed, our Mother in that she sustains us, as well as our Sister in that we are bound to respect and protect all creation (of which we are part, not Lord over) by pledge of *rakhsha bandan* that is both symbolic but also quite literal for our own survival. Parsis have for too long, cried “us too!” in an attempt to find inclusion with establishments of power, be they political or religious. With *Laudato Si*, Parsis have a chance to embark on a new era of distinction as equals (leadership, does not belong to the criteria for either spiritual evaluation, nor the success of a faith-based community) in a cosmopolitan movement for conservation and preservation which is truly in spirit with Mazdayasni Daena, rather than a contortion of it.

Mazdayasni Daena has suffered more than two centuries of unnecessary “protestant-izing.” Much of this was the by-product of the Parsi, imperial encounter with the British in India. Parsis worked particularly hard to escape their being classified by the British as

“Hindu” (a non-existent descriptor created by imperial administrators to “organize” the unfamiliar diversity that they encountered, into bounded monolithic projections of European categories)⁶. Along with “tribal,” “Hindu” as a modifier, translated as “uncivilized,” “effeminate,” and “superstitious,” all things that Parsis obviously did not want to be associated with, especially since this would dictate British behaviour and administration towards the community. A proactive campaign of ingratiation toward the occupier was launched which served to create a favourable subaltern political climate for Parsis.

The British employed an indirect method (low administrative overhead, and commercial control) of rule which necessitated cooperation from segments of the population while exploiting divide-and-rule methodology, and assessed the Parsis as one such group which could be utilized as a non-threatening instrument of such a policy. The Parsi emphasis on being an Aryan (Iranic) community with little connection to “the natives” other than their displacement among them, simultaneously fit well into the British narrative of White-man’s burden for the export of a civilization-project⁷. Faced with the onslaught of Protestant (especially Reformed Church and Presbyterian) missionaries who chastised the “lack of rationality” in Mazdayasni Daena, Parsis defended themselves by attempting to appear Protestant fellow-travelers if not Christian. A protestant-izing occurred to create “Zoroastrians,” a category which the British could understand and possibly respect; a people with “a single book,” “a prophet,” “a monotheism,” and “an iconoclasm.”

Either through the maintenance

of this façade, the longevity of a parody over time elevating the concept into dogma, or the neglect of a rich tradition negated wholly as “pagan” and “nonessential to Zoroastrianism,” Mazdayasni Daena was disgraced. The Dalai Lama wrote that the best way to learn about one’s own faith, is to study those of others. This self-reflexive exercise initiates a broad understanding of cross-cultural tenants, but also the uniqueness of one’s own spiritual perspectives. Perhaps this is because the unabashed pride (or is that bigotry?) in each of us, seeks to “own” something which we deem important, worthy, great, and unique. We want to have had it first, or at least challenge for co-ownership. Let *Laudato Si* be the vehicle for a reawakening of sorts for Mazdayasni Daena! In this courageous proclamation by the Pope, let us applaud the undercurrent of Mazdayasni conscious, and then propel ourselves to action with a determination to serve *Spenta Armaity* as both Mother and Sister!

Our faith is not born out of Enlightenment doctrines and materialist philosophies which provide justification to perverted forms of religion that consider man at the centre of the universe, the measure of all things whose right it is by God to establish dominion over creation. Our spirituality finds affinity in Adivasi and Indigenous beliefs globally which value reciprocity and symbiosis as aspects of worship, *asha*, and indeed *moksha* as the ultimate realization of divinity. We are also more Indigenous in our grammar, which does not provide prominence for the masculine. Textual analysis yields the conclusion that the masculine form is actually limiting. For example, of the six Amesha

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Spenta, three are female: *Spenta Armaity* (Holy Devotion, associated with the Earth), *Haurvatat* (Wholeness, associated with Water), and *Ameratat* (Immortality, associated with Plants). The remaining three, are neuter: *Asha Vahishta* (Best Righteousness, associated with Fire), *Vohu Mano* (Good Purpose, associated with Animals), and *Khshtira Variya* (Desirable Dominion, associated with the Sky). It is quite easy to perceive this as one conceptual framework of Mazdayasni Daena; that Good Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, are accomplishment of the “good purpose” (*Vohu Mano*) of “protecting” (*Khshtira Variya*), the “integrity” (*Haurvatat*) of all creation which is “essential truth” (*Asha Vahishta*) as well as the best form of “holy devotion” (*Spenta Armaity*) that ensures “human legacy” (*Ameratat*).

The Magi were considered guardians of ALL life and their spirits. Part of their authority derived from their supposed “possession” of an understanding of holistic relationships, and as overseers rather than over-lords of the natural environment. The word “magic” may be considered to denote the ability

of a Mage to “master the elements and laws of nature,” representing the action of one who abides by natural law. While one of the Persian imperial symbols is Lion, *Verethragna* (*Behram*: remover of obstacles, victory) in the *Yasht* dedicated to him, is described as having ten forms: wind, bull, horse, camel, boar, youth, raven, ram, buck, and man. In addition to these, *Verethragna* appears in lore as Bear, one of the most “popular” incarnations and in stark contrast to Lion (which is absent from the list). While Lion dominates the Earth standing atop it, Bear is part of the Earth hibernating within it, receiving strength from it, being “re-born” each spring (Navroz). Lion (not Lion-ess) is male, while Bear’s symbolic strength within all Indigenous cultures who utilize this motif is decisively female: birthing, nurturing, protecting, Earth, guardian, teacher, wisdom, food, medicine. The latter two criteria invoke another illustration of “truth” regarding human interdependence and Earth guardianship, because a proper respect and understanding of soil, seed and growth, is essential for both sustenance and health. Fundamentally, cooking

and medicine (e.g. *Ayurveda*) derive from a “proper” knowledge and respect of the source and combinations (recipe) of earth-ingredients.

Our Gambhars are seasonal worship of nature in praise of Her gift. *Espandgan* (*Aspandard Roj & Mah*; *Spenta Armaity*) is a “Persian day of Women and Earth Day.” Let us pledge this *Fasli Mehrgan*, which celebrates the harvest of nature under the patronage of *Mithra* (love, friendship, contracts), to curtail destructive waste and unbridled “progress” with shameless disregard of the ecosystem, *Spenta Armaity*, our common home which we share with all creation as equals. We have free-will to either embolden *Ahura Mazda* or else become participants in our destruction. Having lost three-quarters of our liturgy and historical record through calamities that befell our people, let us now, not lose our dignity, faith and salvation through willful neglect and cowardice.

The Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi and *Mehrgan* coincide on the calendar and so should global efforts at Earth stewardship.

(Endnotes)

- 1 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html Accessed September 27, 2015.
- 2 <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/wosf/wosf22.htm> Accessed September 27, 2015.
- 3 For example, the *Meher* (*Mihr*) *Yasht* <http://www.avesta.org/ka/yt10sbe.htm> Accessed September 27, 2015.
- 4 <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2014/romano-guardini-father-of-the-new-evangelization> Accessed September 27, 2015.
- 5 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html Accessed September 27, 2015.
- 6 The works of Jaffrelot, Addas, Chatterjee, Skaria, shed light on the cultural imperialism and transformation of identities which occurred during British imperialism in South Asia.
- 7 Justification for rule found apologists among the literary figures and anthropologists of the day. A cursory glance at figures such as Wellington or Rudyard Kipling or Herbert Spencer, provide a few examples.

Neville Gustad Panthaki has pursued two Doctorates (Ph.D) in Eurasian History and International Diplomacy (York University, Toronto) and Social Justice Education (Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto).

World Zoroastrian Chamber Of Commerce

GLITTERS IN GOA



The Annual General Meeting of WZCC was held at the International Centre, Goa with 150 delegates in attendance, in conjunction with Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry and The International Centre-Goa in December 2015. The first day was for networking with sumptuous barbeque dinner and cocktails.

The Board Meetings were followed by a panel discussion ***“Opportunities of Investment in Goa”*** where successful entrepreneurs from Goa shared their views on their professions and businesses. Prominent personalities from Goa like. gave practical anecdotes and insights into the investment opportunities available in Goa. Although Goa is known for tourism, fun and food, there are excellent industries which form the commercial part of India’s economy namely Pharmaceutical Industry IT Industry and of course, Tourism Industry.

The second panel ***“Overcoming Challenges for Growth in Competitive Business Environment”*** was ably anchored by Mr. Umeed Kothavala, Managing Director-Extentia-Pune. The panelists, all members of WZCC and successful entrepreneurs in their own fields of activity. talked of practical ways of crossing the barriers in the growing competitive environment. The panelists were of the view that one has to continuously change the strategies according to the competitive business environment and unless the policy of “Fair Play” is adopted, the existence of long term sustenance will always be in jeopardy.

The evening program saw two eminent personalities – Lord Meghnad Desai, Member of the British Parliament and well known Global Economist and Brig. Behram Panthaki, ex-ADC to Late Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. Lord Meghnad Desai in his very stylish and humorous way described India’s political scenario and expressed hope that the same will change under the leadership of the new Prime Minister. Brig. Behram Panthaki explained how Defence Forces conduct their lives and how a good leadership can motivate a team.

Mr. Sandip Bhandare, Vice President, Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Mr. Ramakant Kamat, Director-General GCCI. appreciated the contributions made by the Parsi Community in the development of the country. Tributes were paid with a standing ovation to Mr. Minoo R. Shroff, the Outgoing President, for his splendid work for WZCC.

As in the past WZCC presented three Awards to Zarathushti Entrepreneurs and Professionals

Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur of the Year 2015 – Dr. Zarir Hector Sholapurwalla

Outstanding Zarathushti Professional of the Year 2015 - Ms Jasmin J. Sohrabji

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Professional of the Year 2015 – Dr. Urvakhsh M. Mehta

A very special Award was presented to **Ms Tanya Sam Balsara** (herself a visually challenged individual) for her outstanding contribution in making the lives of more than 200 visually impaired persons more fruitful and comfortable.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT

KHOSRO ESFANDIA MEHRFAR



I was honored to be nominated as the track chairman for Climate Change to represent FEZANA on the Stewardship of the Environment forum at the Parliament of World's Religions. I was further honored to serve on this panel with the esteemed Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli, Homi Gandhi, Manek Bujwala, Firdosh Mehta and one of the leaders in ecology and environment in the Sikh community of North America, Rajwant Singh. Our discussion topic was the relationship among Man, Nature, and Religion, specifically from our Zoroastrian viewpoint.

The planning, management, and implementation of the Stewardship of the Environment segment were fascinating. The event's timing could not have been better, as Pope Francis' second encyclical letter (*On Care for our Common Home*, which was part of the Holy Father's *Laudato Si* [Praise Be To You] writings) just released. In fact, since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, led by the United Kingdom, we have witnessed the progress of science and technology as it helped mankind to have more comfortable lives. Unfortunately, it was at the cost of a degraded environment. And, in recent decades, its cost has escalated as our societies historic human-human relationships (and empathies) have disintegrated, replaced with sterile, unfeeling virtual human-to-machine-to-human/digital electronic interactions.

Regarding Pope Francis' recent ninety-nine page *Laudato Si*, one can easily notice many common sense principles. I found many similarities between the principles in the Pope's encyclical letter and those in our holy books, the Avesta, Gathas, and of our other holy writings. For example, the Pope encourages all of us to respect Nature as our Prophet Zarathustra encouraged us to protect the plant life and not to pollute the earth, air, and water. Indeed, Zarathustra was the world's first environmentalist!

It really boils down to the fact that we should become better stewards of Mother Earth—Our Common Home. In an earlier article (FJ Summer 2015, Vo 2 No 2), I wrote about the Pope's *Laudato Si* and, based on my assessment, I believe the well-written encyclical letter can be summarized as:

If we care for our Common Home and if we want to protect the well-being of humanity and the Mother Earth's ecosystem, we

need a **"Paradigm Shift."** Centuries of environmental abuse are not undone overnight; although we may be a bit late in righting our wrongs and it may take generations to reverse our past actions, it is better late than never. The Paradigm Shift that I envision is a new way of looking at our lives and appreciate the blessings of living in a great country and the bounty of many sacred blessings. Regardless of religious affiliation—whether we are a Zarathushti, a follower of any faith, or an atheist—it makes no difference. Our blessings are part and parcel of our existence. We rely more and more on global interconnectedness and are dependent on instant access to news from across the world. We daily experience this interconnectedness when a small group of people in one corner of the world—be it in Africa or the Middle East—can impact our lives, halfway around the globe.

It was with this view and with the help of my colleagues that I planned the Stewardship of the Environment segment at this year's Parliament of World's Religions (PWR) conference. And, in the end, we came up with an action plan for those of us who care about our environment and want to participate in a Paradigm Shift that encourages: **Use, but don't Abuse.** I thank and very much appreciate the help of all my colleagues who advised me on this critical issue of our time and shared their valuable viewpoints. I compiled my colleagues' well-articulated points, added mine, and drafted the following action plan; it is now respectfully submitted for your consideration and comment.

The plan goes well beyond the "five Rs" (**Recycle, Reuse, Repair, Respect and Reduce**) in that it asks us to **"Rethink"** our eco-strategies based on the proposed Paradigm Shift; that is, if we want to have a better world for the next generations, people, planet, and Mother Earth.

The action plan identifies two target audiences:

- External: FEZANA contact lists from other faiths, UN, and NGO organizations

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- Internal: FEZANA contact lists from our global Zoroastrian communities

Some redundancy between categories may occur.

EXTERNAL AUDIENCES, following are seven proposed initiatives for your consideration:

1. **Create a Global Council**—Although labels don't matter, we suggest the strawman name, "Council on Care for Our Common Home."
2. **Create a "Planet Earth—Our Common Home Prize"**—Fashioned after the Nobel prizes, it would include an annual event to recognize those who have successfully demonstrated their effectiveness in Caring for Our Common Home.
3. **Educate at early age**—Once a month, an executive from a local, participating corporation would visit an elementary school and create awareness among students for the Care for Our Common Home program.
4. **Create Ambassadors of Care**—These children, educated in the Care for Our Common Home program and its continuing education programs would be asked to educate their parents, families, and friends on the six Rs. While educating their family and friends, they will develop the skills necessary for them to become actively involved as Ambassadors of Care for Our Common Home as they grow up, hence laying a foundation for a brighter future and a better world now.
5. **Create a "Chief Caring Officer"(CCO) Position**—We would solicit executive-level participation in the Care for Our Common Home program from supporting corporations as their Chief Caring Officer, a voluntary and honorific position. Using their executive position in the company, the CCO would advocate the precepts of Care for Our Common Home and participate in the Ambassadors of Care program in local schools.
6. **Create "Net Care"**—Currently, a measure of business success is Net Profit. We propose the creation of a new matrix of corporate success metrics based on their intangible contributions, which have resulted in ethical, moral, environmental, and human situational improvements. Details to follow.
7. **Embed the six Rs in our daily lives** via all

channels of communications and education. The five Rs of (Recycle, Reuse, Repair, Respect, and Reduce) with an additional, fundamental R (Rethink).

INTERNAL AUDIENCES, following are their seven proposed initiatives:

1. **Coordinate** our efforts in the "Stewardship of the Environment" program with other faith groups.
2. **Involve** our Zoroastrian youth from childhood in Good Deeds related to the Stewardship program, such as encouraging them to plant trees and inform their peers and parents of the importance of protecting Mother Nature.
3. **Participate**, at the organizational level with other civic and religious organizations on eco-themed occasions, such as, **Earth Day**, **Care for Environment Day**, and **Arbor Day** to create awareness of us and our Stewardship of the Environment programs.
4. **Initiate** the **Re-think** process and gradually internalize it within each of us Zoroastrians. Rethink our consumption of resources and use only what we need. Rethink how we can reduce our carbon footprints by avoiding wasteful habits. Rethink how to take simple steps to avoid wasting energy by turning off electronic devices, lights, TVs, and radios when no one is in the room.
5. **Work with** regulatory bodies and help shape policies designed to create more sustainable societies in the future.
6. **Care for** People and Planet using the six Rs every day. No matter how small the act, it all adds up—for example, don't use a disposable plate unless necessary, if you do, try to use a biodegradable plate.
7. **Support** petitions consistent with the Stewardship of the Environment philosophy at the local, national, and global levels—not only as a responsible Zoroastrian but as one who believes wholeheartedly in the protection of our planet's ecosystem as a mandate of the "Stewardship of the Environment."

N.B. A website is being created to connect Zoroastrian Youth with the Stewardship of the Environment program at <http://www.platinumit.info/ZEGEN/>

Dr Khosro E Mehrfar was born in Tehran, Iran and moved to the US in 1979 to pursue higher education. Dr Mehrfar has served the Zoroastrian community in many capacities. He lives in southern California with his wife and two children

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT—ACTION BY INDIVIDUALS A Zoroastrian Call to Action

MEHRBORZIN SOROUSHIAN

Zarathushtra's call to action to humanity is to do our best to move life and living towards betterment and perfection. Towards that end we are tasked to focus on what constitutes living and resist forces that retard progress and degrade life for all living including the precious nature that has made our life on Earth a reality. At this juncture in time, our climate and nature is under historical stress resulting in unprecedented natural disasters such as excessive rain, flooding, tornados, hurricanes, droughts, ocean levels, and rising temperatures, with potential dramatic impact to the living. Evidence points to an accumulative of human activities over the years as being the culprit. The question is what can we, as individuals, do to address the roots causes. The essay below addresses one critical area where we can make a difference, through direct action, and by the good example we can set for our neighbors.

Readily available energy around-the-clock is a basic requirement of modern living. Life on Earth for both plants and animals is dependent on the Sun. Nonetheless, we have historically relied on burning limited reserves of oil, gas, and coal for our energy needs. This practice has contributed to significant pollution world-wide; destruction of forests, mountains, and other natural habitats as part of the extraction process; and unnecessary human suffering in the form of wars waged to gain control over these fuel reserves. Ultimately, the Earth's reserves of fossil fuels are limited, and they will one day run out.

On the other hand, renewable energy sources—such as solar, wind, wave, and geothermal—are unlimited gifts that are found everywhere on our planet. They do not pollute our planet and are therefore clean, and as long as the Sun continues to shine and the wind blows, there is no need to cross borders to take control of power sources. **We are all privileged to live in places where such technologies are readily available and economical. Let us embrace them and be part of a movement towards a greener**

and more peaceful planet. One easy way to do this is to invest in solar energy for our homes.

The Sun is the prime source of energy for the Earth and our entire Solar System—it has been radiating outwards and supporting life on our planet since the dawn of time. The amount of radiation from the Sun that reaches the upper part of Earth's atmosphere is around 1.367 KW/m^2 . Much of this radiation is reflected or otherwise does not reach the surface of the Earth. Given that a fraction of this solar energy can be harnessed with current technology, we would have to collect about eight hours of solar radiation daily to capture 40 minutes' worth of solar radiation and satisfy all our modern energy consumption needs for a 24-hour period.

And it is not only the "sun-drenched" parts of the world that can extract substantial energy from the solar source. Germany's solar energy production in 2014 made it the number one country on Earth in terms of solar production. In the United States, New Jersey, hardly the sunshine destination, had the third largest solar energy production behind California and Arizona. If you think, Hamburg, Germany gets more sunshine than Halifax, Montreal or Edmonton, think again.

This free energy keeps coming whether we use it or not. It only makes sense to take advantage of it.

Another free source of free green energy comes from the wind. The gravitation pull of the Sun results in Earth orbiting around its own axis, helping generate wind patterns in the Earth's atmosphere. Denmark's record in wind power generation provides



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good evidence of how much potential this energy source holds. On some days, Danish off-shore wind farms generate more than 114% of the entire energy needs of Denmark for that day. The excess energy is often exported to Germany, Sweden, and Norway.

Geothermal is another proven clean energy source that does not pollute.

Importantly for us Zoroastrians, the embrace of clean energy is completely consistent with Zarathustra's message, as it allows us to be a force for good and wholesomeness of life and nature. We need to be leaders in helping solve humanity's energy-production needs, while maintaining the precious balance of nature. Keeping the fire, air, earth, and water clean and pristine is our calling. We need to set the example for humanity at large.

Embracing green energy is one simple step in fulfilling our mission. For those of us who own homes with rooftops, installing solar panels is one easy and economical way of being part of the solution. Improvements in solar panel manufacturing has resulted in lower costs and more reliable performance. Subsidy programs that may be available from utility companies and governmental agencies is another factor that makes it even more affordable for us to install solar panels

and to become part of the energy solution.

Furthermore, even if it seems as though installing solar panels does not lead to an immediate financial payoff, as it may take many years for the initial investment to pay off, one must unselfishly consider the priceless nature of the reduction in CO₂ and preservation of earth-embedded resources that immediately come into play.

Critics may say that solar panel performance degrades with age. One should answer, is there any system that does not degrade with age? Most solar panels come with a 20 year guarantee that their performance will not degrade by more than 10 percent. Also, the objection may be raised that rooftop solar panels need to be cleaned every year or every other year to remove dusts. That criticism assumes that other production systems do not require regular servicing, which obviously is not the case. Another objection raised is that the manufacturing process to make photovoltaic silicon material for solar panels creates hazardous waste. The fact is, the same material is manufactured for other industrial production, and there is ongoing progress in making it safer and cleaner. Even in its current state, photovoltaic technology is far cleaner than traditional forms of energy.

Ultimately, the question each Zoroastrian can ask is what difference installing solar panels on one roof makes in the bigger scheme of things. One rooftop equipped with solar panels in Toronto, Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta, or Vancouver is one solid step (no matter how small) towards protecting the environment from harmful gases. It is one step towards protection of the air and nature and one solid step towards reducing dependency on oil. It is one step towards eradicating future conflicts, one solid step towards cutting off funds that may be directed towards terrorist causes. Just imagine 30 rooftops equipped with solar panels can make the difference between one less martyr-producing madrassa being sponsored or built.¹



Older home in Edinburgh, Scotland being retrofitted with modern, high performance solar panels.

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Solar panels on home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada generate 4.8kW of power during the winter.

Just imagine a future CNN news-flash proclaiming, *“Despite the North American Zoroastrian community’s small population—which comprises less than 0.005% of the North American population—the followers of this ancient religion, founded by Zarathushtra (history’s first environmentalist), have led North America’s way to energy independence with its members’ adoption of solar power equaling 95% of all roof top solar installations in North America.”* Such a statement, if one day soon becomes reality, would indeed be

newsworthy and would be embraced by the networks and their viewers looking for uplifting news. Think of the great publicity it would be for our community. Think of what an inspiration it would be for our neighbors. If you own a home, consider this as a call for you to join the Zarathushti vanguard. If you decide to do so, do it not because of the recognition we will receive as a progressive community; do it because of the ultimate reward of doing the right thing by humanity and by nature. The best reward for the righteous action is doing the righteous act itself.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Editorial support and contribution to this article from Mr. Vishtasp Soroushian is hereby acknowledged.
- 2 <http://theweek.com/speedreads/451299/germany-gets-50-percent-electricity-from-solar-first-time>
- 3 <http://www.triplepundit.com/2015/08/germany-became-solar-superpower/>
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- 5 <http://www.sciencealert.com/denmark-just-generated-140-of-its-electricity-demand-from-wind-power>
- 6 http://fpif.org/wikileaks_saudi-financed_madrassas_more_widespread_in_pakistan_than_thought/

Mehrborzin Soroushian was born in Kerman, Iran, and received his schooling at the Zoroastrian schools of Kerman. He pursued his higher education at the University of London, and completed his doctoral studies at University of California Los Angeles, and Cornell University. He now lives in San Diego with his wife Mehrbanou. He has always been interested in Zoroastrian studies.

TO PLANT A GARDEN IS TO BELIEVE IN TOMORROW

AUDREY HEPBURN (1929-1993)

THE SUN TO THE RESCUE!

SHAHIN BEKHRADNIA

I have long been aware of alternative/renewable sources of energy that could be developed and adopted. We have a Centre for Alternative Energy in Wales that I used to visit in the early 1990s; I was inspired by the various technologies that could harness the pervasive sources of natural energy. However, although some of the prototypes developed were very promising, there was no prospect of commercial production, leaving me very frustrated.

Eventually, with the growing realisation that global warming is a reality, commercial production became more feasible. So, twenty years ago I had two solar water tube panels installed on my Cotswold roof here in the UK; they generated enough heat to warm the water in my tank daily to about twenty-five degrees (they don't require direct sunlight, only its illumination); I supplement solar-derived energy with my boiler. Luckily, I have a big roof and was able to add solar electric (photovoltaic) panels to my existing system four years ago— in contrast to the hot water panels, photovoltaic panels require direct sunlight to be most effective. However, as I wrote this article, it was pouring rain, which is, of course, typical English weather where I live. So, you may think, I must have been mad to invest a hefty amount to purchase and install them because it can't ever be sunny enough in England to cost-justify the expenditure.

Well, you are quite wrong if that was what you imagined. Actually, some seven years ago the UK government committed to achieving twenty percent of England's domestic electricity consumption from renewable resources by 2020. To achieve this, they introduced a scheme to encourage solar panel installations along with wind turbine farms. Recognising that we humans all love a good bargain, financial incentives based on purchasing this newly-generated green

energy at good rates were offered to kick-start the project. The program works like this: you invest in the installation of solar photo-voltaic panels (which were not cheap four-years-ago—I paid £16,500 to have the whole of my south facing (sun catching) roof covered with seventeen panels with a total output of 3.9kWh... but, the price has halved within four years). Excess electricity generated by my rooftop system fed back into the national grid.

In the UK, the government and power companies calculate the average electrical output of a solar panel placed on a south-facing roof, the result is used to determine payments for generated electricity. A meter is installed that measures the amount of electricity generated and, every 3-4 months, a meter reading is submitted to the power company. The power companies pay a rate which is guaranteed for 20 years, which is called the "Feed in Tariff."

To begin with, this was a generous rate which achieved its intended aim of persuading homeowners to make the investment in solar energy. In fact, it became so popular that, after two years, the payment rate was halved; however, people continue to invest in solar energy as product and installation costs have also lowered. In my case, my account has been credited with £1300 for a four-month generation period). At that rate, I estimate that I will recoup my initial costs within 8 years and will enjoy an income for the remaining guaranteed 12 years as it was underwritten by the government. Certainly, the income is a great benefit; additionally, while the sun is shining and generating electricity, your domestic appliances can directly use the generated electricity, thereby reducing your energy bills. This means that after I have paid off the cost of the installation, the income from generation will totally offset my electricity bills and I will enjoy free energy knowing that I am creating it from my own panels.

The scheme has also attracted solar energy investments from councils that own local rental properties. By installing solar panels, they get



SOLAR PANELS ON
THE AUTHOR'S ROOF.

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the income from Feed in Tariff program, while the tenants benefit from the free electricity. On my way to work, I pass a solar farm—a entire field of solar panels raised off the ground at an angle to maximise the sun exposure. Although the project was initially considered risky, it has now been deemed successful—farmers can now transition from agricultural farming to solar farming... 21st century thinking! If solar energy works in rainy old England, it can work anywhere.

Given our joyous experience with solar electricity generation, I can't help wondering why every country in the world does not legislate that all new buildings (homes, hospitals, schools, and factories) must be equipped with the latest solar technology. Why is it not happening? The cost of manufacturing solar energy products continues to fall as demand grows and economies of scale are achieved. And, with the increasing demand, R&D has increased and found replacements for the initial use of rare and precious metals. Improving technologies have resulted in photovoltaic roof tiles becoming a viable alternative to solar panels—it is getting easier by the day. Governments, businesses, and individuals now recognize that solar electricity is one of the cheapest, safest, and eco-friendly forms of power available to us.

Could it be that the oil lobbies are so strong in some places that they can selfishly block renewable energy initiatives and lobby for the continued use of fossil fuels—regardless of the impact to our environment by global warming? Is California the only state in the USA which is forward-thinking? European countries are actively engaged in green energy research, legislation, and implementation. Even China has hearkened to our message and has developed state plans to generate its electricity from solar and wind. The replacement of their infamous highly toxic polluting industrial and coal fired power plant emissions, which have caused long-term damage to its economy and people, are a top national priority. China knows from joint research with UK climate specialists that, if there is no control

on the global temperature increase, the earth will suffer a further two-degree rise, which is in addition to the one-degree rise that occurred over the past 30 years. Unless China is successful in the elimination of their fossil fuel yoke, their agricultural output will be severely impaired and it may not be able to feed its people.

That prospect seems to have focussed minds and each one of us should be doing our bit to prevent the unthinkable from happening. We have all been told that we are almost at the point of no return. Let's hope that the Paris Climate Conference will produce serious, global commitments to reduce fossil fuel consumption—if not, the selfishness of governments, industries, and citizens will be the undoing of this planet.

A last word to our Zoroastrian readership: do you realise that it is a cardinal duty of a good Zoroastrian to be green not just in word, but in thought and particularly in deed. Sadly, not enough of our teachers emphasize the importance that our philosophy attaches to environmental stewardship. We already have several traditional ways in which to engage in green behaviour: by planting a fruit bearing tree in honour of a birth; an evergreen tree in memory of a loved one; by recycling our bodies (for medical research instead of via a dakhma); or by farming organically, so that we don't fill the earth with chemical poisons. Moving to a higher personal level, we can opt for a low fuel consuming or even a hybrid car. If you are a purist, you may have sold your car and joined those of us that regularly use public transport and our pedal power. By becoming a vegetarian, you can reduce the demand for methane-emitting farm animals that contribute significantly to the greenhouse gas problem. Today, you can start making your statement by installing and harnessing alternative energies, thereby setting an example for your neighbourhood and reaping the economic benefits over the long-term. And, anyway life is not only about money

Shahin Bekhradnia studied for her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Oxford University, for the latter writing a thesis on *Continuity and Change among Iranian Zoroastrians in the 20th century*. She is currently a magistrate and chairperson of a charity for substance misuse in the UK. She learnt about green awareness from her father, who was far more advanced than most of his generation on the dangers of polluting and disrespecting the environment. As a result, Shahin was raised to think about the future of the planet and the advantages of simple self-sufficient living. She is the granddaughter of a Yazdi mobed (priest) poet and stargazer. She was thrilled when running as a Green parliamentary candidate to find that the Independent newspaper ran an article claiming that Zoroastrianism was the first green movement in history, which, of course, it still is.

“because it is the right thing to do”

EDUL & NILOUFER DAVER, NEW JERSEY, USA

It was around 2010 that I started getting interested in Renewable Energy. Exciting new technologies, which embodied Zoroastrian values of respect for the environment, were being developed and we started looking at Hybrid Cars and Solar Energy for our home. We bought a Hybrid automobile in 2010 knowing that we would save on gas but not enough to justify the higher initial price. However, it felt like the right thing to do and we never regretted it.

We then seriously started looking at Solar Energy for our home. The fact that there was a Federal Tax Credit of 30% and additional State incentives made the proposition even more interesting. New Jersey is one of the top five states with respect to incentives and provides > marketable **SREC's (Solar Renewable Energy Certificates)** for the energy produced. In 2011 with consideration of the Federal Tax Credit, SREC's, and Electricity Savings the Return On Investment (ROI) was about 14 years. (Photo above, the Daver house with solar panels and Niloufer in the window)

However, we again felt that it was the right thing to do and we rationalized further that it would be a Capital Improvement which would increase the resale value of our house bringing the ROI estimate to about 10 years. So we took the plunge and were thrilled with the results. Every month when we get a ZERO Electricity bill it brings a smile to our faces.

By 2012 competition had increased and Third Party Installers were willing to pay for the Capital Cost but would keep the Federal Tax Credit and depreciation benefits. They would then lease the equipment to you with a front end payment and a buy back provision in about six years for a very nominal residual value. The ROI now was only 7 years and if you considered an increase in your house value it was a very attractive 4 years. We took the opportunity and installed a Solar system on our second house, as did Farzana & Cyrus Cama (daughter/Son-in-law) and even our friends, Sheroo and Vispi Kanga, were convinced enough to



have it installed. Farrokh Patel, also a Solar believer, had it installed independently on his Factory Building. It was a perfect opportunity to do something for our 'Good Earth' and simultaneously it was a very sound financial decision.

By this time we had become friends with the Solar Company called **GeoPeak Energy** owned and managed by fellow Indians, A. Javan and S. Velicheti. We were also starting to build the New NY Dar-e-Mehr so we had them make a presentation to the entire Zoroastrian Community and also showed them our site, which happens to be in NY, for potential installation in the not too distant future.

Unfortunately, not many Zoroastrians took advantage of the fantastic opportunity in 2012. The new Dar-e-Mehr is now almost ready and we are planning to install a Solar Energy System some time late in 2016. We have a \$10,000 seed donation to kick off the initiative and if anyone feels inclined to help us with monetary support please contact Edul Daver at eduldaver@gmail.com or 908-397-4443.

And guess what, things are getting even more exciting and we have ordered a true Electric Car which we should have in 2016 - no gasoline, no fossil fuel!!

C l i m a t e C h a n g e

Last but not least I have been active in WZCC since it's inception in 2000. In the new 2016-18 term we plan to consider adding 'Solar Energy awareness' as one of our goals. Perhaps even consider supporting an initiative to build a '**Model**' system at a specific charitable location in India with long term benefits.

Looking back, many of our Zoroastrian customs and traditions were designed and aligned with respect to the conservation of natural resources and Nature, and were way ahead of what we consider modern concepts today.

Edul Daver graduated from IIT-Bombay 1966, as a Metallurgist. He was the Owner-President-Entrepreneur of ACuPowder International. He is retired since 2012 and is actively involved in Building the New NY Dar-e-Mehr. He is the newly elected President of World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC)



Patuck Education Trust one of the pioneers in education from KG to Senior College recently inaugurated their first solar power generated system in their premises. Mr Adil Patuck, chairman, mentioned that this would be a pioneering step in moving towards green energy. We are probably the first education institution in Mumbai city to have installed such a system in furtherance of our objective of building an eco-friendly environment for the future generations”

The Solar panels which have a life of 25 years will save power up to 30% of the daily requirements of the institution and the investment will be recovered in 5 years. Avesta solar, headed by Mr Burgis Balsara was the service partner which helped in the system integration for the project.

NAVSARI—PAST AND PRESENT

MARZBAN JAMSHEDJI GIARA



Navsari occupies a special place in the history of the Parsi community in India. It was a village situated on the banks of Poorna river and had a climate similar to the village Sari in Iran—hence, the Parsis named it Navsari. It is the birth place of several great men such as **Changasha**, the Parsi merchant prince who, in the 15th century, invited the Parsis to bring the sacred fire Iranshah from the jungles of Vandsa to Navsari; the **First Dastur Meherjirana** (who inspired the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century); **Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (1783-1859)**, the first Indian and Asian knight and baronet; **Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)**, the first Indian and Asian to be elected a member of parliament in Britain; **Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904)**, the father of Indian industry and founder of the industrial house of Tatas; and **Shapurji Fakirji Jokhi (1913-1990)**, a philanthropist. During Changasha's reign Navsari was known as Parsipuri.

In 1600, **Bahman Kekobad Sanjana**, a priest resident in Navsari, wrote *Kisseh Sanjan* in Persian couplets; it gives an account of the arrival of Parsis in India and their residence in Sanjan and Gujarat.

The **Vadi Daremeher** or the main agiary located at Dastur Wad is the chief ecclesiastical seat of the Parsis. Like Oxford, it is the place where young priests are initiated as *navar* (bachelor's degree) and study for their *maratab* (master's degree). This agiary, established in 1142 CE, is the oldest surviving dare meher in India and is nearly 874-years-old. It houses a *dadgah* fire and a *varasiaji* (sacred white bull).

Navsari was home to the Iranshah sacred fire for more than 300 years. Iranshah fire was taken to Udvada, via Valsad, in 1740 by the Sanjana priests. The Navsari Atash Behram was consecrated in 1765. The High Priest is known as *Vada Dasturji*. The present Vada Dasturji is **Kaikhushroo Naoroji Dastoor Meherjirana**. He is the 17th descendant of Meherjirana *gaadi* (ecclesiastical throne). Traditionally, only the High Priest of Navsari uses the title of Vada Dasturji on his letterhead. The present boewalla sahebs are *Ervads Cyrus Rusi Panthaki*, *Kaizad Jehanbux Kotwal*, *Homi Edulji Antia*, and *Khurshed Faramroz Desai*. The Navsari priests belong to the Bhagaria sect, their anjuman is known as Bhagarsath Anjuman. The Desais were the government revenue collectors for nearly 200 years.

I was born at the Dorabji Nanabhai Mehta Parsi Lying-in Hospital at Lunsui Kui at Navsari in 1942. I used to come to Navsari at my mamaiji's (maternal grandmother) house as a child during vacations and have fond memories. In those days, Parsis resided in their own or rented houses or bungalows. During the past twenty years, multistory apartments have gradually replaced most of these older structures. We used to play *nargolio* (7 tiles) and *gillidanda* and I spy. Parsi mohollas (streets) were full of Parsi families. There were two prominent Parsi localities: **Mota Falia and Malesar**—Malesar was so-called because people used to come to meet Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. Now, sadly, the mohollas have many locked houses, some in good condition, others dilapidated with more residents of other communities than Parsis. Back then, toilets were

located at the back of the house where sewage was collected in a cane basket and cleaned every morning by a sweeper. There was a separate toilet for ladies, which was used during their menstrual cycles. Isolation of women during menstruation was required by religious ritual purity laws. Cooking fires were fueled with wood logs, cow dung, or coal, which were gradually replaced with kerosene stoves and now with LPG gas cylinders and gas stoves.

The lanes where the fragrance of loban and incense once wafted in the air and cleanliness was paramount are not so clean now. The dusty streets are now tarred. Stray dogs, cows and, in some localities, even pigs roam the streets. There are no footpaths in Navsari for pedestrians. Youths now recklessly drive their two wheelers [motorcycles] at high speeds, even on narrow streets.

Navsari still has a town crier system where a Parsi stands at the entrance of the Parsi moholla each morning and announces weddings and deaths. Once, transportation was provided by horse drawn carriages; but since 1965, they have been replaced by auto rickshaws. There are no local buses or taxis available in Navsari city. Electricity came to Navsari after **Mr. Ardesar Kaikobad Mody** obtained a license from the Gaekwar government at Baroda in 1921. He became the managing director of the Navsari Electric Supply Co. Ltd.

There were only three cinemas: *Laxmi Talkies*, *Vasant Talkies*, and *Jehangir Talkies*. Now there are many more cinemas, each with air conditioning and Dolby sound systems. Then very few people had telephone connections. Now, TVs, mobile phones, the internet, and computers are ubiquitous throughout.

Navsari is a municipality with elected corporators and a mayor. It is now a district in Gujarat State. There are two ponds near Navsari: **Sharbatia Talao and Dudhia Talao**. My mamaji used to joke that one gets *sharbat* in Sharbatia Talao and *dudh* (milk) in Dudhia Talao. Sixty years ago ice cream was available for one anna (one anna = 1/16th of a rupee) for a scoop, two annas for two scoops, three annas for cold milk, and four annas for a large glass of falooda with two scoops of ice cream. Now one scoop of ice cream costs Rs.20/- and a glass of falooda Rs.60/-. The decades-old Kolahji's ice cream shop, adjacent to the atash behram, has been closed for more than a year. Once there were three Parsi shops that sold sandalwood, provisions, etc. close to the Atash Behram. During November 2015, Amroliwalla's traditional Parsi shop started an ice cream parlor on the first floor.

Navsari has been famous for **Kolah's vinegar and pickles, mango chutney, syrups, and murambo** since 1885. Parsi ladies prepare delicious *vasanu* in winter and *bafenu* (mango pickles). Several Parsi ladies spin wool and weave the sacred kusti. Sandalwood prices have skyrocketed. There is a *falani machi* fund for offering sandalwood to the Atash Behram.

There was a beautiful bungalow Navroz Minar with a wall clock belonging to Mr. Navroji Kapadia where Parsi weddings and navjotes were held; it was demolished and replaced with multistory apartments.

Institutions founded mainly by Parsi philanthropy are the pride of Navsari. The Navsari Parsis were pioneers and have contributed immensely to its phenomenal growth and rapid development from a small village to a prosperous city.



EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. 1856 – Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Navsari Zarhosti Madressa (multipurpose high school)
2. 1872 – Navajbai Tata Girls' High School
3. 1883 – The Dadabhai Kawasji Tata Boys' School
4. 1884 – N. R. Tata Madressa, for teaching Zend Avesta (now closed)
5. 1911 – Ruttonji Faramji Daboo Students Quarters
6. 1923 – Dosibai Aderji Kotwal Parsi Boys Orphanage provides free education, boarding, lodging, and other welfare services to Parsi orphans and poor Parsi students from surrounding villages.
7. 1924 – Nanabhai Bejonji Choksi Scout Headquarters
8. 1945 – Sorabji Burjorji Garda Arts College
9. 1945 – Burjorji Pestonji Baria Science Institute
10. 1953 – Sir Homi Mehta Technical Institute (now an industrial training institute operated by the government)
11. 1954 – Bai Dinbai Daboo Girls' School
12. 1863 Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Primary School
13. 1973 – Dinshaw Daboo Law College
14. 1996 – Rustomjee Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Gujarati School (reconstructed)
15. 2012 – Sir J.J. High School English medium at Dandi, educates children from nursery to junior college
16. Sir J. J. School
17. P. K. Patel College of Commerce

HOSPITALS

1. 1913 – Ruttonjee Faramji Daboo Parsi General Hospital is now open to all communities. Parsi patients are given free or subsidized treatment.
2. 1915 – Dorabji Nanabhai Mehta Parsi Lying in Hospital is a general hospital for all communities. It provides free or subsidized maternity facilities for Parsi ladies. Since 1998, the hospital has offered nurses training programs.

Both hospitals are a great boon to Navsari inhabitants.

The Nanabhoy Bejonji Choksi Navsari Ambulance Service transports sick and immobile patients to the hospital.

PARSI INFIRMARY

Abuwala Parsi Infirmary at Rustomwadi cares for and provides medical assistance to aged and infirm Parsis who have no one to look after or care for them in their twilight years.

FIRST DASTOOR MEHERJIRANA LIBRARY (Founded 1872)

It is one of the world's foremost research institutions for Zoroastrian studies. A new three-story building, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust Annex, was added in 2009. It includes a large reading room, an air conditioned conference room, and furnished rooms for visiting research scholars. (photo below)



J. N. TATA MEMORIAL CENTRE (auditorium)

It was constructed by Tata Trusts at a cost of Rs.75,00,000 and inaugurated by Mr. Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister of India in 1978. It is a great asset to Navsari in the field of culture and performing arts.

DHARAMSHALAS

Jamshed Baug at Malesar. It has seven rooms, some of which are air conditioned. It was built by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 1st Baronet in 1849 and rebuilt in 2003 by Mr. Keki Jokhi. Boarding and lodging facilities are provided for Parsi Zoroastrians. It is also used for navjotes, weddings, and social functions.

Sorab Baug at Bamji Wad is close to Navsari Atash Behram. Founded in 1888 and renovated in 1982, it has offered some air conditioned rooms since 2014, as well as boarding and lodging facilities. The baug is available for navjotes, weddings, and social functions.

There was once a Nusserwan Baug; however, it has not existed for a few decades.

The Ratanbai Bamji (nee Tata) Sanatorium, located at Lunsikui, started operations in 1923 and was entrusted to Trustees of Bombay Parsi Punchayet—it closed 20 years ago. Three new residential buildings have been erected and flats sold on ownership in Buildings A and B. Building C is completed since 2002. .

The Khurshedwadi Kaoos Tata Baug (Jamanshala) was built in 1853 and it can be hired for social functions and gahambars.

HOUSING

Malesar Behdin Anjuman owns several houses in the Malesar area and rents them to Parsis at nominal rates.

AVAN BAUG

Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi, who hailed from Navsari, was a businessman and philanthropist, who prospered in Hong Kong, built a Parsi colony consisting of five hundred flats and named it Avan Baug in memory of his mother Avanbai. The old Avan Baug buildings A to I were built in 1971 and the new Avan Baug buildings, J to S, were completed in 1985. Avan Baug flats are rented at subsidized rates to middle and low income Parsi Zoroastrian families. **Shapoorji Jokhi Pavillion**, a community hall on the ground floor and a gymnasium on the first floor, was inaugurated at Avan Baug in 2015.

The Jokhi family has given munificent donations to B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and for Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug, Mumbai; Rotary Eye Institute at Navsari for conducting free eye camps; Manijeh Shapoorji Jokhi Hall at Sorab Baug; Reconstruction of Rustomjee Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy School in 1996 and Jamshed Baug in 2004; Sir J. J. English Medium High School building at Dandi, in 2012 all at Navsari as also at Surat and Vyara.

WZO TRUST FUNDS, under the leaderships of Bachi and Dinshaw Tamboly, has completed twelve residential buildings, which are rented to Parsi Zoroastrian families at low cost. A 13th building is under construction.

MEMORIAL MUSEUMS

SIR J. J. MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The Ancestral home at Vatchha Mohollo—where Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy was born in 1783—has been renovated and transformed into a Memorial Museum that commemorates his 225th birthday. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Memorial Museum was inaugurated on Sunday October 19, 2008, (Roz Bahman, Mah Khordad 1378 Yezdezerdi) by Vada Dasturji Meherjirana after a jashan ceremony.

J. N. TATA MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The J. N. Tata Memorial Museum was inaugurated on March 3, 2014, at Dastur Wad, Mota Falia in the house where he was born in 1839, 175 years ago.



DADABHAI NAOROJI MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Work is underway to convert the house in which Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian and Asian member of the British Parliament, was born into a memorial museum. Let us hope that it will be dedicated before his 2017 death centenary. (photo left)

BYRAMJI NUSSERWANJI SEERVAI PARK

Mr. Byramji Seervai in 2008 gifted a park and playground at Lunsikui.

A DIRECTORY OF THE PARSIS OF NAVSARI

The Navsari Hunnar Udyog Kelavni Fund published a survey report and directory of the Parsis of Navsari in 1973. As forty long years have elapsed, a new directory of Parsis of Navsari needs to be compiled and published under a time-bound program.

WZO SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE (PHOTO RIGHT)

Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizens Centre was dedicated on January 6, 1998, at Pinjar Moholla, Malesar in proximity to a fire temple and marketplace. In 2005, a second building was added to the **Dolat Hormusji Vandrewala Senior Citizens Centre**, a gift from the benevolence, magnanimity, and foresight of Rena and Behram Baxter of the U.S.A. and their family. A third building was added to the Centre in 2014



thanks to the generosity of the **Avari and Dudha families**. **Bai Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust** in 2008 gave a munificent donation for sustaining and enhancing operations at this Centre, which is ably managed by WZO Trust Funds. The Centre is a great boon to the ageing Parsi Zoroastrian community, most of whose members are senior citizens. Senior citizens live independently in happy surroundings, spending the evening of their lives with self-respect and dignity.

WZO TRUST FUNDS

These have been active in Navsari promoting farmer rehabilitation, self-employment, educational support, and youth activities. They have also collected funds for a Parsi infirmary and the D. N. Mehta Hospital.

There were 10,000 Parsis living in Navsari. Now the Parsi population is down to 3,000. Religion was the bedrock of the community. Religious education was imparted at home and in Parsi schools. Meals were served at home only after reciting prayers. There were joint families and respect for elders. They lived an industrious and healthy life. Easy availability of funds has made our community complacent, dependent, and subservient. It has killed the spirit of enterprise. The number of priests has declined drastically. Talented youths go abroad for higher education and job opportunities. Elderly people are left behind. Priests and well-qualified Parsi boys have difficulty in finding marriage partners as Parsi girls are reluctant to move out of Mumbai.

The only way to reverse this trend is to go back to our roots. We now place more emphasis on fashion and beauty contests in our quest to become “modern,” while “keeping up with the Joneses.” Our education system has failed to instill a sense of values. A change of mindset is required. Let us bring back the spirit of sacrifice and instill self-respect, self-reliance, and pride in being a Parsi/Irani Zoroastrian.



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Marzban Jamshedji Giara is the author, publisher, and distributor of books on Zarathushti religion and Parsi history. In the eighties he helped Dr. Surti to publish seven volumes of SHAH NAMA OF FIRDAOSI in English Prose. In the past 30 years he has produced many firsts including the **first ever illustrated Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples** in 1998 and its 2nd edition in December 2002, **The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide** in 1999, and **Parsi Statues** in 2000. He has to his credit thirty-five other books, some authored or compiled by him, some translated from Gujarati into English. He is perhaps the only one who has had a track record of consistent performance in bringing out new and informative publications that meet the needs of the community and all this with his own resources, without seeking any sponsorship.

He has been working zealously for the spread of religious education by taking books to the people at various community functions. A keen student of Parsi history and Zarathushti religion, he is an independent thinker, writer, public speaker, journalist, and research worker.

Born at Navsari in 1942 in a simple but religious Parsi Zarathushti family, he attended religious classes for seven years every Saturday evening conducted by The Dadar Parsee Youths' Assembly. At Ranina Day Nursery and at J. B. Vachha School he learnt devotional hymns and Gujarati in primary school, which has proved immensely useful to him. A science graduate of University of Mumbai with a postgraduate diploma in Marketing Management, he served for 14 years with IBM as a computer marketing professional. He is a life member of several organizations among others Indo Iran Friendship Society, , British Council Library, Computer Society of India, Indo American Society, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Philatelic Society of India, Bombay Local History Society. He has been an active member of various social, cultural, and religious organizations in Mumbai and served on various committees.

His parents and his teachers have been the inspiration for him. Right from childhood, his father ingrained in him the idea: "Son, be a creator and not a spectator in life. We must give back to society more than what we have received from it." These words have motivated him to pursue his noble work of bringing out new and innovative books in the service of the community. Married to Bapsy (nee Daruvala) since 1969, they have a son Zareer and a grandson Farhad. The family's support and encouragement from friends and well-wishers drives him to carry on with his work in his chosen field of endeavor.

He has been featured in The Times of India, Jam-E-Jamshed, Afternoon Despatch and Courier, Indian Express as also in Parsiana and was interviewed on Doordarshan TV and ZEE TV alpha Humata Hukhta Hvarashta for his publications. He is interested in devotional music and has compiled and published two song books Jarthosti Gayan Sangrah, and Gaavo Maari Saathe Singalong Treasure Trove of Parsi Songs and also produced audio CDs of devotional hymns Zoroastrian Melodies, Khushaline Bandgina Geeto, Ame Chhaiye Parsi.

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NAVSARI BHAGARSATH ANJUMANNA ATASH BEHRAM

MARZBAN JAMSHEDJI GIARA

This Navsari Bhagarsath Anjuman Atash Behram is the most picturesque in India. The beautiful and well maintained garden together with the Achaemenian style of architecture lifts up one's spirit. The First Dastur Meherjirana's natural silhouette in the marble slab opposite the holy kebla bears an uncanny resemblance to this Dastur's straight posture.

Changasha, the illustrious leader of Navsari Parsis brought the sacred fire—Iranshah—from Vandsa to Navsari in 1419 CE. Due to differences between the Sanjana and Bhagaria priests in 1741 CE. the sacred fire was taken from Navsari to Valsad and then settled at Udvada. With the departure of Iranshah from Navsari its loss was deeply felt. To satisfy their religious and spiritual hunger the Parsis of Bhagarsath Anjuman decided after 24 years to establish an Atash Behram.

Dastur Sorabji Rustomji Meherjirana selected a hundred wise and pious mobeds and on Roz 1 Hormuzd Mah 4 Tir (January 15, 1765) they started working on the consecration of the Atash Behram.

The sacred fire of this Atash Behram was consecrated on Roz Sarosh Mah Ardibehest 1135 Yezdezerdi (Monday, December 3, 1765) under the leadership and assistance of **Desaiji Shri Khurshedji Tehmulji** by the Bhagarsath Anjuman for the continuance of its *Panthak*. The consecration ceremony was performed by **Dasturji**

Sohrabji Rustomji Meherjirana, the seventh descendant of the ancient lineage of First Dastur Meherjirana. He also performed the first *buoi* ceremony. As the old building deteriorated, **Desaiji Minocherji and Wadiaji Nusserwanji Manekji** built a new one in 1178 Yezdezerdi.

According to the accounts maintained by the late **Desaiji Khurshedji Tehmulji**, the cost of establishing the Atash Behram in



1765 CE was Rs.1,339 and 10 annas. The Seth family of Surat contributed Rs.1,039 and 10 annas. Rs.350 was spent on the consecration ceremonies. In 1776 Navsari was raided by pirates. To safeguard the sacred fire, Dastur Sorabji personally went to Surat where the Atash Behram fire was hidden in the bungalow of **Dadabhai Manekji Seth**.

In 1290 CE, Yezdezerdi, the Bhagarsath Anjuman, resolved to build a grand new building and entrusted the work to the Bhagarsath Committee, which worked zealously to raise funds, obtain land around the Atash Behram, and getting the new building ready; they overcame several difficulties with courage, patience, and perseverance. **Seth Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal, solicitor and Ervad Kaikhushru Mahiyar Kutar, M.A.** both rendered valuable services to the Anjuman. Rs. 6,00,000 were collected and 10,000 Parsis gathered for the consecration in ushahin gah.

The fire was brought from Vadi Daremeher after **Dastur Faramroz Navroji Kutar** tolled the buoi in ushahin gah. The stars twinkled brightly in the sky. The mobeds in their white dresses appeared like angels descended from heaven. The fire was placed in a copper vessel and carried by **Ervad Nasserwanji Navroji Masani and Dastur Faramroz Navroji Kutar** toward the new building. They were followed by leaders holding swords, maces, ladles, and other implements; in turn, these leaders were followed by a procession of enthusiastic devotees, some who held a silk umbrella over the sacred fire. **Dastur Kekobad Darabji Meherjirana** opened the lock of the new building. (picture above) The fire was ceremoniously and respectfully enthroned. Huge crowds of devotees thronged the temple at dawn. Parsi Zoroastrian hearts were full of joy as they bowed before the fire after offering sandalwood. As the sun rose **Tarota Bazar** resounded with the devotional song *Sakhee suraj bhale uge aaje*. The first buoi in havan gah was tolled by 80-year-old **mobed Khurshedji Behramji Sahiar**, who also offered a *machi* in the name of Samast Anjuman. He donated his entire life's savings of Rs.75,000 to the Atash Behram. This was typical of Navsari families' generosity and nobility. Navsari resounded with joy and was resplendent with color on this auspicious occasion.

Dasturji Saheb Kekobadji Darabji Meherjirana inaugurated this sacred building on this day for the priests of Bhagarsath Anjuman loyal to Vadi Daremeher and as per the Anjuman constitution for performing buoi and other religious ceremonies as also for all Parsi Zoroastrians to pray. Roz Sarosh Mah Tir 1295 Yezdezerdi Thursday 24th December 1925. The High Priest of this Atash Behram carries the title of Vada Dasturji Meherjirana.

The present High Priest is **Vada Dasturji Kaikhushroo Naoroji Dastoor Meherjirana**. He is the 17th Dastur Meherjirana. The present boewalla sahebs are **Ervads Cyrus Rusi Panthaki, Kaizad Jehanbux Kotwal, Homi Edulji Antia, and Khurshed Faramroz Desai**.

May the sacred fire of this Atash Behram continue to glow forever and bless the Parsi Zoroastrian community and the environment.

(Source: Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples by Marzban Jamshedji Giara 2002)

VADI DAREMEHER

Marzban Jamshedji Giara

Vadi Daremeher (also known as Bhagarsath Anjuman Daremeher) is located in Dastur Wad, Mota Falia, Navsari. It was consecrated on Roz Aspandad Mah Amardad 551 Yezdezerdi; at 850-years, it is the oldest known agiary in India. It houses a dadgah fire and was established by Jarthost Mobed who came to Navsari from Sanjan in 1142.CE



It was mainly used for training and initiating male children of Parsi priests as navars (equivalent to a bachelor's degree) and martabs (equivalent to a master's degree). Over the centuries, more than 10,000 priests have been initiated there. A record of priests initiated here has been compiled by Ervad Mahiyar N. Kutar and published as *Navsarini Vadi Daremeherma Thayla Navaroni Fehrest tatha nirangdin ane varasyani nodh*. For many centuries martabs were ordained only here and not in Mumbai.

Over time, the old building became dilapidated and was repaired by the Anjuman.

Eventually, it was razed and rebuilt by Desai Mancherji Khurshedji at his own expense; and was consecrated on Roz Hormuzd Mah Amardad 1164 Yezdezerdi (February 7, 1795).

The inscription on the building is in Gujarati:

This building of the Vadi Daremeher of Navsari which was originally established in 551 A.Y. was built by Bai Motlibai of Bombay, daughter of Seth Jehangirji Noshervanji Wadiaji in memory of her late father. The building was consecrated on Roz 26 Astad, Mah 8 Avan Yezdezerdi 1220 20th May 1851 CE. and entrusted to Bhagarsath Anjuman. Her son, the late Seth Naoroji Maneckji Wadia, C.I.E. carried out appropriate changes and repairs to this building during his lifetime. The building was reconsecrated and inaugurated on Roz 12 Mah 12 1278 Yezdezerdi 27th August 1909 CE. The old building was renovated by Ervad Khurshedji Behramji Sahiar at as cost of Rs.25,000/- in memory of hama asho farohars. Roz Daepmeher Mah Meher 1299 Yezdezerdi Friday 21st March 1930.

(Source: *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* by Marzban Jamshedji Giara 1st edition published in 1998 and 2nd edition in 2002.)

NIRANGDIN IN NAVSARI

MARZBAN J. GIARA

A sacred nirangdin ceremony was held at the historic 874 years old Vadi Daremeher, Navsari on Roz Aspandarmad Mah Tir Yezdezerdi 1385 (midnight on Friday, November 20, 2015). The ceremony, which lasted eighteen days, was performed by two yozdathregar mobeds (**Ervad Aspandiar Rustomji Dadachanji and Ervad Darayus Parvez Bajan**) under the guidance of **Vada Dasturji Kaikhushroo Navroji Dastoor Meherjirana and Dasturji Dr. Firoze Meherji Kotwal**. The ceremony was in memory of the late Edulji Rustomji Adajania at the request of his wife Najoo and son Kaizad. An explanation of the nirangdin ceremony was given at 4 p.m. for the benefit of the audience. A jashan was held at the hall of Navsari Atash Behram at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, November 21 2015. It was a unique occasion as the Dasturji sahebs, mobeds, and requesting family all hailed from Navsari.



Ervad Darayus Parvez Bajan



Ervad Aspandiar Rustomji Dadachanji

The nirangdin ceremony is very important as *nirang* (consecrated bull's urine) is produced by transforming bull's urine into consecrated nirang by the power of prayers, which make it free from bacteria. It is used in our rituals such as nahn, navar, navjote, wedding, and death. The *alat* (apparatus) consists of twigs from the hom plant; *havanim and lalo* (mortar and pestle); *varasni viti* (a ring of varasiji's hair); two metal pots with lids, one filled with water and the other with *taro* (bull's urine); *sangrez* (pebbles); *tashto* (metal plates); *khajurini patri* (leaf of palm tree); goat's milk; the *mahrbye* (a crescent-shaped stand); and metal rods chained together. Fire is kept burning all the time in an *afarganyu*. Varasyaji is a sacred white bull that is brought from his *barsingo* (enclosure). Two mobeds are required for the ceremony—one *gyoti* performs the ritual, the other *rathvi* tends the fire. The mobed sahebs have to maintain strict discipline for the 18 days. This ceremony costs about Rs.3 lakhs.

According to Dasturji Kotwal, there was a time when there were many yozdathregar mobeds in Navsari. They were so eager to perform this ceremony that out of Rs.18 they would offer one rupee to another priest for the favor of stepping aside and allowing the other to perform this ceremony. Some years ago WZO India felicitated yozdathregar mobeds at a function at Allbless Baug. **Ervad Jehangirji Turel of Surat** had the distinction of performing as many as 168 nirangdin ceremonies and was publicly felicitated at Wadiaji Atash

Behram when he completed 150 nirangdins in 1994.

Unlike some other communities where the priests remain bachelors, our dedicated mobed sahebs lead good family lives. Both come from illustrious Navsari priestly families. Both are students of Dadar Athornan Madressa where they underwent rigorous training. Both are blessed with supporting wives and two sons each. Both are humble and very courteous. It would not be out of place to mention some of their achievements.

Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji (78) is currently the panthaki of Vaccha Gandhi Agiary at Hughes Road, Mumbai. He has served there for thirty-three long years as panthaki and has a proud record of service to his community. This is his sixty-eighth nirangdin. He was a boewalla saheb at Aslaji Agiary and a religious teacher at M. F. Cama Athornan Institute for three years. He was the panthaki in Sri Lanka for one year and at the Nagpur agiary for ten years. He has consecrated several of our religious places of worship and varasiyajis. He is the Vice President of Athornan Mandal and has trained innumerable navars and maratabs. He is a life member of Parsi Gymkhana, Mumbai, and is a keen sportsman who plays cricket, badminton, and table tennis. He participates in car rallies with his vintage Morris 8. Driving the entire distance, he and Ervad Farokh Govadia brought the sacred fire (originally of Tavri) from Navsari to Shapoorji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug in Mumbai in December 1999. His sons, Ervads Marespand and Hormuzd, are full time priests. His dear wife Dhunmai assists him and encourages him in all his activities. A successful priest, he has graduated from his 1948 Morris (which he still owns) to a Mercedes.

Ervad Darayus Parvez Bajan (40) is the son of Betsy and Ervad Dr. Parvez Minocher Bajan. This is his eleventh nirangdin. His family has served as panthakis of Mewavala Agiary at Byculla for six generations (164 years) and is featured prominently in the tome *A Zoroastrian Tapestry* by Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree. He is a student of Dadar Athornan Madressa and Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School. He ranks among the very few who have triple qualifications: chartered accountant, cost accountant, and company secretary. Every morning he serves as a practicing priest at the Mewavala Agiary and then proceeds to his place of work as the Chief Financial Officer of a multinational bank in Mumbai. Darayus' dear wife Havovi brings her son Xerxes to Dadar Madressa early in the mornings before he goes to school; Xerxes is an ordained navar, keeping up the family tradition.

Excellence does not come easily. Success comes before work only in the dictionary. The story of these two illustrious mobed sahebs reminds us of a verse from *The Ladder of St. Augustine* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight
But they while their companions slept
Were toiling upwards in the night.*

We, the Parsi community are grateful to our mobed sahebs for their perseverance and sacrifice in preserving our rich traditions and heritage. Young Parsi girls can derive inspiration from Dhunmai, Betsy, and Havovi and marry Parsi priests. Instead of glorifying fashions and beauty contests, let us learn to sacrifice our worldly comforts of the present for a better tomorrow.

References:

1. *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of The Parsees* by Shams-ul-ulama Ervad Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi.
2. *The Nirangdin* by Marzban J.Giara 1994 Mumbai
3. *Humata, Hukhta, Havarashta* Zoroastrian Teleserial episode on "Nirangdin" produced by Ervad Cyrus Dastoor.



On October 3, 2015, the Navsari Atashbehran celebrated the 250th Salgreh (anniversary) of its establishment. Navsari is home to one of the oldest religious sites of the Indian Parsi community. It was all decked out as Parsis throughout India came together to celebrate Atash Behram's 250th anniversary. All community operated organizations' facilities were decorated with flowers and lights. (see photo above)

The Atash Behram is currently located at Tarota Bazaar, a peaceful Parsi community, which was bursting with activity for the days leading up to the celebrations. Over 2,000



Parsis from across India joined with nearly 500 local Parsis to celebrate the 250 years of Atash Behram. The fire temple (Agiyari) was built after the Iranshah Fire, was moved to Udwada. Navsari has also played an important role in contributing legends like Jamshedji Tata. The ancestral home of the Tata family is few metres away from the Atash Behram. A slew of events, cultural and religious, were planned by cultural artist Rumi Bariya to showcase the Parsi culture. After a morning jashan, the Parsis gathered at Atash Behram to offer sandalwood to the holy Fire. Prayers were recited in the presence of high priest Kaikhushroo Meherji Rana, Dasturji Dr Feroze Kotwal, Dasturji Dr Jmasp Asa, and other high priests from across India.



In The News

Burzin P. Balsara AWARDS!



Burzin P. Balsara, 16, a sophomore at Clark High School in Plano, Texas has recently received several awards for his work in science and engineering. In May of 2015, Burzin earned the Grand Award of being fourth in the world in the Embedded Systems category (<https://www.societyforscience.org/content/press-room/intel-isef-2015-grand-award-winners>) at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, PA (after advancing from Districts, Regionals, and State levels). At the same competition, he also received a Special Award from the International Council on Systems Engineering or INCOSE (www.societyforscience.org/content/press-room/intel-isef-2015-special-awards-ceremony).

This, high-stakes competition included over 1,700 entries from just over 70 participating countries and 442 affiliated fairs (<https://student.societyforscience.org/intel-isef-alumni-year>). More recently, however, he attended the Texas Junior Academy of Science where he placed first in his category and will be moving on to present his work at the American Junior Academy of Science, to be held in Washington D.C. in February 2016

(<http://www.pisd.edu/news/archive/2015-16/science.tjas.awards.shtml>).

Burzin's award-winning project entitled, "EyeMove: Using Electrooculography to Provide Mobility for the Disabled," included the design and prototype construction of a wheelchair that could be controlled by a user's eye movement. Such a system could provide the possibility of independent mobility and consequently a better quality of life for quadriplegics and severely paralyzed individuals. His design uses readily available off-the-shelf components and can be implemented across the world due to its affordability (<https://apps2.societyforscience.org/intelise2014/project.cfm?PID=EBED010I>).

Aside from participating in science and engineering fairs, Burzin, also competes in speech and debate. He enjoys Foreign and Domestic Extemporaneous speaking and has qualified to compete at the Texas Forensic Association's State Competition in both, freshman and sophomore years for Public Forum Debate. Additionally, he serves his local Zarathushti community (Zoroastrian Association of North Texas) as a mobed, praying alongside his father at major events and in Jashans. In the near future, his aim is to further develop technology similar to that which is described above and study a combination of mechanical and electrical engineering.

In The News

REVIVING THE PATH OF ASHA

Presented at the WZO seminar on Zoroastrian religion, history, and culture; June 7, 2015, London, England

MOBEDYAR MAHSHAD KHOSRAVIANI

Toronto, Canada

The following abstract is from a speech presented at the World Zoroastrian Organization Seminar by the first female Zoroastrian priestess in North America and the youngest in Iran, Mahshad Khosraviani.

The answer to the question, “What are your religious beliefs?” is often used to help us better understand another person. Knowing a person’s religious beliefs often provides a window into their personal philosophies, cultural background, and values. The average person who asks this question has a general sense of what a Christian, Jew, or Moslem believes. Yet, in my case, when I say, “Zoroastrian,” I often receive a puzzled look. To many of us, this is not an infrequent or unexpected reaction. Indeed, “What is a Zoroastrian?” I am amazed at how we have fallen into obscurity, considering the impact the faith has had throughout history—a religion once numbering in the millions.



As a Zoroastrian priestess, it is my imperative to ensure Zoroastrianism endures and continues to inspire others. One of the main ways that we can reverse our declining numbers is by educating and allowing conversions of those who are interested in joining the faith and accepting the children of mixed marriages. Unfortunately, there is stiff opposition to such thinking in some quarters. Many feel that it would dilute the faith or damage the religion. Such beliefs are unfounded and cannot be justified. They are based on notions that are not part of the Zoroastrian Gathic message. This dogmatic inflexibility has been incredibly detrimental to the faith’s viability and its perceptions. Millennia ago, conversions enabled Zoroastrianism to become established, then proliferate. The insular and rather exclusionary views held by a segment of contemporary Zoroastrians misinterprets the true message of Zarathustra, which is to elevate goodness in all. Efforts of those who attempt to superimpose rules written thousands of years ago on today’s society is analogous to hammering a square peg into a round hole—a deleterious exercise that inevitably creates frustration, confusion, and apostasy.

It is time to accept that we live in a world different than our ancestors. I believe that we can find a way to remain faithful to and honor our core tenets while accepting newcomers into the faith and aid those who seek companionship outside the religion. However, to accomplish this, a radical revamping of social, cultural, and spiritual thinking will be required. Simply put, Zarathustra taught that to be considered a religious person, a person’s thoughts should have a positive impact on their words, and, thence, their deeds—and through them, Ahura Mazda and others will grow and prosper. Further, He said that one does not need to be a Zoroastrian to be accepted. An atheist can be a Zoroastrian by dedicating his life to truth and goodness.

In many ways, people who use their own free will to look for truth and strive to help others are far better people than people who may call themselves religious, but follow the lying and deceitful ways of Ahriman.

Mother Teresa once said, “If I look at the mass I will never act, if I look at one, I will; the more who die, the less we care.” If our community can come together to care for one person at a time and open our arms for those wishing to join, we will have a better chance at preserving this beautiful religion.

For those seeking Mobedyar Khosraviani’s speech in its entirety, please contact her at mahshad_khosraviani@hotmail.com

In The News

BRIDGING THE ISLAND OF HAWAII...

WITH SILK AND MUSLIN FROM IRAN, INDIA AND CHINA

The verdant islands of Hawaii with their swaying palms, surrounded by an ocean of Persian turquoise, was the unlikely venue for an exhibition of Parsi and Iranian textiles: *Parsi Silk and Muslin from Iran, India, and China*. The exhibition was housed at the University of Hawaii's East West Centre and showcased an array of Zoroastrian textiles and old sepia images of Parsis, which had been sent from Mumbai. Nine Parsis from Hawaii enjoyed the exhibitions and were happy to see the variety of sartorial styles and textiles on display. It consisted of more than eighty textile pieces, images and objects connected to the China Trade that formed the exhibition's core. Cleverly intermingled with antiquities familiar to Parsi life style, the textiles were used to weave a visual story of 19th century Parsi merchant's trade in Canton.

The familiar narratives of the Parsi arrival in India, the sugar in the milk story, and sailing to Canton were interspersed with vignettes of Zoroastrianism. Images of the sacred Fire, priestly costumes and turbans, and glimpses of a Yasna ceremony told the compelling story of the community's faith and history. The resilience of the Iranian Zoroastrian traditions, throughout the diaspora, could be seen in the two hundred-year-old, multi-colored, striped shalvar and qamis (photo below) and the fine silken

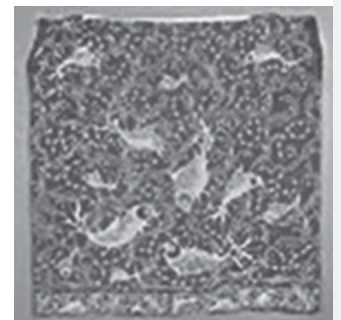


THE PARISIS OF HAWAII AT THE OPENING

shawls worn by the women Yazd—all reminiscent of Zoroastrian trade on the old Silk Route.



Pheroza Godrej (L) and Firoza Punthakey Mistry, co-curators of the exhibition



A consequence of the China trade was the continuing influence of typical Chinese embroidery seen in Parsi *Garas*, *ijars* (pantaloon) and *jhablas* (embroidered blouse, above). Several of these pieces caught the eyes of Hawaiians from a Chinese heritage; they were fascinated by the Chinese influence in Parsi textiles.



EMBROIDERED TOPIS (HEAD PIECES))

The juxtaposition of these textiles, with a rich selection of objects of Indian and Chinese provenance that provided an in-depth view of the Parsi material culture to those unfamiliar with the community.

All in all, it was a compelling and educational journey that began in Iran, moved to India, then to China, and back to India. The exhibition interestingly and clearly documented the story of a people unafraid to go to distant lands for their faith, as well as, for commerce and trade—a journey that bridged communities and re-lit a tiny flame and

illuminated a larger world.

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The exhibition was coupled with a follow-up program of talks on the ancient religions of Persia, Chinese influence on the fashion runway, and Zoroastrianism after Islam; all of which enabled the Hawaiians to enjoy a brief insight into the historical counterpoints of the faith and its people.

Dates: October 11, 2015, through January 24, 2016

Co-curators: Pheroza J. Godrej, Firoza Punthakey Mistree, and Michael Schuster

Exhibition Design : Lynne Najita

Arts Coordinator: Eric Chang;

Presented in cooperation with: Pheroza J. Godrej, Firoza Punthakey Mistree, Shangri La, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, and Douglas D. L. Chong.



SHALVAR AND GAMIS

This exhibition was made possible through the generous support of Richard H. Cox, Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute, The Hawai'i Pacific Rim Society, Aston Hotels & Resorts, EWC Arts 'Ohana members, Jackie Chan Foundation USA, Jean E. Rolles, and the Jhamandas Watumull Fund.

The East-West Center was established in 1960 and actively promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through study, research, and dialogue and serves to bridge cultures and enrich communities by focusing on the arts.

Links to additional photos and an article:

Photos: <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B4cNbJjE0Z8DZnVaUDVmWV9NYjQ&usp=sharing>

Press Photos: <https://picasaweb.google.com/105182313013139471087/>

ParsiSilkMuslinFromIranIndiaAndChina?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCJfVpfanhbHyzwE&feat=directlink

For Hawaii Public Radio story: <http://hpr2.org/post/acclaimed-immigrants-india-s-parsi-through-textiles>

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In The News

EVERLASTING FL

March 19, 2016 to May 29, 2016

Venue : National Museum, National Gallery of Modern Art
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.

THE EVERLASTING FLAME PROGRAMME

The **International Everlasting Flame Programme** is to be held, from 19th March to 29th May 2016, by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, MOMA, in collaboration with Parzor Foundation and the Culture Ministry of India. We are deeply grateful to the Government of India particularly MOMA for enabling **the largest ever Festival of the Zoroastrians in the World**. UNESCO has gladly endorsed the project.

This Programme will include **three exhibitions**, namely "*The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*", "*Painted Encounters -- Parsi Traders and the Community*", and "*Threads of Continuity*", at the National Museum, NGMA and IGNCA, Delhi.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE EVENTS PLANNED.

- **Opening Event at Vigyan Bhavan, Forenoon, on 19th March 2016, by Invitation only. Programme to include:** Penaz Masani, Ghazal Singer, singing Parsi prayer song (Monajat) 3 minutes and a Parzor-Google Film Experience: 10 minutes.
- **Inauguration of National Museum exhibition *Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*, 4.00 pm on 19th March.**
- **Inauguration of NGMA exhibition "*Painted Encounters -- Parsi Traders and the Community*" on 20th March.**
- **Inauguration of *Threads of Continuity* at IGNCA at 11.00 am on 21st March by Minister of Minority Affairs.**
- **Navroze celebrations on 21st March, begins from 4 00 pm, at IGNCA with Navroze Tables from India and Central Asian Countries who are partners of the UNESCO Parzor ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) Programme. Navroze Feast to be hosted by the Platinum Sponsor Dr Cyrus Poonawalla, at IGNCA.**
- **A two-day Academic Conference, *Zoroastrianism in the New Millennium*, MoMA- Parzor-NMI collaboration on the 22nd and 23rd March.**

In The News

AME PROGRAMME

Workshops, Cultural Performances, and a Film Festival will run through the period of the programme to reiterate the support India has always provided to a **micro-minority**. All Cultural Programmes are courtesy **Parzor Platinum Sponsor, Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla**.

GLIMPSES INTO THE CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND WORKSHOPS:

- **Dance Performance** by renowned Artiste **Astaad Deboo**
- **A Puppet Theatre Performance** by Ishara Founder, Dadi Pudumjee (Early April).
- **Yazdi Karanjia's** Troupe from Surat gives a **Parsi Theatre Performance** (Early April).
- **Fashion Show** by India's famous Designer, **Wendell Rodricks** and our own Parzor Member **Ashdeen Z. Lilaowala on Zoroastrian themes and symbols**. (Early April).
- **Iranian Choir Performance**. (To be confirmed).
- **Shahnameh Exhibition** for one week with display of models by **Silloo P Mehta** of USA. (End March/Early April)
- **Google - Parzor Art Talks** coming for the first time to India. (April to end May).
- **Conservation Workshop** at National Museum with participants from INTACH and Meherjirana Library, Navsari, etc.
 - **Stained Glass Workshop** by **Katayun Saklat** of Calcutta;
 - **Puppetry Workshop** by **Dadi Pudumjee and Ishaara Theatre Group**; **Toran and Kusti Weaving Workshops**
 - **Film Festival from 1st April to 20th May**. Chaired by **Shernaz Italia** and **Dushyant Mehta** to run every Friday for 8 weeks along with **Photographic Exhibition** by and on the community. It will screen both Classics of Zoroastrian Cinema **while a Competition, to be announced shortly**, will encourage young Film Makers and photographers. Contact **Mahtab Irani** for details at mahtabb@gmail.com.
- Acknowledging Parzor's and the community's collaboration with national and international institutions through celebration of events like the **SOAS Centenary Day, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune Centenary Day, CDAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune) Day**
 - **Planned Tours for Children** with Trained Professionals.
 - **Friday Muskil-e-Asan** participative Story Telling at IGNCA.
 - **Parsi and Irani Food Courts at all Venues**.

For any queries and further details kindly contact Kritika Mudgal: mudgal.kritika@gmail.com; +91 9873113054; or, Vanshika Singh: vanshikaa.singh91@gmail.com; +91 9818055390.

Yalda in my land

Yo! Yalda our very own celebration
At first gave me lot of stimulation.
The thought of getting to my origin
Made me at first, twirl and spin
A table with winter foods
And saved up summer fruits
What to me appealed the most
Was reading of poetry not prose.
Felt so cultured that my spirit rose
Open house for Yalda as for Nowroze.
Just then I hit the ground
No long dark nights I found
Spate of Navjote and Lagans pre-occupy
Celebrate Yalda no one would try.
A chink of light does appear
As more of us to the West steer
Some origins lost may regain
As more in number when gain.
Till then Yalda in my mind will hold
But another day its story will be told.

Sunnu F Golwalla. Pakistan

Sunnu F. Golwalla was inspired to write this poem after reading the
FEZANA JOURNAL 2015 Vol 29, No 3 on YALDA

In The News

* IRANSHAH ATASH BEHRAM-ETERNAL FLAME

Symbol of the sun that nurtures all creation,
of energy love and happiness, of the very spirit of Ahura
Mazda,* you were born from a merging of the hearths of
sixteen fires.

From a blacksmith, the home of a learned *mobed*,*
a flame struck from lightning, you were consecrated
with the prayers of eminent Dastur Nairyosang and his
wise priests, in the city of Sanjan, two thousand and two
hundred years ago.

Here you reigned, inspiring Zoroastrians who
traversed from afar to gaze with devotion at your
unquenched fire, for six unbroken centuries.
But fate would not allow you a somnolent sojourn.
Enemies of the faith invaded your peaceful city.
You were carried on tired and desperate shoulders
jostled through hilly forests inhabited by marauders
and unknown animals, moved to a secure place
in the mountains of Bharot, to protect you.

Nor would time shelter you there for long.
Your weary journey took you to five further destinations
until after many years you settled
on the sacred land of the city of Udvada.
Only the mighty and the pure of spirit
could have withstood a journey such as yours.

I travel a long distance for a glimpse of you, Iranshah,
from the tumultuous shores of America to the quiet
confines of ancient India's sleepy Udvada.
I walk along narrow dusty alleys and one storey houses.
A gaggle of gossiping teenagers, the tinkle of bicycle
chimes, an occasional car pass me by.

You live in a simple unassuming structure.
A silent *kushti* prayer and then, with bare feet
I step over the threshold of the chamber
of your house.
Hesitant, I tread forward, over the whispering steps
of a hundred pilgrims preceding me over time

across the deep maroon carpet that protects your
sanctuary.

Quiet prayers sung by *miskin** *mobeds*,
dedicated caretakers of the flame echo around me
soothingly.

Through barred windows you beckon
gently uttering my name.
You draw me close, mesmerized, climb through my pores
and into my being.
Your flame scorches my hair and kindles my spirit.

I imagined you to be a robust, magnetic all powerful force,
sinewy arms leaping towards the ceiling flames straining
to burst that ornate silver *afargan**flimsy walls confining
a mighty burning force, oh king of light and love and all
living things.

Yet here you burn, no jeweled crown, no shrill bells,
no trumpets proclaiming your awesome unquenched
longevity.

A soft warm glow, lemon magenta flames, a creamy gold
streaked with the orange of a million citrus trees,
outlined in heaven's turquoise sky, rising from small knots
of katha and sweet smelling sandal wood.

I place the atash from your ashes upon my forehead
and reluctantly prepare to leave.
Dare I turn my back? Will you be there when I return?

A honey gold aura reaches out and embraces me
its warmth melding in my veins.
Vibrations throbbing along nerve endings
whisper "I will burn forever, till the ends of the earth."

My heart is filled with quietude
when I gaze into the mirror,
your sparks transform my pupils
into eternal flames.

DINAZ COACHBUILDER, CALIFORNIA

* **Iran Shah Atash Behram**- a consecrated holy fire kindled and installed in the 9th century, a few years after Zoroastrians settled in the city of Sanjan in India. The fire is called "Iran" in remembrance of the homeland from which they fled, and "shah" for their famed Zoroastrian kings.

***Ahura Mazda**- Lord wisdom, the sole divinity of the Zoroastrian faith, the creator.

***mobed**-Zoroastrian priest

***miskin**-humble; ***afargan**-container

In The News

The Iranshah Udvada Utsav 2015 *Brings the Town To Life*

Arzan Sam Wadia

December 25th 2015 will forever be remembered as the first day of a long cherished festival in Udvada to celebrate the hallowed stature of this the “Vatican” of the Zoroastrian faith. Born out of an idea proposed by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, a few years ago; the Vada Dasturji of the Pak Iranshah Atashbehram Khurshed Dastur had promised to host this. He stood by his word and was the ever gracious host and the face of the IUU 2015 at the events of the first day.



Events for the day began even before the actual inauguration. The Global Working Group got down to work (pun intended) at the home of Homai Engineer who welcomed leaders of the Zoroastrian diaspora from India and the world over, to deliberate and discuss matters of common interest to the faith and the community worldwide. Beside the presence of the FPZAI which represented the Indian anjumans, there was large representation from North America (FEZANA) United Kingdom (ZTFE), Iran, Middle East and Australia. Other global organizations like the WZCC and the WZO Trust Funds of India were also represented. FEZANA President Katayun Kapadia led the FEZANA delegation that included members of the Executive, Past Presidents and Committee Chairs.

The 11th World Zoroastrian Congress was awarded to Perth, Australia. The event will be held in 2018.

The GWG also deliberated on ways to bring about a more accountable action plan and set up a time table for meeting annually and also discuss a global time table for Zarathushti events worldwide.

Opening ceremony with Chief Guest Saurabh Patel, and Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor,



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The evening saw droves of attendees gather at the Gymkhana grounds for the official opening. Vada Dasturji welcomed one and all to Udvada and detailed out the steps that went into the organizing of this the first ever IUU. The opening was graced by the Chief Guest Mr. Saurabh Patel, the finance minister of Gujarat who welcomed the Parsi community and urged them to meet every two years and also to increase their population.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Udvada Iranshah Utsav on December 25 Gujrat finance minister Saurabh Patel urged Parsis to preserve their sunder (beautiful) houses in Udvada and if the buildings were to be sold, they should be sold only to other Parsis.

The first day's entertainment segment included dance performances by Shiamak Daver's troupe and Gujarati Natak by Yazdi Karanjia and Company. The Ushta Te Foundation from Ahmedabad inaugurated a Gatha Calendar.

The evening ended with a vote of thanks and a dinner laid out "panth" style catered by MEK caterers of Udvada.

The second day of the Utsav started with two fun filled participatory activities. **The Heritage Walks and The Treasure Hunt** had droves of people walking or running through the small lanes of Udvada and give the town the kind of buzz and foot activities seen only once or twice a year during the Iranshah Salgrehs.

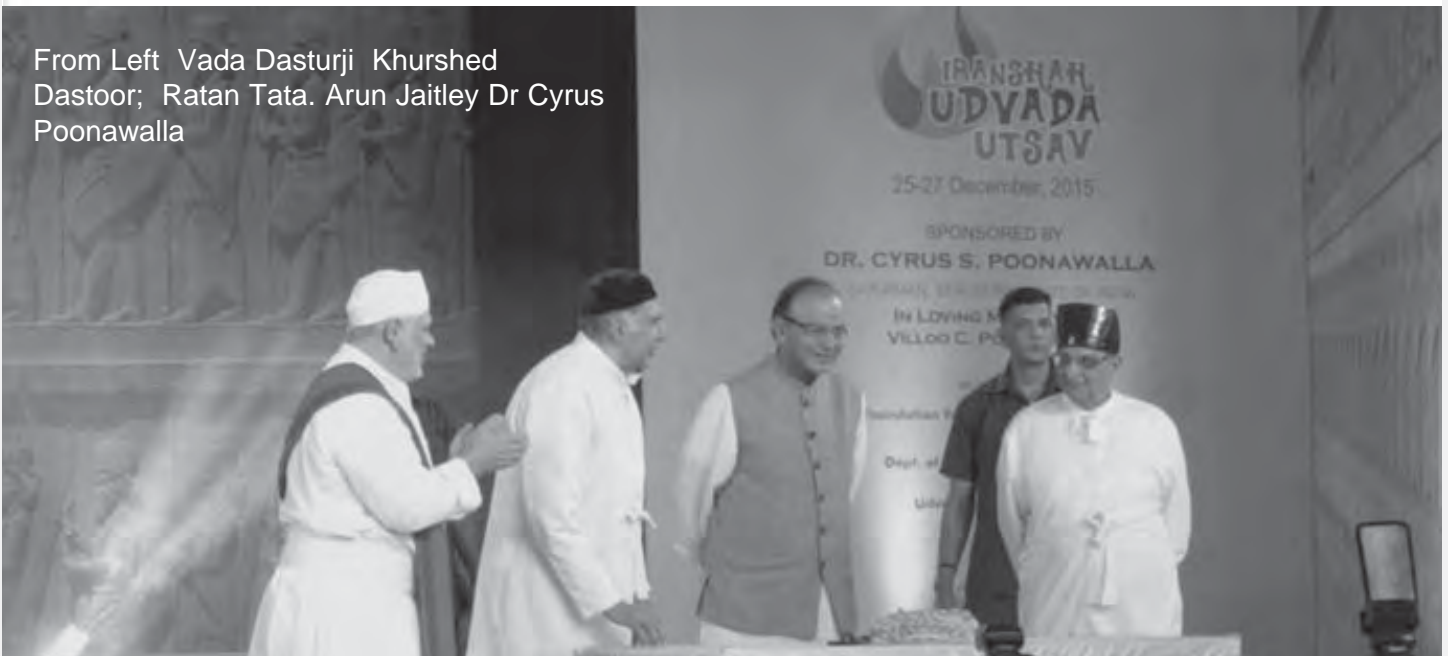
Groups of attendees were escorted by architects well versed in Udvada's history and shown around the various different historical and heritage landmarks.

The treasure hunt had 38 teams of 5 people each race around the town taking selfies at landmarks, checking off items off their list of to-do's and hunting for quirky clues and souvenirs. Teams comprised of people of all ages and the hustle bustle it created was very infectious.

The Iranshah itself was abuzz with devotees filing to worship in a steady stream all day.

The formal lectures and events in the main Gymkhana grounds started in the morning. A series of lectures

From Left Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor; Ratan Tata. Arun Jaitley Dr Cyrus Poonawalla



and audio visual presentations were interspersed with some entertainment breaks.

Notable among the speakers were BPP Trustee and community leader Noshir Dadrewala who spoke about Ancient Iran. His mastery and command of the topic and the lucid presentation brought alive some of the glories of the "MadreVatan" as we refer to Iran today. It made my resolve to visit Iran so much stronger in

In The News

the near future. Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaki and Zenobia Panthaki of ZAMWI spoke about the book they co-authored on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. Famous Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla took to the stage and in his customary manner enthralled the crowd. He also predicted that 2017 is the year when the world will see peace return. Firoz Andhyarujina spoke exceedingly well on the role of the Zoroastrian Youth in modern times

Dr. Shernaz Cama and the Jiyo Parsi team spoke about the program and presented a video showing the work done by their campaign. More power to them and Babies to our community. Former Maharashtra Attorney-General Darius Khambata spoke about Zoroastrians and Zoroastrianism today. In his excellent oratory he laid out his case and asked the leaders, priests and community in general to re-think the whole concept of keeping our Agiaries out of bounds to women who marry outside the faith

The second day's evening entertainment started with the felicitation and welcome of the famous Bollywood icon Boman Irani. The amazing actor enthralled the crowd with his presence, and spoke of his immense pride in being a Parsi and a Zarathushti.

The evening entertainment was packed with skits by young children ...the Farohars of New Delhi. The girls of Avabai Petit Girls High School sang monajats and the MEJMT Trust performed a fantastic theatrical experience called Tapo Re Iranshah. A live e band brought the evening to an end with Boman Irani jumping in and belting out a couple of songs and strumming the guitar.

The third and final day began on Sunday, December 27th with a sense of expectation and euphoria to



Executives of FEZANA, ZTFE, WZCC with Ratan Tata

welcome Ratan Tata, Arun Jaitley and Cyrus Poonawalla. Decked out in Daglis and Gara Sarees thousands of folks filled up the Gymkhana grounds and waited patiently for all the dignitaries to arrive. Finally, the three of them made a quick entry. The level of applause reserved for Ratan Tata was ear deafening.

Boman Irani introduced all the three dignitaries before each one of them addressed the crowd. Finance Minister Jaitley spoke of his connections to Parsis from childhood and urged more Parsi businesses and entrepreneurship to happen besides increasing the population.

In The News

Ratan Tata spoke about the pride he had in being Parsi and Zarathushti and was totally humbled by the love and admiration the community gave him.

For the Utsav, Udvada town had been spruced up beautifully. Roads were paved and most buildings have a fresh coat of paint. There was street art and street furniture that gives the town a festive look without taking away the sanctity of the Iranshah. The arrangements are slick and professional. Things started on time. The crowd was lively and enthusiastic. The food lines at the end of the evening were long, but the crowd was patient and orderly. Probably something to do with being in such close proximity of the Iranshah !!

The volunteers who did yoemen service over three days need a standing ovation. Scouts, Rovers and Guides from the 32nd West Bombay Pioneer Scouts and the 16th East Bombay Scout Group and their Guide Company volunteered their time from 7 in the morning to 2 AM everyday controlling crowds, dealing with boorish devotees at the Iranshah and disgruntled participants who would vent their frustrations on the volunteers. Thank you and more power to each of these volunteers.

All in all, those who attended will always remember the first IUU. The Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor, his wife Havovi, Homai Engineer, Dinshaw Tamboly and others did a fantastic job of pulling off such a mega event. This experience of an event at this scale will be stepping stones to even better and greater success in the years to come. And may the Pak Iranshah continue to burn bright as the beacon of Zarathushti religion for millennia to come.

The first ever IUU 2015 was successful overall. And it was great to see Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor announce the next one shall be held from December 23-25 2017. Mark your calendars.

I would like to end with one profound statement that Boman Irani said in his thank you speech on the evening of the second day when he was felicitated. That for me was the singular take away from this event and something that will always remain in my mind. He said and I paraphrase from memory.... We Parsis should stop saying how great we were and are. It is only when others tell us the same, that it becomes even more meaningful and powerful. That my fellow Zarathushtis should be what we all collectively strive for in 2016.



Dining arrangements under the tent.



Arzan Sam Wadia is an architect and urban designer, living in New York City with his wife Shirrin. He runs a technology consultancy business catered to the CAD and BIM industry. Arzan is the Chair of the Information Technology Committee of FEZANA, a Board Member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and co-founder of Parsi Khabar (www.parsikhabar.net) an online news portal about Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India. He is an active Rover Scout of India's oldest Scout Group the Sethna's 18th West Bombay.

Personal Profiles

The Ruler of the Fruits

A Zarathushti Champion, Shahrokh Khanizadeh,

A role model for the next generation of Zarathushtis growing up in North America.

Shahrokh Khanizadeh received his undergraduate degree in agricultural engineering from Tehran University, and his Masters in small fruit culture and a PhD in tree fruit- physiology and biochemistry from McGill University with a post-doctoral research in breeding and genetics.

He is an Adjunct Professor in the Plant Agriculture Department of the University of Guelph and the Plant Science Department of McGill University, and has supervised over 70 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from Iran, China, Germany, France and Canada and Egypt.

He is currently working as a research scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada developing new spring wheat varieties for eastern Canada. He has been recognized nationally and internationally for developing disease resistant fruit varieties through the use of conventional and newer techniques in plant breeding and genetics.

He has developed several unique strawberries and raspberries for North American markets, high in antioxidant and several apple varieties for cider, ice-cider and fresh cut including a non-browning apple Eden. He has published over 300 refereed publications, 12 books/book chapters, and 14 Journal cover stories, review or feature articles. His books (***Our plums, Our Apples and Our Strawberries***), are very comprehensive and used as a reference nationally and internationally. It has been translated into Chinese and French. His publication received the top ten cited certificate during 2008-2010. <http://khanizadeh.info/book>

Shahrokh has shifted research to focus on traits related to protecting the environment and human

health such as development of fruits with high levels of antioxidants, disease resistant fruit cultivars to reduce the use of pesticides and also select for diversification and adaptation of new lines to colder climates and climate changes.

Shahrokh has developed software, databases and new methods to accelerate the breeding processes and lines useful to industry and private partners

Shahrokh was President of the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science (2006-2008 and President of Plant Canada (2005-2015), the federation of Canadian plant science societies. During 2009-2014 he served as Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the *Canadian Journal of Plant Science* and currently is EIC of Archives Of Phytopathology And Plant Protection, Taylor&Francis Online - <http://cyberfruit.info/editor>



RECOGNITION BY PEERS IN THE SPECIFIC BUSINESS OR PROFESSION

He received several national and international awards (<http://cyberfruit.info/awards>) including the Gold Harvest Award from the Minister of Agriculture, Government of Canada recognizing his exceptional commitment to the qualities of excellence and innovation, leadership, client-centered work, genetic enhancement, collaboration with universities and nongovernmental organizations and work that fosters inclusiveness and equity.

Dr. Khanizadeh developed several unique fruit crops which is currently planted in North America and Europe including 11 new strawberry lines and 2 red flowering strawberries for home gardeners, 10 new apple cultivars (<http://Cyberfruit.info/cultivars>) including 'Eden' a non-browning apple and 'Jeanne d'

Personal Profiles

'Orleans Raspberry with high level of antioxidant.

Dr Khanizadeh has built a national and international reputation as a key player in fruit breeding and genetics and was involved in the release of "Duahua Xiangshuili" and "Hanhong" pears in China , "Galarina" and "Reinette-Russet" apples in France.

He currently owns 17 patents for his innovations (<http://cyberfruit.info/patent>).

Zarathushti CONNECTION

The afore-mentioned achievements are remarkable for any individual, but Shahrokh Khanizadeh has more to offer alongside his professional leadership roles. Shahrokh devotes much time and energy to our Zarathushti world. Nine years ago Shahrokh offered his services to FEZANA without question when the Journal was looking desperately for someone to do the layout and graphics. Since then he has become an integral part of the FEZANA JOURNAL Team, bringing his technical and artistic expertise pro-bono in the layout of each issue, which he performs with meticulous care as a labor of love for the Zarathushti community.

In addition he has developed and maintained several web sites for the scientific community and associations including the beautiful website of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec www.zaq.org.

As an established author, a highly accomplished professional, Shahrokh can serve as a role model for the next generation of Zarathushtis growing up in North America. No job is too small or too big for Shahrokh, he handles all with the same ease, humour and efficiency which makes it a pleasure to work with him.

Ashkan Khosropour (1988-)

Ashkan Khosropour, Zoroastrian correspondent of Hamshahri media group in Iran, has been working as a journalist since the age of 18 years. Being a journalist in the unclear atmosphere of Iran for a young man was a challenge but it has recently got much easier. Being a book and magazine enthusiast and with the help of all resources and encouragement in high school, Ashkan improved his journalistic skills. His first article at age 13 on Ferdowsi, the creator of Shahnameh, received a standing ovation from the students and teachers at "Rostam Abadian" high school. This marked the beginning of his career as a writer and journalist.

In 2002, at age 14, he published the 1st student magazine of Ekbatan town, under the supervision of Mr. Reza Javadi. Later at "Sheykh-e mofid" high school, he published a new student magazine under the supervision of Mr. Pouya Lotfian, a senior journalist at Shargh newspaper. The magazine's content and layout won him the 1st place twice nationally in Iran. In 2003, he joined Shargh newspaper and CHN – cultural heritage of Iran news network, receiving support and encouragement of Mr. Pouya Lotfian. He was then appointed, as a journalist for Amordad news, and later promoted as a senior journalist of the newsgroup. He has been covering the news and events of several Zoroastrian congresses around the world. Ashkan can be reached at firstashk@gmail.com.



اشکان خسروپور (1367-)

اولین بار وقتی سرکلاس «برزو پرستار» در مدرسه راهنمایی رستم آبادیان، انشایی درباره‌ی فردوسی بزرگ را نوشت و مورد تشویق قرار گرفت، فکر کرد که لابد می‌تواند چیزهایی بنویسد. او آنقدر خوش‌شانس بود که در سالهای بعد، در دوران راهنمایی و بعدتر دبیرستان مورد تشویق معلم‌هایشان باشد و این فرصت به او داده شود که قلمش را محک بزند. در دوران راهنمایی برای مجله‌ی داخلی مدرسه‌شان که زیر نظر «محمدرضا جوادی نسب» منتشر می‌شد، طنز می‌نوشت و بعدتر، زمانی که در دبیرستان درس می‌خواند، با کمک آموزگارش، پویا لطفیان روزنامه‌نگاری و کار در مطبوعات را به طور حرفه‌ای‌تری آموخت. او در همان سالها با روزنامه‌ی شرق و خبرگزاری سازمان میراث فرهنگی ایران همکاری کرد و برای آنها گزارش‌هایی درباره‌ی آیین‌های ایرانی نوشت. پس از دو سال غیبت از کار مطبوعاتی، به خاطر آزمون ورودی دانشگاه‌ها او دوباره به دنیای مطبوعات وارد شد. اشکان در آن سالها وارد هفته‌نامه امرداد شد. ابتدا به عنوان خبرنگار ساده و چندی پس از آن به عنوان دبیرسرویس بخش زرتشتیان و برونمرز با این هفته‌نامه زرتشتیان همکاری کرد. او در طول مدت همکاری‌اش با هفته‌نامه امرداد در همایش‌های زرتشتیان در کانادا، هندوستان و دب‌ شرکت کرد و بخش‌های عمده‌ای از این همایش‌ها را پوشش خبری داد. اشکان خسروپور هم‌اکنون در موسسه مطبوعاتی همشهری فعالیت دارد. آنچه در این گزارش می‌خوانید، بخشی از گفت‌وگویی است که برای نشریه علمی دانستنیها، وابسته به موسسه همشهری منتشر شده است.

میوه‌ها خیلی وقت‌ها کاربرد صنعتی دارد. مثلاً تفالوتی که سیب عدن با دیگران دارد، در آن جاست که قطعات بریده‌شده‌اش هیچ وقت سیاه نمی‌شوند. نوع دیگری از توت‌فرنگی هم هست که برای درست کردن مربا خوب است چون بعد از پختن، تغییر رنگ و شکل نمی‌کند. یکی دیگر از انواع سیب‌مان هم طوری مقاوم است که هیچ وقت از درخت نمی‌افتد. این نوع از سیب حتی در سرمای شدید کانادا هم دوام می‌آورد و روی درخت ثابت می‌ماند، بدون این‌که خراب شود یا خم به ابرو بیاورد. این سیب از آن جهت مهم است که کانادایی‌ها آن را برای ساختن نوع خاصی از نوشیدنی سیب استفاده می‌کنند. در این نوع از نوشیدنی، سیب باید روی درخت و در شرایط طبیعی یخ بزند. به همین دلیل، ما سیبی را اختراع کرده‌ایم که در دمای بسیار پایین زنده مانده و از روی درخت هم نمی‌افتد.»

مدام باید تغییر کنی

شاهرخ خانی‌زاده بیشتر از ۲۸ سال روی میوه‌ها کار کرده و دنیای این خوردنی‌های ابدار را خیلی خوب می‌شناسد اما چند سالی است که سراغ دنیای گندم‌گون نانو‌ها رفته است: «سال ۲۰۱۲ به خاطر تغییراتی که در برنامه‌های داخلی کشور کانادا برنامه‌ای که درباره میوه‌ها داشت تعطیل شد و مرا از کیک به اتاوا فرستادند. الان چهار سال است که در اتاوا در زمینه بیماری‌های ژنتیکی گندم‌ها کار می‌کنم.»

او که تا به حال ۱۲ کتاب درباره میوه‌ها منتشر کرده و موضوع اصلی کار او بر روی سازگار کردن روش زندگی و رشد میوه‌ها با توجه به شرایط محیط زیست بوده است، می‌گوید: «همه فکر می‌کنند که روز و شب ما در باغ‌ها، پی خوش‌گذرانی و خوردن میوه‌ها می‌گذرد اما مشکلات کاری در حوزه ما کم نیست. به خصوص کار در زمینه ژنتیک بسیار دشوار است و پیچیدگی‌های بسیاری دارد. باید مدام حواستان به این موضوع جمع باشد که بیماری‌ها و حشرات هم مثل میوه‌ها و گندم‌ها متحول می‌شوند. پس اگر گندم یا میوه‌ای را در برابر یک بیماری خاص مقاوم کرده‌اید، ده سال بعد باید یک راهکار تازه ارائه بدهید چون حشره بر میوه پیروز می‌شود. میوه‌ای که ده سال پیش مقاوم بوده ممکن است الان مقاومت نداشته نباشد. یکی از مشکلات کار ما این است که باید دائم سعی کنی یک چیز جدید درست کنی و چیزی که ده سال پیش درست کرده بودی را تغییر بدهی و این کاری است که باید تا همیشه ادامه داشته باشد، تا هر وقت که داستان ژنتیک هست، حشره‌ها هستند و ما هستیم.»

شاهرخ و جامعه‌ی زرتشتی

دکتر شاهرخ خانی‌زاده حدود نه سال است که با جامعه‌ی زرتشتی و به طور مشخص با فدراسیون انجمن‌های زرتشتیان در آمریکای شمالی (فزان) در ارتباط بوده و به صورت افتخاری برای انتشار نشریه‌شان با آنها همکاری کرده است. او در زمانی مسئولیت بخش گرافیکی و تصویری فزان را بر عهده گرفت که کیفیت این مجله از نظر گرافیکی و تصویری در سطح چندان خوبی نبود. شاهرخ به جز مجله‌ی «فزان» راه‌اندازی چندین سایت مرتبط با جامعه‌ی زرتشتی را هم بر عهده داشت. یکی از این وبسایت‌ها متعلق به انجمن زرتشتیان شهر کبک در کاناداست که اخبار و اطلاعات مربوط به این شهر را پوشش می‌دهد.

او به عنوان یکی از افراد فعال جامعه‌ی زرتشتی می‌تواند به عنوان الگوی نسل جوان جامعه‌ی ما مطرح شود. او کسی است که کارش را با شوخ‌طبعی و جدیت همراه می‌کند و به همین دلیل کسی است که می‌توان از او درس گرفت و موفق شد.

اشکان خسروپور (۱۳۶۷-)

پرفسور شاهرخ خانی‌زاده، دکتر ژنتیک میوه‌ها از دانشگاه مک‌گیل کانادا تا به حال چندین میوه کوچک با قابلیت‌های خاص تولید کرده است

فرمانروای مغز میوه‌ها

سیب عدن که آدم و حوا را از آسایش بهشتی بیرون انداخت، دست‌پخت اوست. شاهرخ خانی‌زاده، دکترای ژنتیک میوه‌ها از دانشگاه مک‌گیل کار عجیبی دارد. او سالی چند هزار میوه را آزمایش می‌کند تا از بین آنها، بهترین‌شان را به تولید بیشتر برسانند. تخصص اصلی او ساخت میوه‌هایی مثل توت فرنگی، تمشک (رزبری) و سیب است. شاهرخ خانی‌زاده به مغز این میوه‌ها دستور می‌دهد، چه کارهایی را برای ما انسان‌ها انجام دهند.

سیب عدن را من اختراع کردم!

رشته انتخابی پرفسور شاهرخ خانی‌زاده در دانشگاه مک‌گیل کانادا، مطالعه روی بیوشیمی میوه‌ها بود. دلش هم مطالعه رفتار عجیب موجودات ریز بود، چیزی که از کودکی هم ذهنش را مشغول کرده بود. «در کانادا میوه‌های ریز زیادی بودند که تا قبل از سفر به این کشور، نمونه‌شان را در ایران ندیده‌بودم. میوه‌های کوچکی مثل رزبری و بلوبری هم همین‌طور. رفتار این میوه‌ها برآیم خیلی جالب و عجیب بود. این‌که می‌توانستند در یک بازه حرارتی ۷۰ درجه‌ای زنده بمانند، اتفاق فوق‌العاده‌ای است. برای همین اول روی بیوشیمی میوه‌های کوچک کار کردم. بعد هم که نوبت نوره دکترایم رسید، دلم می‌خواست بیشتر بفهمم. انگار که معتاد این رشته شده بودم، دکترایم را هم در زمینه ژنتیک گیاهان در دانشگاه کبک خواندم تا ببینم خود گیاه چطور می‌تواند در این دما زنده بماند. بعد هم در زمینه ژنتیک گیاهان فوق‌دکترایم گرفتم.» گرفتن مدرک فوق دکترا، آغاز اختراعات پزشک گیاهان بود. بعد از این‌که درس‌هایش تمام شد، سراغ ابداع درختان جدید رفت. «تحصیلاتم که تمام شد حدود ۵ سال در زمینه فوق دکترای ژنتیک تحصیل کردم و بعد از آن سراغ کار در زمینه ژنتیک میوه‌های کوچکی مثل توت‌فرنگی، تمشک و سیب رفتم.»

این میوه‌های شگفت‌انگیز و کوچک

زمینه کاری او در این سالها محدود به یک سری میوه خاص بوده که در خود کانادا به عمل می‌آمده‌اند. دکتر خانی‌زاده که اکنون به عنوان دانشمند محقق در زمینه باغبانی و گیاهشناسی مشغول به کار است و توانسته نوع خاصی از گندم، مخصوص مناطق شرقی کانادا تولید کند، می‌گوید: «در استان کبک، درخت سیب و توت‌فرنگی داریم ولی بعضی میوه‌ها مثل ازگیل، خرمالو یا گلاس در اینجا نیست. گرچه اخیراً گلاس را با دست‌کاری ژنتیکی مقاوم و تولید می‌کنند ولی به‌هر حال کار اصلی ما در زمینه میوه‌های کوچکی است که در کانادا به عمل می‌آیند.»

او در دوران تحقیقاتش ۸ گونه جدید توت‌فرنگی را اختراع کرده که حق ثبت‌شان در آمریکای شمالی ثبت شده و در حال حاضر، در اروپا بر روی آن مشغول به کار هستند. «در هر جایی یک میوه به ثبت رسانده‌ام. مثلاً در چین هم نوع خاصی از گلابی را تولید کردم. «مدتی با دانشگاه‌های چین هم همکاری داشتم و در زمینه ژنتیک سیب و گلابی با آنها کار کردم. یک گلابی چینی و پنج سیب جدید را هم به ثبت رساندم. یکی از سیب‌ها که خیلی سر و صدا کرد و هم‌عاجا معروف شد، اسمش سیب عدن بود. به خاطر اسم سیب و کاربردی که داشت، همه مردم مدام نامش را تکرار می‌کردند و به شوخی می‌گفتند، پس سیب عدن را تو کاشته‌ای!»

برای ما که همیشه تمام سیب‌ها و گلابی‌های دنیا را به یک چشم دیده‌ایم، این‌همه تفاوت حیرت‌انگیز است. دکتر شاهرخ خانی‌زاده که تا به حال ۷۰ دانشجوی دکترا و پسادکترای از کشورهای ایران، مصر، چین، آلمان، فرانسه و کانادا را راهنمایی کرده است، می‌گوید: «تنوع زیاد در زمینه

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Celebration of the New Year Festival of Faiths

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

PRESENTATION

BY ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago in cooperation with Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church held a ***“Celebration of New Year Festival of Faiths”*** on Sunday, September 20, 2015.

ZAC, under the leadership of Rohinton Rivetna, made a ten minute presentation of the Zoroastrian celebration of the New Year. Other religions represented were *Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, and African American Protestant Christianity*. The celebration inaugurated with Ervads Freddy and Sheroy Gonda, Rayomand Ravji and Mobedyar Bomi Dakmevala, walking down the center aisle carrying a “divo” reciting a short Zoroastrian prayer.



The ZAC participants were in traditional dress – priests in pure white jama and purgree, ladies in colorful “kor” sarees and men in dagli-topi. The presentation was a short scripted audio-visual of Persepolis and Herodotus, muktad and haftseen tables, mobeds praying at ZAC, dinner on Gatha days, congregation reciting humbundagi and Navroz (New Year) breakfast of “sev” and “dahi”. As this was an audience of lay people from different faiths, the presentation was kept very simple so that all could enjoy the gist of the religion without getting too technical.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Rohinton Rivetna, Zenobia Damania, Sheroy Gonda, Rustom Ichaporia, Bachi and Bomi Damkevala, Dinaz Weber, Amy Sumariwalla, Zarin and Minoo Press, were presenters. They highlighted the religion of "Good Life". The history recorded by Herodotus of the Persian life style. They explained the concept of muktad and New Year festivities in our homes and our center. "*Humbundagi*" during gatha days and evenings filled with camaraderie, joy, love and strong sense of belonging were also highlighted. The presentation ended with translations of **Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo** and the recitation of the two prayers by the presenters lead by our mobeds.

Aban Daboo choreographed and wrote the presentation, and the credit for the colorful A/V presentation goes to **Ken Weber and Farida Shariyari**.



Participants of other religious groups were impressed with our presentation - most of all our traditional dress. The ladies received glowing compliments on the colorful saris with "kors" and some were surprised to learn that few of our "kors" were a hundred years old. The evening ended with a social hour where the various groups offered their traditional fare of goodies. ZAC's contribution was "sev" and "dahi" which were enjoyed by all.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



INTERFAITH PRAYER FOR PEACE, sponsored by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago (CRLMC), held outdoors in Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago, on July 31st, 2015. Prayers were offered by various faiths.

The Zoroastrian prayer was offered by Rohinton Rivetna, who serves as the Zoroastrian representative on the CRLMC.

BOOK REVIEWERS NEEDED

With the influx of independent and self-published authors, the demand for Z. book reviews and book marketing is on high. We at FEZANA Journal need your help in helping authors achieve more visibility for their books. Every issue of the FEZANA Journal has a section **BOOKS AND ARTS** where a variety of titles have been reviewed from fiction to non-fiction. These books are either written by Zarathushtis or about Zarathuhstis on different subjects. Book reviews are between 700-1000 words with a lead time of three months.

If you are interested please send an e.mail to editor@fezana.org with a brief statement of your background and interest.

INTERFAITH INTERALIA



Aug 7th 2015

To:
Presidents
Zoroastrian Associations of North America

Dear Sir / Madam:

In response to requests from several North American Zoroastrian Associations, we provide guidelines for "Ashodad" or "Kadr-Dani" for performance of religious services provided by Mobeds in North America.

Following extensive consultations, NAMC has developed these guidelines for the benefit of the families requesting religious services as well as the Mobeds; and with a view to ensure that the North American communities continue benefiting from the religious ceremonies, education and counsel provided by the next generation of Mobeds while being fairly compensated for their services.

We intend these to be **guidelines** and we emphasize that a family's financial ability should be given utmost importance. We believe that no family should be discouraged from availing services of a Mobed for financial restraints. We also acknowledge that, where appropriate, geographical and logistical variations should be given their due consideration.

We encourage your association to publicize these guidelines in your communications for the benefit of your members.

Sincerely,

Ervad Kobad Zarolia
President, NAMC

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

THE NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

C/O Mehraban Guiv Dare Mehr Zoroastrian Temple
3590, Bayview Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario M2M 3S6, CANADA
Corresponding address: Kobad Zarolia 1304Whitewater Lane
Mississauga Ontario L5V 1L8 Canada

ASHODAD / KADR-DANI GUIDELINES BY NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL (NAMC)

In response to requests from several North American Zoroastrian Associations, NAMC provides the following **guidelines** for “Ashodad” or “Kadr-Dani” for performance of religious services provided by Mobeds invited by the family:

WEDDINGS/ GAVAH / NAVJOTE / SUDREH-PUSHI: \$ 500 per Mobed
per ceremony

JASHAN/JASHAN-KHANI / AFARGAN / SEEOM/ SAAL: \$ 250 per Mobed
per ceremony

FUNERAL CEREMONIES: \$ 250 per Mobed
per ceremony
Geh Saarnu, , Sarosh nu Patru,
Day Uthamnu, Night Uthamnu, Chaharom.

Sareh Khak, Poresh \$ 500 per Mobed
per ceremony

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION (in addition to above amounts):
Pre-paid Air ticket and / or mileage as appropriate
Overnight accommodation as appropriate

USE OF ASSOCIATION FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES: As per Association regulations

THIS LIST IS INTENDED TO BE A GUIDE AND IS NOT MANDATORY.

Consideration should be given to geographical and logistical variations through North America and financial ability of the family requesting these prayers.

These guidelines are subject to change.

Issued: May 2015

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WITH BEST WISHES FROM THE DAVIER FAMILY,
ZAH HOUSTON

BIRTHS

Justin Khory, a boy, to Danielle and Jehangir Khory, brother to Ashton and Kayla, grandson to Dilnavaz and Rustom Khory and Dolly and Harry Wilson on September 15, 2015. (OZCF)

Yazdan Yohan Banaji, a boy, to Gulshan and Yohan Banaji, grandson to Nergish and Aspi Bharucha (Cincinnati, OH) and Roshan and late Mehernosh Banaji (Secunderabad, India) in Cincinnati, OH on September 18, 2015.

Darien Phiroze Panthaky, a boy, to Roxanne and Phiroze Panthaky, both to Sofia, grandson to Jaiji and Noshir Panthaky and Purviz and late Kuroosh Mistry on September 24, 2015. (OZCF)

Charles Xerxes Cerniglia, a boy, to Sunaya (Sapurji) and Keith Cerniglia, grandson to Aspi and late Katy Sapurji and Nancy and late Gene Cerniglia on September 28, 2015. (OZCF)

Jehan Ranasinghe, a boy, to Zareen and Sajith Ranasinghe, grandson to Anoo and Jangoo Mistry, great grandson to Jerbanoo Bhadha on October 26, 2015 (MANASHNI)

Nazreen Tiffany Jussawalla, a girl to Delila law and Zubin Jussawalla on October 28, 2015 (ZSO)

Sarosh Rayomond Collector a boy to Rayomond and Sarah, grandson to Pearlina and Sarosh on December 24, 2015 (Manashni)

NAVJOTES

Darius Dastur, son of Barjor and Khursheed Dastur, brother of Mahtab, in Mumbai on December 24, 2015.

Simon Todywala, daughter of Lyla and Sam Todywala, sister of Zane and Stefan, grand daughter of Dhun and Jangoo Bativala, and Minnie and Erach Todywala in Mumbai on December 30, 2015. Navjote ceremony performed by Dasturji Jamasp Asa.

WEDDINGS

Jasmine Dadachanji, daughter of Behram and Bapsy Dadachanji to **Nathan Buckham**, son of Patricia and

Bruce Buckham in Victoria, BC on July 25, 2015.

Benafsha Kapadia, daughter of Sharook and Yasmin Kapadia to **Yohan Irani**, son of Darayus and Veera Irani in Burnaby, BC on August 8, 2015.

DEATHS

Arnavaz Golwala, wife of Burjor Golwala, mother of Zarine Madon, Armaity Jasavala and late Daraius Golwala on August 12, 2015. (ZSO)

Azarmidokht Dorost-Misaghi Tafti, wife of Jahangir Misaghi Tafti, mother of Mahnaz, Mehrnaz, and Mehrdad Misaghi Tafti, mother-in-law of Farhad Khorasheh, Dariush Joobbani and Shiva Najmi, sister of Irandokht and Shahindokht Dorost in North Vancouver, BC on October 9, 2015.

Gulmoher Behramjee Gandhi, wife of late Behramjee Gandhi, mother of Jamshed and Ader Gandhi in Walnut Creek, CA on October 10, 2015.

Katy Thanavalla, mother of Gulshan Tarapore, Yasmin Thakur and Aspi Thanavalla, grandmother of Karina and Zenia on October 15, 2015. (OZCF)

Khorshed Karai, mother of Kashmira Karai on October 22, 2015. (ZAGNY)

Siloo Lentin, wife of Beji Lentin, mother of Mehernaz Lentin in Toronto, ONT on October 23, 2015.

Pesi Daruwala, husband of Bapsy Daruwala, father of Darius Daruwala (New York) and Khurshid Motiwala (Canada), grandfather of Kainaz Motiwala and Carina Daruwala in Mumbai, India on November 3, 2015.

Dady Burjorji Mistry, father of Hovi (Burjis) Shroff, grandfather of Dustyn and Kevyn Shroff in Boca Raton, FL on November 12, 2015. (ZAF)

Khorshid Bano Kont, mother of Kayshah Parki, Keimah Parki, Gita Farahi-Far and Shahbahram Parki in Gaithersburg, MD on November 27, 2015.

Shahriar Behzadian, 93, husband of Parichehr Behzadian, father of Fereshteh, Farshid, Farhang, Faroborz and Farinaz in Tehran, Iran on December 2, 2015 (ZSWS)

Sarvar Bastani, 89, mother of Shirin Jahanian in Iran. (ZAPANJ)

Soonu Keki Kharadi, mother of Darius and Rohinton (Roy) Kharadi on December 9, 2015 (ZSO)

Dolat Jehangir Cama, 104, mother of Cawas (Nelly) and Naval (Maharukh), grandmother of Tenaz Cama, Sherry (Steven) Bunt, Parizad (Anthony) Torres **Dilnavaz and Goolshan Cama**, Great grandmother of Mackenzie, Steven and Priya in Kingston, NY on December 12, 2015. (ZAGNY).

Naju Langdana, wife of Burjor, mother of Zarrin John-Paul, Ron, Meher, Karen and Eric. grandmother of Ashton, Jake, Sarah, Paige, Quinn in Toronto, on December 12, 2015

Aspi Divecha, husband of Villy, father of Shaun, Narius, Neville, and Daniel in Toronto, Ont., on December 22, 2015.

Dinsoo Rivetna, 73, wife of Dara Rivetna. mother of Zubin (Roxanna), Jehan (Chris) Bell, grandmother of Xerxes, sister to Dadi Mistry, Shahrukh Mistry, Ketu Baka and Late Pouru Writer. in Navsari on December 23, 2015

Katie Dhabar, wife of Dadi Dhabar, mother of Neville and Daisy, in Torrence, CA on December 24, 2015.(ZAGNY)

Oovi Irani, wife of Farhad Irani, mother of Shirin (Greg) and Zarir (Nicole) in Willmington, DE, on December 27, 2015 (ZAPANJ)

Minoo N Bamjee husband of late Dinaz, father of Anita (Nadeer) Contractor, Lyla (Ramie) Daroga of Houston, Natasha (Adil) Tarapore, Phiroza (Kaezad) Setna, on January 1, 2015, (Manashni)

Khodadad Jamshidi. 73, husband of Parvin Torki, father of Jehangir, Jamshid, Shirin and Farhad, in LA on January 3, 2016

Jehanbux (Jangoo) Byramji

Divecha, 86, husband of Daulat, brother of Dosubhai and late Khushroo, Dadi. Nargese, Thrity, in Toronto, ON, January 3, 2016. (ZSO)

Katy Billimoria, wife of Minoo, mother of Darius (Ladan) and Cyrus in Montreal on January 20, 2016 (ZAQ)

Jimmy Jahangir Engineer, 78, husband of Meher Soltan, father of Shahnaz and Farhad, grandfather of Kamran, Aryana, in New Westminster, BC on January 5, 2016

PLEASE SEND ALL
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Mahrukhm83@gmail.com

Matrimonials Winter 2015 -

FEZANA JOURNAL will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at RRRivetna@aol.com

Matrimonials

Female, 27, 5' 5", BA (Jai Hind College), post-graduation degree in Mass Media, working as Brand Manager for leading Indian fashion designer in Mumbai. Enjoys traveling, movies and quality time with family and friends. Trained dancer with Shiamak Daver Institute in Mumbai. Contact sister settled in USA at Mailfaa@gmail.com. [F15.58]

Male, 25, 6', M.D. from University of Wisconsin, contact bchindhy66@gmail.com or 920-882-1849. [M15.62]

Female, 37, born and working in Toronto. Attended University in Canada. She leads an active and independent life, enjoys traveling, adventure and entertaining, and has a healthy dose of Zoroastrian customs and values. Seeking a caring spouse who shares her values, and is a well-educated professional. She is willing to settle anywhere in Canada or USA. Contact smoothsail52@gmail.com. [F15.68]

Male, 27, 5' 8", BS in Accounting, working as Accountant in software company in San Francisco. Contact zlahe@yahoo.com. [M15.70]

Female, 24, 5' 4", third year medical student studying to complete M.D. and practice medicine. Contact bchindhy66@gmail.com or 920-882 1849. [F15.74]

Male, 32, 5' 7", Mechanical Engineer, MBA from University of Wisconsin, working in Minneapolis, MN. Navar-martab. Born and brought up in USA. Contact

godiwalla@att.net, 262-527 7312. [M15.75]

Female, 27, 5' 7", M.S. in Life Sciences (Mumbai University), currently pursuing Ph.D. in molecular biology in France. Contact brother in USA at mkootar@gmail.com or father in Mumbai at 91 – 9819999408. [F15.77]

LOOKING FOR A SOUL MATE?

Have you seen the **new user-friendly matrimonial website** created to assist Zarathushtis of all ages. It was made possible through the personal funding assistance of a concerned gentleman in the USA. He writes "Ahura Mazda willing, it will continue forever with my support, and that of other like-minded individuals. There will be no charge for participants." Please visit: www.zoroastrianmatrimony.com

Looking for a Soul Mate? Try these matrimonial sites and services:

www.chaalokaajkariye.com
www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com
www.zoroastrians.net
www.TheParsiMatch.com
www.shaadi.com
www.ParsiMatrimony.com
www.ParsiShaadi.com
www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com
Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com, tel: 91-22-2416 6120.

Obituary

Silloo Jasavala (1928 -2015) &

Kersey Jasavala (1927-2015)

BUILDERS OF THE MODERN ZTFE (ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE)



On 9 November 2015 Kersey Jivanji Jasavala, former President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, passed away, aged 88, exactly six months to the day his beloved wife Silloo had departed in June 2015. Both had been unwell for some time. They leave behind a son Pooroosh and a large extended family, several of whom are based in Canada. Kersey was Kaka to Rumi Jasavala, Past President of the Ontario Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation.(OZCF)

Kersey Jasavala born in Valsad in 1927, was educated in Mumbai and settled with his wife Silloo in Zanzibar who was born and raised in Zanzibar. They migrated to London in 1963. Kersey was a teacher of science and maths by profession while Silloo worked in the British Civil Service and was awarded an MBE on her retirement. Both were ardent community workers

and their generosity and dedication are the stuff of legends. Kersey served the ZTFE as its House Secretary, then its Social Secretary, later as its Vice President and then as its President in 1992. From 1998 to 2006 he served as one of three Trustees of the ZTFE. Silloo was always by his side and the two can be said to have been the builders of the modern ZTFE. During the late 1980s when Kersey was the Social Secretary, he handled community Ghambars and functions attended by 700 people on occasion. This is widely acknowledged as the golden age of community events in London. On 6 November 2011, on the occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the ZTFE, Silloo and Kersey were felicitated by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh for their lifelong services to the community.

Obituary

The hallmark of Silloo and Kersey was their deep humility and a sense of mission. They helped numerous new arrivals from East Africa, from India and from Iran. Kersey was also a talented actor and played the lead in at least a dozen Parsi Nataks in the 1980s and 90s. He was mentor to three recent ZTFE Presidents – Dorab Mistry, Paurush Jila and Malcolm Deboo. There was never a fund raising event or a community gathering where Silloo and Kersey were not active and making a huge silent contribution. Amongst their many generousities was the funding of a tank to supply drinking water to parts of Udvada in 1999.

There is some very interesting history relating to Silloo's family in Zanzibar, something that all Zoroastrians from East Africa should take pride in. Her father Ervad Rustom Sidhwa was an ardent freedom fighter and a leader of Zanzibar's Afro - Shirazi party. As seen in the attached photograph, Ervad Rustom Sidhwa participated in the Freedom Talks with the British Government at Somerset House in 1962 when he accompanied Bwana Abeid Karume who later became the first President of Zanzibar after the Revolution in January 1964. Ervad Sidhwa was a school teacher by profession and passed away in 1973.

Kersey and Silloo carried on in the family tradition of putting service before self. Their titanic contribution towards the modern ZTFE in London will be long remembered.



ZANZIBAR CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE OPENS IN LONDON

Pictured at the opening of the Zanzibar Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House, London recently are, left to right MR WOOL-LEWIS, MR RUSTOM SIDHWA AND BWANA ABEID KARUME – MARCH 1962.
R.3850

***Contributed by Dorab Mistry,
Past President of Zoroastrian Trust
Funds of Europe (ZTFE)***

A New Errad In Houston

Ervad Neville Kanga , son of Kermeen and Shahrukh Kanga , twin brother of Natasha Kanga, Grandson of Perviz and Adi Kanga and Aloo and Dadi Bharthania was ordained as a Navar on Saturday, December 26 (Roj Khorshed, Mah Amardad 1385 YZ) at the Vatcha Gandhi Agiary in Mumbai. Neville learned his Navar prayers under the guidance of Ervad Peshotan Unwalla of Houston, TX.

CONGRATULATIONS ERVAD NEVILLE



The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism,

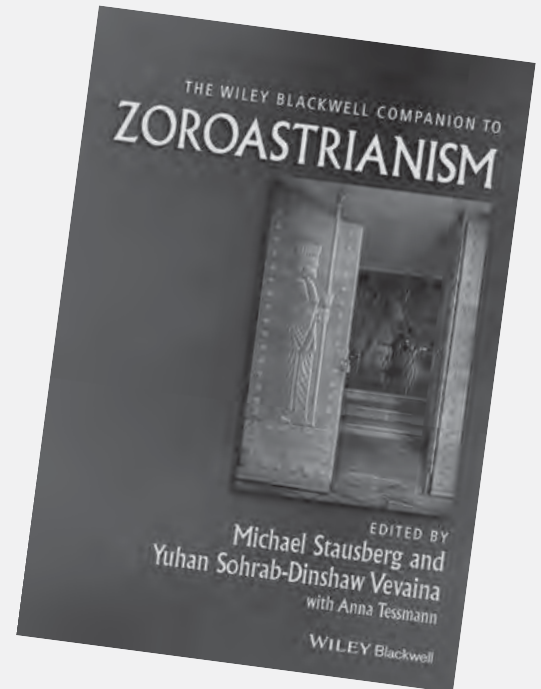
edited by M. Stausberg and Y. S-D. Vevaina with Anna Tessmann.
Malden, Mass./Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015. Pp. 668.
ISBN: 9781444331356

REVIEW BY JESSE S. PALSETIA

The *Companion* highlights the contributions of some thirty-three scholars in the areas of religion and history on Zoroastrianism. The editors identify the central *problema* that has inspired this volume in noting what they believe to be a precipitous decline in the study of Zoroastrianism within the comparative and historical study of religions since perhaps the late nineteenth century, and this volume's attempt to 'redress this situation' by presenting a comprehensive study of the present-day scholarship on Zoroastrianism. The number of scholars dedicated to the study of Zoroastrianism and Parsi history, including as compiled in this volume, might well contradict the editors' *raison de produire* of this volume. In any case, the volume offers a wealth of scholarship on Zoroastrianism from a gamut of scholars. The editors claim to present no single overarching view of Zoroastrianism or its definition; but rather to highlight the scholarship and breadth of studies dedicated to the subject. Indeed, the editors deliberately do not seek to offer a definitive definition of Zoroastrianism; but rather see the 'essential' nature of Zoroastrianism and its scholarship, to be found in the diversity of scholarly and other 'voices', and with no single authoritative voice pronouncing on what Zoroastrianism is. At the same time, the editors provide their own definition of Zoroastrianism as a complex network of dynamic on-going re-creations that its makers—believers and practitioners—are situated within, continually engaged with, and often contesting. The editors' caution reflects the historical reality of Zoroastrianism's long, fragmented and reconstructed history, traditions and scholarship.

The arrangement of the chapters and their subject matter reflect the eclectic approach of the editors and contributors to provide a breadth of perspective aimed towards shaping a fulsome view and scholarly understanding of Zoroastrianism.

PART I "ZARATHUSTRA REVISITED" Includes articles by Frantz Grenet, and Almut Hintze that recreate the historical geographical and linguistic landscape of



Zarathustra's time respectively. This format seeks, as the editors suggest, to avoid making Zarathustra, 'traditionally held to be the founder or prophet of the religion' the central focus of early Zoroastrianism's history and nature, and thereby relegating the great corpus of works and history after Zarathustra as a 'mere footnote to Zarathustra' (xiv). While tradition holds the prophet Zarathustra to be the author of the five *Gatha* hymns that are the central kernel of Zoroastrianism, the *Companion* presents interpretations and understandings of Zarathustra and the cultural landscape of the *Gathas* by the four scholars Helmut Humbach, Jean Kellens, Martin Schwartz, and Prods Oktor Skjærvø. While the question of who was Zarathustra and was he the 'author' of the *Gathas*, the editors note, is a contentious question, the four scholars present a picture of an ancient and complex culture that gave rise to a unique vision of the divine and human's place in society. Stausberg completes Part I with his own interpretation of the historical and culture significance of Zarathustra and his memes since his time and over the millennia.

PART II "PERIODS, REGIONS, AND CONTEXTS" examines the historical settings of Iran, Central Asia, India, and the Far East where Zoroastrianism and its adherents spread and formed communities, with

Books & ARTS

articles by Albert de Jong, Touraj Daryaee, Frantz Grenet, Takeshi Aoki, John R. Hinnells, and Michael Stausberg. The articles offer some fascinating insights into the adaptability of Zoroastrianism and its adherents in various geographical settings over millennia into the Common Era. Indeed, if anything militates against any single definition or normative model of what Zoroastrianism or the typical Zoroastrian community are, the articles detail the historical evolution of Zoroastrian identities. Zoroastrianism emerged as a global religion and unique regional expression comparable to every other great world religion and culture. From the spread of Zoroastrianism from Eastern Afghanistan and Iran to Central Asia, India, and the Far East via both the Silk Road and the seaborne trade, unique Zoroastrian Diasporas formed that created novel cultures, communities, and organizational and material infrastructures and networks.

PART III “STRUCTURES, DISCOURSES, AND DIMENSIONS” examines the theologies, cosmologies, myths, gender identity, and law within Zoroastrianism. Vevaina, Antonio Panaino, Carlo Cereti, Jenny Rose, Maria Macuch, and Mitra Sharafi note various aspects of Zoroastrian and Parsi culture. Once again, Vevaina sets the tone to not simply describe features of Zoroastrianism, such as its deities and their attributes, but rather to provide a sense of the theological culture and nature of Zoroastrianism. The other articles further develop the mythological, gendered and legal nature of Zoroastrianism over the centuries and among its adherents.

PART IV “PRACTICES AND SITES” examines the ethics, prayers, ideas of purity and pollution, rituals, festivals and religious structures of Zoroastrians and the Parsis with articles by Alberto Cantera, Firoze Kotwal, Philip Kreyenbroek, Alan Williams, Michael Stausberg, Ramiyar Karanjia, Jenny Rose, and Jamsheed Choksy. Many interesting details on the state and evolution of Zoroastrian traditions, practices, and perceptions of both are noted from scholarly and religious outlooks of the authors.

PART V “INTERSECTIONS” examines the historical linkages between religious traditions from the Avestan and Vedic period, Zoroastrianism’s connections to Judaism, the Classical World, Ancient Rome, early Christianity, and influences and relations with Manichaeism, Islam, Yezidi and Yarsan traditions, and the Bahā’ī Faith. Articles by P.O. Skjærvø, Yaakov Elman and Shai Secunda, Martin L. West,

Richard Gordon, Marco Frenschkowski, Manfred Hutter, Shaul Shaked, Philip Kreyenbroek, and Moojan Momen follow a historical timeline based on Zoroastrianism’s contact with the other religions and cultures. The articles highlight the long antiquity, intense interactions and influences of Zoroastrianism on other faiths, and the fascination of the latter for not only the ‘Good Religion,’ as pre-modern Zoroastrian sources referred to it, but also the Great Religion.

PART VI “PRIMARY SOURCES” includes a summary of the primary sources on the research on Zoroastrianism in Avestan and Pahlavi, and New Persian and Gujarati as noted by Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo and Daniel Sheffield respectively. The chapter provides a summary of the well-known and less known texts. The chapter highlights the great foundations from which scholarly research and understanding of Zoroastrianism and Parsi studies depend and emanate, and the fragility of the preservation and loss of textual sources and knowledge.

The *Companion* forms a highly valuable work and marshalling of major ideas by some leading scholars in the field on Zoroastrian and Parsi studies. The breadth of its focus achieves the editors’ goal: to provide a broad understanding of the religion, and account for the historical, religious, cultural, and intellectual factors that shaped Zoroastrianism.

Jesse Palsetia is Associate Professor, University of Guelph, Canada
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Editor’s Comment This is the first book of its kind; which assembles almost all senior scholars working on Zoroastrianism and presents many different angles in a systematic manner. This volume will be of value to the NA Zoroastrian community interested in scholarship on Zoroastrianism. A book for all associations to have in their libraries.

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina is faculty at the Religious Studies Dept, Lecturer : Zoroastrianism and Ancient and Late Antique, Stanford University, FEZA-NA and the North American Associations and some individual community members in India and NA have been supporting the teaching position of Vevaina at Stanford since 2010 till 2016. Additional funding could support the position for three more years beyond 2016

Sponsorship

By Ardi Kolah. Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group); 320 Pages; \$67.95 ISBN:978-0-415-63789-3
Reviewed by Rohinton Deputy

Brand owners need to rewire their thinking in order to make sponsorship the most effective component of the marketing mix.

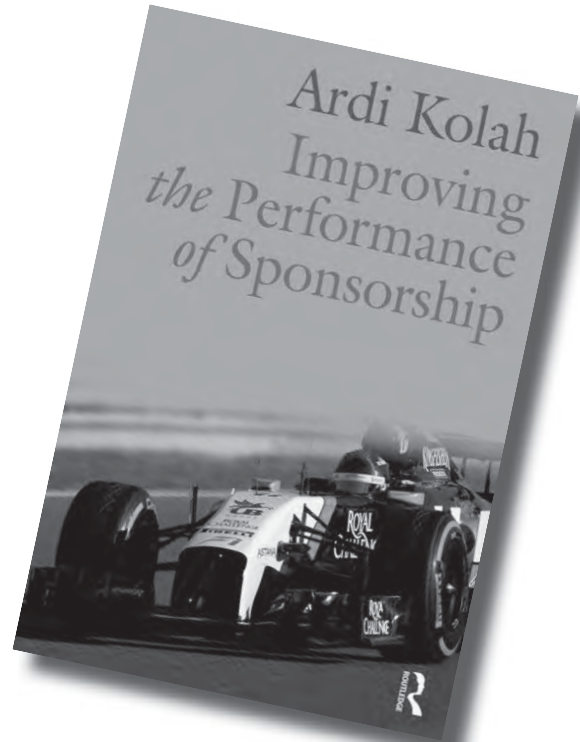
Sponsorship is one of the most powerful promotional tools in the business of brand creation, recognition, and ultimately in increasing sales. This new book will guide you through essentials of running successful sponsorship programs. Ardi Kolah is a highly respected individual and is the "guru" in the field of sponsorship.

The author Kolah is a senior visiting lecturer on sponsorship, marketing and public relations at Henley Business School, Cass Business School, Kingston University Business School and the London Guildhall Faculty of Business and Law, UK.

The book will assist the right holders and brand owners to have a thorough understanding and appreciation of the strategic importance and value of sponsorship as part of the marketing mix to help them drive sustainable, profitable growth of these businesses and organizations. Ardi clearly articulates why the world's oldest and most dominant form of sponsorship is sport and entertainment

It accounts for 80% of all sponsorship globally. How sports unite people in a way that politics never can. How the 'big data' is exploited by the sports right holders to gain a competitive advantage for many years, and how sports can teach business and its sponsors. Mr. Kolah builds on the extensive work he undertook for the UK Government in relation to the 2012 Olympic games. The Olympic games were an achievement in athletic, organizational and for the global and national sponsors associated with them. Brand owners have a wide range of brand communications and marketing options, so a rights holder must provide a robust business case as to what the sponsorship opportunity will deliver, compared to other alternatives.

How Brand owners should choose highly related sponsorship properties where the connection is natural. Sponsorship is about intelligent activation and how the budget is spent rather than the size of the activation budget. A sponsor brand has to be experienced.



Social and mobile sit at the heart of effective sponsorship activation and provide digital dividends.

Mr. Kolah demonstrates creative thinking in sponsorship in different companies, sectors and countries through several case studies. How Coca-Cola fused popular DJ culture with sport to produce a video based on five London 2012 Olympic hopefuls from around the world – where they live, work and play. Other real life case studies: Adidas, Absolut Vodka and Lady Gaga, Red Bull, Samsung and many more. Brands must seek to connect creativity with technology. To fail to understand sponsorship is to fail to understand marketing. The book provides the blueprint for improving sponsorship. Blatant advertising and over commercialization have been replaced by compelling content which is relevant and meaningful for the audience. How can we distinguish ambush marketing from smart marketing? It is refreshing to see chapters dedicated to ethical issues in sponsorship, and Corporate Social

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Responsibility. Responsibilities of food, drinks, gambling, alcohol, and tobacco brand owners. Each chapter in the book starts with What is In this Chapter, Introduction, ends with a Chapter at a glance, Questions for discussion, Further reading, Website and Reports. This layout will be very helpful to the readers.

The author Ardi Kolah has over 20 years of experience in the sponsorship industry and holds the prestigious UK Sponsorship Award. Fellow of several professional institutes, elected member of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. Kolah's Improving the Performance of Sponsorship takes a holistic view – it is an incredibly comprehensive reference full of case studies, figures, informative data,

best practices, and a powerful model. This excellent book is a MUST read for professionals, entrepreneurs, marketers, budding marketers and students involved in brand building and sponsorship programs.

Rohinton K. Deputy lives in Sugar Land, Texas with his wife Mahrukh. He is a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) and serves on the Executive Committee and on the Investment Management Team.

My Mother Used to Say

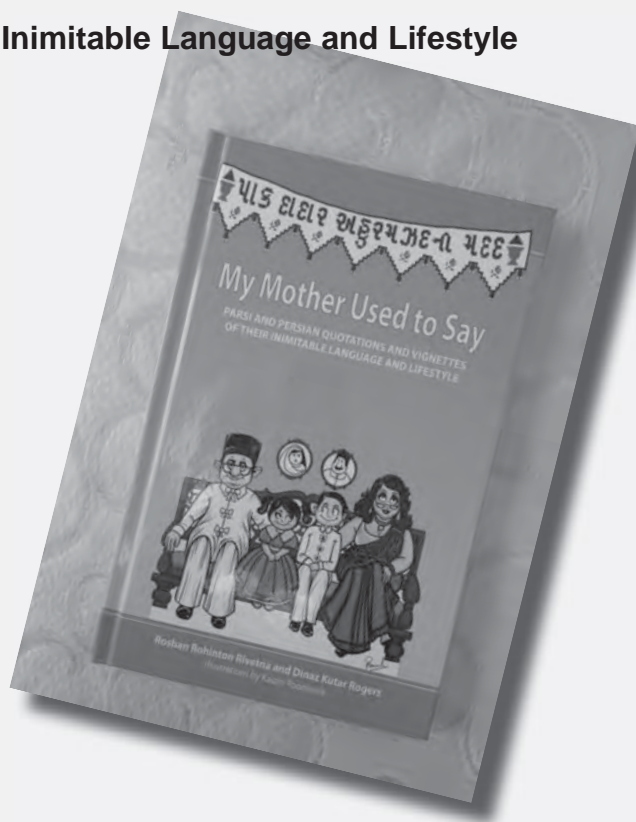
Parsi and Persian Quotations and Vignettes of their Inimitable Language and Lifestyle

by Roshan Rohinton Rivetna and Dinaz Kutar Rogers
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Hardcover, published by FEZANA, 2015.

\$10+shipping (shipping in USA is \$4 per book plus 50c for each additional book)

To order contact FEZANA Office, Zenobia Damania, admin@fezana.org
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This delightful compilation captures and records, lest future generations growing up in the West forget, priceless heirlooms – from Parsi and Persian quotations and fun phrases to timeless words of wisdom. It is a great way to remind and regale those who grew up on the Indian subcontinent and Iran about a part of their heritage they left behind. New generations born and raised in the Western Diaspora will be enlightened and entertained, and all readers will appreciate the wisdom our parents and grandparents dispensed in their own incomparable way.



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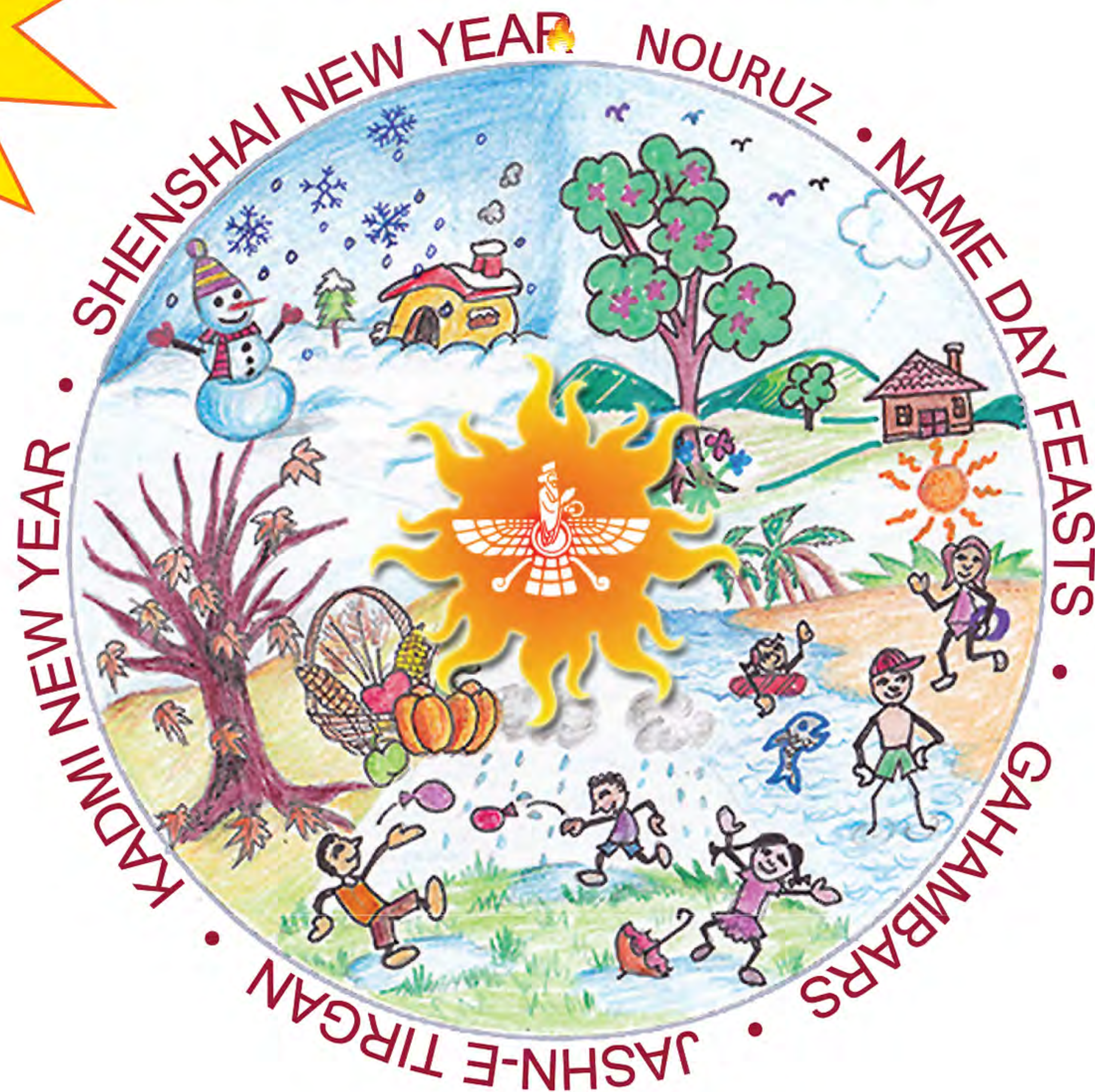
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New Children's Book Announcement



Let's Celebrate Zoroastrian Festivals



A Book for Children

by

The Children of
Zoroastrian Association of North Texas

March 2016

The children of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) have written and illustrated a book on Zoroastrian Festivals. This book is a "must have" for every Zoroastrian home library and we urge our community to purchase this Special Limited Edition for your own family and friends.

Please support our children's hard work and effort in raising funds for the ZANT Center Operation and Maintenance fund.

The book is available from ZANT for a donation of \$15 or more (checks to be made to ZANT). Please contact Pearl P. Balsara in Plano, Texas (ppbalsara@gmail.com) for more information.



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