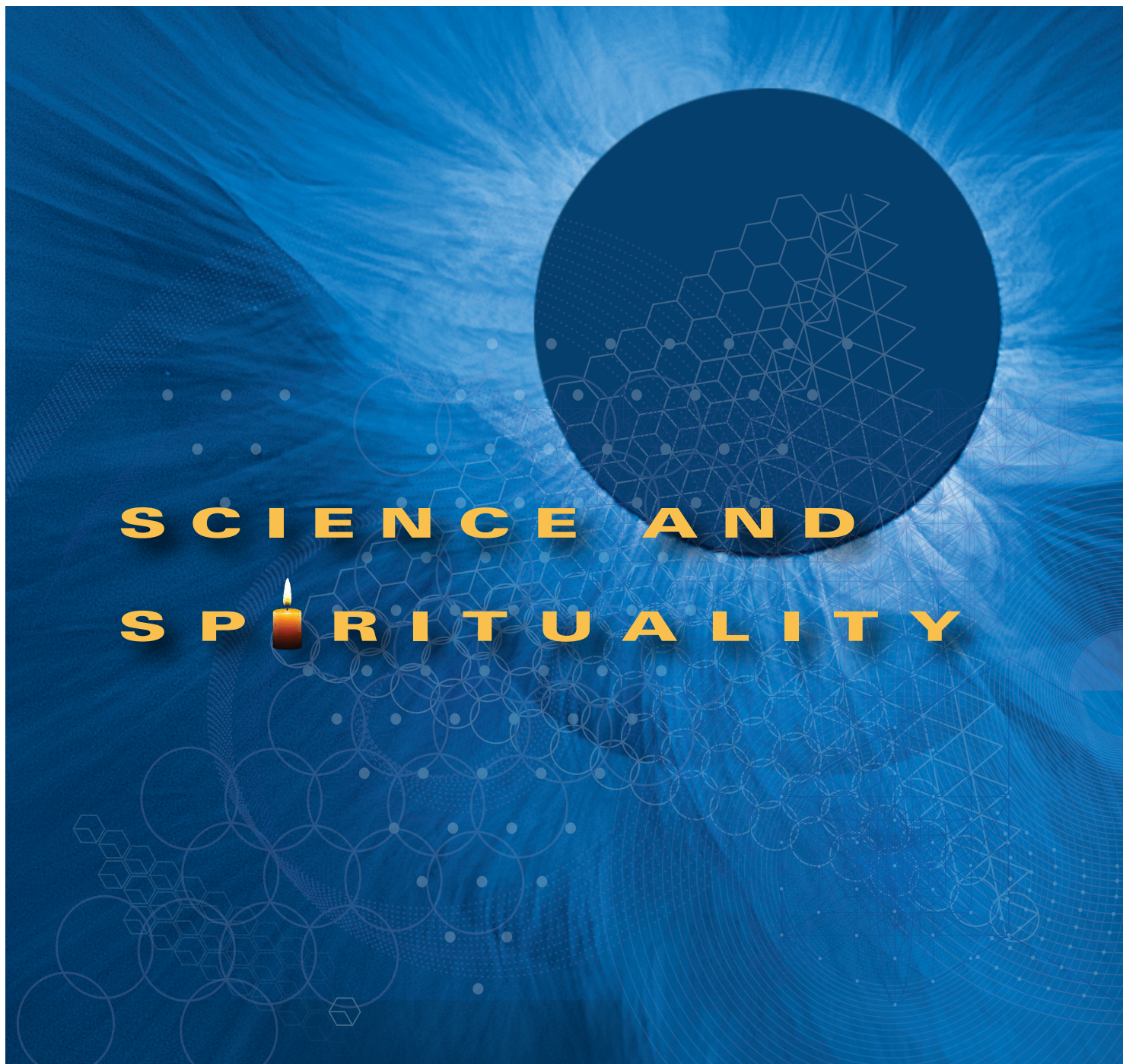


# JOURNAL

Mehr–Avan–Adar 1386 AY (Fasli) • Ardebehesht–Khordad–Tir 1387 AY (Shenshai) • Khordad–Tir–Amordad 1387 AY (Kadimi)





*With Best Compliments  
From  
The Incorporated Trustees  
Of the  
Zoroastrian Charity Funds  
of  
Hong Kong, Canton & Macao*





## - CONTENT -

- 02 Editorial Dolly Dastoor
- 03 Message from the President
- 04 FEZANA update
- 20 SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY



- 46 In the News
- 63 Personal Profile
- 65 Milestones
- 67 Books and Arts

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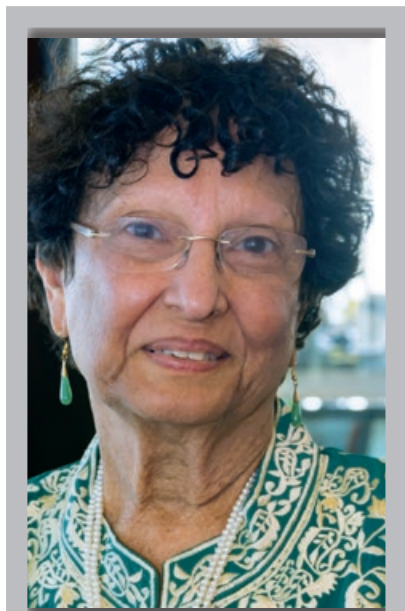


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WINTER 2017  
SADEH  
SPRING 2018  
EMERGING LEADERS OF N. A  
GUEST EDITOR  
EDUL DAVER

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When we conceived of the idea for the cover story for this issue Science and Spirituality, it was all theoretical and in the abstract. Little did we know that August and September would bring that concept in actuality. We had the total solar eclipse where we saw nature in all its glory and our spirituality in seeing this phenomenon was touched.

Then a few weeks later came Hurricane Harvey hitting Texas especially Houston with all its destructive force, flattening all in its path, causing millions of dollars of destruction of property and lives, traumatizing people. Then came Hurricane Irma, in Florida causing havoc in that sunshine state. And the forest fires in British Columbia and California burnt hectares of forests and claimed lives. We have first person accounts from Zarathushtis who went through that trauma, and how the community came together.

These were all humbling experiences. But it brought out the best in us, our humanity and spirituality unfolded itself in helping our neighbour and the stranger carrying the elderly and babies and toddlers across the surging

waters. Natural disasters can be real equalizers. But it could have been much worse if science and scientific knowledge had not prepared us in advance of the impending path of the hurricanes, by compelling us to build better and stronger houses to withstand the force of the winds,

The authors of this issue are all scientific experts in their own fields who all believed and practiced spirituality as interpreted through the Gathas, assembled by our guest editor Dr Ervad Jehan Bagli, who is himself a scientist of renown and a practicing scholarly priest. Dr Jamshed Goshtasbi and his daughter explained the meaning of service in the Gathas and how that transcends spirituality. Dr Soroosh Sorooshian and his son Dr Armin Sorooshian explain how the Gathas help them understand the laws of nature, Dr Natalie Gandhi discusses her hypothetical character's inner turmoil in resolving the conflict between science and spirituality, Dr Shirin Cama looks for hope in the spirituality and urges her fellow physicians to incorporate spirituality

and religion in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and physical health. Dr Bagli himself espouses the value of spirituality, in the healing process for all human beings. Astad Pastakia sees spirituality as a journey that implies a quest for deeper meaning in life. And finally Dr Lovji Cama talks of Spirituality Zoroastrianism and science.

In this issue we also publish two surveys on the meaning and value of one's religion, how important the religion is. The survey results are quite astonishing. Do read. Zgoldies program at ZAGNY is progressing well. Very interesting to see the elderly interacting and enjoying their days off!! The Solar panel project for the ZAGNY Dar e mehr is complete and an inspiration to other associations.

This has been a very traumatic quarter, challenging us to face natural disasters and sudden deaths. But we hope and pray that better days are coming.

Till then

Dolly Dastoor

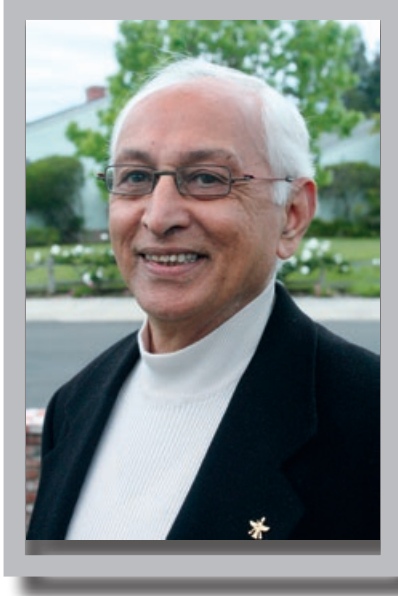
## FEZANA JOURNAL NEW COOKBOOK PROMOTION!

The new digital **FEZANA** journal can be read on any mobile device! Our promotion offers a choice of two cookbooks to all who purchase a new, renewed or gift subscriptions, (print or digital) while supplies last.

Select a free sumptuous traditional Persian recipe cookbook with compliments from IZA, or a Parsi cookbook from ParsiCuisine.com (recipes, videos and more) with mouth watering Parsi recipes.

Visit [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) to subscribe or gift the digital version to younger family members.





Dear Friends,

I have always been interested in visiting the old cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, and recently I had the opportunity to do so as part of a tour of Uzbekistan. During the trip, we visited many archaeological sites from Akchakan Kala near Nukus in the west to Afrosiab in Samarkand. The interest in studying ancient Iran, including Zoroastrianism, is widespread, and our community should collaborate with these scholars to enhance the information documented by these studies.

The details of the archeological excavations in this region and their history are chronicled in the FEZANA Journal issue focused on Zoroastrians in Central Asia (Summer/June 2014). In Uzbekistan, I was impressed by the strong desire of archeologists, museum directors, guides, and even laypersons in the area, to unravel the history and culture of the past and present our heritage to the world. Dr. Alison Betts, an archaeologist from Australia, who has been working in Nukus area for the last 25+ years, said to us, “this belongs to humanity, this belongs to you, Zoroastrians, and we are trying to

explore and give back to you”.

There is a growing academic interest in studying ancient Iran, including the influence of Zoroastrianism. The SOAS University of London recently secured a £5 million donation to create the world-leading SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies. An Italian scholar is currently visiting India to learn Gujarati, so that she can translate old Gujarati manuscripts and analyze Zoroastrian history and customs from ancient times to the present. One scholar has said that the most immediate concerns facing Zoroastrian communities everywhere is “the need to document those aspects of the religion that are fading fast once the religion’s adherents leave Iran and India - particularly (Dari and Gujarati) oral histories/stories/poetry and domestic rituals.”

In North America in the last decade, many universities have expanded programs that focus on ancient Iranian history and languages. The Iranian Studies Initiative at University of Southern California started out with Persian language courses and will soon offer a Major in Iranian Studies. The Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at University of Toronto (Canada), which offers courses on Zoroastrianism, is now looking to expand its scope by investing in research and teaching positions focused on the Avesta and Pahlavi languages as well. University of California-Irvine offers courses in Ancient Iranian History and plans to expand into Ancient Iranian Art and Archaeology. In April 2017, University of California-Los Angeles

established the Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World, the first center in the Western Hemisphere that aims to advance the knowledge of ancient Iranian languages, history and religions.

How will our community respond to this tremendous interest in ancient Iran and Zoroastrianism?

In North America, we should set up an Institute of Zoroastrian Studies, which would study our past right through to the development of the Zoroastrian religion as it is lived today. Zoroastrian communities should, with the guidance and help of academic institutions, create an organized body of work, which documents our history and contemporary existence from various sources, including oral histories from learned elders. Let this body of work documenting our past and tracing our development into the present community, in its various forms, be our gift to our community and our world.

*Atha Jamiyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamah!*  
May it be so even as we wish it!

United Nations Day, 2017

*Homi D. Jandhu*



## THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ZOROASTRIAN UNITY CUP- A SIZZLING SUCCESS!

NIMA PATEL

Labor Day Weekend in Southern California is synonymous with backyard barbeques and bustling beaches, but this year the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) had the pleasure of hosting another Labor Day tradition – the 10<sup>th</sup> Zoroastrian Unity Cup soccer tournament in Redondo Beach, CA! And despite the record-setting heat, the fierce competition witnessed over the two-day event was perhaps the best in the decade-plus long history of the tournament.

In all, nine adult teams and four youth teams participated, making up a total of just under 100 athletes with origins as close as LA and San Diego, and as far away as Toronto, Canada. ZSC's core mission to unite folks near and far is continually manifested through the success of these events, where participation by people of all ages from all places reinforces the cause and validates the values upon which the committee was built.

This year's games, 23 in all, had no shortage of highlights. With a pool-play format consisting 3 groups of 3 teams in



Above  
Team Verahram  
The champions  
On left  
Team Chilli Peppers  
2<sup>nd</sup> place  
On Right  
Team SDZ 3<sup>rd</sup> place







the adult division, there was much at stake for all teams playing on Day 1. Unfortunately, one team was eliminated after pool play, leaving 8 teams battling it out in the sudden death playoff rounds on Day 2. In the end, only one team survived the grueling heat and stood as champion. This year, that distinction went to Team Verahram, a squad made up of members residing in all parts of California coming together to prove that teamwork doesn't have to have a single home base. Coming in second and third place were Team Chili Peppers and SDZ, respectively, whose members included folks from Southern and Northern California, and Canada.

While the winning teams had their time to shine, the extraordinary contributions of several individual players were also featured as an important factor in the success of this year's tournament. **Amir Shoberi** (Best Goalie), **Payam Khorramshahi** (Best Sportsmanship), and **Parham Oshidari** (Most Valuable Player) stood out by demonstrating that great leadership lies in setting positive examples and playing the game the right way.



Youth teams, split into two divisions (ages 7-10 and 10-15), from San Diego, Orange County and Los Angeles, played in four action-packed games resulting in all players going home with a trophy. Photo above.

While the core members of ZSC spent several months planning the event, marketing the games, and fine-tuning logistics, it's the contributions of our community that truly acts as the oil that allows ZSC's engine to operate. This year's tournament highlighted the willingness of our fellow Zoroastrians to shine in any role – whether it was manning the first-aid station, helping chase down balls, fill up water coolers, help pass out lunch, monitor the games, or donate their tents and chairs, our volunteers have always been and will continue to be key to the success of these games.

In addition to donating manhours, financial contributions from our community is an equally important facet to any successes we see. Being a nonprofit organization, ZSC relies wholly on donations from the generous community members. The funds received this year went directly into the tournament, allowing us to maintain the professional level of play all the participants have come to expect.

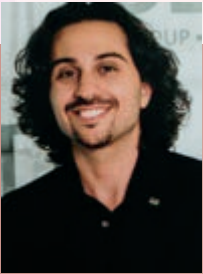
All involved - be it the players, the volunteers, donators, and the spectators - played an equally important role in making



this one of the most successful and smoothest run tournaments in ZSC's 27-year history. The fulfillment of our mission to provide a forum through which friendly competition can cultivate long lasting unity is what keeps the vision intact and allows us to look ahead with a sense of pride to what's upcoming.

We hope to carry the momentum of the success of the 10th Unity Cup into the 16th Z Games in 2018, to be held in Southern California during the week of 4th of July 2018. If you wish to receive updates please email us at [ZSC@FEZANA.ORG](mailto:ZSC@FEZANA.ORG) to be added to our mailing list. Please also pay attention to updates on Facebook (@ZSC) as we release more details in the coming months.

Remember, it's never too early to start preparing. Sports offered at the 16th Games include basketball, volleyball, track & field, swimming, and more! If you're interested in volunteering for the Z Games, please feel free to reach out to us anytime via email or Facebook! See you all next Summer in LA!



*Nima Patel is a structural engineer by profession but a sportsman at heart. He has been involved with ZSC events as a young teenager, but joined the committee as sports coordinator in 2013 and was named President in 2016. Anyone who knows him knows he loves sports, and the idea of uniting our community through competition is a brilliant one, he would do anything he can to help promote it.*

## ADVANCE NOTICE FEZANA JOURNAL SPRING 2018 EMERGING ZARATHUSHTI LEADERS OF NORTH AMERICA- GUEST EDITOR EDUL DAVER

Zarathushti's in North America are doing very well with many Young Adults on the threshold of Leadership positions. The FEZANA Journal would like to feature these Emerging Leaders in the Spring 2018 issue. We plan on featuring two levels of leadership (a) those under 35 yrs and (b) those between 35 – 45 yrs. If you would like to be considered for inclusion or know who should be considered please contact Edul Daver, [eduldaver@gmail.com](mailto:eduldaver@gmail.com); 908-397-4443. with their name and e-mail address. We plan on featuring 15 movers and shakers who will no doubt make our community proud in the not too distant future. Your help to make this issue a success is much appreciated.

Thanks,

Edul Daver [eduldaver@gmail.com](mailto:eduldaver@gmail.com) 908-397-4443





## “UNITY & WELFARE” COMMITTEE UPDATE

**The *Unity & Welfare Committee*, established in 2002, is a FEZANA committee designed to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters or domestic violence issues.**

Although based in North America, the committee works for the global community.

This quarter our primary work has been focused on:

1. Working with our member associations in Houston and Florida for assistance with recovery from two devastating Hurricanes
2. Working with our non-profit partner, WZO Trust, in India on two medical appeals

We provide for you below an update on these recent appeals:

### **HURRICANES HARVEY & IRMA:**

In Houston approximately 11 Zarathushti families have been affected by the Hurricane. Hurricane Irma in Florida affected only one Zarathushti family. FEZANA and the member associations are working with the families to provide assistance as required.

### **ERVAD SOHRAB BHARUCHA**

Er. Sohrab Bharucha met with a major accident at Nargol on April 23, 2017 where he had sustained severe injuries to his head and brain. He was brought from Nargol and admitted to Saifee Hospital in Mumbai in ICU in very serious condition.

Although we are pleased to report that Er. Sohrab has recovered from his injuries, we are mindful that he will require long term physiotherapy and speech therapy. It will take him a long time to be able to pursue his profession as a ‘Mobed’.

### **ASPI SEPOY:**

Aspi Sepoy, employed as caretaker at Foundation for Development of Udvada’s Zoroastrian Information Centre met with an accident at the railway platform in Udvada, where both his legs were crushed. Aspi was rushed to the Govt. Civil Hospital at Valsad where Dr. Jamshed Bunshah performed the surgery and both of Aspi’s legs were amputated right above his knees.

It needs to be acknowledged that Dr. Jamshed Bunshah has displayed immense magnanimity by waiving his professional fees, not only for the surgery and his daily visits, but will also be treating Aspi gratis once the process of fixing prosthetic legs will be undertaken.

### **OUR GRATITUDE:**

The FEZANA executive, the FEZANA Welfare & Unity Committee, our FEZANA partner in India the WZO Trust and the Bharucha & Sepoy Families would like to extend the deepest gratitude to all our donors and well-wishers for showing us your unconditional trust and coming together so quickly to help both Er. Sohrab Bharucha & Aspi Sepoy.

**Houtoxi Contractor** – [huty.contractor@gmail.com](mailto:huty.contractor@gmail.com)

**Hosi Mehta** -- [hosimehta@aol.com](mailto:hosimehta@aol.com)

**Freyaz Shroff** -- [freyaz@kurniv.com](mailto:freyaz@kurniv.com)



## Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington

### ELECTS A NEW BOARD

On Saturday, September 23rd, a general body meeting was convened at the Kamran Dar-e Mehr at which a new ZAMWI Board was elected for the term October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019.

The new officers of ZAMWI are:

President:	Anne Khademian;	Vice President:	Jamshid Parsinejad;
Secretary:	Mahnaz Marolia	Joint Secretary:	Pegah Emami
Treasurer:	Behnaz Mistry	Joint Treasurer:	Jamshid Dehghanian
Trustee-at-Large:	Mehrdad Izadyar		

Photo below

**MESSAGE FROM Navroz Gandhi, out-going president who served ZAMWI very admirably for four years.**

I would like to thank all Board members, the Mobeds and Mobedyars of our community, Avesta Class teachers, Sazeman Zanan, the Youth Committee, the Dar-e Mehr Operations Committee (DOC), the

Kamran family, and all volunteers and donors who have worked so hard to bring ZAMWI to where it is today. It has been a pleasure leading the community these past 4 years. Much has been accomplished to bring and keep our Zarathushti community together and thriving in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. And, I'm sure much more will be accomplished under this new

ZAMWI Board.

Please join me in congratulating the new ZAMWI officers on their election. Also, please be patient with us as the old Board transitions and hands off stuff to the new Board over the next few weeks.

Best regards,  
Navroz



#### ZAMWI Board 2017-2019

From left to right: Jamshid Parsinijaad – VP; Mahnaz Marolia-- Secretary ; Behnaz Mistry-- Treasurer Mehraban Izadyar-- Trustee at large Anne Khademian -- President ; Jamshid Dehghanian-- Jt Treasurer Pegah Emami -- Jt Treasurer





## NEW YORK DAR-E-MEHR

### SOLAR SYSTEM COMMISSIONED ON JULY 27, 2017

**EDUL DAVER and NINA MISTRY**



much longer than the estimated six years. In an effort to overcome these challenges, Edul Daver worked with A Javan (AJ) of GeoPeak for over a year to find a third party investor. However, all efforts seemed futile since the project was considered to be commercial and relatively too small to get investors excited.

It was then decided that the best option was to find a group of people within our community who would form a Company, invest the monies, take the incentives, and supply DMZT with solar generated electricity at a discounted price and later, when most of the investment had been recouped, consider selling the assets to DMZT. This proposal was explained and an email communication distributed to the community inviting potential investors for the project.

We were pleasantly surprised when we immediately



With the construction of our new Dar-e-Mehr building complete, we set our sights on Phase II needs and enhancements. A Solar System to generate electricity for our Dar-e-Mehr was on our wish list.

Zoroastrian values embody respect for the environment and action to revert climate change. Looking back, many of our customs and traditions are designed to align with these modern concepts. A solar system would not only reduce electricity costs and thus overall maintenance costs for our Dar-e-Mehr, it would also impact our environment positively and be in keeping with our scriptures and faith traditions.

We worked with GeoPeak Energy, a company we are familiar with since they had installed home solar systems for some members of our community. GeoPeak estimated the cost of a solar system for our Dar-e-Mehr to range between \$150-\$200,000, and after taking into account Federal & State incentives, the pay-back period was estimated to be about six years.

The first challenge was to raise funds required for this project. We were cognizant of the fact that the tri-state community suffered donor fatigue having stepped up to the plate to raise approx. \$5.5 million for the recently completed new Dar-e-Mehr building. The second challenge was that DMZT, being a non-profit, could not benefit from the tax credits & incentives, making the pay back period



got seven (7) individuals willing to invest a total of \$156,000, including two individuals who are not even from the NY area but feel strongly that our solar project is a novel idea and is in keeping with our Zoroastrian values. Total project costs were firming up at \$168,000 and with a \$22,000 rebate from NY State the net project cost to investors would be \$146,000.

There was considerable work required to form ZSolar LLC, have a partners agreement, Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with DMZT, quarterly NY state reports etc. GeoPeak helped with the Request For Quotations (RFQ), specified the equipment and reviewed the contract on our behalf, all at no cost, as a favor due to AJ's relationship with and respect for our Zoroastrian community.



The solar system installation contract was awarded to RGS Energy and a detailed contract drawn up. The installation was carried out flawlessly without any hurdles and as of July 27, 2017 the solar system is in operation at our Dar-e-Mehr.

DMZT will currently receive electricity with a saving of about 35% and in a few years when it acquires the assets about 93% of its needs would come from solar energy with a cost saving of about \$10,000 per year.

### Facts about the Solar System:

- The System Power Rating is 58.4 KW DC System.
- It utilizes 172 Canadian Solar Panels and 3 Fronius Inverters.
- The solar generation will be 65,000 kwh (or 93% of theoretical needs)
- We have a net metering system arrangement with the Utility Company, which means that when we generate more electricity than what is used we feed it back to the grid and our meter runs in reverse (there will be some months when we generate more than we use and in winter we will likely generate less than we use, making it necessary that we conserve energy when possible and not get into a frame of mind that we can use more electricity because we have a solar system.

***“The Magnificent Seven” has proven to be a very workable model that should be an inspiration and considered by other Associations, especially those that are in States offering “Net Metering” and other renewable energy incentives, here in the USA.***

***Edul Daver*** attended the Doon School, IIT-Bombay and UW-Madison. He joined Alcan Metal Powders in NJ, as a Powder Metallurgist, becoming President and then leading a MLBO in 1995 to form ACuPowder International LLC. ACuPowder which become the #1 Copper Powder Co. in NA before being sold to Platinum Equity in 2010. Edul retired in 2012. Edul is intimately involved with the New NY Dar-e-Mehr Initiative and since 2015 has been the President of World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce.

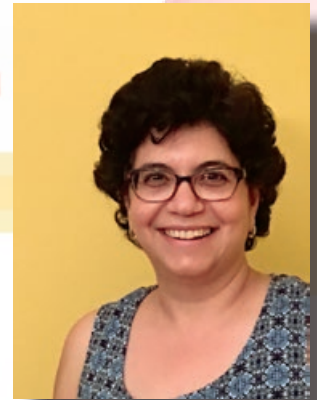
***Nina Mistry*** is a New York State licensed real estate salesperson. She is an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and has been involved on the Fundraising Committee for the new NY Dar-e-Mehr.





## Z GOLDIES PROGRAM AT ZAGNY NEW YORK

**Nawaz Merchant**



**T**he Z GOLDies program was launched in December 2016, as an outcome of a **Population Needs Assessment of the Zarathushti Community commissioned by FEZANA**. Initially created by Yasmin Ghadiali, Nawaz Merchant and Piroja Press, volunteers Teshtar Irani, Keki Dadachanji and Yasmin Pavri have joined the team which now includes 91 members,

This research identified the need for a transportation coordinator role, and diverse activities in the local area as being key to engagement and keeping active. Increased engagement and participation is associated with improved physical and mental health.

It suggested that by building small groups of friends, Zarathushtis can avail of the local events held by senior centers, Persian and Indian associations, etc. Our program seeks to increase activity level and engagement through community participation and companionship.

**Launch:** On Dec 11 2016, despite impending snowfall, 45 seniors met in the new Pomona *Dar e Mehr*. The group voted to adopt the name **Zarathushti Goldies**, ( abbreviated to **Z-GOLDies**).

The NY-NJ-CT area is quite large, with groups in Northern NJ, Central and South NJ, Manhattan including Queens and Long Island, Westchester plus upstate NY, Connecticut and nearby NY towns. Friends groups formed over the years constitute a natural support system.

Members from each area sat together to decide upon activities that they would like to participate in. Yasmin Ghadiali and Teshtar Irani volunteered as Transportation Coordinators for the group. **Ervad Parvez Patel performed an Atash Niyesh to bless the occasion and the launch of this effort.** (photo page 12)



All present enjoyed a selection of golden oldie songs (lyrics earlier shared by Rusi Sorabji for the FEZANA Journal).



Members read the words of the songs and sang along with Sinatra, Streisand and Julie Andrews, followed by requests for old favorites in English, Gujarati, Farsi etc. The afternoon included a delicious lunch cooked by volunteers.

Our seniors also donated non-perishable food items for the Food Pantry, (People to People of Rockland). Four large boxes of canned goods were donated to the Rockland County in January. 2017.

Future events planned were a Housie-Chaat Food Party, and Golden-Oldies music dance with families and grand-kids. Talks on health



and wellness topics, computer and phone shortcuts and other topics were also requested.

## Yoga talk and class with Keki Dadachanji

On March 3, 2017, a small group met at a members' home to learn about Yoga, the philosophy, practice and the origins of Yoga. The group enjoyed a yoga class by Keki (Certified Yoga Instructor) and a discussion on history, asanas and pranayamas (breathing exercises) followed by scrumptious dinner. The group is presently seeking a daytime location in North Jersey.

## SOUTH JERSEY GROUP

Retiree Jasmin Kotwal has been holding a yoga class at her home twice a week for a group of friends in South Jersey. This effort was ongoing prior to the Z GOLDies and was offered to the Z GOLDie group as well.

The Z Goldies Spring Event on 9th April 2017 included a chair yoga session called "Yoga for All" with Jasmin Kotwal who led the group of about 40 seniors in a series of seated and standing yoga moves to build strength and balance, as well as relieve



stress. Next, the group played a few rounds of Housie with prizes donated by Yasmin Ghadiali, as well as other friends and members, and they relished a meal of Bhel Puri, Dahi vada and more.

## LADY MOBEDYARS IN TRAINING AT THE Z GOLDIES SPRING EVENT

Our group was privileged to attend a very special event. For the first time, the *atash niyesh* prayer was led by Ervad Pervez Patel and two Lady Mobedyars in training, Teshtar Irani and Khurshid Mehta. These two lady mobedyars from ZAGNY are learning to perform prayers for Jashans and other ceremonies under the tutelage of Ervad Pervez Patel. It was heartwarming to see ladies from our own group perform this prayer to bless our congregation. (photo page 13)







Over a decade ago, the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) created the Mobediar/Mobediyar program to address the shortage of priests for prayer services in some areas. Mobediars are lay persons who apprentice with an experienced priest in order to learn the prayers for specific ceremonies (prayers for the deceased, Jashan to bless the home, for example). Presently North America has three Lady Mobediar. At least three others are learning the requisite prayers.

Ervad Pervez Patel states that *“Anyone who is willing to join the program may contact me for details. The time and effort put in by them for this worthy cause (especially by those who have recently retired from workplaces), will be appreciated by the community. ZAGNY appreciates the initiative of Mrs. Teshtar Irani and Mrs. Khursheed Mehta.”*

## TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

This spring the team conducted a survey of Zarathushtis in the greater New York region. 43 responses included individuals who identified as infrequent visitors to the Dar E Mehr due to distance, and requested rides to attend services and events.

**KEY RESULTS:** 52% of respondents attend ‘regularly’ while 48% attend Dar-e-Mehr infrequently. Most (79%) want to join major events while a few want to attend every month. 18 individuals were seeking rides, and 21 can give rides. Some would like to car-pool due to the distance. Yasmin and Teshtar attempted to match up rides, then solicited bids from taxi and mini-bus services, and located a service in Pomona which is cost-efficient for those who wish to travel from Manhattan (\$35 for a round trip, as long as 7 or more individuals participate).



**UPCOMING Events** include making blankets for **Project Linus** (and canned food drive) scheduled on **Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. Teams will make a baby blanket for children in need in this fun no-stitch project.

In just nine months, the Z GOLDies group has enjoyed a number of activities, and opportunities for members to socialize and deepen relationships. We thank the volunteers who make this happen, and the members for their enthusiasm, fellowship and hum-bandhagi. Ushta Te!

**Nawaz Merchant** is a consultant in Market Research, Analysis and Marketing. After twenty years in the biopharma industry leading various analytical teams, she consults bio-pharm organizations and technology firms seeking to serve them. She volunteers with FEZANA and Shine and Inspire, a local non-profit, and enjoys creative writing on historical and immigrant topics.





## WALK IN REMEMBRANCE OF 9/11 UNITES WASHINGTONIANS

### Share America

Article from the US Department of State, appears on...

<https://share.america.gov/walk-in-remembrance-of-9-11-unites-washingtonians/>

The TV crew from the US Department recorded the entire event, broadcast to the Middle East. Several walkers, including Zoroastrians, were interviewed by WTOP radio.

The *Sazman e Zenan*, (Zarathushti women's leadership group), brought *shirini* (sweets) which was shared at the resource tables and the Zoroastrian booth. The pamphlet, ***Who are the Zoroastrians***, proved very popular.

To begin the walk on September, 2017 Mobedyar Hormuzd Katki, Ph.D recited one of the favourite Zoroastrian scriptures of Mahatma Gandhi, Thanks to *Erv Soli Dastur* for guidance (see Yasna 34.15 at end of the article).

As Rabbi Gerry Serotta, Executive Director of the IFC, ([www.ifcmw.org](http://www.ifcmw.org)), remarked Zoroastrians have lent their belief systems not only to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but also has commonalities with several religions of the Indian subcontinent.

Th recently launched **India Initiative**, held a very successful music concert, in the historic Gaston Hall of Georgetown University in Washington DC on 9/11/2017. The current Ambassador to the US, *Navtej Sarna*, reminded the packed audience of the celebration of the first Parliament

of the World's Religions held in Chicago on 9/11 more than a hundred years ago.

The opening lamp for the evening function, was lit by representatives of the current US Administration, by the musicians, and the Indian Ambassador.

Renowned violinist, Dr. L. Subramaniam, had composed a special music offering for the event, which received a standing ovation.

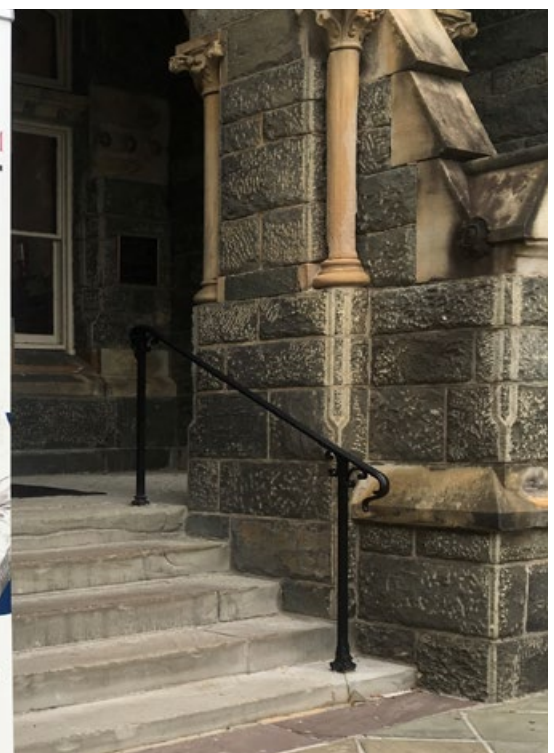
#### REPORT BY BEHRAM PASTAKIA.

Photo from 9/11/2017-India Initiative @ Georgetown University, Washington DC Photo credit: Behram Pastakia.

#### Gatha Ahunavaiti--Yasna 34.15

*Mazdaa at moi vahishta  
sravaaoschaa shyaotha-naachaa  
vaoochaa; Taa tu vohu mananghaa  
ashaachaa ishudem stuo,  
Khshmaakaa khshathraa Ahuraa  
ferashem vasnaa haithyem daao  
ahum*

*Teach me, O Lord, the words and deeds  
that are noblest and best, Through love  
of Fellow-man, through Search for Truth,  
Make my life express the yearnings and  
the prayers of my heart! Through the  
strength to Serve, O Lord! Renew my  
life and make it as True as You wishest!*







## GLOBAL SURVEY: HOW WE VIEW & PRACTICE RELIGION

RUSTOM BHOPTI MD.

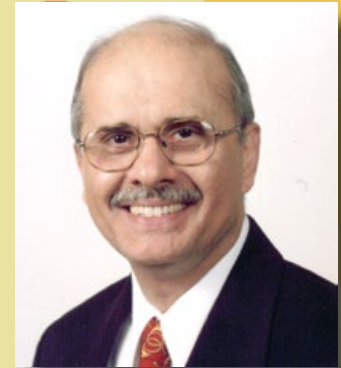
**T**his survey shows religious/cultural practices of today's society across multiple religions and spiritual belief systems. Hopefully, it will foster dialog on global inter-faith tolerance and harmony.

During my extensive international travels, I frequently talked with the youth to elicit their life interests from social, career, and spiritual perspectives. With the increase of global sectarian conflicts, my approach shifted to understanding how the youth view their religious/spiritual standing in their society. Talking to a UNESCO Director, I suggested developing the "Survey" that some of you have kindly participated. I hope the results help defuse current sectarian and socio-economic conflicts.

Survey questions were reviewed by several inter-faith leaders, including Dr. Jehan Bagli, (Canada) Mr. Jehangir Sarosh (UK), and several friends; my heartfelt thanks to all of them.

Following is a summary from responses as of 9/27/2017, filtered by Zoroastrian participants (246). Results of individual questions may not add up to 246, as participants may have skipped some questions.

The survey has 31 questions, under 9 sections. This report will show only a few "Comments" at end, due to space constraints.



**A DEMOGRAPHICS** (details will be published on FEZANA Website) Zoroastrian responses came from Australia, Austria, Canada, Belgium, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, New Zealand, Pakistan, Samoa, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA.

**B RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL BELIEF AFFILIATION** (data filtered for "Zoroastrians" only)

**C RELIGIOUS PRACTICE**

**How often do you pray and follow religious practices?**

64% Regularly—22% Occasionally—7% Only on Holy days—7% Never

**How often you visit Place of Worship or Pilgrimage to any Holy sites?**

60% Occasionally—13% Only on Holy days—12% Never.

**D PRAYERS & RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION**

**Do you recite prayers, even if you don't understand their meanings?**

81% "I accept them in the original language, for I can still connect and find it meditative"  
9% "I accept it due to obligation"  
9% "I object to praying in a language, I do not understand"

**If you are required to wear "Items of Religious Significance" (Sudreh-Kushti), do you wear them?**

61% Regularly  
17% They are irrelevant for me to practice my religion, but wear it when I feel it's appropriate.  
12% Only when attending a Place of Worship  
7% Never  
1% Only on Holy days

**E RELIGIOUS RITES, RITUALS & LAWS**

**Religious Laws of Social Behavior. Do they affect your relationship with members of other faiths?**



- 28% Yes, I accept it on “Faith”
- 31% I accept some, not all
- 26% My religion does not dictate specific laws of social behavior
- 13% I do not accept or follow these religious laws of social behavior
- 2% I am uncomfortable with these laws, but I accept them due to obligation

## Is Gender Equality practiced within your religious institution?

- 75% Yes
- 25% No

## Are you comfortable with validity of religious rites and rituals within your religion?

- 45% I am ok with these practices
- 24% I question the validity of some of the practices
- 22% Some need to be reviewed, with respect to current socioeconomic structures.
- 9% All of the above.

**F RELIGION & YOUR MONEY** (details will be published on FEZANA website)

**G INTERFAITH COEXISTENCE** (details will be published on FEZANA website)

**H RELIGIOUS DOGMAS & SPIRITUALITY** (details will be published on FEZANA website)

## I SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF SPIRITUAL BELIEF SYSTEMS

If your religious scholars attempt to make the following changes to your religious practices, would you accept the following ideas?

Yes	No	Suggested Proposal
98%	2%	Ban any form of violence stemming from religious practices.
96%	4%	Encourage Gender Equality within your religion.
94%	6%	Bring Interfaith Tolerance and Harmony within the human race.
85%	15%	Translate the prayers.
82%	18%	Accept family planning, ensuring life in harmony with earth’s natural resources.
56%	44%	Simplify the prayers.

## Would above suggestions affect your participation in religious practices?

- 66% I would participate the same as before.
- 33% I would participate more.
- 1% I would participate less.

We received **609** Comments, between 9 sections and the overall survey.

## SELECT POSITIVE, CRITICAL, AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY.

Positive	It was interesting. Hope the dastoors and other persons would hold a town hall and listen to the new ideas to strengthen our community going forward. We all need to keep an open mind and move with the times.
Critical	Youth today are more educated and rational while religions (preachers, parents) have not kept up with modernity. Religion must move with the time and at this time the philosophy and the business of living a rational, truthful, good life should be supreme rather than some antiquated, obsolete practice.
Negative	Religion is terrible. Religion is BS. If Jesus or Zoroaster came down today, they would be put in a mental hospital.





**Rustom Bhopti** started his career as a Resident Medical Officer at the Red Cross Hospital in Mumbai, India. After studying computer programming, he started an IT department for Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai. Dr. Bhopti then joined Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in Iran and proceeded to establish Pfizer's IT departments in Africa and the Middle East. He also implemented a "Manufacturing Management System" in Pfizer's global plants. He retired after a successful 26-year career. Since 2013, he has volunteered his services to the Department of Homeland Security and NIST in developing cybersecurity frameworks. He retired from active work in 2017. Dr. Bhopti is a liberal, rational Zoroastrian by faith and practices the Gathas in his day-to-day life.

Readers are urged to help expand global participation in this survey by forwarding the following link to their friends and family of all faiths: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/My-Faith>



## RELIGIOSITY SURVEY

**HOWARD GONTOVNICK, Ph.D.**

Adjunct Professor, State University of New York (Plattsburgh, NY)

In the Spring/March 2017 edition of the FEZANA Journal, Davood N. Rahni reminds us that "contemporaneous internal and external influences pose a serious challenge to the continuation of Zoroastrianism as a strict and invincible religion." He goes on to say that, to strengthen and balance one's faith and sustain the Zoroastrian community's identity, there needs to be a serious effort to reach out to non-Zoroastrians to celebrate commonalities rather than diversity. If I understand Mr. Rahni's words, it seems apparent that his premise for strengthening one's faith is clearly found in understanding a person's spiritual nature and sharing this as a more active form of religiosity. In a world challenged by division, perhaps Zoroastrian spirituality can serve as a "good" example to create understanding and outreach to others to gain from these ideas. In recognition of this, what is known about the spiritual climate of the community and what does this tell about the future of Zoroastrianism in North America today.

As a professor of World Religions and a non-Zoroastrian, I have always been appreciative of the wisdom of Zarathustra. In my classes, I have often encountered a sense of amazement and admiration for the ideas and principles associated with the Zoroastrian tradition. Most, if not all, students were unaware of Zoroastrianism and its significant impact on such religions as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of Zoroastrianism and what it means to be a Zoroastrian in North America today, I recently embarked on a project to "better know" the people who comprise this community. With the assistance of Dr. Dolly Dastoor, Ervad Gev Karkaria, and Homi Ghandi, I created an online survey



that I hoped could provide some insight into the role of one's spirituality and perhaps a glimpse into the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. (See <https://goo.gl/forms/envRFktMuz3VywnB2> for the survey.)

Upon the conclusion of the survey this past May, I was pleasantly surprised and appreciative of the number of participants from Canada and the United States. Although I am currently reviewing the data for a more comprehensive review, I would like to provide an initial look at some of the results thus far, which is a precursor to a more comprehensive, upcoming review.

As a starting point, there was a good balance of women and men among the participants. Although the average age was skewed more toward an older population, participation from younger respondents between 18 and 29 was a concerning 9%. Even though it would have been interesting to understand the thoughts and expectations of this younger age group, perhaps this would be an unreliable perspective considering the evolution of religiosity during this period of life. In this age group, most young adults focus more on family, economics, and career, leaving



religiosity on the backburner.

In addition to the level of participation, it seems clear that many respondents acknowledged the importance of Zoroastrianism in their daily life. Measured as “very relevant,” “somewhat relevant,” and “not important,” the data from this question revealed that 68% selected how Zoroastrianism is very relevant in their life while 28.4% choose somewhat relevant. Later in the survey, a similarly focused question concerning the relevancy of Zoroastrianism revealed a supportive result. In response to the question, “do your religious beliefs play an important role / factor in your life”—the results reflected a strong sentiment of significance by the respondents. Once again, 60% selected the option of Zoroastrianism as; “very important” (indicating a very strong influence) with 31% indicating a “somewhat important” role of their religious beliefs. Together, these questions certainly affirmed that there is strong and broad perception of the positive role of Zoroastrianism in the life of the majority of the respondents living in North America.

Continuing to explore this theme of religious relevance, another related question addressed whether the respondents

expected to increase the role of Zoroastrianism in their daily life? Based on the question, “do your religious beliefs play an important role / factor” in our daily life, the data revealed some interesting results. If a response of “yes” can be considered as a strong level of significance, 59.9% indicated that their religious beliefs were “very important,” 31.3% selected “somewhat important,” and only 7.9% choose “not important.” Although we can argue the significance of “very important” and “somewhat important,” overall I would accept that these results clearly acknowledge that just over 90% recognize some level of significance and importance of their Zoroastrian religiosity in their daily life.

Even though this remains a small fragment of a larger analysis, I am confident that much can be learned from this survey as a snap-shot of a community. If there is any effort “to strength and balance one’s faith and sustain the Zoroastrian community’s identity,” perhaps understanding how Zoroastrians relate to their religiosity can be a stepping stone to building a stronger community for the future.

## SURVEY DATA

Population (respondents): Men = 278, Women = 222, Other = 1

### AGE RANGE

18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
8.6%	34%	27.2%	30.2%

### CURRENT RESIDENCY

Canada, 16.3%; USA, 76.3%, Other (not-specified) 7.4%

### RELEVANCY OF ZOROASTRIANISM IN DAILY LIFE

Very	Somewhat	Not Important	No Response
67.6%	28.4%	3.4%	0.6%

### DOES THE RESPONDENT EXPECT TO INCREASE THE ROLE OF ZOROASTRIANISM IN THEIR LIFE?

Yes	No	Other (?)
55.6%	36.8%	7.6%

*Howard Gontovnick, Ph.D., is an Adjunct Professor of World Religions & Philosophy at the State University of New York in Plattsburgh, N.Y. and a psychotherapist. He is also an author and with publications in psychotherapy, philosophy, and world religions. His upcoming book on personal transformation is co-authored with the late Dr. Alvin R. Mahrer.*





## **POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM A COMMUNITY MEMBER IN SEATTLE, USA TO ERVAD ARDAVIRAF MINOCHERHOMJEE, PRESIDENT NAMC AND ERVAD SOLI DASTUR**

Dear Arda and Soli Uncle

Just a quick note to relay to you a couple of positive anecdotes which appear to reflect on the good work being done by NAMC.

During the Mukhtad prayers at Vancouver this year, a young Mobed (Arzan Bulsara) addressed the congregation and described the positive experience he had learning about our religious practices from you at San Diego earlier this year. He led a group prayer, and asked that everyone bring three flowers for the prayers the next day so that everyone could participate with the priests during the flower exchange ceremony.

Also, Kobad Jamshed (aka Kekobad Jamshed Andhyarujina) was in town to conduct funeral rites for Minu Daruwala. The information published by NAMC was very helpful to the family in getting a hold of Kobad. Moreover, the manner in which Kobad conducted the prayers was a great source of comfort to the family. He appeared to be following a script explaining the Zoroastrian concepts of the afterlife, and the transition of the spirit to this state. He also included audience participation during each of the rituals. (I get the feeling that the script and participative concepts were generated by NAMC). Long story short....there was a visible calming in the family's demeanor by the time the suite of rituals was completed on the third day.

Much too often, those amongst us who serve our community hear nothing but negative feedback. I just felt it is time to appreciate and acknowledge positive change when we see it. Please let the NAMC members know that their work is appreciated, and special thanks to each of you for everything you have done.

Best regards

Feroze Motafram  
Seattle , USA

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

***Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.***

Albert Einstein 1954



**Ervad Jehan Bagli Ph.D.**  
Guest Editor

Science and spirituality, are they compatible? An eternal question, the answer to which are as many as the number of people to whom the question is posed. Science, as a domain of the physical, has evolved through the principle of experimental verification and reproducibility of their results, as a touchstone of Truth. Spirituality, a trait along which religious beliefs have evolved, is an intangible realm to the five physical senses and is beyond measurement by any instrumental verification.

It can be said with reasonable certainty that both science and spirituality are quests for truth. The former seeks the truths of the physical world, while the latter unravels the truth of the nature of consciousness. The concept of spirituality is broad and open-ended. For example, Helminiak, in his book *The Human Core of Spirituality* (1996), defines the term spirituality as a lived reality stating,

Spirituality is all those facets of daily life that relates us to the highest and best that God made us to be, to achieve authentic self-transcendence reaching fulfillment through the Holy spirit of God.

The above clearly directs us to a very personal aspect of spirituality that is subjective to the pursuit of value, reality, and understanding through individual consciousness. Current scientific thought does not include mind or consciousness as a fundamental reality. Science has looked out to the edges of the Universe, back in time to the beginning of creation, and down into the sub-atomic structure of matter. However, the essence of pure consciousness is feelings and feelings are emotions. Science has yet to unravel the chemistry of emotions.

Timothy Conway, in his book *Spirit, Science and Deep Wonders*, states,

In recent years increasing number of cosmologist, theoretical physicist and philosophers of science have argued that consciousness is a basic aspect of the cosmos. Mystics from ancient traditions of India have maintained this position for nearly 3000 years ... well before the time of Jesus ... this bodes well for some kind of complementarity between science and spirituality.



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## BREATH OF LIFE—DIVINE SPIRIT?

A human being is a composite of two components—spiritual and physical—built within its oneness. So, let us explore the etymology of the word spirituality. The term Spirituality is derived from the Latin word *spiritus* meaning the breath of life. Interestingly, the German word for breathing is *atmen*, which is believed to have been derived from the Sanskrit term *Atman*—the indwelling divine spirit within. This association of breath with the divine spirit is noticeable in the book of Genesis (2.7, 7.22), which affirms that, “God...proceeded to blow into his nostril the breath of life and the man came to be a living soul.” -

Centuries before Genesis, Asho Zarathusht in his Gathic hymns, asserts, “Wise Lord, you fashioned this world for us ... and put the vital life-breath (*Ushtanem*) into the physical body” (Ys 31.11, 43.16). According to the *Vedas*, *prana* or **breath** extends and controls both the quality and length of our life. Life is defined not by the number of years on Earth, but by the number of breaths that a soul is allotted for its journey. When that limit is expended, the journey ends.

Ancient traditions have focused on the rhythm of the human respiration, a formless, yet palpable entity, as the manifestation of the Divine spirit in the living. To early civilizations, **Spirit** was perhaps the human breath, that ineffable essence, that distinguishes the living through its presence and the dead by its absence. As respiration is a central aspect of all living it is the spirit—the breath of life—that nourishes us and keeps us alive.

## FOCUSED MIND AND THE SENSES BEYOND

The notion of spirituality seems to be consistent with the notion of mind, which is the study of cognitive science. Spiritual experience is therefore an experience of mindfulness or even right-mindedness (*Spenta Aramity*, as defined by Zarathushtra) that is rooted in the human body as a unity. Central awareness, in this experience, is the profound oneness with all, a sense of belonging to the universe. These moments of spirituality make us a part of all that we encounter and all that we encounter becomes a part of us. Thus, spirituality becomes a measure of the way we are with ourselves, the way we are with Nature around us—that is the consequence of the harmony with the Spirit within.

The science in spirituality is sacred science, which is beyond the fathom of five physical senses. Just reading the scriptures and believing what we read does not trace one's path to spirituality. A spiritual person has a mind that responds to spiritual body. As the

Buddha said,

“Do not believe anything because I have told you it is so.  
Only believe it when you have tested it for yourself.”

Zarathushtra said,

“Hear the best with your ears and ponder with a bright mind  
before you make a choice in life.”

These great sages were humans with a higher sense of being. Their words awaken within us the recognition of truth because of the higher perception and the values they reflect. They manifest senses that are above and beyond the five physical senses. The perception of a human with extra sensory ability extends beyond to the expanse of creative energy of which our physical reality is a part.

Spirituality is rooted in the idea that a transcendent reality exists beyond the realm of the five physical senses. Despite its formless nature, the physical body remains the sanctuary of spiritual reality. Physical science is a systematic accumulation of knowledge in the form of a verifiable explanation about the universe, recognizable by the five physical senses. Humanity has the potential to verify the claims made by spiritual mystics, provided we awaken and train our faculty

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

of spiritual discernment through appropriate disciplines to recognize the spiritual science.

The science of parapsychology (the study of paranormal psychic phenomena, including extra sensory perception [ESP]) has, for a century, withstood the criticism of the scientific community. The rejection of ESP by science is based on the lack of experimental techniques that can provide reliable reproducible results. This is not surprising as any activity in this area is beyond the five physical senses and is considered a pseudoscience. This is an area that lies at the border between the science and spirituality.

These are the areas of study that deal with consciousness, perception, and thinking, the domains of a human mind that Zarathushtra defines as *Vohu mananh*—a divine gift to humanity. It is the subtle ability to perceive events beyond the understanding of the average physical intellect that is often labeled as the *sixth sense*. The experience of the perception of these subtle dimensions is expressed as *spiritual experience*. Gary Zukav, in his book *The Seat of the Soul*, speaks of the evolution of humanity from a five-sensory human to a multisensory human. That is where the borders between science and spirituality begins to blur.

Zukav says,

From the perception of the five-sensory human we are alone in a universe that is physical, ... the physical world is an unaccountable in which we unaccountably find ourselves and we strive to dominate it so that we can survive. Intentions have no effect and not all actions affect us or others.

From the perception of multisensory human we are never alone and the universe is alive, conscious and compassionate. The physical world is a learning environment created jointly by the souls that share it and everything that occurs within serves their learning. Intention behind an action determines its effects, and the effect of intentions extend far beyond the physical world.

A mystic experience is invariably associated with deep sense of gratitude, awe and wonder with a feeling of great humility. The mode of operation of a scientist is to observe a natural phenomenon without feeling the experience of the reality as ineffable. For example in the pursuit of 'oneness in the universe' a scientist expresses in technical language through precise mathematical methodology the study of universe gradually stepwise.

A spiritual mystic approaches the same question through self-knowledge and meditation. While the spiritual results of oneness are experiential—it is the union with the infinite—whereas, the scientist arriving at unity leaves himself out of it. Regardless, many great scientists have expressed their awe and wonder when faced with the mystery of that which lies beyond the limits of their theories.

As Einstein said, "The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science...the mystery of the eternity of life, and the inkling of the marvelous structure of reality, together with the single-hearted endeavor to comprehend a portion, be it ever so tiny, of the reason that manifests itself in nature."

The future of humanity lies in the working of science and spirituality in cooperation and not in competition. Neither is separately up to the monumental task. Connectedness, relationship, and interdependence are fundamental concepts of life and belonging with them is the essence of spiritual. It is a worldview that all living beings are members of sacred creation bound together in network of interdependence.

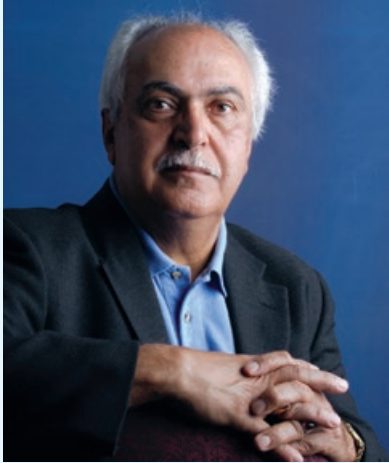
**Ervad Jehan Bagli Ph.D** is the past president of the North American Mobeds' Council and President of World Zoroastrian Organization, Canada. He is a retired Distinguished Research Fellow at Wyeth Laboratories



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SPIRITUALITY THROUGH THE UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE:

### Science and current understanding of our planet's climate and ecosystem



Prof Soroosh Sorooshian

The nature of how our own home planet and all the “living things” on it were formed in the ever-expanding universe continues to fascinate people and often makes for interesting conversation regardless of the country we come from and what religious persuasion and belief system guides us.

The conversation between those who believe in either “creationism” or “evolution” has often resulted in heated debate and in some countries, such as the United States, has been politicized to the extent of influencing pre-college educational programs and even challenged in the legal system.

The creation vs. evolution debate involves an ongoing, recurring cultural, political, and theological dispute about the origins of the Earth, of humanity, and of other life.

Within the Christian world, creationism was once widely believed to be true. But since the mid-19th century, evolution by natural selection has been established as an empirical scientific fact.

Credit goes to the English naturalist Charles Darwin who in the first half of the 19th century advanced the Theory of Evolution, which is based on the widely held notion that all life is related and has descended from a common ancestor.



Dr Armin Sorooshian

In a survey conducted in 2014 by Gallup organization in the United States, more than four in 10 Americans believed that God created humans in their present form 10,000 years ago. But almost half of the Americans believe humans evolved with the caveat that most of them believe God guided the evolutionary process; however, the percentage who say God was not involved is rising. According to a report issued by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, many religious denominations accept that biological evolution has produced the diversity of living things over billions of years of Earth's history. Many have issued statements observing that evolution and the tenets of their faiths are compatible. Scientists and theologians have written eloquently about their awe and wonder at the history of the universe and of life on this planet, explaining that they see no conflict between their faith in God and the evidence for evolution.

A logical question at this point is how the aforementioned discussion about the “creation–evolution controversy” relates to our scientific understanding of Earth's well-being and its future prospects. As two Zoroastrians who follow the simple teachings of Zarathustra, we wondered about the position of prophet Zarathustra on the “origins of the Earth, of humanity, and of other life?” While we admit that we are not scholars of our religion, we have come to form our opinion that indeed Zarathus-

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

tra, thousands of years ago, may have been one of the first individuals taking the scientific position and advocating the theory of evolution that Charles Darwin advanced nearly 200 years ago.

Zarathustra's teaching that *Earth, Water, Fire, and Air* are critical elements of our planet that need to be protected as part of our responsibility as inhabitants of this planet is the best evidence in support of our position. In fact, these four elements identified by Zarathustra are critical for the growth of cells, which are the basic building blocks of "life" and all "living things" on our planet that have evolved through time to their present form today.

While one of us has invested a career spanning 40 years investigating all aspects of water, the other is at an earlier stage of a career to study air, specifically tiny particles usually referred to as aerosols.

The amount of water in all its forms (liquid, solid, and vapor) on earth is constant and is estimated to be about 332,500,000 cubic miles ( $\text{mi}^3$ ) (1,386,000,000 cubic kilometers ( $\text{km}^3$ )) of which nearly 98% is salt water in the

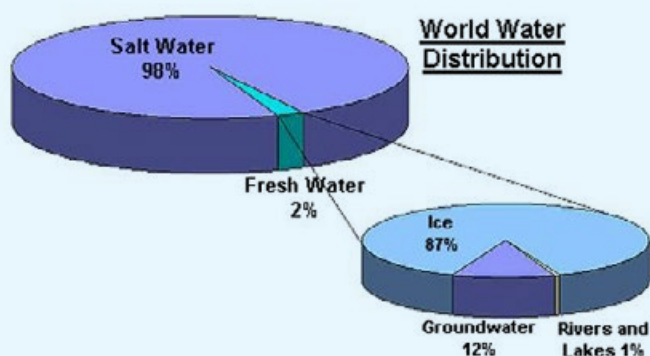


Figure 1: Global water distribution

(Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, School of Natural Resources)

oceans and the remaining 2% is fresh and distributed as shown in Figure 1.

The hydrologic cycle is responsible for the movement of water on our planet and the primary mechanism for resupplying the fresh waters over land through precipitation of the evaporated waters from the vast oceans.

Studies by the international scientific community under the auspices of the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have established that human activities, including the burning of fossil fuels, are responsible for the warming of the planet through

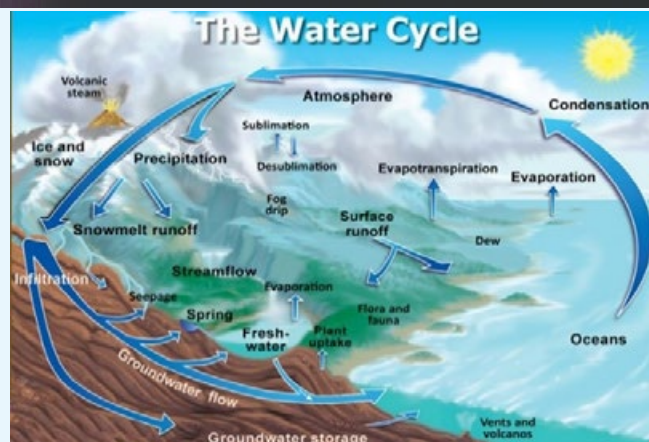


Figure 2: The hydrologic cycle on Earth.

(Source: USGS – <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>)

the increase in the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

What we know now is that the warming of Earth has been changing the dynamics of the climate system, which in turn has been intensifying the earth's hydrologic cycle. This has resulted in more extreme weathers and hydrologic extremes. Recent hurricanes originating in the Atlantic Ocean and devastating many Caribbean islands and resulting in severe flooding and damage to Texas and Florida are examples of the acceleration of the planet's hydrologic cycle. At the other extreme has been the impact of severe and prolonged droughts in many regions of the world including India, Iran, and the United States.

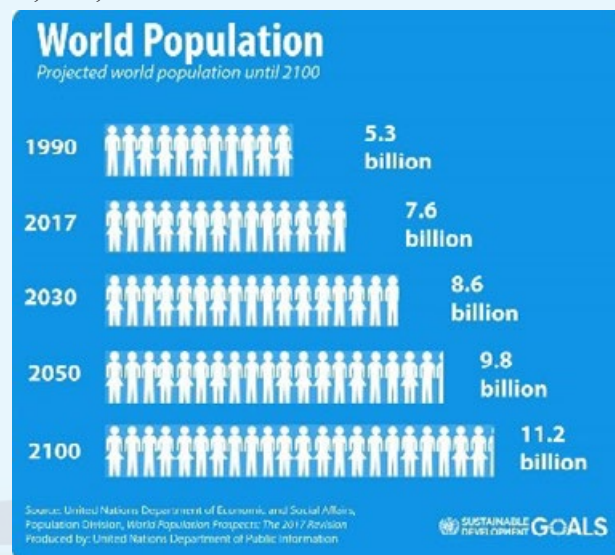


Figure 3: History of world population and future projections. (Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

The ever-increasing global population (Figure 3) has placed unprecedented stress on the availability of fresh water resources.



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

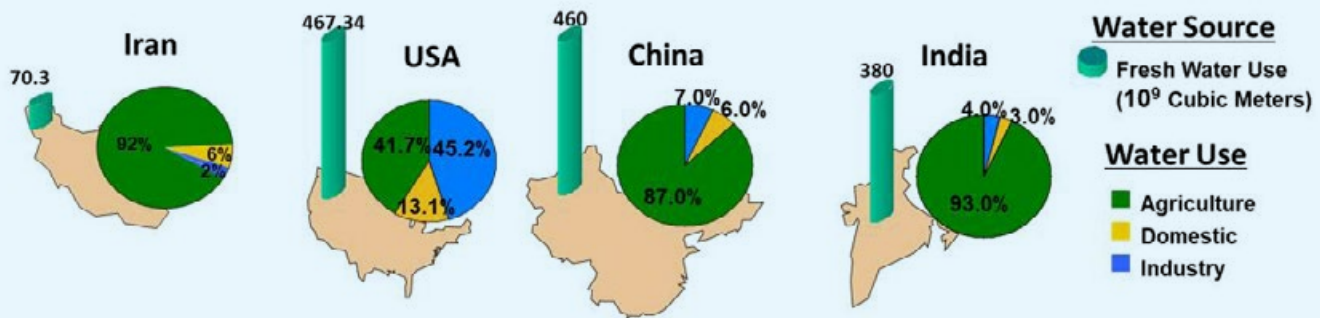


Figure 4: Fresh water consumption for selected countries.

As evident from Figure 4, agriculture is the biggest user of fresh waters in many countries.

More critical is the ever-expanding size and number of urban areas and mega cities. Demographic data shows that

related since fires, originating from biomass growing on Earth, emit particles into the air that form the seeds of cloud droplets, with clouds ultimately generating rain. The nature and magnitude of interrelationships between aerosols, clouds, and precipitation in fact are linked to the

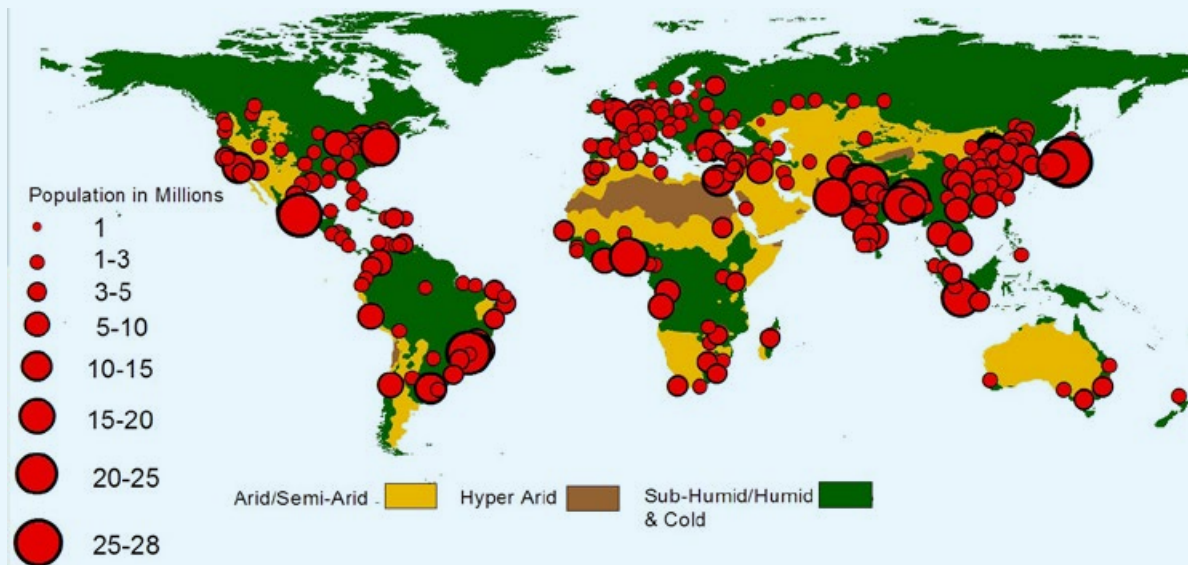


Figure 5: Increase in the number and size of mega cities

in 1970 the urban population was around 37% and in 2010 it surpassed 53%. The growing urban population, especially in the developing world, has imposed additional stresses on water resources and the urban environment. Water quality concerns, especially the inadequate treatment of waste waters and their unregulated disposal into rivers, lakes, and coastal waters, are likely to get worse before getting any better. Excessive groundwater extraction for agricultural use and ground water pollution are global problems with likely irreversible impacts on the availability and sustainability of fresh water resources for many nations.

It is interesting that earth, water, fire, and air are closely

single largest uncertainty in climate model projections of future climate change. Other major sources of particles in the air include desert dust, sea salt from oceans, anthropogenic pollutants such as sulphates and nitrates, and biogenic emissions from vegetation (Figure 6).

Several terrestrial parts of this planet, especially the western United States, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to the effects of wildfires owing to a warmer climate, drought, and fire-control strategies over past decades resulting in conditions that promote larger and more frequent fires. The gases in fire plumes can act to heat the planet via the well-known greenhouse effect. But less known to most

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

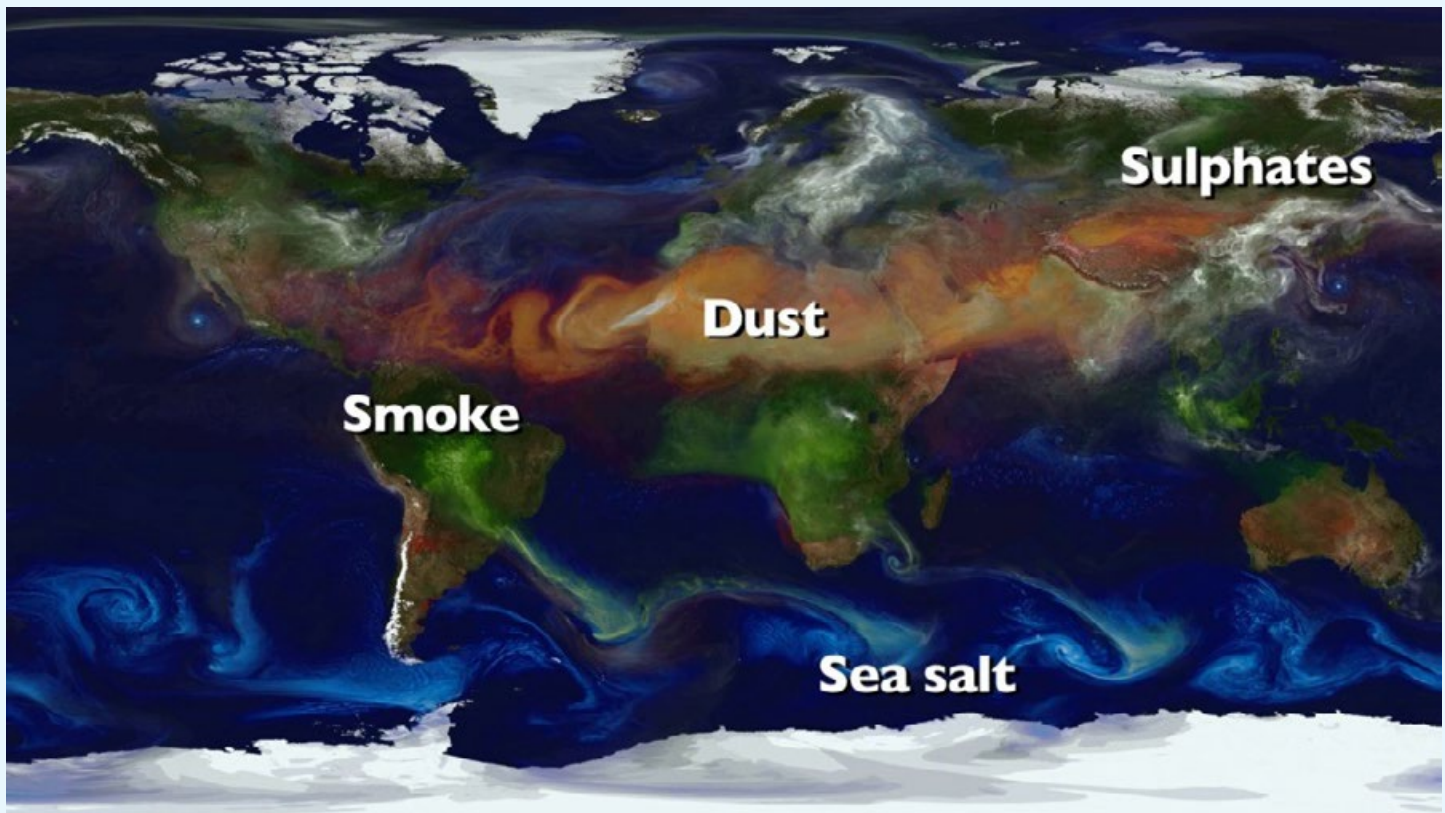


Figure 6. Typical view of major particulate pollutants in the air and how they reach far distances

(source: <https://gmao.gsfc.nasa.gov/>).

people is that particles can reflect sunlight (unlike gases) and cool the planet. Clouds, formed from fire-emitted particles and water vapor, also cool the planet because white surfaces are reflective. The relative magnitude of cooling by particles and clouds versus the heating by the greenhouse effect is still a point of great uncertainty.

Aside from impacts on climate and the hydrologic cycle, fires are important for other reasons. They severely impact air quality and public health. An issue that is underappreciated in terms of its importance is that of all environmental threats, the most global deaths are due to particles. Fires are a major source of particles globally that can lead to a host of chronic and acute medical issues. Depending on the size of particles inhaled, they will deposit in different parts of one's respiratory system. Those that penetrate deeper and cause some of the more aggressive issues are unfortunately of the size that is typically most frequent among fire emissions.

To bring our contribution to a close, we provide the following concluding reflections. Our brief presentation about the state of the "health" of planet earth, in terms of the four elements (*Earth, Water, Fire, Air*) that prophet Zarathustra identified, highlights challenges we face regarding the pro-

jection of two of the elements, namely water and air. Our objective was to introduce some of the current concerns about the protection of these two elements for which humans have had a direct role in. Nature's response to the adverse known human activities (i.e., contributing to global warming, over-utilizing fresh water resources, polluting the air and waters among others), will most likely carry undesirable consequences such as more severe extreme weather, heat waves, floods, and droughts; fortunately, the scientific knowledge regarding the cause and effects of our actions is improving. The knowledge we gain each day is suggesting that the "business as usual" approach to the inefficient utilization of Earth's resources will not be the best path forward, unless the ever-increasing world population is ready and capable of adopting to the undesirable consequences. We remain optimistic that the global community will respond and invest some of its monetary resources and human capital to come up with better mechanisms and alternatives for the projection of the four elements our prophet Zarathustra identified thousands of years ago.



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

**Soroosh Sorooshian** is a Distinguished Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth System Science Departments and Director of the Center for Hydrometeorology & Remote Sensing (CHRS) at University of California Irvine. His area of expertise includes the interface of global hydrologic cycle, and climate system. He is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering (NAE); the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA); and the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). He has numerous other international honors and prestigious recognitions. He has served on numerous advisory committees, including those of NASA, NOAA, DOE, USDA, NSF, EPA, and UNESCO and has testified to both U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate Committees on issues related to water, climate and satellite programs. [Please see his Faculty Profile for a comprehensive list of accomplishments, [http://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty\\_id=5082](http://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty_id=5082).]

**Armin Sorooshian** is an associate professor in the Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering at the University of Arizona (UA) with joint appointments in the Department of Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences and also the College of Public Health. He received his BS degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Arizona (UA) with Honors (2003) and his PhD in Chemical Engineering from California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 2008. After a brief postdoctoral fellowship at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 2008, he began his career as a professor at UA in 2009.

As a researcher, Armin specializes in understanding the sources, nature, and impacts of particulate matter in the atmosphere. His research is supported by agencies such as the National Science Foundation, NASA, NIH, and the Department of Defense, including funding from an Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Program Award. He has published over 80 peer-reviewed papers, graduated 7 PhD students, and advised over 20 other Masters degree and undergraduate students. He has received many teaching awards, including being named one of three University of Arizona's Distinguished Scholars in 2016.

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# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## ADARBAD RELIES ON SPIRIT, SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION

NATALIE R. GANDHI, PhD

Consider Adarbad. He is in graduate school now, after finishing his bachelor's in neuroscience. He works hard, but sometimes it is just to stop the chatter in his mind. The same questions come up over and over and he only gets part way in settling them.

Spirit, Science, Religion, and his Zarathushti Religion, what are these immense, provoking things? How do they relate to each other and to him? Everything is scrambled and he wants answers for what is going to work for him.

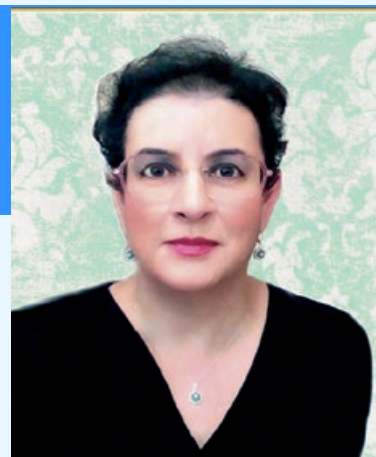
Here is the thing: He picked up a refreshing book Saturday, "Waking Up, A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion," by the "New Atheist" Sam Harris (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2014). According to Harris, Adarbad can do many things with his mind that Adarbad didn't realize. There are a series of exercises for enhancing his Spirituality. Some things Harris suggests derive from ancient wisdom, some from science. Wouldn't a neurosciences major know the brain has untold mysteries!

Adarbad recalled a lovely paragraph from Hsun Tzu from his freshman humanities course. "... if a faint wind passes over the top of water ... you can no longer get a clear reflection of even a large object .... The mind is the same way ...." (Watson, Burton, trans. "Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings," New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, p. 131). Was a still mind, a balanced mind, a meditating mind, part of the Good Mind in his religious tradition?

Harris says transcendence of spirit is something the average person can reach. It doesn't take a mystic contorting his body in extreme positions, or a saint, to access a great luminosity and ecstasy that lies in each moment. Harris maintains, access can and should come without religion.

Now Adarbad's confused. What is Harris's hang-up on religion? Adarbad has been swimming in his religion since he was born on the outskirts of Orange county, USA. No way could he have foregone religion. For one thing, his parents took him to religious classes come what may for years. It was a long haul for parents, teachers, and community.

He would complain, but he enjoyed religious classes. He enjoyed especially connections he made with other kids. He respected kind, gentle priests. What was Harris's



point to want him to forego something so innocent, for which his parents were so driven?

For Harris, religion is not the inspired institution Adarbad knows, but instead a vicious, distorting practice. Harris gives his indictment earlier in, "The End of Faith, Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason" (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 2004). Harris writes " ... The danger of religious faith is that it allows otherwise normal human beings to reap the fruits of madness and consider them *holy*. Because each new generation of children is taught that religious propositions need not be justified in the way all others must, civilization is still besieged by the armies of the preposterous. We are, even now, killing ourselves over ancient literature" (p.73). He condemns religion for instigating violence, divisive tribal investment, and terror.

Surely, the "metaphysics" of other traditions puzzles Adarbad. His friend took him to communion and he questioned the wafer being made the body of Jesus. He went camping in the Arizona deserts, wondering that Native Americans know they walk and speak with the Great Spirit in the same empty miles.

Adarbad hasn't considered the depths of these metaphysics. He would appreciate knowing his own metaphysics first. How about that eternal Fire and its relation to God? Could there be a familial relation, the sacred fire a "son?" ("Fire in Zoroastrianism," Dastur Jamasp-Asa, in "The Fire Within, Jamshid Soroush Soroushian Commemorative Volume," Mehrborzin Soroushian, 2003, p.247-263.)

His Christian and Jewish friends find sustenance and strength in their religions; so, of course, Adarbad is not buying Harris's condemnation. Too much is positive to entirely demote religion.



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

If Harris and Adarbad walked together in the Arizona desert, Harris might laugh and allow Adarbad his own metaphysical myths. If they work and do not hurt, what is so wrong about the tales religion gives us? Now that science has secularized and separated our myth-making from our truth-making, we are a step ahead in how these institutions relate with one another and with us. We modern people know that science has grasped the purview of Reason. From science, we get facts.

Reason might leave some things calming to our souls (our spirits), for faith. Faith can sustain us considering humanity's vulnerabilities. It can make us strong and give solace in the face of temptation, ire, pain, betrayal, fear, injustice, upheaval, pride, terror, war, and death. Faith can uplift spirits. Even Harris can think reason and faith, science and religion, coexist for mortals.

To be honest, Adarbad wants to cede something in his imagined exchange with Harris. He is a student of science and it has not been about God, but about brains and minds. Adarbad has been cramming and prepping his mind in the hard sciences for two decades. Once, he crammed a week before his n-dimensional calculus exam. His mind had little room for praying or song. His head went hard-core math and numbers, and became a shrill calculator. He drilled until numbers and equations danced and nothing else.

And the human brain is a gory mess. His cognitive science Professor took them to a medical hall to show them the actual human brain and dissect it. In that small carnage, Adarbad did not meditate on God, angels, and the sacred fire. Adarbad had to give up eating normally for three days after his first dissection. The brain is mass of blood and nerves to be measured and manipulated with tools of the scientific method.

In his mind and investigating other minds, science and reason could set aside other human dimensions. Science had its win over faith. It has vastly improved the human condition during the last two hundred years. Yet, something is not final. Glory, Adarbad is going to turn the debate around! He thinks a mistake has been made to concede the reign of reason to science.

Go back to the rough translation in the little Gathas prayer book from which Adarbad recited as a child. It is a slender, blue book. In it, the first prayer is only three lines,

Ashem Vohu. It was written in some notation of the Gathic words, and a translation into his language, English. He never analyzed the translation itself. He was a mere child reciting and wondering. The wonder never stopped.

The prayer says, "Truth is The Highest Virtue;" this caused him thought over the decades. What kind of religion, or faith, would consign itself to making only myth and your cafeteria-choice metaphysics? Not his! His Ashem Vohu gave him a Divine claim on the nature of Truth itself. There in the child's first prayer. Could it be that his religion would relinquish reason and be the avatar of only faith?

Never. His religion told him "Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds." So, there it was; for to have a Good Mind, to have Good Thoughts, and to do Good Deeds, he did drill for that calculus exam. He did rise above his horror and learn to precisely wield the dissecting scalpel.

His religion never divorced him from Knowledge. He was not Milton's Lucifer, falling from Grace for the sin of knowing. Eve stole no apple in The Gathas. (Seductress Eve, tempted by a snake, the fallen Angel Lucifer, steals from the Tree of Knowledge in John Milton's classic poem, "Paradise Lost," written in 1667.) Adarbad's Ahura Mazda gave him a small shred of divine omnipotence, Adarbad's own Vohu Manu.

Adarbad could not know the Mind of God, for it was too vast and glorious for mortals. But, Adarbad could share infinity with Newton and Descartes, and the cognitive scientists Patricia and Paul Churchland. Faith and reason are not opposed. Poor Harris should know about a religion so beautiful and contemplate how Beauty spurs us to a unity of the Virtues.

Adarbad is going to absorb the good things the institutions of humanity offer. He will let Spirit, Science, Religion, and his Zarathushti Religion relate cooperatively, or jocularly compete, with each other. Any of humanity's grand institutions can be corrupted by what is bad. But, Adarbad will rely upon the gifts of Ahura Mazda and build the positive.

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*Natalie R. Gandhi is a Philosopher and Entrepreneur. She completed competency requirements in the Philosophy of Science in two PhD programs and worked at the graduate level with four Philosophers of Science, Arthur Fine, Paul Teller, Michael Friedman, and Frederick Suppe. Her science background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Physics from The University of Chicago, a Master of Science in Financial Markets from The Illinois Institute of Technology, and work with disruptive technologies in Silicon Valley.*

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## RECONCEPTUALIZING THE MOBED FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: SPIRITUALITY AND PASTORAL SERVICE

NEVILLE GUSTAD PANTHAKI PH.D

I would like to begin by collectively thanking all practising Mobeds. In so doing, I think we must acknowledge the vital place of clergy within faith and fellowship communities. Historically, when clerics serve as psychosocial spiritual educators, religions flourish. Hence, it is primarily as pastors of faith, that Mobeds must be re-conceptualized for Zoroastrianism to remain relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mobeds functioned as psychosocial pastors of faith, especially prior to the Sassanian era when Zoroastrianism became a standardized dogma. While Mazdayasni Daena had pluralistic geographic expressions, remaining decentralized and non-centered (no specific “home” or residence of authority); the Mobed functioned as a liturgically informed social and psychological counsellor.

Although they conducted ceremonial practices, after the Sassanian era, Mobeds increasingly became associated with officiating rather than pastoring. Parsi residency in India seems to have accelerated and exaggerated this phenomenon. Understandably, every diasporic community seeks to preserve itself after displacement. In most cases, a preservation of ritual practise seems the preferred route. In so doing, however, traditions become immutable aspects of allegiance to faith. By extension, the Mobed associated his job as primarily being the stalwart

defender of tradition.

Yet, the vibrancy of a faith and fellowship community does not solely depend on the accuracy of dogma and maintenance of tradition. Religion is a social endeavour. Meaning, religion exists as part of society. For religion to remain relevant in the hearts and minds of its adherents, it must be integrated with life, not an addition to secular existence.

Consider that Humanism and Modernism equally threaten all religions. Their main claim is that religion does not or cannot provide a contextual methodology for contemporary life. What is the most effective way to dispute this? Is it to give scriptural rebuttal? Liturgy, although it is central to religion, is only important to those who already believe in it. In a sense, this is preaching to the converted. The real issue is how can scripture and ritual be made into faith. The most effective way is to display its relevance. And, religion is best illustrated as relevant when it is integrated as part of service. When religion informs secular activities, it serves life.

Dr. Merle Jordan of the Boston School of Theology and Psychology once stated, “All theology is clinical theology.” He meant that the mission statement of any theology is for it to become a lens to decipher life. We often conclude that this means that the main goal of religion is that it should be “a way of life,” how to live one’s

life, what to do, and what not to do. And although this is quite true, we seem to overlook that religion should also be a solution to contemporary problems encountered in life. How more relevant to life could religion be if it provided answers to present problems, rather than remaining a prescriptive path for soul salvation and commemoration of the departed?

This is what is implied by Jordan’s statement, that all theology must be applied theology. Applied, in the sense as, to life. Theology must serve as a decoding framework to help people live. Most problems of life are simultaneously causes of spiritual crisis. Moreover, regardless of how or whether the problem resolves, if there is no spiritual dimension to the solution, the person loses faith. Spiritual intervention is most required when the nature of the problem is existential. Grief, loss, feelings of powerlessness, despair, and loneliness, are all terms that describe a person’s lapse of their awareness of reciprocity, interdependence, and love, otherwise known as Ahura Mazda.

Besides the terminology, this is a clinical assessment with which most religiously minded people might concur. In fact, even most secular psychologists would be aware that sense of identity, self-worth, and purpose are rooted in how the psyche constructs meaning. You would think that clergy is most adept at aiding in these resolutions.



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

However, many people, irrespective of their faith affiliations, do not seek out clerics to help solve their issues. This is because the common perception of clerics is that they are ritually oriented specialists who pray. Others note that clerics provide judgement on situations or formulaic pronouncements. Ironically, people turn to secularly trained professionals for spiritual guidance. And, the greater irony is studies have indicated that, while most people claim to be religious, most doctors and psychologists claim that they are not. Hence, you have a situation where the deepest insights into a person's issues remain undiscovered, unspoken, and unresolved.

Spiritual disillusionment may also lead to substance or other forms of abuse, anger, withdrawal, and self-neglect. Someone who feels detached, disembodied, and dispossessed requires attention towards their reintegration, reembodiment, and repossession in faith and with fellowship. This should be the prime role of clergy. More to the point, clergy must reclaim their former role, as pastors of faith. We should also realize that the most damning consequence of spiritual disillusionment is silence. And silence must be understood as a psychosocial statement, of condemnation. Silence says that faith and fellowship are irrelevant to one's existence. Or, at least, Zoroastrian faith and fellowship.

In general, I believe that there is an immediate need to re-conceptualize the education and role of the Zoroastrian clergy in diaspora. Indeed, I should leave out "in diaspora," as I believe that this argument is valid for Zoroastrian clergy. However, since this is a brief opinion piece, I limit myself to matters concerning the Parsi

Zoroastrian clergy in North America.

## A Pastoral Model for Clergy

Although clergy must be well-informed of scripture and liturgical practises, it is the aspect of stewardship that must become the core role for clergy. In this respect, community education must be reconceived as community outreach by clergy who not only seek to relate ritual and historical information, but provide moral and ethically based reflections of Zoroastrianism. A pastoring model for Mobeds also serves to ensure that the prime directive of religion, as fostering faith and fellowship, remains Zoroastrianism's core feature. This empowers Zoroastrianism by maintaining its relevance within secular society, and prevents religion from becoming uni-dimensionally ritualistic.

## A Non-discriminatory Model of Clergy Selection:

Zoroastrian clergy, as faith officiants and fellowship leaders, must reflect the non-discriminatory principles of the religion. Ecclesiastic positions must exhibit solidarity and connection with the community as demographically and conscientiously representative of the population they serve. There must be a firm commitment towards the creation of a pastoral clergy. Neither, gender (female), nor lineage (behdin), should prohibit candidates for clerical training to become a Mobed. In addition, those accepting Zoroastrianism ("converts") must not be discouraged from becoming a Mobed. A scaffolding of learning via modular curriculum, involving stages of training consummate with the gaining of *wisdom* (understood as: academic

training + theology + vocational ability) must be adopted. Ordination based on such competencies should be the sole determinant for the acceptance of clergy. Regarding age, consideration must be given to the emotional and intellectual maturity of younger candidates. Correspondingly, it must be remembered that pastors require a youthful energy, agile mind, engaging exuberance, and non-dogmatic approach to contemporary living.

## A Diasporic Zoroastrian Identity for its Diasporic Anjuman

The Zoroastrian Mobeds of North America are responsible for the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. Taking note of demographic shifts over the last decade, one may argue that NAMC (The North America Mobed Council) might actually be responsible for the future of global Zoroastrianism. Clergy is, first and foremost, responsible to the community it serves. Clerical service is therefore, locational and chronological in context. This does not mean abandoning traditions or creating new aspects for faith and fellowship. But, it equally does not mean, that these things should not occur. Religion is a social, human(e), endeavour. Therefore, religion must be mutable. History indicates that dogma(s) develops according to sociopolitical and sociocultural circumstances. It would be a more proper understanding to write, religion evolves. It does so as adherents reimagine faith and fellowship and, in so doing, takes ownership of their religion with both, a lived and inherited appreciation.

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## NAMC: From Expatriate Council to Autocephalous Organization

NAMC must not act as a council of expatriate Mobeds whose authority stems from their adherence to Parsi norms and traditions. NAMC must boldly legitimize itself as part of an autocephalous (self-governing) Zoroastrian Anjuman of North America. In this way, intercontinental relations remain

intra-Zoroastrian dialogue, while NAMC requires no approval from a central repository of faith and fellowship. It must also be pointed out that presently, case-precedent tends to act as an informal extra-territorial supervision upon NAMC. Making decisions, justifying arguments, or disapproving change, based on what is or has been normative in India, is valid so long as it is not the sole basis for judgement in North America.

Zoroastrianism, or at least diasporic Zoroastrianism, requires the reconceptualization of its Mobeds as pastors of faith, for the religion to emulate its core tenants that are located in the context of life

*Neville Gustad Panthaki has pursued two doctorates, one in comparative history, and the other in education. He also holds a masters degree and a bachelor of education. He has taught and published in the areas of peace and conflict studies, Eurasian history, South Asian Studies, and educational sociology for 17 years.*



## The Gathas Empower Men and Women to Provide Service to Mankind

JAMSHID GOSHTASBI Ph.D

CONTRIBUTION BY: YASNA GOSHTASBI

Service is understood as voluntary acts by individuals to benefit members of institutions, a society, a country, and humanity at large. Push for service is universal in all walks of life. In business, academia, government, education, science, etc., some forms of “service” to benefit the organization or the community are encouraged and sometimes required.

“Service” is to better the life of the recipient. Many scientific discoveries and technical achievements benefit mankind, as do great works of art, music, poetry, literature, philosophy, etc. On the other hand, it could be said that people in any profession provide various services to their community and society. And yet, extraordinary and exemplary “services” provided by persons with means are often the ones that are recognized and celebrated, but services we encounter day in and day out rarely get noticed. For example, philanthropists who set up foundations are admired for their contribution; while smaller donations from “average people” and their simple acts of kindness go

unrecognized.

Does the culture of promoting “exemplary services” go against the idea that service, in all forms and sizes, benefits mankind, and that anyone can and should volunteer an act of service within his/her power, means, or imagination? Does the common understanding of “service” go beyond “community” services? Could “service” to one be “disservice” to others? What is the service provider’s reward? What if compensation is expected or gained in return for providing service? These are some of the questions that come to mind when talking of “service” in general.

### In Search of the Common Understanding

A layman, can easily surf the Internet in search of answers to the above questions. On that note, sample quotes—on virtues of Service—from famous people were found online. Few were selected from (Quotes



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

About Service, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/service>).

There seems to be consensus that service is a voluntary act of helping those who need it, often through just a simple act of kindness, and when rendered with joy, it brings joy and happiness to giver and recipient:

**MAHATMA GANDHI:** “Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.”

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE:** “I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”

**ALBERT SCHWEITZER:** “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”

**RICHELLE E. GOODRICH:** [service is] “a smile ... an acknowledging wave, a reaching handshake, a friendly wink, and a warm hug. It’s these simple acts that matter most, because the greatest service to a human soul has always been the kindness of recognition.”

**GORDON B. HINCKLEY sums it up nicely:** “One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served.”

## GOOD DEED (VOHU-KHSHATRA) IN SERVICE TO MANKIND AND UNIVERSE

*(Note: The author’s discussion of the Gathas’ teachings is not based on any specific translation of the Gathas, rather, it is the author’s understanding of interpretations of principal terms and concepts in the essential teachings of Zarathushtra in his Gathas, based on a comparative study of several resources.)*

The Gathas are the distillation of Zarathustra’s observations and thinking about the state of his society, people’s living conditions, beliefs, the status of priests, rulers, etc. The Gathas teach a way of life that, if followed, empowers men and women to provide “service” day in and day out. Zarathushtra’s thought process and methodology that led him to finding answers to questions he had on these matters can be seen in verses in

Yasnas 44, 32, 29. In Yasna 29, Zarathushtra teaches an understanding of the profound principles of life: MAZDA (Great Knowledge), ASHA (Cosmic Order/Universal Law) and VOHU-MANA (Good Mind/Thought). MAZDA is the essence of creation, the knowledge of creation, the creating knowledge, the beginning and the end, the creator of ASHA and VOHU-MANA. ASHA is the Universal Law that governs the living world, maintains order and harmony in the universe and forwards the progress of the living world and the universe. Zarathushtra further teaches (Yasnas 31, 34, 47 ) that VOHU-KHSHATRA (Good Deed) is any act in harmony with ASHA, brings ARMAITI (Tranquility/Serenity) to one’s life and serves the progress of the universe to HAORVATAT-AMERATAT (Eternal Tranquility/Serenity and Perfection). Anyone can seek and receive knowledge from MAZDA and with VOHU-MANA (Good Thought), one can analyze the knowledge to find an answer and to choose a life that is in accordance and in harmony with ASHA, thus helping the progress of the world.

Since ASHA is the Universal Law, Good Deed is service to everything in the universe, and Serenity is the reward of Service and Good Deed. Simple examples include Good Deed in keeping the environment clean, protecting and taking care of animals, trees, etc. Deeds that are not in the path of ASHA are a “disservice” to mankind and the universe. For example, if achievements in science and technology are abused and result in hurting the environment, animals, people, etc., they are a “disservice” to the universe. Even if an act benefits an individual or a section of the society to the detriment of someone else or other sections of the society, it is not service, but disservice to mankind.

## SERVICE IN THE WORDS OF A ZOROASTRIAN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Students graduating from high school are required to complete a certain number of service hours; some counties require 75 hours, while others require 50 hours per year. The idea is to get students involved in community service and volunteering. But, what counts as service, in my opinion, can be anything that helps other people and should be without expectation of anything in return. It can be as trivial as helping a friend with homework or as important as building houses for less fortunate people in Costa Rica. According to Zoroastrian scriptures, everything in accord with Asha’s path “qualifies” as a service.

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

I started earning Student Service Learning (SSL) hours in 6th grade and collected almost 300 hours by the 8th grade. I was pleasantly surprised when, because of my community service, I was nominated by my school and received the Ben Carson Scholarship.

Beyond the school system requirement, in 2015 I decided to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. With the help of members from the Zoroastrian Association, I have held two fundraisers and am working on another in 2017. My hope for these fundraisers is to be in accord with Asha and positively impact the lives of people with cancer.

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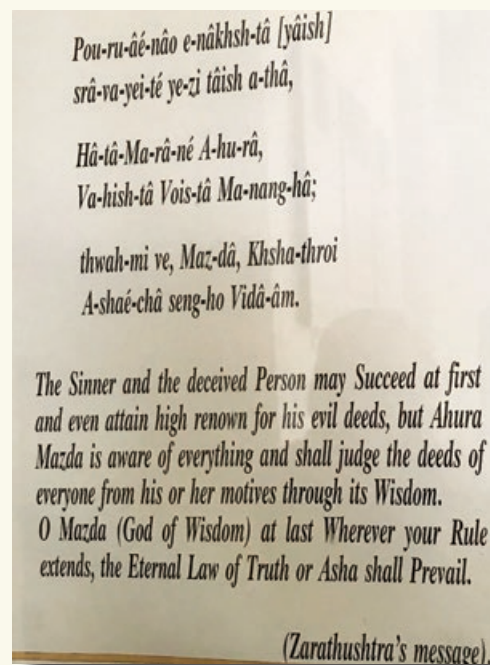
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**Photo of Zoroastrian Avestan Scriptural extract with translation in English, from a place of worship in Yazd, Iran.**



**Ahunavaiti Gatha Yasna 32, Verse 6:**

**PHOTO CREDIT: NAYAN CHANDA.**



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**Yasna Goshtasbi** is a High School Senior, who lives in Chevy Chase, MD, with her parents Jamshid and Shahrzad, and her sister Athra. She loves her Iranian and Zoroastrian heritage and has always been active in the Zoroastrian community in the D.C. area by participating in the Avesta Class, accompanying the choir on piano and organizing fundraisers for the American Cancer Society and ZAMWI. At school, she is member of multiple Honors Societies. In her free time, she enjoys playing the piano, running and spending time with her family and friends.





# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## ZOROASTRIAN PRIESTHOOD AND ITS TRAINING: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE—PART I

ERVAD JEHAN BAGLI PH.D

Zarathushtra saw God in the Supreme Intellect vested in the immutable order of nature—the eternal order that governs changes in nature, from day to night, from sunrise in the east to sunset in the west, the waxing and waning of moon over precise intervals, and the constant cycle of seasons. It was the peace and truth vested in this order, that led the great Aryan prophet, some 3700 years ago, to identify the force that creates, governs, and sustains the universe, and he baptized that force with the epithet Ahura Mazda—the Wise Lord or Lord Wisdom.

In civilization's infancy, the only reliable information that we can glean comes from the Gathas—some 240 poetic hymns—that Zarathushtra composed in the Avestan language. The Gathas were transmitted orally for about 2000 years before they were committed to writing in the third century C.E.

The Gathas reveal that the theological notions of Zarathushtra were not readily accepted by the society of his time (Yasna (Ys) 46.1), until he moved eastward to the kingdom of Bactria (near modern day Afganistan). Here his teachings found their roots and his theological concepts were accepted by Kavi Vishtaspa, monarch of the Kyanian dynasty (Ys 46.14). The Prophet is believed to have trained the brothers Ferashaostra and Jamaspa (Ys 46.16,17) in Vishtasp's court. When Zarathushtra died, Jamaspa, the son-in-law of the Prophet took over the helm of propagating the Faith. Among the early disciples of the prophet were his two cousins Haechataspa (Ys 46.15)

and Maidyoi-maha Spitama (Ys 51.19).

Zarathushtrian priests were addressed by different names, depending on the era under discussion. The Avestan hymns refer to terms, such as *ratu* (Ys 26.13) and *zaotar* (Ys 33.6). The former means a righteous guide/leader, while the latter has its origin in the pre-Zarathushtrian Sanskrit term *haotar* (implying an invoker of the Divine). Later in the Gathic era, the title of *aethrapaiti* (teacher) came into vogue. During the Pahlavi/Persian periods, it came to be known as *Herbad* or *Ervad*. While the Gathic *Magavan* (a member of the Zarathushtrian fellowship (Ys 33.7, 51.15)) never appears in the later Avesta, the old Persian *Magu* (Greek, *Magoi*; Latin, *Magus*) evolved into Pahlavi *Magopat*, which later Persian became *Mobad* or *Mobed*, which means an ordained member of the Zarathushti priesthood. It was the *ratu* of the early era that emerged in the later Pahlavi/Persian writings as *Dastavar* or *Dastur*, implying the leading priest.

According to later Zoroastrian texts (Aerpatistan 1-37, Vendidad (Vd) 4.45) from the early era, any aspiring Zoroastrian could undergo priestly training and become a performing priest—*Athravan*. The eighth book of Dinkard even speaks of the women assuming the duties of the performing priests (Dinkard, Book 8, 28.6). The ability of a women to tend a consecrated fire is also recorded in other Zarathushtrian text (Erbedestan Ch 5.6,7; 6.7).

Training for the Zarathushti priesthood in North America should be open to all Zarathushti men and women who

innately get the calling. The question of gender in serving the religion has been debated *ad nauseum*. Many research articles (Dr. Ketayun H. Gould, *Parsi-ana*, October 1995-April 1996; Dr. Ali A. Jafarey, *Parsi-ana*, April 1991) were written to demonstrate that, doctrinally and theologically, men and women are part and parcel of the same whole—the fellowship of mankind. Despite that, an egalitarian position was clearly vindicated by Asho Zarathushtra in the Gathas and, despite history, the significant religious contributions of women over the centuries, our traditions have retained a patriarchal character and embedded it in the religion's core. The basic principle for maintaining ritual purity, as expounded in the Sassanian Vendidad, is gender-free. Ritual purity must be maintained, as the principle is based on regarding as Nasu (impure) anything that leaves the body of a man or woman.

According to Greek historians Herodotus, Strabo, and Xanthus, Indo-Iranians started their priestly training at seven and evolved over ten years (Dhalla M.N., *Zoroastrian Civilization*, pg 225). Their first three years of training were spent under the guidance of a competent teacher, during which they learned rituals and doctrines and memorized the holy hymns composed by Zarathushtra. These early students understood what they were learning because the Avestan language was their language. Today, the Avestan language is extinct and present-day leaders and clergies must largely depend on the translations and interpretations of linguists and philologists. According to a later Avestan text (Yasht (Yt)

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

5.91), a competent priest is the one "... instructed in the religious lore, well acquainted with religious doctrine, conversant with Mantras, possessing merit and incarnated with Holy words."

By the 6th century BCE, the religion of *athravan* that originated in eastern Iran was vanquished by the warring Median tribes and religious authority was gradually usurped by the priestly Median tribe of *Magu*. Over time, the Magi, were recognized as Zoroastrian priests and the term *Magopat* (the chief *magus*) evolved to the present day Mobed. It is in this era that we see the insemination of institutionalized priesthood in Zoroastrian Faith. Magi thus became the Zoroastrian religious leaders and advisors of the Achaemenian (559-331 BCE) monarchs.

A Magi is described by Pseudo-Lucian as "an order of seers who are dedicated to the service of Gods.... their profession as Magi makes it incumbent on them to observe strict rules of life" (Boyce M., Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, pg 98). This Median priesthood evolved a tradition of religious authority during the Achaemenian times that pervaded through to the Parthian era. One of the Younger Avestan liturgy of Yasht (Yt 4.9; 14.46) records, "Oh Zarathushtra do not teach this Manthra to other than father or son, brother...or priests giving nourishment to the soul." In the interest of sustenance of power and authority, Magi have played a dominant role in institutionalizing the principle of hereditary priesthood.

The heredity principle has the advantage of replenishing the ranks of the priests, however, it hardly guarantees the quality. While it ensures a cadre of clergies with the know-how

of ritual performances, their ability to satisfy the needs of laity through theological and spiritual care was often missing. Over time, the inexorable atrophication of the knowledge base was one of the major reasons for the laity's loss of respect for the profession and its practitioners. The intellectual Zarathushtrian community in North America recognizes that the criterion of heredity was introduced in the era when the Median tribe of *Magoi* seized control of the Zarathushtrian religion during the sixth century B.C.E. The heredity principle has become a part of the religious tradition, but has absolutely no doctrinal bearing. It has served its purpose, and the time is here for it to go.

The religion and its guardians suffered a tragic setback during Alexander, the Macedonian's (331 B.C.E.) invasion. As described in a later religious text, "he killed several *Dasturs* and judges and *Herbads* and *Mobads* and upholders of the religion, and the competent and wise of the country of Iran" (Arda Viraf Nameh 1.9). Many sacred fires were quenched (Anklesaria B.T. Greater Bundahisn XXXIII.14) as he ravaged and pillaged the rich Zoroastrian sanctuaries.

The religious leaders continued their duties clandestinely through the Seleucid and Arsacid era only to re-emerge in Sasanian times (226-641 C.E.) in a powerful resurgence. The religious leader and chief priest, Tansar, of the founding Sasanian monarch Ardashir, assumed full responsibility (Tansar Nameh 36-40) for the revival and renovation of the Faith. It was then that a single authoritarian Zoroastrian religious hierarchy was established in Iran. The later Sasanian era was riddled with clergies who were supported by the crown and governed all aspects of Zoroastrian life. During Khosrow II's era, it is reported that

there were 12000 priests in the realm. It is then that we see the rise of two priestly classes: the ritual performing ones and the scholarly clergies who were involved in documenting and translating religious texts and were engaged in research.

Poverty and religious fervor drove Arab zealots to overrun the Sasanians in the 636 C.E. Islam spread in Iran and landed a second serious blow to the Zarathushtrian Faith. The Zoroastrian religious leaders of the later Islamic era came to be recognized in the ninth century C.E. as *Hudinan Peshobay* (Boyce M., Zoroastrians: pg 147) (leader of those of good religion). *Dadistan-I-Dinig* (Religious Judgment) was a religious text written by Manushchir, a prominent Zoroastrian leader around 881 C.E., and deals with questions from the laity and describes the harassment that the Zarathushti community underwent. Several of the extant Zoroastrian religious texts were written then. Among these were *Shkand-Gumanig Vizar* (Doubt-dispelling Exposition), and *Dinkard* (Acts of the religion). The latter was a monumental compilation initiated by the first known Hudinan Peshobay named, Adurfarnbag Farrokhzadan, and reedited by his descendent Adurbad-e-Emedan.

Thus ended the power and strength of priesthood and a dynasty that will be remembered by friends and foes alike.

## PART 2

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# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SCIENCE, SPIRITUALITY, ACTION! THE MAKING OF A DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

ASTAD PASTAKIA



Both science and spirituality are concerned with the quest of knowledge and truth. Spirituality, however, has a larger goal—that of leading an individual to lasting happiness. I see spirituality as a journey that implies a quest for deeper meaning in life and an understanding of the sacred dimension of self by progressively transcending the ego and attaining higher levels of consciousness.

Science, too, is of great value as it results in the generation of knowledge that can be applied for the benefit of humanity and for the preservation of our beautiful planet. While science and technology provide the means for tackling social problems, spirituality provides the set of values that guides decision-making. The resulting impact could be a better quality of life for sentient beings and/or the preservation of natural resources and environment for future generations. Both the *effort* made and the *results* achieved strengthen the value system of the professional and result in inner satisfaction of a lasting nature. Continuous application of knowledge and values for the betterment of society can lead to an upward spiral of *spirituality through action*, where the journey itself becomes the destination.

### SPIRITUALITY AND THE PROFESSIONAL

The field of “positive psychology” deals with the study of happiness, which is also the end-goal of spirituality. It, therefore, represents an area of convergence between science and spirituality. Three sources of happiness identified by researchers are pleasure, challenge, and meaning. These provide an excellent framework for understanding the extent of one’s satisfaction in the workplace. The best results are obtained when all three are present in a job. That is, when work becomes sheer joy!<sup>i</sup>

People who understand this often try to change the situation by making their job more pleasurable or meaningful or challenging. Bagchi (2011)<sup>ii</sup> in his book, “The Professional,” cites the example of Perrin Curtis, a bus-driver who by being courteous to his passengers turned an otherwise boring job into one with deep satisfaction. Bagchi concludes “people like Perrin make a real difference to their work and to the people they serve.”

Spirituality is not restricted to one’s profession alone. As pointed out by Fields (2014)<sup>iii</sup> it is practiced in different spheres of one’s life viz. work, family, community, and faith. Most of us try to balance work life with family life. Somewhere down the line, we realize the need to do more. In this balancing act, it is important to give priority to family. The ideal situation would be when the family members are happily aligned with one’s social goals or are pursuing their own ambitions. The importance of family, as an institution that provides basic values in life cannot be undermined.

### FAMILY AS THE NURSERY OF VALUES

Some people in industrialized countries tend to discount the value of family as an institution. I believe that neglect of such a fundamental institution would only usher in decadence in society, for it is the family that imparts values to help the child discriminate right and wrong.

I was blessed to be born in a wonderful family. My parents were so completely devoted to the education and well-being of their children that nothing else in life seemed to matter to them. At the time of my *Navjote* ceremony, I remember my mother taking my small hands in hers and whispering in my ears “with these hands, remember always to do good deeds!”

My elder brother and sister played an important role in reinforcing the right values in me. Giving and accepting love is a two-way street. Positive emotions like faith, hope, love, awe, gratitude, etc. lead to happiness, which cannot be felt without those strong family relationships. Those who are not born in a loving family can create one’s own “family” with friends or relatives.

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORK SPACE

Decisions regarding career opportunities are crucial as they determine the footprints that we leave behind on the sands of time. These choices are aided or abetted by extraneous factors which some will attribute to destiny while others to “luck.” As Machiavelli pointed out as early as the 16th century, fortune determines one half of the actions; the other half is controlled by the person himself.<sup>iv</sup>

Hence, fortune, or its absence, does not prevent us from trying to find or create opportunities that match our inherent and/or acquired passion, skills, and knowledge.

Coming into a post-graduate program at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA), I harbored no other ambition than to get a “decent” job in the private sector. A brief encounter with farmers in a field-training convinced me that farmers were often cheated by my prospective employers. Having read Rachael Carson’s “Silent Spring” (1963) in my undergraduate days and being aware of Masanobu Fukuoka’s methods of natural farming (1978), I determined to look for an organization *that worked with farmers and the natural environment rather than against them.*<sup>v</sup>

During the eighties, I worked with a small secular group of professionals for sustainable development in a coastal saline region of Gujarat. The group had successfully adapted Paulo Freire’s “pedagogy of the oppressed” to the local situation of caste-based discrimination of a scheduled caste community.<sup>vi</sup>

My specific responsibility was to make over 1400 acres of coastal saline and alkaline land productive. It took a decade of scientific exploration, trials and incremental innovation to establish plantations of salt tolerant *Prosopis uliflora* on these lands and make them productive.<sup>vii</sup>

It is the impact on the lives of ordinary people that prompts a doer to look for larger goals and bigger platforms. My search of a larger platform took me back to IIMA for a Fellowship in Public Systems Management. For my thesis, I searched out grassroots innovators or “ecopreneurs” who devised ingenious, low-cost methods of diffusing their technology. Significantly, their eco-friendly innovations such as vermicomposting and natural pesticides/repellents diffused across the country—riding the self-help movement triggered a few NGOs, creating in its wake a *silent revolution for sustainable agriculture.*

As a freelance development consultant, I get to interact with developmental workers across the country and beyond. Hence, whether it is a climate change adaptation project for inland fisheries (Madhya Pradesh), or a solar energy village (Maharashtra), or a pro-poor tasar silk value chain (Jharkhand), proper application of science and technology is critical for empowering marginalized communities.

In exchange for all the insights gathered from practitioners, I try to give back to the system by abstracting contextual and experiential knowledge and making it available as open access resources (see for example Pastakia and Oza, 2011).<sup>viii</sup> Abstracting knowledge



Storage of tasar silk cocoons by a tribal youth in Bihar, trained by an NGO, PRADAN and Central Silk Board, to produce Disease Free Layings in a scientific manner.

from the world of practice makes it possible to facilitate people-to-people learning. For instance, local methods of dealing with conflicts around common property resources (CPRs) in the western states of India<sup>ix</sup> were found highly relevant in building capacities in Afghanistan for tackling serious and violent conflicts around CPRs such as pistachio plantations.

## SPIRITUALITY AND ZOROASTRIAN VALUES

*“Through the best Asha, through the highest Asha, may we catch sight of Thee (Ahura Mazda), May we approach Thee, may we be in perfect union with Thee”.*

*Hoshbam prayer<sup>x</sup>*



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

Spiritualism is a journey that can help one delve within and beyond one's ego and emerge connected with the vast primordial intelligence that supports and pervades all creation. Following the path of righteousness (*Asha*) with a pure mind (*Vohu Mano*) and offering one's services by exercising authority and power with reason and intelligence to achieve "good rule" (*Vohu Xhathra*) with devotion (*Armaity*) will eventually help us reach the goal of eternal bliss (*Ameretat* and *Haurvatat*).<sup>xi</sup> This is the promise of the Gathas. This is the time-tested way that cannot let us down.

As a person becomes what she/he is thinking all the time, cultivating good and positive thoughts is the key to a life of positive action. It also represents conquest over evil within the mind. In the on-going battle between good and evil that one experiences daily, it becomes the duty of every Zoroastrian to stand firmly on the side of good and join forces with like-minded people to create greater impact. In the process, one becomes united in strength, not only with them, but with God almighty (*Hamazor*). Zarthushttra

would like his followers to take the initiative in doing good, thereby defeating the forces of evil. However, individuals are free to make their choices and bear the consequences.

The scattered Zoroastrian community will preserve itself only if it preserves its value system. The fact that initiatives, such as the distribution of inspirational Gatha calendars, putting traditional religious verses to modern music, and organizing Gatha study circles for lay people, which are being taken by the community, augers well for the preservation of Zoroastrian values. *Hamazor Hama asho-bed!* (May we all be united in strength with all righteousness!)

## END NOTES

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# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SPIRITUALITY AND HEALING

ERVAD JEHAN BAGLI Ph.D

According to a recent Newsweek magazine poll, 87% of adults believe that God sometimes answers their prayers. Forty percent of surveyed biologists, physicists, and mathematicians believe in a God that answers prayers.

The term “spiritual healing” is ubiquitous in the news where we repeatedly notice miraculous survival of persons suffering from incurable disease after a full day of bedside prayers. Despite these incidences health professionals are guarded in their comments. Rheumatologist and a Mind-body researcher Esther Steinberg of the National Institute of Mental Health explains, “The person in me says, ‘Of course, I believe emotions have something to do with the disease,’ but the scientist in me says, ‘Prove it to me.’”

The word “[to] heal” is derived from an Old Saxon root meaning “whole.” An individual’s “wholeness of health” is the summation of several integrals: the body (physical), the mind (intellectual), and the spirit (emotional/spiritual). While physical and intellectual health can be manipulated by external controls, such as the nutrition, drugs, and advise, emotional and the spiritual healing is strongly influenced by self-reflective tools, such as meditation, stress-management, and prayers.

Zarathushtrian theology invokes *Haurvatat* as “wholeness or completeness,” that is, a state of integration that one can reach through serenity or right-mindedness (*Spenta aramaiti*)—an integration of one’s inner self with one’s physical self, the

unity of the spiritual with the material, and the oneness of the mind and the body. For, the physical body is the sanctuary of the Divine essence of the Creator and *Haurvatat* is the well-being through health and happiness.

### MENTAL CALMING

Spirituality is a part of self-caring that contributes to their health. Attuning with the Spirit in the quest for spirituality can come through Holy Manthra, by focusing on a clear vision of the Divine. Often, a personal tragedy, a natural disaster, an event beyond comprehension of a mortal mind, or the sheer tranquility and awe in Nature, can trigger Spirituality.

Studies at University of Miami, conducted by Dr. Antoni, and at UCLA school of medicine, by Dr. Fawzy, has demonstrated that self-care is emerging in western medicine as an essential component of drug therapy and surgical intervention. Learning muscle relaxation, assertive skills, and stress management techniques can induce markedly improve health benefits via positive thinking.

Dr. Herbert Benson, the founder of the Mind/Body Institute of Boston’s Deaconess Hospital, describes in his book *Timeless Healing* the technique of “relaxation response” that defines a bodily calm (a state when blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and metabolic rates are at their minimum). Simple mental focusing can elicit this state of hypo-metabolism (slowing down of metabolic rate) and reducing oxygen consumption.

In his practice of evoking the relaxation response Benson turned

to the ancient spiritual practice of meditation described in the early Hindu Vedic scriptures. He gave his patients the option of repeating a word or prayer with passive disregard for any other thought that came to mind. Almost 80% of his patients chose a prayer as the focus for the elicitation. The important fact here is that Benson noticed that people emerged from this mental focusing with a clear mind, sharper thoughts that increased mental productivity. This is essentially analogous to reciting one’s prayers with calm and peaceful mindfulness to transform one’s *Vohu Mannah* (good thinking mind) to the *Vahishta Mannah* (best thoughts).

Researchers at the Mind/Body Institute have accumulated evidence that shows that the elicited “relaxation response,” with other self-care strategies, such as nutrition, exercise, and stress-management can cure certain pathological conditions. Patients with hypertension experienced significant decreases in blood pressure and required fewer or no medication over their three-year monitoring period. Seventy five percent of the patients with sleep-onset insomnia (could not fall asleep easily) were cured and became normal sleepers.

### SPIRITUAL HEALING

Spiritual healing, stimulated within an individual’s spiritual domain, manifests itself in the mind and is transmitted to the physical body. Chinese culture recognizes the healing energy as *Chi* or *Qi*, Indian as *Prana*, Japanese *Ki*, Hawaiian as *Mana*, and ancient Egyptian as *Ka*. Is the relaxation response attributable to



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

spiritual energy? Benson says that his attempts to measure this energy were unsuccessful. However, he suggests that the *Chi gong*—slow motion movements often practiced by older people—can stimulate a relaxation response.

Broadly, holistic methods that influence health are the result of spirituality. Psychologist Joseph Rychlak of Loyola University Chicago explains, “we tend to link spiritual healing as a Divine phenomenon.” However, it need not be so. One’s personal choices can also account for the healing. He poses the question, “how can an immaterial entity—the mind—influence a material entity—the body?” What is physical and what is not physical is an arbitrary distinction. The link between spirituality and health need not depend on the action of divine intervention.

Interestingly, of the diverse spiritual traditions in the world today, it was Zarathushtra who revealed the crucial nature of **Manah**—the Mind—and the importance of maintaining it—*Vahishta*—always. Asho Zarathusht teaches that **Vohu manah** is the closest cohort of Ahura Mazda, through the control of which flows values such as *Asha* and *Khshthra Vairya*. It is only through the mind, free of the chaos of worldly disorder, that the brain transmits signals that can generate a physiological response of well-being. Prayers can break down the barriers between the spiritual and the physical, bringing forth their harmonization, which leads to the value that Zarathushtra defines as *Haurvatat* (wholeness).

How does spiritual healing work? Spirituality aids in the healing process by synchronizing the body, mind, and spirit. During healing, spirituality helps combat illness, provides strength to withstand the trauma and pain caused by the disease, and bring about

a sense of wellness and peace through calming of the mind. For example, a cancer patient can find emotional, mental, and physical healing by invoking mental strength through a peaceful mind.

## HEALING PRAYERS

Prayer is an invocation, a mental activity of intensely passionate thinking that touches the sentiments of the world and searches for value among facts. Prayer and motions, such as “the laying on of hands,” is believed by some to be “faith healing” brought about by divine intervention.

Others believe that intercessory prayers are no more mystical than the transfer of one’s thoughts for renewed health for others. The liturgy of *Tandorosti* and parts of *Afringan* and *Afrin* are examples of Zoroastrian intercessory prayers for good health for others.

Dr. Larry Dossey in his book *Healing words: The Power of prayer and practice of Medicine* states, “When we examine the scientific evidence for prayer-type healing numerous controlled studies have validated the non-local nature of prayer. Much of this evidence suggests that praying individual can purposefully affect the physiology of distant people without the ‘receiver’s’ awareness.”

Cardiologist Randolph Byrd designed a scientific study to evaluate the role of God in healing. At San Francisco General hospital, a group of 393 patients admitted to the coronary care unit were divided into two groups. A group of 192 patients were prayed for by home prayer groups. The prayer group was given the first name and brief description of the condition of the patients. In contrast, the other 201 patients were not remembered in the prayers. The study was designed following rigid criteria

used in clinical studies for medicine. It was randomized and double blind, in which none of the patients, nurses, and doctors knew the identity of the study group. When announced, study results created a sensation. The receivers of the intercessory prayers had significantly fewer episodes of congestive heart failures, less pneumonia, and required fewer drug treatments. Believers felt that, at long last, the study demonstrated the profound effects of prayer.

A belief-based calming of the mind, with due respect for the diverse means that were used to attain it, must make humanity more respectful of the spiritual quality of life. Such an understanding of health through spirituality can go a long way in demonstrating the notion of God—so badly needed in this world, torn apart by discord, often in the name of religion.

Your body is nothing more than an energy system. The energy that is life, is coursing through your body. You can direct this energy. You can control it. As Neale Walsch in his book *Communion with God* states:

"If you imagine that you are a body, you will experience life as an expression of the body. When you understand that you are a soul, then you will experience life as an expression of soul. When you acknowledge that your soul and God's are one, then you will experience Life as an expression of One Spirit".

And, your Oneness with God will be Oneness with Humanity.

# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SPIRITUALITY AND HOPE IN MEDICINE

SHIREEN CAMA, MD



In my work as a psychiatrist, I often speak with people when they feel at their worst. They come to me with their worries, their fears, and their insecurities. It is my job to comfort, help them process their experience, nourish their strength, and help them find hope in murky waters. People draw hope and strength from many sources—from family, friends, inspirations, and past experiences.

For some, that hope comes in the form of religion and being a part of a religious community. Humans are social beings, yet many people who I see in therapy have few social outlets and lead a life of relative isolation. This is an even more common occurrence for the elderly and physically disabled amongst us, for whom physical mobility and resource limitations may prove too much of an impediment to leaving one's home. Research shows that social isolation can negatively affect one's sleep, ability to think critically, and mental and physical health (Cacioppo et al, 2014). For many people, going to church or religiously oriented gatherings is one of their only opportunities to socialize and be amongst other like-minded people. A study of elderly Americans noted that those who were part of a tightly knit religious community felt more supported spiritually and emotionally and felt a more personal connection with God. This, in turn, was associated with an increased sense of optimism and an enjoyment of better health (Krause, 2002). Furthermore, following a religious tradition via ritual, custom and prayer can offer people a sense of control in an otherwise chaotic world.

The health benefits of being part of a religious community are not only found in the elderly or disabled. Having a religious and cultural "home base" that one feels connected to can provide a place of refuge to people of any age, race, or creed. A sense of strong religious affiliation and community may, in fact, prove more critical for people of color and other marginalized groups who often face discrimination and prejudice in their daily lives. The negative health effects of discrimination, which have been well documented, may be tempered by the protective contributions of social connection and a sense of belonging. During my own childhood, I readily found refuge in my local Zarathushti community, a place where I was relieved to not have to explain what the "string" around my waist (*kusti*) was or to constantly have to teach people how to pronounce my name. Of course, this is not to say that strong affiliation

with a religious community is always found to be supportive and health promoting. For instance, gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals who are strongly affiliated with religious communities that are not affirming of their sexuality tend to have higher rates of internalized homophobia (Barnes et al, 2012), which has, in turn, been associated with depressive symptoms (Newcomb, 2010). Moreover, I have had situations in my own medical practice where I have felt that a patient or family's religiosity interfered with medical care, such as in the case where a patient of family refused to take helpful medication because they believed that their condition could be cured by prayer alone. As with most things, the influences of religion can be varied and complex.

A second separate, but overlapping source of hope that I look for in my patients is spirituality. While both harken to connection with a greater power, religion is based in established traditions, rituals, and beliefs that often characterize the identity of a group of people, whereas spirituality is a more personal, individual and subjective experience of transcendence. While many people find their spirituality through religion, others find their spiritual grounding elsewhere, including through meditation, yoga, self-reflection, altruism, and spending time in nature. A growing body of evidence shows that these practices, namely yoga and mindfulness meditation, have a variety of mental and physical benefits including a decreased sensitivity to pain (Grant, 2009) and decreased cortisol (stress hormone) and markers of inflammation within the body (Yadav, 2012). In my work as a psychiatrist, I regularly talk to patients about the benefits of meditation and mindfulness on alleviating feelings of anxiety and depression. I find that patients who express a sense of spirituality and a feeling of connection with something greater than themselves find acceptance and ultimately comfort in a recognition that there are parts of their destiny that are out of their control. Many people find spirituality a helpful means of coping with seemingly overwhelming situations. On the other hand, sudden or chronic illness and disability may also precipitate a spiritual crisis, where a patient may perseverate on the question, "why me?" and may feel hopeless when



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

their prayers for a cure may not seem to change the course of their illness (Koenig, 2004).

Despite a growing understanding of the connections between spirituality, religion, and mental and physical health, however, many physicians do not incorporate this into their diagnostic and treatment approach. As physicians, we often underestimate the role that religion may play in the medical lives and decisions of our patients. For instance, in a study that surveyed patients with advanced lung cancer, their caregivers, and medical oncologists, all three groups said that the recommendation of a patient's oncologist would be the primary factor that might influence chemotherapy treatment decisions. However, when asked about where "faith in God" would factor into the decision, patients and caregivers ranked this second, while the oncologists ranked this last (Silvestri et. al, 2003).

The reality is that many decisions, especially at the time of illness and vulnerability, are made based on religious and/or spiritual beliefs, and yet, these beliefs are often not discussed with medical providers. Why is that? On the part of the provider, many physicians, as those in the survey above, do not believe that is as relevant to their patient care and may not be aware of the growing body of literature stating otherwise. They may also not be aware of the immense role that faith communities can play in providing care, support, and encouragement during a patient's treatment and recovery. Other physicians have expressed feeling uncomfortable in bringing up spiritual and religious issues with their patients, fearing that they may be seen as being "politically incorrect" or offensive to someone who may have unanticipated views on religion and spirituality (Koenig, 2004). These barriers must be addressed and overcome, however, if physicians want to have a holistic understanding of their patients.

Just as physicians must ask questions about substance use and sexual history despite the potential awkwardness of the topics, so too should they inquire about religion and spirituality as part of a comprehensive clinical assessment. There are, of course, ways to inquire about these topics in a non-judgmental and open manner, and many medical schools and residency programs are trying to introduce their trainees to new ways of doing so.

On a personal level, my own moral conviction and expression of spirituality through service is what initially drew me to medicine and is what sustains my passion for it still. As I work with children and adults who have endured horrible traumas, live in unabating poverty and endure life with chronic and debilitating illnesses, I sometimes feel helpless and frustrated by my inability to "fix" what is wrong in their lives. It is during those times that I rely on my own faith in Ahura Mazda and find peace in Zarathushtra's charge for me to "be among those who renew the world." I am often awe-struck and humbled by the resiliency that I see in my patients—a resiliency that displays their own spirituality and connection with a power greater than us all.

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# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

## SPIRITUALITY, ZOROASTRIANISM AND SCIENCE

LOVJI CAMA Ph.D.

*Everyone who is seriously involved with science becomes convinced that some spirit is manifested in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man. In this way the pursuit of science leads to a religious feeling of a special sort which is surely quite different from the religiosity of someone more naive.*

Albert Einstein

It is safe to say that no religion can survive without a sense of spirituality and an acceptance of a view of the world among its members. But, what is Zoroastrian spirituality? How do Zoroastrians arrive at this spirituality? I have seen two paths.

One is a path of understanding and knowledge. In this case, an individual learns what Zarathustra taught. The individual understands the concept of the Amesha Spenta, an individual's ideal role in Ahura Mazda's creation as an agent of perfection. Their choice of words and actions are then governed accordingly. Piety then comes through one's correct actions and a sense of responsibility for them.

Many Zoroastrians follow a different path towards spirituality. It is a path based more on faith rather than understanding. It consists of reciting certain prayers without knowing their meanings, carrying out certain rituals that have been taught to them, and believing that these prayers and rituals are a way of communicating with Ahura Mazda, which then becomes a source of their piety.

The two paths are not mutually exclusive and the piety of many Zoroastrians is derived from a combination of understanding and faith.

One question that arises is: Does science fit in with Zoroastrian spirituality?

Science can be defined as methodical thinking and action directed to the understanding of the working of our universe as perceived by our senses. Religion on the other hand is a set of beliefs that define the goal of humanity and its relationship with the Creator, while defining the ideal human behavior that leads towards that goal. Religion also describes the nature of the Creator and prescribes rituals that are to be performed, which facilitate the relationship of the human being and the Creator.

Since science deals only with the rational, it is possible for scientists to believe in only that which can be understood through a rational approach. Since the nature of, or the existence of, the Creator cannot be learned



through a scientific approach, many scientists are skeptical about the existence of a Creator. A personal God, who rules at will and the workings of whose mind cannot be comprehended or questioned is a concept that is rather difficult for a scientist to accept.

What about the Zoroastrian concept of God, Ahura Mazda? Here is a concept of God whose main attributes are absolute wisdom and goodness, a God who is incapable of evil and, in that sense, not absolutely powerful. This is a God who is completely predictable. Ahura Mazda who is Vohu Mano (the Good Mind) and Asha (righteousness and the divine law) has a perfect plan for the universe that he has created. The nature of this perfect plan is subtle and intricate, but it is not capricious. Its intricacy arises from the infinite nature of its Creator, but can be understood and unraveled, perhaps not in its entirety, using the Good Mind that has been granted to mankind. This endeavor of understanding Asha is science when applied to the physical world and is religion in its truest sense when applied to the moral world. Once one looks at the universe in this way, the distinction between science and religion becomes blurred.

From where does the conflict between religion and science come? In the absence of knowledge about the physical world, religion creates myths that may temporarily satisfy humanity's need to understand the physical world's mysteries. These myths, over time,



# SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

do not stand up to critical examination via a scientific approach. When religion insists in the validity of these myths there is conflict. Such is the conflict between evolution and the myth of special creation. In fact, most creation stories, as described by various religions, fall into this class; including the Zoroastrian story of creation in the *Bundahishn*, if it were taken literally. Does evolution conflict with the teachings of Zoroastrianism? In my opinion, no. Evolution is the path of Asha unfolding to create mankind, this is the real story of creation. Intricate it is, slow and stepwise it is, but capricious it is not. The laws of nature that are part of the Divine Law of Asha, have created a sentient being that is capable of being aware not only of itself, but also of the creation around it. A being willing to attempt to understand the Creator. And if you believe in the Law of Asha, you must believe that this is the only way this could have happened.

The pursuit of science is the pursuit of understanding the mystery of the physical world. Two of the greatest mysteries are the origin of the universe and the nature of life

According to the Big Bang theory, the universe started from a point of inconceivably immense energy and, following the predictable laws of physics, gave rise to all the stars and galaxies as we know them today. One cannot but be amazed at the order that is present in the universe. Biologists and physicists have found that our universe is very finely tuned. The slightest of deviation from the laws of physics would have prevented the events leading to our present state and would have produced a very different universe in which humans could not have evolved. If our universe is a product of intelligent design, then this order (one that can be seen and measured) is the order introduced into the universe by the designer. For a Zoroastrian, this is a manifestation of Asha.

In the last hundred years, man has made great strides in the understanding of the nature of life, to the extent that entire genomes of many species, including man, are known. Though the blueprint for life appears to be laid out in a very simple fashion, we have not been able to

figure out all the mechanisms by which even a simple bacterial cell functions. That is not to say that we do not know many of the biochemical steps. Even our limited knowledge has been useful, for example, in defending ourselves with antibiotics against bacteria. However, the more we learn there appears to be more to learn and the complexity of even a simple cell. These complex systems of chemical reactions that are a living cell, require an order that we can just begin to decipher. In the absence of this order, there is no life. For a Zoroastrian, this too is a manifestation of Asha.

Ecology is a relatively new field of science. Its genesis is the belated realization that man in his progress has disregarded the effects of his endeavors on the rest of nature. The success of this specie has taken a great toll on other species whose habitats man has destroyed. Man has come to the realization that the power science has given man over nature must be used wisely, i.e. with the Good Mind to establish Kshathra Variya. Ecology is a belated attempt to do that. Zoroastrianism teaches us a great respect, even a reverence for nature.

Science and religion answer questions at different ends of Asha's spectrum, The Divine Order. Often, when their spheres overlap, they provide each other with important insights and thought-provoking questions. Returning to the Big Bang theory: From where did the initial energy come? Is it God who put it there? Or, even more stirring, is that energy a manifestation of God? The last two questions cannot be answered by science, but these are important questions that a religious view can attempt to answer. To me, Zoroastrian spirituality comes from an attempt to bridge this gap of understanding the Universe, where science and the Zoroastrian religion have complimentary roles.

While he did not believe in a personal God, Einstein seems to have believed in Asha, as Zarathustra describes it.

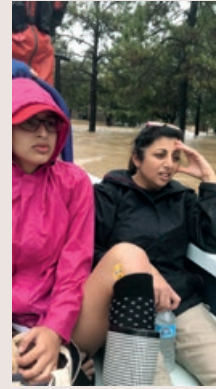
**Lovji D. Cama** has a B.Sc. and a B.Sc. (Technology) degree from the University of Bombay, India, and a Doctorate in Chemistry from Columbia University in New York. He retired after 36 years from Merck and Co. as a research scientist. Lovji has over 45 patents in antibiotics and many publications in scientific journals. Lovji is a founding member of ZAGNY, its first Secretary and later President, and a trustee of the Dar-e-Mehr (26 years). He has run the Religious Education Classes at ZAGNY since 1974 and Youth Camps for 15 years. He is presently chair of the Religious Education Committee of FEZANA. He has lectured on subjects on Zoroastrianism in North America, UK and India and contributed to the text book "Good Life."



## CREATOR THE ORDER OF ASHA THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST FOR MANKIND



Courtesy J. Jamadar



Courtesy R. Setna

### **Totality!**

During August and September, nature presented us with spectacular scenes, starting with a glorious solar eclipse that left us awed and in wonderment of the magnificence of creation and the precise order it follows.

And, before people had time to absorb the beauty of day turning into night and back into day within an hour ...  
... nature unleashed its fury in a series of devastating hurricanes that left thousands homeless and their properties destroyed, which were accompanied with some loss of life. Then, there were the forest fires in British Columbia and California.

The beauties and beasts were humbling events. We can prepare and pray, but we are ultimately helpless in summoning the beauties and preventing the beasts. We bow to the power of nature. ED

## MYTHS AND SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT SOLAR ECLIPSES

The word 'eclipse' derived from the Greek term "ekleipsis," meaning abandonment, as the ancients believed the sun was literally abandoning the Earth during that time. And over time, ancient cultures and religions applied the definition to a plethora of now de-bunked mythological tales and superstitions. Still, many people around the world consider solar eclipses evil omens signaling the onset of destructions and death.

Here are a few bizarre myths or superstitions about solar eclipses.

**CHINESE** – Sun- eating demons make the sky go dark. The ancient Chinese apparently believed an evil dragon living among the stars devoured the sun and they needed to create a big, noisy commotion to scare the dragon away

**INDIAN** –Solar eclipses are dangerous to pregnant women and their unborn children

This myth is also true for other cultures dating back to the Aztecs and Hispanic. Pregnant women are still forbidden to go outside their homes during the eclipse.

**ITALIAN** – Flowers planted during eclipse will be more vibrant than any others.

Unlike other myths the Italians have a more positive outlook on solar eclipse. Unfortunately, there is no scientific evidence to back this claim





## EQUINOXES AND ECLIPSES: SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS IN THE SKY

ANAHITA SIDHWA

kaêibyô azîm rânyô-skeretîm gâm tashô.  
*You fashioned the fruitful joy-bringing world*  
Ys 44.6 (Gahta Ushtavaiti)



As an avid sky-gazer, it is appropriate for me to seek every opportunity to notice and enjoy usual and unusual happenings in the sky. As a Zarthushti, I am continually gratified to celebrate Nauroz, because it is an event with great astronomical significance. The sky is a beautiful clock and calendar—and, while ancient farmers were more skilled at reading it, we have the benefit of many centuries of knowledge that help us discern the details and give us insight into the vastness and beauty of the universe.

Every year, as I lay my Nauroz table, I also remember to go outdoors and pay homage to the Sun. I choose to think that its mid-point position on the celestial sphere represents the “golden mean.” It’s neither too hot, nor is it at its extreme positions, and we can imbibe the symbolism into our personal lives, to practice and celebrate moderation and equality.



Recently, I also had the opportunity to view the total eclipse of the Sun on August 21, 2017. I have waited for this event for over a decade, and the reality certainly lived up to my expectations! Examining the long swath of the path of totality across the USA, my first challenge was to decide where we would go to view it. After some deliberations we decided to go to Idaho Falls for three reasons—prospects for clear skies were high, we were invited to stay with our friends, Amy and Minoo Sumariwalla, and we would be together with other like-minded astronomy enthusiasts like Amy’s brothers, Rustom and Jamshed Jamadar. An astronomy party weekend with Parsis, what fun!

When we saw that the Sumariwalla’s backyard looked out on a golf course with a clear view of the eastern horizon we knew we did not need to search for a better location or deal with crowded parking lots. It was cloudy when I peeked from the window blinds at 7 am; but, as expected, the clouds had disappeared and the sky was clear by 9 am. We set up our lawn chairs, a table to hold all our paraphernalia, a ground tarp for kids to lie down, and a tripod for our camera. We also had solar binoculars, the # 14 welder’s glass, and lots of paper eclipse glasses for the 11 people at home and the other neighbors who joined us.

At 10:15 am the Moon crept in front of the Sun and took its first tiny bite at the 2 o’clock position. As it gradually moved to take a bigger bite, everyone got a view with their eclipse shades and took turns with the binoculars and welder’s



glass to get different perspectives. The binoculars clearly showed some sunspots, Jamshed and Rustom experimented with their filtered cameras, and we looked at the crescent suns from our jerry-rigged colander holes. By about 11 am it began to feel cooler and, as totality approached, we noticed the street lights come on in the distance. The sky was still like twilight and soon Venus was clearly visible. Since the Moon's surface is not smooth, as its disk lines up with the Sun, some sunlight can filter around the Moon's rough edges to create a "diamond ring" effect. More than anything I wanted to see this—would I be able to?

One minute before totality I trained the binoculars at the Sun, keeping a constant watch—and there it was, the first diamond ring! I called out to everyone to remove their glasses and could not believe I was seeing it. It was so clear and breathtaking and delicate and it lasted longer than I expected before it vanished and totality began. The corona was not a bright smudge as seen in photographs. It had structure with streamers and filaments flowing out very conspicuously, specially from the Sun's 7 o'clock position. I remembered to look around and no, it wasn't as dark as I expected and the western sky had a strange glow. The temperature had dropped to 50 degrees and all too soon our 109 seconds of totality were over. As the second diamond ring burst into view on the opposite side from the first one, it was time to put on our eclipse glasses again. This time the "diamond" was more brilliant.

As I came back to earth from my astronomical high, my first thoughts were of gratitude that my first total solar eclipse experience was so awe-inspiring and perfect. It is no wonder that eclipses have been recorded since ancient times and different civilizations have given their own interpretations to their significance.

Thoughts can be a gradual process of understanding or a flash of insight. I feel the same way about equinoxes and eclipses. To me the vernal equinox, Nauroz, is something gentle and expected, it happens every year. But the Great American Eclipse on August 21, 2017, was like a flash. Yes, it was expected although it was over too soon. But the memory of the sight will remain with me forever and give me another reason to marvel at our universe.

*Photos courtesy Jamshed Jamadar*

*Anahita Sidhwa recently retired as a Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Brookhaven College in Dallas after more than twenty-five years. She is a founder member and past president of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas and continues to coordinate various activities for ZANT like the Vohu Manah group discussions. She serves on the Fezana Academic Scholarship Committee. She is married to Feroze who supports her many interests ranging from star gazing to trying new recipes.*

## TOTALITY WAS WORTH THE 24-HOUR DRIVE

**KESHVAR BUHARIWALLA**

The Buhariwalla family has been avid admirers of the sky, be it the moon, the stars, the planets, or the sun. If it pertains to the magnificent displays of our universe, we have been eager to seek it out. There have been journeys near and far over the years to view the Milky Way in places where city lights don't impede the amazing sights. The McDonald Observatory in the middle of no-where, in West Texas, has enthralled us with the larger-than-life telescopes to gaze into the beyond. Therefore, when the ability to view a total eclipse came calling, the Buhariwalla family was all in!



In all fairness, our fearless leader is Kali, and his fascination has become our fascination. The three boys and I are the lucky co-pilots on these amazing adventures. Our home is in Flower Mound, Texas, and





# In The News



we belong to the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT). Every time we met our astronomy mentor at ZANT events that summer, there was feverous talk between Kali and Anahita Sidhwa. You see, Anahita is our guru about all things stars, planets and sky. Over the past 20 years, she has engaged our ZANT community by including us in viewing extraordinary celestial events.

So, it only makes sense that Kali received the best advice and the plans began coming together. The Buhariwallas decided on an 8-hour drive to Kansas City. But even with the best laid plans, a change was required. As Kali monitored the weather for optimum eclipse viewing, it became clear that our original destination would most likely be overcast and cloudy. So, we adjusted our plans and found our new destination—White House, Tennessee. We also found the last hotel room available. While this change added 2 hours to our drive, we also gained a few more seconds of totality, a tradeoff we were happy to live with.



We gathered at the front of our hotel and, at exactly 11:58 am, an audible gasp and applause broke out on the front lawn; the eclipse had started. In just a few minutes the beautiful process of the moon covering up the sun was evident through the must-have eclipse glasses. From our vantage point of laying on the grass and staring directly up at the sun, the slow creep of the moon was fascinating. I could not look away, it was enthralling to see this black shadow creep into the sun, barely moving, yet making steady progress.

Totality was expected at 1:26 pm and, as the time grew closer, there was one unexpected phenomenon. To our eyes, it did not get noticeably darker as the sun was getting covered up. However, the temperature changed, and there was a different hue in the sky. Yet even as the sun was over 90% covered, the light being emitted was still significant. Then the magic happened—there is just a sliver, barely a crescent, and then poof... the sun is gone and the glasses come off, totality! Everyone claps, all eyes are looking up, the beautiful ring around the sun is peeking through. How am I feeling right now? Is this real? Then calm comes over you and you just soak in the magnificence of the universe and the experience of the moment. It lasts a brief 2 minutes and 39 seconds, in which you realize you were part of something extraordinary.



As the sun peaks reverse, daylight takes its rightful place and slowly the heat rises once again. What we came to see had been accomplished and the boys were eager to hit the road and make it back home. This turned out to be a longer drive than expected as everyone was using the same roads to get back home. After a much-needed overnight stay and 14 hours of driving, we were back home in Flower Mound, Texas, having experienced something unique and amazing. Words and pictures don't do *totality* justice, find the next one and see for yourself!

**Keshvar Buhariwalla** lives in Flower Mound, Texas with her husband Kali and their three sons, Zaal, Cyrus and Hormuz. She is active in the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT). Currently, Keshvar is pursuing a Master's in Sustainability and Development at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Photos Kali Buhariwalla

**TÂ DEBENAOTÂ MASHÎM HUJYÂTÔISH  
DAEVAS DEFRAUDED MANKIND OF GOOD LIFE  
YS 32.5 (GATHA AHUNAVAITI)**



## HARVEY HITS HOUSTON

YASMIN PAVRI



On August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Rockport Corpus Christi, Texas, more than 200 miles from Houston; but then Harvey stalled over South-East Texas for four days. According to the weather channel: “Harvey’s extreme slow movement Aug. 26-30 kept a fire hose of moisture pointed into southeast Texas and Louisiana for days, resulting in catastrophic flooding.” Harvey dumped 50+ inches of rain (90 trillion gallons of water!) on Houston in those four days.

Houston also has several reservoirs that collect excess rainwater for future use. However, with the amount of rain that Harvey brought, the reservoirs rose to such alarming levels that the Army Corps of Engineers was forced to open the dams and let out water in a “controlled flood” rather than allow the dams to burst. The water let out from these reservoirs flowed into the already swollen bayous and ... you get the picture!

Houston has a large Zarathushti community; 11 families lost their homes and their cars. Many more had to evacuate temporarily. Many families had dramatic rescues by boat, an experience they will not soon forget. An army tank came late one night to evacuate another family and drove them to a friend’s house an hour away! Fortunately, almost everyone found shelter at a friend’s house or at hotels. Zarathushtis around Texas sent messages offering to keep

any families that needed a place to stay. Thankfully, not one Houston Zarathushti suffered physical injuries. (photo above, Fiona Setna with daughter Serena)



Supplies ready for distribution to local shelters.

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) Executive Committee got into gear and started the process of accounting for everyone’s whereabouts. The ZAH CARES Community Assistance Team, a team of volunteers chaired by Homi Davier, sent out regular emails with contact numbers of volunteers. Homi, an insurance agent, kept the community informed on what they should, and more importantly, should not do, before filing an insurance claim. As the floodwaters receded, teams of volunteers assisted families whose homes had been flooded to remove mud-soaked carpets and damaged sheet rock.

While the cohesive Zarathushti community ensured that anyone who needed a place to stay found one, many others in Houston were not so fortunate and shelters around the city filled up fast. In the true spirit of charity, some ZAH members conducted a drive to collect items needed by various shelters. In two days, the large Rustomji room of the Houston Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center was filled with supplies. ZAH members also donated \$4000. Although an email was sent out to the community to come and take any supplies that they needed before they were sent to shelters, no one wanted to deprive those needier than they were, and all the donated items were sent to various shelters.



ZAH youth helping with collection and sorting.

The Governor of Texas designated Sunday, September 3rd a day of prayer. Houston’s Zarathushti community





gathered at the center for a Boi ceremony, which was followed by prayers of thanksgiving for bringing the community through a harrowing ordeal. Since no Zarathushti gathering is complete without food, the prayers were followed by a pot-luck lunch. The prayers, lunch and fellowship were just what the community needed after a tumultuous week.

*Photos Percy Master, Rustom Setna and Yasmin Pavri*

## **“HURRICANE HARVEY WAS A VERY SCARY EXPERIENCE...”**

**ISABELLE IRANI, 13, WOODLANDS, TX**

**H**urricane Harvey was a very scary experience for all of Texas, including our family. At school on Thursday, many people were talking about how they might not come the next day because of the storm. I didn't think that the hurricane would be bad. Later that night we found out that all the schools in the district were cancelled on Friday. I was excited because we wouldn't have to go to school, but quickly realized that Harvey was going to be worse than I expected.

On Saturday, it started to rain, hard, and it continued Sunday. On Sunday, we got news that school was cancelled till Wednesday because of flooded roads. At that point, the creek behind our neighborhood was overflowing, pushing water back into the neighborhood. Early Monday morning, I went outside to take Junior, my dog, for a walk—half our side of the street was underwater. I turned around and ran back inside to tell my parents that the water was in people's houses just down the street. My dad and another neighbor placed a meter stick where the water was at, to check and see how much it was rising per hour.

My dad checked the stick and found that the water had risen; it was now only two houses away from ours. This is the point where everyone got more frightened and nervous. We had never come this close to flooding and I didn't know what to think. We started moving everything from the bottom floor in our house up to the top floor. All the kids were kind of nervous, and we ended up getting most of the irreplaceable items to the second floor in a little over an hour.

My mom told us to pack some clothes in a backpack, just in case we had to leave, which made us a little more scared. At one point we were completely ready to leave, but ended up staying through the last few days of rain. Our house never flooded, but I was restless and scared about the water rising over the next few nights. School was cancelled for the rest of the week and, by Thursday, the rain had died down and the water was slowly lowering. After the hurricane, I saw a lot of damage to other houses in our neighborhood and felt very fortunate that we stayed dry. Overall, hurricane Harvey made me realize how lucky I was to have everything I do today.

## **... HURRICANE IRMA WAS THE BEAST!**

**HOVI SHROFF**

**Boca Raton (east coast of Florida)**

**M**eteorologists predict that as global temperatures rise, warmer oceans are expected to fuel stronger hurricanes, with disastrous consequences...and this is exactly what happened on September 10, 2017.

Millions of Florida residents prepared for one of the deadliest hurricanes ever to hit the Sunshine State. Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm, blew into Florida with intense wind gusts of over 135mph and torrential rain ripping through the entire state of Florida, leaving behind devastating despair. Hurricane Irma was supposed to hit Miami head-on. But, the storm changed its course and headed towards Florida's Gulf Coast. Despite the change in trajectory, Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys, and then hit South Florida as a Category 4 hurricane, flooding and crippling Miami and its neighboring cities.

# In The News



Approximately 400 Zoroastrians live in Florida cities like Miami, Ft Lauderdale, Boca Raton, Naples, St. Petersburg, Tampa, Sarasota, Orlando, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville.

Our family has been through a few hurricanes over the last thirty years but Hurricane Irma was The Beast! She was slow moving, and traversed the entire state of Florida. Irma warranted fear and she certainly got that with the uncertainty of the unknown that she guaranteed in her wake.

With hurricane shutters secured, propane tanks filled, flashlights checked, battery operated fans set up, and junk food stocked up to feed a small army we were ready and

as prepared as we could be. The anticipatory anxiety that the storm brought was in a word stressful!

And then she came. With sustained, howling winds, with gusts up to 80-100 mph, Hurricane Irma raged over South Florida for eight hours. Unlike earlier storms, this one was slow moving and accompanied with several tornado touchdowns in our area. Thousands of residents lost power, phone and cable connections and emergency personnel worked and continued to work around the clock to assess and repair damages as Hurricane Irma continued to engulf the entire state of Florida in her fury.

It is the day after Hurricane Irma, and all I can say is that despite the loss of homes, livelihoods, and lives, I am hopeful that we will rebuild and restore. In the words of Miami's Mayor Phillip Levine, "We didn't dodge a Bullet, we dodged a Cannonball."



## IRMA WAS A SPECIAL ONE

**JO ANN AND SOLI DASTUR**  
Bradenton, Sarasota Area, Florida



Over the 23 years we have been in Florida, hurricanes have come and gone. But, Irma was a special one. It was touted by all as the most dangerous hurricane striking small islands [in the Caribbean] at Category 5 (185+ mph wind) and heading straight to the southern Florida tip.

Jo Ann usually keeps track of TV news and weather. For the first time, on Monday, before it hit us, she wanted to put up shutters on our new home and arranged with a worker to put





them up. He came with two other guys on Wednesday and, within two hours, our home was dark in the middle of the day, a feeling that we have never experienced in our home. The only way we could look out was by opening the garage door.

From that time on, Jo Ann was busy buying food, water, batteries, etc., getting us prepared for Irma. We missed having our meals on the patio those days. We kept watching TV to find out what's going on with Irma. It was supposed to hit the Florida Keys and then smack Miami. However, on Friday it shifted a little bit west and was supposed to hit Marco Island and Naples, moving head on to Tampa—our Bradenton City was in its path, with Category 3–4 force winds.

We were hoping and praying all the time and kept watching the headlines on TV and Internet. On Sunday evening, September 10, 2017, we heard on TV that Irma landed on Marco Island and Naples as a Category 4 and we were further worried. However, in the late evening, it veered off further east of us and by 9 p.m. our power went off and on for a while and then cable, internet, and landlines were off, but we still had our cell phones. It seemed that by 11 p.m., both Jo Ann and I were fast asleep and Irma passed us by without our notice. I woke up at about 3 a.m. and checked the cell phone—Irma was northeast of us at that time. I ran around the home and found everything intact and thanked Dadar Ahura Mazda for HIS help in avoiding this monstrous hurricane.

In the morning of September 11, we opened the garage door and looked outside the home and all was OK, except that



our little mango tree was uprooted. We spent the day lounging around and on Tuesday we removed the shutters and replanted our mango tree. However, our cable and internet did not come back until Wednesday but we never lost our power.

Thank Dadar Ahura Mazda for HIS help in surviving this ordeal. We inquired with some friends in Tampa and Orlando and all seemed to be OK though some had to evacuate their homes. And, imagine it was 9/11!

## LESSONS FROM IRMA

**YASMIN AND RUSTOM KEVALA**  
Sun City Centre, Tampa Bay Area, Florida

“This hurricane season—not yet even close to finished—has generated more destructive, land-falling storms than the past few years combined. Four of this year's monsters went on to become Category 4 or 5, and three of those made landfall in U.S. territory. The U.S. has never been hit by three storms this strong in the same season in modern records.” Washington Post, September 23, 2017.

Starting around September 7, 2017, Florida started preparing for Irma's arrival. Florida Governor Rick Scott was constantly on television warning all Floridians to take Irma seriously. Meteorologists started tracking the storm in the Atlantic Ocean and made predictions about its progress. Most models predicted that Irma would turn north after passing Cuba and make landfall as a Category 4 hurricane in the Miami area.

Irma arrived over the Tampa Bay area at 1:30 a.m. on September 11. Fortunately, it had now weakened to Category 2. Most people living on the Gulf coast were evacuated to shelters. There was some flooding along the coast. We live in Sun City Center, about 5 miles inland just south of Tampa. But to be safe, people living in our retirement community got together and helped each other install steel shutters (Florida building code requires the builder to provide shutters with all homes built after 2010) on all the windows. The perimeter walls of our homes are built of concrete blocks and the roofs can withstand strong winds. Those of us living in these newer homes invited others from older homes without shutters, especially those living alone, to come and stay with them during the hurricane night. The moral support and

# In The News



good feelings all around helped everyone overcome the dread feelings from waiting for Irma's arrival.

Strong winds started early on September 10. We woke up from the wind noise as the hurricane passed over us. We have underground power lines, so the power did not go off. But we could not see through the windows due to



the shutters and dared not open the door to see outside. We watched the reports on television. The broadcasters seemed to be relieved. But it did topple some large trees and flooded the coastal islands. The young palms on our street swayed but withstood the 75 mph winds. It rained heavily



with strong winds all day on Monday, September 11. A video of our street can be seen at: <https://www.facebook.com/rustom.kevala.7/videos/10154842412011301/>.

We are from Mumbai, so we are used to heavy rains and floods. But this was a new experience for us, with all the advance warnings, national news coverage and experiencing a hurricane. We received many phone calls and e-mail messages from friends from all over, even from India, inquiring and praying for our safety. The problem with such continuous news coverage is that people can panic and feel helpless. This was the first time that we found empty shelves in grocery stores, sold-out gas stations and long delays on highways.

## AN ANXIOUS NIGHT

**MARI-JO AND JIM DUBASH**  
Wellington, Florida (East Coast)

After hearing a lot of hurricane horror stories from our friends, we made our plan to shutter the house and drive out to our friends in Orlando or South Carolina. If we could not drive, we would fly out to our daughter in Virginia. We had also decided that, if we had to evacuate, we would go to our local hurricane center (a 15-minute walk) outside our development.

During hurricane season we pay close attention to weather reports. When it became obvious that Irma was heading towards Miami and the hurricane path was going through Florida we decided not to drive but to stay at home. It took a friend and I, two days to put up all the shutters, but they were up the day before Irma hit the Florida Keys. We stocked up on food, water, and supplies.

We were grateful Irma moved to the West after hitting the Florida Keys. We spent an anxious night when the hurricane winds (100 mph), horizontal rain, and a few tornados hit our area. We were very fortunate that we did not lose power, cable, or internet through the whole ordeal. (Some of our friends were without power for a few days.)

Next day, we had friends and neighbors at our house as all were suffering from cabin fever. By the grace of God, there was no damage to the house, but we did lose a couple of trees. The water level in the lake behind our house was high, but there was no flooding.

I am glad we did not drive out, as all major highways had turned into parking lots, with people running out of gas, food, accommodations, etc.

Irma left much devastation throughout Florida. It will take months for the cleanup. For some, it will take years to get back to normal. For some, it will change their lives forever.





## FOREST FIRES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA A DEVASTATING TIME FOR THOUSANDS

BELLA TATA, Vancouver, BC

From April 1 to September 20, 2017, almost 900,000 hectares [~2.22-million acres] of forest burned in British Columbia, Canada, which is now facing its worst-ever wild-fire season. The previous record was set in 1958, when 855,000 hectares [~2.11-million acres] burned. So far this year, \$315.7-million has been spent fighting forest fires; almost 4,000 people are currently on the ground battling the fires. It has been a devastating time for thousands of residents who were evacuated. Whereas most of the fires are thought to have been created by lightning, there are instances when human carelessness caused the rest. For the first time in three months, all wildfire evacuation orders and alerts were lifted in BC as the province began to recover from its worst wild-fire season on record. As far as the Zarathushti community is concerned, no reports for assistance have been received to date



<http://latimesphoto.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/la-0826-pin001.jpg>

## WILD FIRES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: A GATHIC APPROACH

FARIBORZ RAHNAMOON

From April 2017, fire has ravaged the beautiful landscape of British Columbia, Canada. As of September 20, about 8900, square kilometers [~2.2-million acres] of forest have been destroyed and fires are still burning at more than 100 locations. Fifty-one percent of the fires are known to have been caused by lightning and 39 percent by humans. With due diligence, no human lives were lost but about 300 homes were destroyed, 37,000 people were evacuated, and thousands of animals have inevitably lost their habitat. It was an exceptionally dry summer and the slight rain received made the area a tinder box, waiting for lightning to start more fires.

Was “Ātash *Puthra Ahurahe Mazdāo*”<sup>1</sup> punishing mankind?  
Does God by way of fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes punish humans?  
*Not Ahura Mazda*. No, at least not the God named Ahura Mazda.

According to the Gathas, it is Nature going its natural course.



*Anais Vaa` Noit Ahura Mazda*

*Ashem ca yanais zaranaema*

Through these, not Ahura Mazda

Asha also brings wrath

That Mind is the best

Which strives' to give good guidance

For you to be worthy, Mighty, satisfied,

and is worthy of praise

***Zarathushtra - Gatha - Yasna HA 28.9 (FR)***

Some evergreens like spruce and pine have an affinity for burning. They must burn to regenerate themselves. Those species have adapted to fire; their cones open after fires and spill their seeds onto the ground. These trees have evolved to when they're old enough and disease-prone, they are naturally replaced after they're destroyed by fire. A forest fire is as crucial to forest renewal as the sun and rain. <sup>2</sup>

WELL, WHAT ARE WE HUMANS SUPPOSED TO DO?

The Gatha says: use your mind, study nature, and strive to give good guidance so that people can live happily and in harmony with nature. For providing such guidance, you will be worthy of praise and become Amordad in the memory of people for generations.

North Americans are finally doing what the Gathas have been saying for the last 3750 years. They learned from hurricane Katrina and used it to be prepared for Harvey and Irma. Though, they still need to learn to build their houses to withstand the force of nature. Just as the Japanese have learned to live with earthquakes and, now, tsunamis.

When we encroach on nature we need to study and plan a harmonious relationship with it. Those fires in B.C. that were near towns and reserves were put out with diligence, the rest were left for the rain to take care of it, thus letting nature take its course.

It is encouraging to see the ways of the Gathas have finally dawned on the wise, in spite of the Gathas being confined as prayers for recitation on the last five days of the three disoriented Zoroastrians calendars.

***MAY MAZDA PREVAIL***

## ENDNOTES

1 Atash Niyayesh

2 Bernie Schmitte from Alberta Forestry interview with National Post.

“Most of us experience situations of excessive stress at one or more times in our lives, such as at school, related to job or business, in personal or family relationships, marriage, death in family or friend, etc. People of faith often find relief and strength in prayer and/or talking to someone confidentially during such times. Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala offers a FREE CONFIDENTIAL PHONE PRAYER SERVICE and general advice. He can also include the name of the person having health problems in his daily Tandarosti prayers for health. You may contact him by phone at (714) 374-7078 and/or email at [mbhujwala@socal.rr.com](mailto:mbhujwala@socal.rr.com)

“





**Pratham : “ EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL AND LEARNING WELL “.**  
**ZAGNY supports this educational cause.**

**Edul Daver**



**P**ratham is one of the largest non-governmental organisations in India co-founded by Madhav Chavan and Farida Lambay. It works towards the provision of quality education to the underprivileged children in India. Established in Mumbai in 1994 to provide pre-school education to children in slums, Pratham today has interventions spread across 23 states and union territories of India and has supporting chapters in the United States, UK, Germany, and Sweden.

Pratham's founder and Ex-CEO, Madhav Chavan, was the 2011 recipient of the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. In addition, Pratham received the 2013 BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in Development Cooperation, as a result of successfully catering to the learning needs of tens of millions of disadvantaged children for over twenty years. In doing so, it has designed and implemented new methods that accelerate reading acquisition, using a grassroots approach in which pupils are grouped by actual levels and needs instead of age, while providing specific training to the teachers and volunteers recruited to its programs.

Pratham's mission is “ Every Child in School and Learning Well “. Over the past two decades, Pratham has devised an effective and proven method to teach basic language and numeracy skills. With generous grants from Google and a US based family trust, Pratham has been experimenting with tablets pre-loaded with interactive games and videos

directly in the hands of children. This new effort called PraDigi is likely to be a game changer!

Pratham has impacted 50 million children over the last 22 years and continues to pave the way to a better dawn for millions of promising young minds.

On Friday September 15, 2017 the 2017 PRATHAM New York Tri-State Gala was held at Cipriani Downtown on Wall Street with over 500 well wishers who had come to support the excellent work being done by Pratham in rural India.

The evening was graced by Dr. Rukhmani Banerji, CEO, Pratham Educational Foundation; with special guest Mangala Mehar who presented her story of how Pratham helped her and Hasan Minaj, Actor, Comedian and The Daily Show Senior Correspondent who kept the audience in constant laughter.

ZAGNY as a patron sponsor for the past five years was represented this year by Hira & Toos Daruvala, Monica & Ruyintan Mehta, Gool & Farrokh Patel, Alpa & Alpesh Chokshi and Niloufer & Edul Daver. (photo below)

It is a wonderful cause with proven results and we would like to encourage other ZAGNY members to become regular supporters and perhaps we could have two tables representing ZAGNY in 2018.

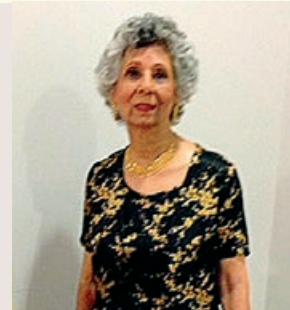




## THIRD ANNUAL KAMRAN SEMINAR ON JULY 15, 2017, AT THE KAMRAN DAR-E-MEHR IN BOYDS, MARYLAND

TAHMINEH JAMASPIAN

The Seminar focuses on independent scholarship and research related to Zoroastrian history and ideas and ancient Iran. The seminar is inspired by a key premise of the Gathas: where everyone has a responsibility to seek the truth, to ask critical questions, and to continuously examine our thoughts, words and deeds considering fairness and equity, and considering evidence, discussion and reflection. *Ushta*, or happiness, results from the continuous exercise of *Vohu Mannah*, the good mind in pursuit of *Asha*, the truth. This focus on the pursuit of truth and the responsibility of everyone for their choices and actions parallels Western liberal philosophy and the evolution of the scientific method. If the words of Zoroaster were the inspiration for enlightenment and liberal thought, it is difficult to demonstrate, but the embrace of critical thinking in the quest for truth at the heart of the Zoroastrian faith motivates the effort to think forward. In this spirit, the Kamran Seminar focuses on independent scholarship, research, and critical dialogue regarding Zoroastrian beliefs, history, and culture. This year, the annual seminar was held on July 15, 2017, at the *Kamran Dar-e-Mehr* in Boyds, Maryland.



The Kamran Seminar committee members are Morvarid Behziz, Mehraban Manoochehri, Dr. Zarir Khademian, and Dr. Anne Khademian. Special thanks to the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (ZAMWI) for supporting the Seminar. The seminar was titled, *Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions and Achaemenid Administrative Documents: The Queen of Monuments and the Cinderella of Archives*.

### SEMINAR FELLOW

Dr. Matthew W. Stolper (Professor of Assyriology, John A. Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies in the Oriental Institute) has worked primarily on Achaemenid Babylonian texts and secondarily on Elamite history and texts. His work on Babylonia, when it was a province of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, mostly treats legal



From left: Dr. Anne Khademian, Shahin Kamran, Professor Stolper, Banoo Kamran, Mehraban Manoochehri, Dr. Zarir Khademian. The picture on the wall is of the late Khodamorad Kamran.

and administrative texts as evidence of social, economic, and political history c.450-300 B.C E., the time between the consolidation of the Achaemenid control and the consolidation of Seleucid control. His work on Elam and Elamite includes a survey of Elamite political history (out of print), a sketch of Elamite grammar, and the publication of Proto-Elamite and Elamite texts from ancient Anshan. His main effort now is on Achaemenid Elamite and Achaemenid Aramaic administrative texts excavated by the Oriental Institute in 1933 at Persepolis, the imperial residence in the Persian homeland, to be published in electronic and conventional forms. Stolper's courses have dealt mostly with Akkadian historical and legal texts of the late first millennium, with forays into Old Persian and Elamite language and Achaemenid history. He serves on the editorial boards of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, the Journal of Cuneiform Studies, and ARTA.

The Lecture was very well received by the members of the community followed by a round table discussion with Professor Matthew Stolper and Dr. Anne Khademian to explore the challenges of his research, opportunities, and





Dr. Anne Khademian and Professor Matthew Stolper

further insights through discussion with the audience. To add to the program, Yasna Khademian played the *Daye Daye* and *Gole Pamchal* Folkloric music from Lorestan and Gilan.

Professor Matthew Stolper, the Kamran Seminar Fellow for 2017 was recognized and presented with a Fellow plaque by Mrs. Banoo Kamran.

The Kamran Seminar committee plans to coordinate with ZAMWI to continue this Seminar every year.

***Tahmineh (Tehmi) Jamaspian**, was born and raised in Bombay (Mumbai) of Persian parents .At age 18 she moved back to her motherland iran where she met and married her husband. They had twin boys. She came to Maryland 26 years ago and was the secretary of ZAMWI for several years. Ever since she has been volunteering her services to the community. Tahmineh worked for a Non-Profit Medical Research Company for 20 years and retired 3 years ago. She is a traveler and takes every opportunity to travel and enjoy the beauty and the people of this universe. Her latest travel was to the 5-Day Muktaḍ services at the Toronto Dar-e-Mehr.*

## NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL (NAMC)

### PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING SERVICES OF A MOBED IN NORTH AMERICA.

The North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) has published the following procedure to be used by anyone needing the services of a Mobed in North America.

- 1) Call a Mobed in your state or region by visiting the NAMC website at <http://NAMCMobeds.org> and clicking the “Directory” tab at the top of the page.
- 2) If a Mobed is not readily available in your state or region, please call one of the Mobeds from the list provided below:

Name of Priest	State	Tel #	Email
<b>Ervad Kobad Jamshed</b>	CA	(650) 888-7867 (res), (650) 766 1977 (cell)	<a href="mailto:kobadj@hotmail.com">kobadj@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Ervad Zarrir Bhandara</b>	CA	(562) 331-9973	<a href="mailto:zbhandara@gmail.com">zbhandara@gmail.com</a>
<b>Ervad Jimmy Ravji</b>	IL	(630) 280-1897	<a href="mailto:jimmy1902@att.net">jimmy1902@att.net</a>
<b>Ervad Pervez Patel</b>	NY	(718) 446-6751	<a href="mailto:udvada@aol.com">udvada@aol.com</a>
<b>Ervad Nozer Kotwal</b>	ON	(905)-820-0461	<a href="mailto:nozerk@yahoo.com">nozerk@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Ervad Jal Panthaky</b>	ON	(905) 568-4946 (res) (647) 405-9714(cell)	<a href="mailto:jal_panthaky@yahoo.ca">jal_panthaky@yahoo.ca</a>

Please note that the charges for the ceremonies, which include travel, and room/board , will be based on NAMC’s schedule given under the “Rates for Priestly Services” tab on the NAMC site.



## ***“ZOROASTRIAN INFLUENCES & CONNECTIONS ALONG THE OLD SILK ROAD”*** **ZSBC SEMINAR AT ARBAB ROSTAM GUIV DARE MEHR, BURNABY, BC, ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017.**

**BELLA TATA**



**W**hat a great way to spend a Sunday! All 63 of us who attended the Seminar, on *“Zoroastrian Influences & Connections along the Old Silk Road”* at the Arbab Rostam Guiv Dare Mehr, Burnaby, BC, on Sunday, September 24, 2017, were indeed privileged. Put together incredibly well by Firdosh Mehta under the flag of ZSBC and supported by FEZANA through the Jamshed Pavri Religion Education Fund, it was a day well spent. Firdosh and his wife, Rashna, organized a team (Aubtin Yazdgardian, Zarrin Bharucha, Kayras Irani, Sepand Gojgini, Manochehr Dini, Percy Billimoria, Azita Dehmobed) which not only catered to our mental rejuvenation, but also to our gastronomical enhancement with plenty of food and beverages during two Breaks and a light Lunch during the course of the seminar, which ran from 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Firdosh opened the program, starting with a benediction of 3 prayers contributed by Mobeds from Canada, USA & India. He recognized the contributions of the Nirumvala Family of DELTA 4 Productions for pro-bono use of the large screen. Followed by a welcome address, introductions of speakers, the launch of 2 Books authored and auto-graphed by Dr. Jenny Rose, and the sale of the 2018 Multifaith Calendar.



## **ARYAN & ZARATHUSHTI HISTORY ALONG THE OLD SILK ROADS** **MR. K.E. EDULJEE:**

Eddie Eduljee has been researching the role of the Iranian peoples in trade in the 1990's, and has a Zoroastrian Heritage website and Zoroastrian Heritage Facebook group page. Mr. Eduljee's article on "Was Central Asia the Ancient Home of the Aryan Nation & Zoroastrian Religion" was the lead article in the summer 2014 issue of the FEZANA Journal.

The presentation involved a review of Zoroastrian and pre-Zoroastrian Aryan involvement in trade along the Silk Roads from the dawn of history to the modern era. He believes that







the Silk Road was the name given to the trading of many other items – more particularly Lapis Lazuli which was only mined in Afghanistan. With a map that traced the routes taken by traders, and how they met at different vantage points, it was interesting to see the growth of the Silk Roads all the way to Western Africa in the West and Mongolia and China in the East.

## **FROM SAMARKAND TO CHANG'AN: ZOROASTRIANS ALONG THE SILK ROAD – DR. JENNIFER ROSE:**

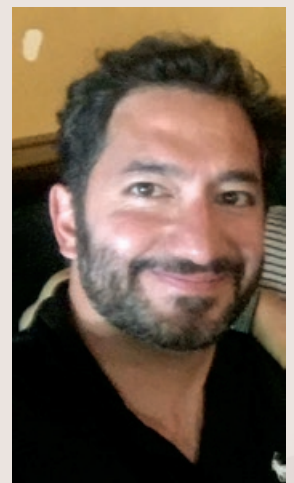
Jenny Rose has made many presentations at various Z-congresses and other venues. She is a historian of religion, teaching Zoroastrian Studies in the Department of Religion at Claremont Graduate University, California, and the study leader on archaeological and cultural trips to Iran, Central Asia, and along the Silk Road. She has published many articles on the Zarathushti religion, and her books on “Zoroastrianism: A Guide for the Perplexed” and “Zoroastrianism: An Introduction” were met with enthusiastic response.



This second presentation, after the morning break, saw an exploration of the religious ideas and iconography of eastern Iranian Zoroastrians in their Sogdian homeland, and in some of the places that they settled after crossing dangerous mountain ranges and forbidding deserts on their way to China. Dr. Rose highlighted their significant contribution to the commerce of minerals and semi-precious stones and cultures of the inhabitants along the ancient Silk Road.

## **ANCIENT IRANIAN GEOGRAPHY IN THE SAHRESTANIHA-I-ERANSAHR – DR. RASTIN MEHRI:**

Dr. Mehri obtained his Masters from the University of British Columbia, and his doctorate from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, UK. completing his PhD thesis under the supervision of Professors John Hinnells and Almut Hintze, He is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. After a sumptuous lunch, Dr. Mehri specifically discussed curious information contained within this ancient manuscript relating to eastern non-Iranian tribes, namely the Hephthalites and Turks, which have been described in a Pahlavi text known as *Sahrestaniha-I-Eransahr* or the “Provincial Capitals of Iran”.



## **BIRD-MEN AND OTHER HYBRIDS – DR. JENNIFER ROSE**

This presentation after the afternoon break, included some Central Asian representations of Zoroastrian Yazatas – beautifully illustrated. Dr. Rose decoded some of the curious anthropomorphic figures depicted on Sogdian Zoroastrian funerary monuments recently found in north central China. Focus was on one particular hybrid motif of the “bird-man” or “priest-bird”. She also introduced other figurative representations of Zoroastrian entities which originated in Central Asia, which incorporated both Indian and Chinese elements.

Gifts of books were given to all three presenters, by *Sepand Gojgini, Bella Tata & Rashna Mehta*. The seminar ended with a “vote of thanks” to ZSBC, FEZANA, volunteers, speakers, participants and to Firdosh for organizing such an interesting, informative and educational seminar.

*Photos courtesy of AUBTIN YAZDGARDIAN*



## CANADIAN ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES. ELECTS PROF ZUBIN AUSTIN AS THE 2017 FELLOW

On September 14, 2017 Prof Zubin Austin was inducted as the 2017 Fellow

by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Fellows of the Academy are elected on the basis of their demonstrated leadership, creativity, distinctive competence and commitment to advance academic health sciences. Membership is considered one of the highest honours for members of the Canadian Health Sciences Community and carries with it a covenant to serve the Academy and the Canadian Society.

Prof Zubin Austin BScPhm; MBA; MISc; PhD is Professor and inaugural holder of the Ontario

College of Pharmacists Research Chair at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto, Canada. His research interests focus on continuous professional development of health care professionals. He has published over 90 peer reviewed manuscripts, authored 3 textbooks, and has received awards for his research from national and international organizations.

He is currently Principal Investigator in a Health Canada funded research project examining integration of internationally educated health professionals in the Canadian health care system. He is also an award winning educator having received the Province of Ontario's Leadership in Faculty Teaching Award, the University of Toronto's President's Teaching Award, and he has been named undergraduate "Professor of the year". by students on 15 separate occasions.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
PROF ZUBIN AUSTIN THE COMMUNITY  
IS PROUD OF YOU.**

Neville E. Sanjana, Ph.D. of New York Genome Center and New York University wins the 2017 New Innovator Award from National Institute of Science for his project *In Situ Functional Genomics to Understand Transcriptional Regulation* Grant ID: DP2-HG-010099

The National Institute of Health Director's New Innovator (DP2) Award initiative supports a small number of early stage investigators of exceptional creativity who propose bold and highly innovative new research approaches that have the potential to produce a major impact on broad important problems in biomedical and behavioral research

Utilizing new technologies for large-scale DNA synthesis and gene editing, Dr. Sanjana has developed pooled screening approaches for functional genomics and applied them to gene regulation, cancer evolution and metastasis, drug resistance, cancer immunotherapy, neurodevelopmental disorders and synthetic biology.

Dr. Sanjana was previously a Simons Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr. Feng Zhang's lab at the Broad Institute and MIT, obtained a Ph.D. in Brain and Cognitive Sciences from MIT with Dr. Sebastian Seung, and holds a B.S. in Symbolic Systems and a B.A. in English Literature from Stanford University. He is a recipient of the Kimmel Scholar Award, the Melanoma Research Alliance Young Investigator Award, the NIH Pathway to Independence Award, and the Paul Allen Institute for Brain Science Next Generation Leader Award.





# Personal Profiles

## ANAHITA SIDHWA, SCIENTIST BY PROFESSION, SPIRITUAL BY CHOICE

In interview with KESHVAR BUHARIWALLA, DALLAS, TX

Anahita Sidhwa has been a stalwart member of the Zoroastrian Community of North Texas for the past 37 years. Her unwavering dedication to Zoroastrian principles, traditions, and culture is clear through her actions. Anahita has set the bar high for our community.

### 1. *Anahita please describe your childhood? Your family? What are the early memories that impact who you are today?*

I grew up in Karachi, Pakistan, the youngest of three girls. My parents, Pheroze and Gool Thanawalla, were my greatest influences, surrounding us with nurturing and unconditional love. My father was an engineer, he was quiet and meticulous, and from him I learned to appreciate tools and stars. My mother was outgoing and kind. They encouraged their three daughters to further their education and travel the world. But, spirituality played a key role in our household. I remember my mother never left home in the morning without doing the loban. And she would do her kusti in full view of whoever was around whenever she came across a lake or an ocean. I helped my mother do muktads at home in honor of my father and grandmother, therefore I consider it a labor of love to continue this tradition at ZANT.

I must also mention my uncle, Behram S. H. J. Rustomji who was the Principal of the BVS Parsi Boy's School. He was a visionary who challenged us to do more than we expected of ourselves.

### 2. *Please tell me a little about your educational history? Did you envision a career in the sciences early on?*

After attending a Montessori school, I completed high school at Mama Parsi Girls School. Hearing a series of lectures on the radio by Dr. Abdus Salam (Pakistan's Nobel prize-winning physicist) on elementary particles, I knew I wanted to study physics. I received my Master's degree in physics from the University of Karachi and taught physics at St. Joseph's College for 4 years.

### 3. *What is your story regarding your journey to America? Your journey to finding Feroze?*

After teaching for four years in Karachi, the yearning to do something more, and go further, motivated me to apply for scholarships in the US. The East-West Center in Hawaii offered a unique opportunity and I came to the States in 1975. I obtained a Master's degree in Secondary Science Curriculum and Instruction from the University of



Anahita and Feroze Sidhwa

Hawaii. I had an incredible opportunity to travel across the USA during the summer. In all honesty, that summer really shaped my professional life as a teacher.

This was also the time I reconnected with my future husband, Feroze, whom I had known back home in Karachi. In 1977, Feroze and I were married by Kersee Antia in Chicago, since he was the only Parsi priest we knew. We moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma where Feroze had a job.

### 4. *You and Feroze were founding members of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) in 1989, please tell us about those early days in Texas.*

Feroze's job brought us to Dallas in 1980; at the time, we knew three Parsis. As time went on we found a few more and by the end of the second year we planned a Shehenshai New Year party and invited everyone. Word got around and to our amazement 30 people showed up! As the meetings became more frequent, talk began in 1983 to form an Association. People continued to meet and celebrate, but this happened informally. Five years later, some of us started the task of writing the bylaws for the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT), which was officially registered in 1989.

### 5. *You and Feroze were involved in bringing a Zoroastrian Center to North Texas in 2011, what are you most proud of? What are you currently working on?*

The first meeting to build a Center took place in the summer of 1991 and we opened ZANT Center in April 2011. That's been a long twenty-year journey! I wouldn't

# Personal Profiles

use the word “proud,” but I had a deep sense of “ushta”—deep inner joy—on the night of the Vendidad before our opening ceremonies.

We started holding monthly religious classes for children around 1988, before ZANT was even registered. I was heavily involved for the first few years and although others are now playing a lead role, I’m very glad that the religious classes for our children are a successful monthly activity at ZANT.

As a teacher who loves words and books, life-long learning is an important part of my life. So, in recent years I have made it my mission to try and inspire our adults to take the initiative for their own intellectual growth. Towards that end, we hold a monthly discussion group called the “Vohu Manah” group. We have such a rich tradition of words in our faith, what better goal than to achieve good thinking or vohu manah?

I have served on the FEZANA Academic Scholarship Committee for many years and find it is a rewarding task to learn about the wonderful things our young people do. I also want to encourage people to donate directly to the scholarships because the need is great. We get many deserving applications, but only have the funds to disburse to 25% of the applicants.

## **6. *You recently retired from Brookhaven College after 36 years, what were the most satisfying parts of your job?***

Initially at Brookhaven, I taught only Physics. Then when the astronomy professor retired, I was asked to teach Physics as well as Astronomy. Since the science behind astronomy is all physics I had the background. But I had to develop my expertise in astronomy. I have come to love astronomy and it has become my passion.

At retirement I will miss interacting with the students the most. That’s why I have decided to still teach on a part-time basis at least for another few years. I taught two very different populations of students—the physics students were engineers, pre-meds, architects, etc. The astronomy students were non-science majors, making them scientifically literate and showing them how the universe works has been truly rewarding.

## **7. *Moving forward, what areas are you most excited about pouring your time and energy into?***

I’m looking forward to reading more, redesigning an online astronomy course that was originally done by me many years ago and perhaps contributing to a Citizen Science project. While activities for the Zoroastrian community will continue, I feel one should also contribute somehow to the larger community in which we live. That’s

my first challenge—to find an organization/project to which I can really contribute my service.

I also see a need for adults of my generation to focus on preparing for the years ahead when we might not be able to take care of ourselves. Should those in the 70 plus age bracket be contributing to a new Darbe Mehr or to communal living areas for themselves so they are not a burden on their children? These are questions I’m wondering about for the future.

## **8. *How do prayer and faith play a role in your life?***

Prayer is a very important part of my life and while “calling in” to Ahura Mazda every day is necessary, praying in Avesta (while knowing the general meaning) makes the communication special. While Ahura Mazda will hear and accept our prayers in any language, I feel that, using the Avesta, words will gild your communication with Ahura Mazda.

Sometimes prayer does not produce the results you would want, but it gives you the strength and peace to be able to deal with what has occurred or what will occur.

## **9. *I took the opportunity to ask the scientist, how do you justify the existence of God?***

Through learning, we come to the realization that we do not have all the answers. Every answer we get, produces new questions. We must marvel at how great the human mind is at figuring out answers to all these questions. When you see the expanse of the universe and you realize how insignificant we are, you cannot but realize that there must something greater than what the human mind can fathom, be that God or your own manifestation of the greater power. I like the word “An-Aiyafah” from our 101 names. It means God is “unfathomable.”

I also like to say, “God made the laws of science, and the laws of science made the universe.”

Therefore, science can explain how things happen, but does not explain the why. What caused the Big Bang? That is religion, that is your faith. But, explaining what happened after the Big Bang, that is science.

## **10. *Final thoughts?***

My husband Feroze is my rock and my strength! I could not accomplish half of what I do without his support. Let us remember to give thanks for our families and community and hope that we can continue to make the world a little bit better every day.

Anahita’s final thought put everything in perspective, “*religion is for the soul, while science is for the mind!*”



### BIRTHS

**Reah** a girl, to Binaisha and Narius Shekdar, granddaughter of Hira and Zarir Todiwalla (Chicago, IL) and Yasmin and Jehangir Shekdar (Karachi, Pakistan) in Mississauga, ONT on June 20, 2017.

**Kian**, a boy, to Homa Gahribshahi and Faramarz Soroushi on August 1, 2017. (ZSBC)

**Yazdan Ghaswala**, a boy, to Farrahnaz Bulsara and Tyrone Ghaswala, brother to Scherazade, grandson to Rukshan and Jehangir Bulsara (Rideau Lakes, ONT) and Jimmy and Armin Ghaswala (Perth, Australia) in Kitchener, ONT on August 10, 2017.

**Rose**, a girl, to Zareen Tehsildar Bulger and Pete James Bulger, granddaughter to Tehmtan and Taruna Tehsildar on August 10, 2017. (ZAPANJ)

**Asha**, a girl, born to Atousa Mojgani and Farhad Rahmanson on August 14, 2017. (ZSBC)

**Jayan Adil Raymond Gump**, a son to Dilshad and Michael Gump, bother to Jolene and Shailee, grandson to Zarin Balaporia and Sandy and Raymond Gump, nephew to Rita Balaporia 2017. (ZA-Chi)

### NAVJOTES

**Liam Bhathena**, son of Jennifer and Firdaus Bhathena, grandson of Zarin and Behli Bhathena (Halifax, Nova Scotia) in Toronto, ONT on August 5, 2017.

**Yasmine and Maxime Moos**, children of Nathalie and Rayan Moos, grandchildren of Perviz and Phiroz Moos in Montreal, QUE on August 26, 2017.

### WEDDINGS

**Pashna Munshi to Yanko Ivanov** on July 1, 2017. (ZAPANJ) (Photo below)



**Ava Lala to Ben Perry** in Philadelphia, NJ on July 22, 2017. (ZAPANJ) (photo below)



**Bahram Hakhamaneshi**, son of Katayoon Yazdanparastan and late Dinyar Hakhamaneshi to Nahal Shalchi, daughter of Mitra Nourozi and Karim Shalchi in Toronto, ONT on July 29, 2017.

**Roohshan Noshir Divecha**, son of Dinaz and Noshir Divecha (Vancouver, BC) to Michelle Rene Wilson, daughter of Margaret and Raymond Wilson in Vancouver, BC on August 11, 2017.

**Shazneen Hushmenday and Bahman Sotoodian**, children of Fars hid and Dilnavaz Hushmenday and Bahram and Kathy Sotoodian (West Vancouver, BC) in Vancouver, BC on August 26, 2017.

**Nousheen Bastani to Raein Jamshidi** children of Roshni and Farshid Bastani (Toronto, ONT) and Poursan and Jamshid Jamshidi

(North Vancouver, BC) in North Vancouver, BC on August 27, 2017.

**Carl James**, son of Mari Jo and Jim Dubash (Florida) to **Emma Line Griffith**, daughter of Ann and Clark Griffith (Lexington, MA) in Cambridge, MA on September 23, 2017.

### DEATHS

**Zarin Mehta**, wife of Meher Mehta (Jamshedpur, India), mother of Ashrat, mother-in-law of Shabnam, sister of Daisy, grandmother of Nazrene in Mumbai, India on May 22, 2017. (ZS0)

**Namdar Oshidary**, 84, husband of Parichehr (Nahid) Oshidary, father of Azita and Babak, grandfather of Shawhin, Shahaab and Shahaan, brother of Mahin and Mehrnaz, father-in-law of Parvin in North Vancouver, BC on July 18, 2017.

**Nani Wadia**, 88 years, husband of late Roshen Wadia, father of Riah Sidhwa (Shahroukh, Jahan, Kashmira, Arman), Khursheed Bativala (Rustom and Zubin), Avan Wadia (Nigel Senior), brother of Sarosh (Moti, Jehangir, Keki, Neville, Sam (Khushnaaz) on July 29, 2017. (ZAPANJ)

**Naval Homi Tata**, husband of Judy Tata, father of Homiyar and Jim, grandfather of Kyle, Erika, Ian, brother of Daisy in Winnipeg, MB on August 14, 2017.

**Jimmy Khan**, 70 years, husband of Zarin Khan, father of Kainaz, Shirin, brother-in-law of Erach Patel in Mumbai, India on August 18, 2017. (ZAPANJ)

**Minoo Faredoon Daruwala**, 63, husband of Huti Daruwala, father of Anhaita and Firdosh, father-in-law of Cyrus and Firozi, grandfather of Iyanah, Aarish and Freya in Seattle, WA on August 19, 2017, roj Ardibesht.

# MILESTONES

**Katie Dinshaw**, 90, wife of Dinyar Dinshaw, mother of Porous Dinshaw, Rukshan Bulsara and Marook Sidhwa in Oakville, ONT on September 3, 2017.

**Ayesha Minwalla**, wife of Farhad Minwalla, mother of Rufus Francis, Omar, Sherizaan, Ljiljana and Shama in Cincinnati, OH on September 3, 2017.

**Soli Kaikhushru Dastur**, 73, husband of Thrity Kanga, father of Niloufer Vincent Dumas, Anahita, grandfather of Ava and Karl in Montreal, QUE on September 5, 2017.

**Ganesh Gupta**, husband of Jyoti Gupta, father of Gautum and Harsh Gupta, brother-in-law of Rakesh and Percis Bansal, uncle of Amit, Rahul and Rohit Bansal in Virginia on September 10, 2017.

**Ervad Noshir Mirza**, husband of Putli Mirza, father of Rustom

(Binaifer), Aimee, Khurshid (Jeff Rogers), grandfather of Riaan and Liam Mirza, and Zehan and Farah Rogers, uncle of Darius Damania (Chicago) in Toronto, ONT on September 13, 2017.

**Zenia Minwalla**, wife of late Rohinton Minwalla in Karachi, Pakistan on September 20, 2017. (ZSO)

**Soonu Birdy**, 81, wife of Ervad Jal Birdy, mother of Meher (Afshad) Mistri, grandmother of Tasha and Jamsheed Mistri, sister of Putli Antia in Corona, CA on October 6, 2017

**Paridokht Khodayar Dehmeri**, wife of Khodayar, mother of Homa (Darius); Pariborz (Homa); Merwan (Monica); Mahrukh (Sharukh); Shahdokht (Jimmy); Delnavaz (Fareed), grandmother of Parisa, Avis, Arya; Tina, Tushar; Gaurav,

Akash; Delreen; Erica, Pareen, Cyrus, Shireen, Gatha Ahunavai – Yasna 34.15

Mazdaa at moi vahishta sravaoschaa shyaotha-naachaa vaochaa,

Taa tu vohu mananghaa ashaachaa ishudem stuto,

Khshmaakaa khshathraa Ahuraa fershem vasnaa haithyem daao ahum.

Persis and great grandmother of 11, in *Washington DC* on October 6, 2017.

**PLEASE SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR MILESTONES TO MAHRUKH MOTAFRAM TEL 425-961-0298 MAHRUKHM83@GMAIL.COM**

## Matrimonials for Fall 2017

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna at roshanrivetna@gmail.com.

**Female, 36**, MBA in Finance, working in Mumbai. Thoughtful, genuine, quiet and kind, enjoys music, travelling and reading, invites alliances from a family as well-placed, warm and cultured as her own. Willing to relocate to the West. Contact parsimatch@yahoo.com. [F17-33].

**Female, 26**, B.D.S. working as dentist in Mumbai. Attractive, from well-placed family, with relatives in California. Willing to settle abroad. Contact avabhot@gmail.com, tel: +91 98702 18787. [F17-56].

**Female, 21**, studying corporate law in Mumbai. Attractive, from well-placed family, with relatives in California. Willing to settle abroad. Contact avabhot@gmail.com, tel: +91 98702 18787. [F17-57].

**Male, 26**, 5' 10", doctorate in pharmacy, working as a pharmacist in Canada. Contact m\_tamboli@hotmail.com, tel: 613-727 8970. [M17-58].

**Male, 28**, 5' 8", Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Studies (Hotel Management), front office supervisor in 5-star luxury hotel in Dubai. Contact goolpervaz@gmail.com, tel: +91 98 1960 7175. [M17-59].

**Male, 37**, MBA in Marketing, working in an Airline, based in Mumbai, family-loving, kind, good-humored, invites correspondence with a view of matrimony from educated, family-loving, kind and cheerful girls under 34. Contact guzdar@gmail.com. [M17-60].

### Looking for a Soul Mate?

Also try these matrimonial sites and services:

[www.zoroastrianmatrimony.com](http://www.zoroastrianmatrimony.com)

[www.chaalokaajkariye.com](http://www.chaalokaajkariye.com)

[www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com](http://www.Matrimonial.Zoroastrianism.com)

[www.zoroastrians.net](http://www.zoroastrians.net)

[www.TheParsiMatch.com](http://www.TheParsiMatch.com)

[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com)

[www.ParsiMatrimony.com](http://www.ParsiMatrimony.com)

[www.ParsiShaadi.com](http://www.ParsiShaadi.com)

[www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com](http://www.MatrimonialParsiZoroastrianism.com)

Mrs. Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai, goolpesi@gmail.com, tel: 91-22-2416 6120.



## *Dealing with Doctors, Denial, and Death: A Guide to Living Well with Serious Illness*

**By Aroop Mangalik MD.**

**Pages:** 260, published by Rowman and Littlefield 2017

**Price:** \$18 plus shipping (Google Play)

**ISBN** 978-1-4422-7280-4

**Reviewed by Dr Mazda Turel**

Human beings were not programmed or designed to live as long as they do today. While this is exciting and encouraging at one end, the perils of longevity include dealing with doctors, denial, and death. In unfortunate circumstances, children and young adults too fall prey to such circumstances. Hence, to be able to better deal with such times, veteran oncologist and sound medical ethicist Aroop Mangalik carves out an uncomplicated referral manual to, as he simply puts it, be “better prepared.”

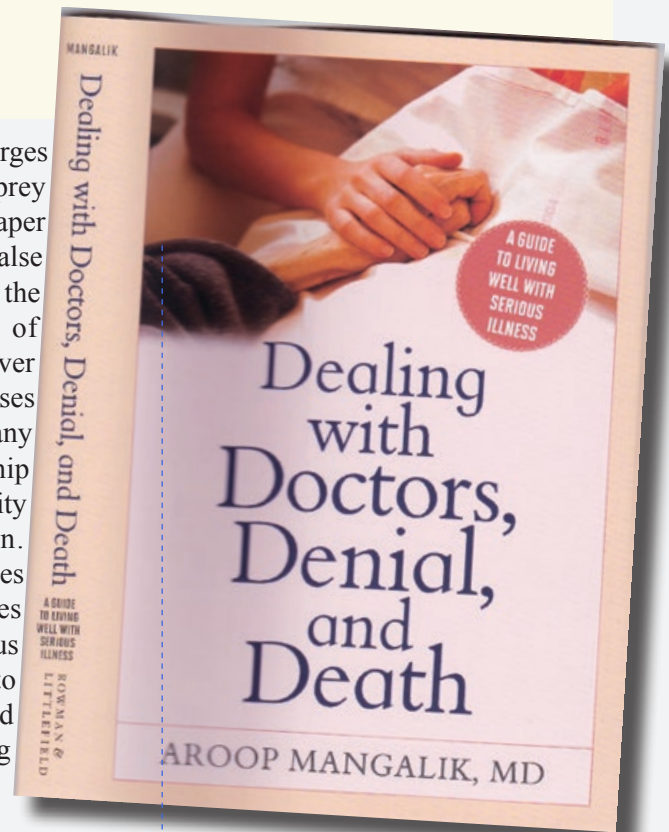
He gives the layperson an overview of the problems faced by the medical world and its deficiencies in dealing with overwhelming diseases, especially cancer. Sometimes, “less is more; more is not always better,” he quotes, referring to the billions of dollars inappropriately spent on treating terminal conditions rather than focusing on comfort. He explains how physicians are hesitant to discuss treatment alternatives, feeding into a culture of denial that can result in expensive, ineffective, and unnecessary over-treatments that may or may not extend life but almost always damage the quality of existing life. While technology has made tremendous progress, we are still not able to defeat biology. He criticizes the flawed influences of some people’s various religious views, which rest on hope and the incorrect belief that God will intervene when doctors cannot, especially in conditions that are

medically incurable. He urges the reader not to fall prey to TV shows and newspaper headlines that give a false sense of rescue, where the tragic consequences of doing too much are never illustrated, and he stresses that the foundation of any patient–doctor relationship should be based on clarity and communication. Through the book, he quotes sound medical references and guidelines from various medical associations to give the reader an unbiased review of the existing literature in the field.

“Accepting death and making the time before death peaceful and comforting is one of the best gifts we can give to ourselves, our family, and our loved ones,” he rationalizes. He talks about how doctors in training are never taught this poignant aspect of medicine and shares positive stories of colleagues and students who benefited when they embraced this aspect. The social, economic, legal, emotional, spiritual, and logical outcomes of this “acceptance” are detailed through the text not only with meaningful examples and anecdotes but also with educational and helpful tools that people in these circumstances can refer to when faced with the challenges of end-of-life care. This seasoned and tested approach is profoundly empowering and will help

people make informed decisions about their lives and medical care. “It will provide them with the CPR they need: Comfort, Peace, and Respite,” he quips.

This philosophy of Mangalik is born from the words of the famous William Osler—who has frequently been described as the “Father of Modern Medicine” and one of the “greatest diagnosticians ever to wield a stethoscope”—who said, “The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.” In medical school, we were trained to get information from patients, but not to give them the information they need, he laments.





# Books & ARTS

Mangalik explains how statistics can be used inefficiently to sway patients' decision making, by putting forward numbers that by themselves sound impressive but have no relevant clinical implication. The book is fraught with resources that gravely ill patients and their families can refer to for support and guidance through these trying times. It provides patients

and relatives with the information they need to know before they make the decisions they need to. It guides them through the questions they need to ask their doctors and it entitles them to be made aware of the information that is legitimately theirs.

Though occasionally repetitive and meandering in its narrative, the

integrity and soulfulness of its content makes it a great resource for those facing illness and, in my opinion, a mindful text for those for those in perfect health.

*Dr. Mazda Turel was born in 1981 and ordained a Zoroastrian priest in 1992. He completed his degree in medicine (MBBS) from Grant Medical College and Sir JJ groups of Hospitals in Mumbai, and pursued a MCh degree in Neurosurgery from the Christian Medical College in Vellore, India. He was awarded the Jacob Chandy Gold Medal at his graduation; a distinction only conferred on 4 previous recipients.*

*He has visited several departments of neurosurgery across the world and earned a Diploma in Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery from Beijing, China, followed by fellowships in Skull base surgery and neurooncology at the Toronto Western Hospital and in complex spine surgery at the Rush University in Chicago. He went to Shanghai to specialize in cerebrovascular surgery. Dr. Turel is a general practice neurosurgeon specializing in the treatment of diseases of the brain and spine. His practice style is collaborative, and he strongly believes that incorporation of patients, their families, and the medical staff in his team offers patients the best possible outcome and satisfaction.*

*He is an avid writer and comments on a wide spectrum and on issues in a monthly newspaper column in the Jame-Jamshed.*

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**Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC):** President: Bomi Patel, 4296 Mountcastle Way, San Jose, CA 95136, Tel 408-264-4395 [bbtes9@gmail.com](mailto:bbtes9@gmail.com)

**Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC)** President Tehmi Damania, 1424E Walnut Avenue, Orange CA 92691 Tel 949-583-9973, [tdamania@zaca.org](mailto:tdamania@zaca.org)

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