

JOURNAL

Tir – Amرداد – Shehrever 1387 AY (Fasli) • Behman – Spendarmad 1387 AY, – Fravardin 1388 AY (Shahenshahi) • Spendarmad 1387 AY, – Fravardin – Ardibehesht 1388 AY (Kadimi)

PASSING THE BATON TO THE NEXT GENERATION
Leadership Forum at the Asha Centre, England



PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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EDITORIAL

PASSING THE BATON



In this issue we also see the achievements of two outstanding young people (page 67) which make us proud. There must be many whom we do not know of, please bring them to our attention.

The months of April and June saw a lot of Zoroastrian activity. The 31st Annual General meeting of FEZANA took place at California Zoroastrian Centre, in Los Angeles on April 27-29, 2018, hosted by the California Zoroastrian Centre and the Zoroastrian Association of California. The celebratory Jashan was performed by Mobeds and Mobedyars male and female. Rooky Fitter was elected the new treasurer of FEZANA.

The 11th World Zoroastrian Congress brought together 330 delegates to Perth, Australia, the first time the adult World congress was organized in the Southern hemisphere. For the first time Zarthushtis from Iraqi Kurdistan attended the congress and gave us a first hand impression of the hard life for a Zarthushti in a Muslim dominated Iraqi Kurdistan. Community awards were given out to well deserving individuals. (page 11) The congress was preceded by the meeting of the Global Working Group where current global issues pertaining to our community were discussed. We are saddened by the loss of an intellectual giant and a great friend of the community Prof John Hinnels, and the other, a giant in the diplomatic field of Pakistan and the UN, Ambassador Jamshed Marker.

I end on a very optimistic note for the future of the community, the next generation is ready and burning for change in the community and they will bring the paradigm shift which we are all waiting for.

Sally Darlow

Planning, developing and executing each issue of the FEZANA Journal is a pleasure, but the summer 2018 issue was particularly pleasurable and exciting because it was executed entirely by the young adults of the next generation, living up completely to the theme “Passing the Baton to the Next Generation”. The issue is very ably guest edited by Sanaya Master of New Zealand who spearheaded the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum at the Asha Centre in England., where 20 young adults met, discussed and bonded for 10 days and came up with an action plan. Read all about their personal experience as related by them.

In this issue we also have the narratives of the participants of the third Return to Roots program. We read of their amazement and disbelief of the transformational experiences they had in visiting Mumbai, and parts of Gujarat where it all began for the Parsis who came to India fleeing persecution from the Muslims.. I was fortunate to interact and travel with this group when they were in Udvada and Navsari. To see their passion and compassion visiting the seniors in the Senior Citizen’s residence or in the infirmaries, reaffirmed my faith that we have nurtured a reliable, dependable generation of whom we can be proud. We must have done something right and been good role models and now we can sit back, relax and hand the reins over to the next generation. They are ready, able and willing, an outstanding calibre of young minds.

Handing over, losing control is hard. Constantly worrying if somebody else will be able to do the job as well as we did is natural, but it is better to hand over gracefully rather than wait till power and authority are snatched away from us. We are not going to fade away in the sunset, but we can and should be like the bright guiding star showing them the way when asked, offering them advice when asked. The operative word is “when asked”!!

Homi Gandhi, President



EDITORIAL

Zarathushtris, *is your Glass half full or half empty?*

Born in an ancient oral tradition, Zoroastrian discourse has evolved past even paper discussion and record-keeping to a speedy, digitized universe. As such, it has become more readily available to everyone in the community, which is a double-edged sword. Social media and other communications tools are used to spread knowledge, but also unfounded arguments. They can be used by influencers to buoy a community's spirits or sow seeds of discontent, to create unity or deepen division.

When people consume this information, without thought and consideration, they can get the impression that our community is marked by irreconcilable differences that will undoubtedly doom it. But this simply isn't the case. A respectful open discussion, engaged in responsibly, is not to be feared. The ability to engage in religious discourse, even though our community is dispersed over haft-keshvar zamin, is a good thing: it can only benefit us and future generations.

There are passionate discussions raging on everything from how to spell Zarathushtra and Zarathushtri to the perennial question as to who is a Zarathushtri? A pressing issue today

concerns the mobedyari: is hereditary a mandatory criterion for becoming a mobed? Can women become mobeds?

These are not unimportant questions, and taking a stand on them as a community is a complex undertaking, especially since the character and concerns of our communities are different. Moreover, our communities are not monolithic. But community leaders should not get bogged down in the complexity of the task. They should study the issues, resolve them, and move on to matters that have real life consequences. Where different communities come to different conclusions on the same questions, one should not assume that this indicates a division... it merely indicates a disagreement. As with our personal relationships, a friendship among communities that insists upon agreement isn't worth its name. It is important to note that often our disagreements are about rituals and traditions, not religiosity. At the end of the day, we revere the words of the same prophet, and it is our actions in line with his teachings, even more so than our beliefs and opinions, that define us as Zarathushtris.

What our communities should spend more time on, and leverage modern technology for, are issues that affect our community in a very real way: Are our Chamber of Commerce Chapters around the world promoting excellence in business and industry? Are our youth being empowered to take on leadership roles? Do we raise funds for education scholarship that open doors for young people to improve their circumstances? Do we provide

for our seniors, offer medical and other critical assistance when needed?

FEZANA has been focused on these issues. We have sponsored Congresses, supported businesses via the WZCC, and continued to enlarge our scholarships and critical assistance offerings. Beyond the community, we have supported new initiatives such as the World Zoroastrian Youth Leadership Forum, Zoroastrians Without Borders and many interfaith activities, and for years, we have facilitated our community's participation at the United Nations.

North American Zarathushtris would have it no other way. We are a vibrant, growing community. 15 of the 26 FEZANA member associations now have the privilege of owning their own Community Centers with a place of worship in each. The community provides generously for its brethren when times are tough. The community invests in the resurgence of Zoroastrian Studies in the humanities and liberal arts departments of various universities in North America, where an exuberance of interest in our religion from scholars and professors around the world cannot go unnoticed.

We must stay this course, view our Zarathushtri glass as half full, rather than half empty, and work towards the stage where our "cup runneth over".

Aedun Baad! Aedun Taraj Baad!

Homi D. Gandhi

31ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FEZANA,
APRIL 26-29 2018
HOSTED BY CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN
CENTRE, LOS ANGELES, CA



From left Zenobia Damania, Fezana administrator; Percy Master Secretary, Houston, Afreed Mistry, Asst Secretary, Toronto, Homi D Gandhi, President, LA, Arzan Wadia, Vice President. New York, (not in photo Shirin Jahanian, Treasurer, New Jersey)



Erv Ardaviraf Minocherhomjee, President North American Mobeds Council, highlighted efforts by NAMC to train the next generation of mobeds and Mobedyars in North America in rituals, practices and the understanding of the meaning of our Zarathushti Scriptures. NAMC is seeking financial assistance to help its various initiatives.

FEZANA *Update*



Parshan Khosravi, chair of the 7th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress to held in LA gives program details. He is a student at UCLA, did a yeoman job in transporting guests from LA airport to their hotels for the FEZANA AGM.



Katayun Kapadia, New Jersey and **Mahrukh Motafaram**, Seattle, co-chairs of the Congress committee give updates of the congresses in the next four years in North America: Los Angeles, Houston, New York. **Saghar Javanshir**, Dallas, TX chair of FEZANA small groups looks on. Significant progress has been made this year in engaging small groups.



Bomi Patel, President ZANC, shared challenges faced by the community in creating a place of worship. Past president of FEZANA he spoke in favour of adopting a resolution made by **Astad Clubwalla**, president of ZAGNY and seconded by **Hosi Mehta** of Chicago, to make the UN NGO committee a standing committee of FEZANA. The resolution was adopted unanimously.



Co Chairs of Interfaith Committee **Maneck Bhujwalla**, California, and **Ardeshir Irani**, Michigan, will be very busy this year planning the Zoroastrian representation at the Parliament of World Religions in Toronto, November 1-7 2018.

FEZANA *Update*



♥ 2018 PHOTO BY: ARDESHIR BAGHKHANIAN ♥

All the attendees at the AGM with Shida Anoshiravani, chair of the organizing committee for the AGM next to Homi Gandhi, President of FEZANA



The organizing committee with Arman Ariane, President of CZC (with mike) and Shida Anoshiravani, chair of the committee next to him at the podium.

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AGM 2019 MAY 3-5 2019 PRE-AGM MAY 2, 2019

11th World Zoroastrian Congress Perth, Australia



TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW



The doors of the Astral ballrooms, Crowne Plaza, were opened to the delegates dressed in their traditional dress of saris and daglis. They were greeted with a blast of the popular Zoroastrian song - Chaiye Hame Zarthosti, followed by a Khushali nu Jashan led by Ervad Aspandiyar Dadachanji with the help of the Ervads from Iran, France, USA, Sydney and Perth. The Ervads were felicitated by Congress Chair Mr Firoz Pestonji, for their contribution to the community. Aspandiyar gave a short speech on the importance of the

Jashan ceremony. The chasni (consecrated fruits) and fruits along with the Sev, Ravo & Malido made by Perth volunteers were served to the delegates on their tables.

The Traditional Welcome to Country with a dance performance by the Wadubah Dance Group of Perth enthralled the delegates and kept them spellbound. Delegates from each country then arched into the Astral room where they planted their country's flag into the flowerpots at the front of the stage and stood to attention while their countries' national anthem was being played. This was the first time a concept like this has ever been carried out at a Zoroastrian World Congress – where all 14 countries represented were given acknowledgment to portray how we, Zoroastrians, are spread out all over the





world but are linked together by our wonderful religion and ancient culture. Australia as host country came in last to a loud round of applause and led forward by young people and the future generation especially the Chairpersons grandchildren!!!

The Congress Chairman then officially opened the Congress followed by a display of messages from prominent global leaders flashed on the screen for the delegates. Shri Amit Mishra – the Consul General of India in Perth gave his welcome speech enumerating the important role played by the Zoroastrian community in India and was sure that they did globally too.



The Premier of Western Australia, Honourable Mark McGowan MLA, personally welcomed all delegates to enjoy the West Australian hospitality and introduced the first Zoroastrian MLA – Mr Yaz Mubarakai. (photo left) The Premier launched the 11WZC Legacy Book on Zarathushtra, compiled by Meher Bhesania of Dubai. The evening ended with the entertainment which was heart thumping, colorful and riveting – each performance from the youngsters surpassed all expectations. There was also Zee Band of Houston who had specially flown in from the USA to entertain the delegates during all three evenings of the Congress. A delicious buffet dinner and dessert was provided by Crown Complex and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Day 2 began with Monajat performed by Mani Rao of USA and a short presentation on the film - *Wings of Fire* by Meherji Madan. Captivating speeches and presentations by Yaz Mubarakai MLA from Jandakot, Dr Esfandiyar Ekhtiyari of Iran and Zoroastrian demographics from Roshan

Rivetna of USA ended the morning session.

After morning tea, a variety of topics were covered from women empowerment – ‘Moving into the 21st Century’ led by Behroze Daruwala to Awat Darya from Kurdistan to Berjis Desai and Khojeste Mistree who offered interesting viewpoints in their areas of expertise.

The afternoon saw an 18-year-old New Zealand entrepreneur and CEO Rishad Maneksha give a presentation on how he and his team started a business converting scrap items into reusable items, a fascinating youth panel led by Arzan Wadia - Vice President of FEZANA, with other dedicated youth leaders, led by Radman Khorshidian (Iran) & Kobad Bhavnagri (Australia), speaking about futuristic foresight and offering future solutions to preserve Zoroastrianism. In the concurrent sessions delegates heard an interesting topic on the Gathas by Dr Meheravar Marzbani, followed by the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) panel of entrepreneurs led by Rustom Engineer of USA. Dr Mehran Sepheri presented an intriguing topic on 1000 Points of Light, then a special presentation by Rati Wadi on the eminent Parsis Mobed Kourush Niknam elaborated on the different groups of Zoroastrians worldwide and the Prophets insights into the behavior of the Youth.

The day ended with dinner and dancing on board a splendid Swan River Cruise which was organized by Aussie Perth



Tours, our Zoroastrian Tour Operators, with live music by The Zee Band and a dance performed by Zenia Sunavala of Houston as well as Louisa Wood and Damaris –Australian Salsa World Champions.

Day 3 began with a Gatha rendition by Rashin Jahangiri of Iran and Monajat by Mani Rao and a short presentation of a film on Australian Zoroastrians presented by the Melbourne Zoroastrians. Dr Alison Betts (photo below) spoke of archaeological digs she is involved in within Uzbekistan and



"The Spirit of Entrepreneurship " WZCC panel with Rustom Engineer at the podium



David Adams talked of his experiences and discoveries showing us his wonderful historical films. Yazdi Tantra then presented the various means and the vast resources we have available to digitally connect to each other around the world.

After the tea break, Awat Darya, spoke of her experiences (due to public request), followed by Dinshaw Tamboly informing delegates of his philanthropy work in Gujarat. Sam Bulsara presented the advantages of using marketing and media to build a strong global community. Behram Pastakia moderated a panel of global leaders who explained

to delegates what their respective organizations stand for and a quick run through of their activities. The organizations included the GWG, FEZANA, WZCC, FAZA (Federation of Australian and New Zealand). After lunch Rohinton Rivetna of USA explained to delegates how our community can take a leading role in various interfaith movements globally. Malcolm Deboo of ZTFE presented in-depth research on various British Zoroastrian defense personnel during World War 1 along with personal anecdotes of these leaders. This was followed by a truly inspiring panel session by the noteworthy Zoroastrian entrepreneurs led by Sam Bulsara.

Mr Xerxes Dastur spoke of prevailing Indian conditions, tax implications and entrepreneurship. AS promised he left his



Awat Darya from Iraqi Kurdistan, was presented a copy of Divine Songs of Zarathustra by Irach J.S. Taraporewalla by FEZANA President Homi Gandhi



hectic BPP elections campaigning to be in Perth, to attend the Congress to promote participation and togetherness. His gesture was appreciated. Dr Keki Turel, the final speaker for the day presented about the brain and its enigma.

In the concurrent session room, a youth panel was led by Farrokh Mistree of Oklahoma, followed by a very successful speed networking session for the youth targeted at getting young Zoroastrian entrepreneurs talking and mingling together by Jehan Kotwal. Fariborz Rahnamoon followed this by a fascinating presentation on the Gathas.

11WZC Gala Event started with Congress awards hosted by Meher Bhesania, followed by an exciting dance by an Australian entrepreneur and young Australian of the year, Louisa Wood. (see page 11 for award recipients)

A vote of thanks and tokens of appreciation to all the volunteers in Team Australia, was presented by the Congress Chair. The World Zoroastrian Trophy was officially passed over to Mr Astad Clubwala and Mr Homi Gandhi of USA who will hold the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress in 2022 in New York.

Team Australia sends a very big thank you to all the delegates and speakers who flew to Perth, Australia from over 14 different countries to join the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress (11WZC) in the Astral Rooms, Crown Complex.

Report by TEAM AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENT OF WORLD'S RELIGIONS EXPANDED GLOBAL ETHICS FIFTH DIRECTIVE

In 1990s the leaders of the Parliament of the World's Religions decided to identify and develop shared moral commitments embedded in the wisdom of the world's religions. Working with theologian Hans Küng and consulted with an international network of scholars and religious leaders the statement. "Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration" or the Global Ethic, was developed which was officially adopted by those who attended the 1993 Parliament in Chiago as its signature document.

Though the Global Ethic's directives are strong principles that apply to everyone, they are stated in language abstract enough to enable the religious and cultural traditions to locate the directives in their traditions' texts and teachings. It was intended to be a living document, but soon it became evident that there was agreement between the traditions on issues of sustainability and the environment. In 2017, the Parliament took decisive action and decided to retain the original language of the Global Ethic but to expand its four directives with a fifth directive focused on those issues. Scholars of religious ethics worldwide were invited to comment on the working draft. A task force reviewed the collected comments and produced the final version of the fifth directive which was approved by a unanimous vote of the Parliament's Climate Action Task Force and by the Board of Trustees' Executive Committee in July. The Global Ethic now elaborates the following commitments:

1 A commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life **2.** A commitment to a culture of solidarity and just economic justice **3.** A commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness **4.** A commitment to equal right and partnership between men and women **5** A commitment to a culture of sustainability and care for the Earth

The Global Ethic on its 25th anniversary, remains a vibrant testament to the power of interfaith conversation and its capacity to unfold in practical and enduring directions. To endorse the expanded Global Ethic, please [click here](https://parliamentofreligions.org/global-ethic-signatures), or paste this link in your browser. <https://parliamentofreligions.org/global-ethic-signatures>

Myriam Renaud, Ph.D



WORLD ZARTHUSHTI COMMUNITY AWARDS 2018

The World Zarathushti Awards were presented at the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress, held in Perth this month. The awards are coordinated by the Awards committee of the Global Working Group chaired by Meher Bhesania of Dubai. The ceremony took place in the Astral Room, at the Crown Plaza Complex, in Perth, on 3rd June, 2018.

42 distinguished Zarthushtis from all over the world were nominated, giving the judges a difficult time to determine the winner. The names of the winners together with the nominees in each category are listed below. A brief biography of the winner is also attached

The WZC Awards Team thanks the Sponsors and Nominees for their participation in this program.

Congratulations to the winners and to the nominees for allowing their name to be put forth and for the outstanding work they do for the community. You are all winners

ZOROASTRIAN ICON AWARD

DINSHAW TAMBOLY (INDIA)

Dinshaw Tamboly is an eminent personality in India. He is well-respected for furthering the cause of Zarathushtis regionally and internationally. He possesses excellent traits of leadership, honesty, parsipanu and community service. He is a role model for many. He is the Trustee of the WZO Trusts in India, which undertakes diverse projects that have resulted in qualitative improvement in the lives of many Zarathushtis and seeds entrepreneurship in the community.



Dinshaw Tamboly receiving the award from Mr and Mrs Jokhi of Hong Kong, with Meher Bhesania, the Awards Chair.

OTHER NOMINEES

Ervad Jehan Bagli; Dr Shernaz Cama; Dr Dolly Dastoor; Dr Delara Javat; Parisa Khosravi



Community Service Award MEHER MEDORA (INDIA)

Meher Medora is the founder and Managing Trustee of “Ushta-Te foundation” in Ahmedabad, India, that promotes advancement of religious, social and cultural activities in the Zoroastrian Community. Meher also works with under-privileged and physically and mentally challenged persons. She harnesses her time, talent and capacity in identifying problems faced by the local Zoroastrian community and provides effective initiatives to bring meaningful changes.



OTHER NOMINEES

Shida Anoshiravani; Mr & Mrs. Tehmtan Arjani; Ervad Zarir Bhandara; Roshan Bharucha; Sarosh Collector; Ervad Soli Dastur; Esfandiyar Ekhtyari; Feroza Jassawala; Zal Kanga Parabia; Sohrab Yazdani; Aubtin Yazdegardian

Science & Medicine Award DR. KEKI TUREL (INDIA)

Dr. Keki Turel is one of the finest Neurosurgeons in the world. He is well-known for setting up the Microsurgery unit at the Masina Hospital in Mumbai, as well as other GCC countries like Oman, Sharjah (UAE) and Bahrain. He provides free service to Parsi Priests, teachers and those in low-income group. He holds free camps in Mumbai, Gujarat and neighboring countries including Africa. He has been decorated with several awards and trophies. On the fateful night of 26/11 he was the only Surgical Consultant attending scores of injured persons brought to the Bombay Hospital after being attacked by terrorists and continued treating several more for three more days and nights. He also organizes world events benefiting the neurosurgical community.



Dr Turel receiving the award from Dr Contractor and Khojeste Mistree

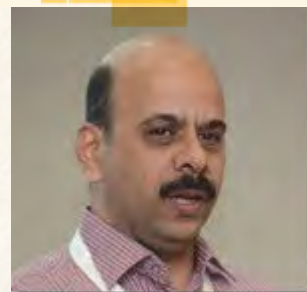
OTHER NOMINEES

*Dr. Iranpour Bastani; Dr. Esfandiar Ekhtiyari;
Dr. Cyrus Hirjibehedin; Dr. Delara Javat; Dr. Anahita Kyani; Dr. Khushroo Lakdawala; Dr. Khosro Mehrfar;
Dr. Dinshaw Patel; Cyrus Rivetna; Dr. Neville Sanjana.*



Social Entrepreneur's Award **KHUSHROO POACHA (INDIA)**

Khushroo Poacha is a firm believer in promoting social entrepreneurship as a key element to advance societies in an innovative and effective manner. He launched the www.Indianblooddonors.com helpline in 2000 to connect blood donors and patients. In 2014, he set up a kitchen for serving meals to patients and later instituted "Seva Kitchens" in 5 cities in India. In Dec. 2016, he introduced the concept "Fridge of kindness" for providing nutrition to poor patients in hospitals. Today there are 10 fridge's in 7 hospitals and 3 schools in India.



OTHER NOMINEES

Roshan Bharucha; Zerbano Gifford; Anahita Kotwal; Ruyintan Mehta; Almitra Patel; Cyrus Rivetna

Woman of Distinction Award **Dr. Pheroza Godrej (INDIA)**

Dr. Pheroza Godrej is an advocate of fine arts and history. She is a cultural icon of Mumbai and India. Her interest in art includes specialized knowledge of modern Indian paintings, prints and drawings. Over the last 4 years she has curated exhibitions ranging from colonial period to contemporary both in India and abroad. In 2013, she was invited by 3 leading UK organisations – The School of Oriental & African Studies London University, The British Museum and The British Library to co-curate "The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History & Imagination exhibition." The success and acclaim earned by this exhibition led to the Government of India, Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Ministry of Culture to sponsor "The Everlasting Flame exhibition" at the National Museum in New Delhi from 19 March to 29 May 2016. Pheroza is the Honorary Director of F.D.Alpaiwalla Museum in Mumbai. She is also a nature conservationist and the Chairperson of the Godrej Archives council.



OTHER NOMINEES

Feroza Jassawala; Roda Mehta

Young Zarathushti Award **ZIBA COLAH (USA)**

Ziba Colah is a bright star among young Zarathushtis in Houston. She has not only achieved high grades in her scholastic studies but also been a winner of several scholarships from prestigious Medical Institutions and Colleges in Houston. Currently, she is doing her MD. Since 2010, Ziba has been making substantial contributions to the Zoroastrian Association of Houston and has helped the Zoroastrian community in that area in many ways.



OTHER NOMINEES

Zenia Bhungara; Zal Kanga-Parabia; Ervad Rayomand Ravji

SPECIAL AWARD TO DR ESFANDIYAR EKHTIYARI (IRAN)

**IN RECOGNITION OF HIS OUTSTANDING AND MERITORIOUS
SERVICES TO THE
ZOROASTRIAN
COMMUNITY IN IRAN
AND WORLDWIDE**



Dr Esfandiyar Ekhtiyari receiving the award from Alayar Dabestani and Rohinton Rivetna.

Photo credits Mehraab Pathwala,



INTERFAITH VISIT TO BAPS TEMPLE -



A small group of Z-GOLDies visited the BAPS temple in Robbinsville NJ with its beautiful architecture on June 12, 2018.

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir has a philosophy of devotion and service, expanded by the efforts of the late Pramukh Swami. This Mandir aims to “serve as a place of understanding and appreciation of Indian art, culture and

religion for generations to come. It will stand as a sanctuary for countless men and women, who will be able to sustain their culture and heritage in the form of arts, language, music, and spiritual learning,” states the temple website.

The group practices the act of giving back to our communities through various charitable efforts like Walkathons, Health Fairs, Blood Drives, and more. The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Robbinsville, NJ truly inspires, through its peaceful ambiance, welcoming atmosphere and kindly tour guides, exquisitely carved architecture, and humanitarian efforts.

The Z GOLDies group enjoyed the visit, and felt uplifted by this serene and beautiful site.

Report by N Merchant



GROUP SEDREH POOSHI/NAVJOTE CEREMONY AT THE ARBAB RUSTAM GUIV DARE MEHR, BURNABY, BC, CANADA IN CELEBRATION OF ZSBC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

May 26, 2018 dawned bright and beautiful, and so did the Dare Mehr at 6900 Halifax Street, Burnaby, BC. It was the sedreh pooshi/navjote ceremony for six of our community's children. The event was not made open to all Zoroastrian Association of British Columbia (ZSBC) members because of the lack of space in the Dare Mehr, as only the children's families and their guests, the Trust Board, the mobeds' families and their guests, past Presidents, Committee members and one guest each, could be accommodated. This was for the families of the six children – ***Raika Namdari, Aryana Mehin Mehrkhodavandi, Artai and Atrem Shoghli, Arya and Katayoun Kamdar.***

Ms. Anahita Kaviani, ZSBC President, made a short speech and gave the children their candles. Azita Dehmobed, ZSBC Secretary/Treasurer presented the bouquets to the mobeds, after which the new initiates and priests entered the main community hall for speeches, gift presentations and a sumptuous lunch.

Here are extracts/modifications from the speech made by Bella Tata, Chair of the Group Sedreh Pooshi/Navjote (GSPN) Committee, to all guests at that ceremony:

“A hearty and heartfelt welcome to all of you who are here. Congratulations to The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, **for celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.** All of you have received a handout, which gives you some idea of who our new Zarathushtis are. The ages range from 11 to 20! We should be so proud of them. But Zoroastrianism does not end with the wearing of the sedreh and kushti – the good thoughts, good words and good deeds only start in earnest from this day on. So here is my advice to these young people who have embraced the oldest religion in the world. Arya, Artai, Raika, Aryana, Katayoun and Atrem - remember that you are going to be the leaders of the future, and you need to prepare for that. All of you have the potential – but what you need is the dedication, love for community and ability to sacrifice some of your personal time and pleasures to work for the community. You have musicians and sports enthusiasts among yourselves – think of organizing a small orchestra or holding a tennis tournament – get enthusiastic about what you can do now. Strive to be leaders. Your parents have given you all the opportunities – make use of your talents and interests for your own character building and for the joy you can give others. A big heart will go a long way! Be compassionate and charitable, and always counting your blessings!

If you want examples of what young people can do, you have two of them here who have given so much of their time and energy to not only the adults in this community, but to the children and youth. One or both of them have tried to attend the classes which Ardeshir and Tooraj have held. Do you not think they had other things to do – family, work, friends, just as all of us have? I would like to say a special thank you to Aubtin Yazdgardian and Kayras Irani. However, there is some sad news here for us. Kayras is leaving Vancouver at the end of this month to go to Australia and New Zealand. He has found his Cinderella and may possibly settle down in New Zealand. Kayras, we will miss you more than you can imagine! Thank you for your constant willingness to help each and every one of us, rushing from here to there when you have a full-time job as a paramedic. Aubtin - you are on your own now as your buddy is leaving you; you will have to find another!

I used to have a good singing voice – with age, most of the time I have difficulty speaking clearly. I have left to the end what is most important, and that is to thank the Group Sedreh Pooshi/Navjote Committee comprising of *Mobed Ardeshir Behi, Mobed Tooraj Khodabakhshi, Anahita Kaviani (ZSBC President), Azita Dehmobed (ZSBC Secretary/Treasurer),*

Farhad Iranfar (ZSBC Director), Farrokh Namdaran, Aubtin Yazdgardian, Zarine Dastur, Manochehr Dini, Kayras Irani, and two parents, Rostam Namdaran and Rashin Mandegarian (who did a marvellous job of decorating the Dare Mehr with her husband) for their hard work. Every member of this team has brought in his/her own expertise and talents.

Our greatest thanks go to two mobeds who have sacrificed much of their time and energy over the past two years to prepare classes about the religion, and then teaching the kushti prayers. **Tooraj Khodabakhshi and Ardeshir Behi** – you have done so much to inspire us that all we can do at this stage is to wish you and your loved ones a long, healthy, happy and prosperous life. Continue to do the good work you have done – you will see the joy in the eyes of our new initiates. Thank you also to Mobed Firdos Balsara who sat through some of our meetings and has performed the navjote for one of our children, along with his young son, Mobed Arzan Balsara. Thanks to **Mobed Jamshid Jamshidi and Mobedyar Borzoo Rostamirad** for performing the sedreh pooshi – we had six priests for six of the children. The parents who have been the guiding force behind what their children have become need to be recognized and thanked: **Gohar and Jamshid Kamdar, Armity Mehin and Farhad Mehrkhodavandi, Rostam and Antonia Namdari, and Rashin Mandegarian and Kamran Shoghli.**

Thank you to the previous Board of The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia for supporting this event, and for the current Board for their participation and assistance. Thank you to the donors who came forward to help with the initial costs.

How blessed we are to have had the foresight of our elders who formed The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia on February 22, 1968 – 50 years ago. We are all Zarathushtis and will remain together as a loving, caring and unified community, irrespective of our different types of food, clothes, customs, etc. Thank you to Jamshed K. Pavri and the other signatories to the Constitution, one of whom is with us today – Noshir Fitter. He works tirelessly at our functions despite health problems and is a true example of how great it is to be humble and hard working. Thank you, Noshir.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate this auspicious occasion with the future leaders of our community. Enjoy every moment of your life with good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and have Ahura Mazda's blessings!"

Ending this short report with thoughts of three of the six initiates: –

'Having my Sedreh Pushi initiation ceremony was a very spiritual and memorable experience for me. I feel blessed and honored that I am now part of this peaceful and meaningful religion based on respect for both nature and mankind. I look forward to following Ashoo Zarthosht's words of wisdom by using good words, good thoughts and good deeds in my daily life.' **Aryana Mehin Mehrkhodavandi**

'The purpose of this email is to thank you for your organisation, great leadership and dedication over the last two years, which has made it possible for us to achieve a very important and significant level of accomplishment. When we first started the Avesta and Sedreh Pooshi classes, we looked at the initiation as a goal and final destination. But on the day of the ceremony we both felt like what we had learned is a high state of moral accomplishment, a way of life and the only right path for the future. Thank you for helping us learn so much more than the Avesta.' **Arya and Katayoun Kamdar**

Report: Bella Tata, past president, ZSBC, and an active community worker.



L to R: Arya Kamdar and Arzan Balsara, Katayoun Kamdar and Firdos Balsara, Raika Namdari and Ardeshir Behi, Aryana Mehin Mehrkhodavandi and Tooraj Khodabakhshi, Atrem Shoghli and Jamshid Jamshidi, and Artai Shoghli and Borzoo Rostamirad (The candles were hand made by Zarine Dastur)



THE GSPN COMMITTEE

Back Row – left to right: Ardeshir Behi, Tooraj Khodabakhshi, Homi Italia, Aubtin Yazdgardian, Manochehr Dini, Kayras Irani, Anahita Kaviani, Shahrzad Rostamirad (she was helping Kayras with the MC's – not on committee but a lovely young lady)
Front Row – left to right: Bella Tata, Farrokh Namdaran , Rashin Mandegarian, Azita Dehmobed, Zarine Dastur

SACRAMENTO ZOROASTRIAN CENTER OFFICIALLY OPENED



On June 30, 2018, over a year after the inauguration of the Dar e Mehr, Sacramento Zoroastrian Center opened the doors of its much awaited grand community hall. Some 250 Zoroastrians and well-wishers from the greater Sacramento area as well as San Francisco Bay Area gathered in jubilation around tables decked out in elegant silver grey, accented by fabulous fresh flower arrangements in stunning orange and white--symbolizing colors of fire and purity. The hall has been given a 406 occupancy permit.

One of the guests present was Mr Homi Gandhi, president of FEZANA, who with some well chosen words congratulated the community for this outstanding achievement. Before the official function, a Jashan was conducted at the Dar e Mehr by Ervad Kobad Jamshed from the San Francisco Bay area.

Tables over-flowed with a large selection of home-made Persian cookies meticulously decorated by the ladies and mountains of fresh California fruits. There was an open bar as well.



Photo above from left :Darius Captain, Erach Tarapore (past president ZANC) Silloo Tarapore, Jeroo Captain - Homi Gandhi Vera Shroff .



Mrs. Manijeh Behziz,(photo left) president of SZA, welcomed the guests and thanked the volunteers who worked diligently and relentlessly for over a year to get the Center up and running.

A short video showing the stages of construction inside the hall was projected on a screen on the newly constructed stage. After a musical presentation and cultural dance, a banquet dinner of Persian dishes was enjoyed by the guests, followed by a live Persian band-- with guests dancing and

celebrating late into the night.

Mr Darab Bozorgchami (photo right) led the renovation project of the Center and was the main person responsible for giving a new look to the hall with new ceiling, new sprinkler system, new heating and a/c units, new and additional bathrooms etc.

It is hoped the Zoroastrian community of greater Sacramento will continue to flourish with this beautiful new Center as its energizing and unifying hub.



MARTIN LUTHER KING 50TH ANNIVERSARY APRIL 4, 2018, NATIONAL MALL, WASHINGTON.

**MOBEDYAR HORMUZD KATKI,
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC .**



Mobedyar Hormuzd Katki represented the Zoroastrian community at the National mall to mark the 50th death anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr. There were about 2000 people there for the interfaith ceremony.

Most Americans have forgotten that it is liberal faith traditions that spearheaded the civil rights movement. King and the SCLC were overtly religious, as were most of the Freedom Riders. Today we see the civil rights movement as an inevitable success, but it was not - it had many failures. Faith sustained the activists during their darkest days and through their failures. But the liberal faiths collapsed in the 1970s. Those who didn't like the civil rights movement left liberal faiths for conservative faiths, and many of those who did like it became apathetic. I think it is absolutely crucial that the liberal faith traditions reawaken and re-energize.

The other speakers were kind to me. I was self-conscious that I do not have their extensive religious training or commitment to social issues.

18 faith leaders read a prayer, or a passage from their sacred texts, or made a statement.

My remarks:

I am a representative of the Zoroastrian community.

Zoroastrianism is the religion of ancient Persia before the arrival of Islam. Today, Zoroastrians continue to live in Iran, and there are large diaspora communities in India, Pakistan, and increasingly, the West.

Our prophet, Zarathustra, lived 4000 years ago. Zarathustra preached a universal monotheistic religion for all men and women, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Our simplest creed, known by all Zoroastrians, is Humata, Hukhta, Huvarashta: Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

Zarathustra's own words are known as the Gathas. The Mahatma Gandhi, who appreciated the teachings of other religions, was fond of one particular stanza from the Gathas. This stanza from the Gathas was sung during evening prayer meetings at Gandhiji's ashram:

Gatha Ahunavaiti – Yasna 34.15

***Mazdaa at moi vahishta sravaaoschaa
shyaotha-naachaa vaoochaa,***

***Taa tu vohu mananghaa ashaachaa
ishudem stuto,***

***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!***

Photo Credit Kersi Shroff, ZAMWI

Passing The Baton to The next generation

Guest Editorial

SANAYA MASTER



If you asked me a year ago if the next generation is ready to take on the baton, I'm not sure how I would have responded. All that changed when I took on the responsibility of organising the first ever World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum (WZYLf) at the ASHA Centre in the Forest of Dean, UK in March. But let me start at the beginning. So how did I find myself in the middle of a forest on the other side of the globe?

My WZYLf journey started four years ago when I first tagged along with my mother Farida Master to the UK as she shadowed her subject, Zerbanoo Gifford, Founder of the ASHA Centre, for her new book 'An Uncensored Life-Biography of Zerbanoo Gifford'. That was when I was first introduced to the enchanting ASHA Centre nestled in the Forest of Dean - a turning point in my life. Something inside me changed that summer. I had the best three months of my life. I couldn't believe that such a place could even exist in today's world. It

was the first time that I felt fully aligned with the universe. At that point, I knew that I would return to the ASHA Centre sometime in the future for an extended period and soak in everything that this beautiful place has to offer.

The ASHA Centre is built on the Zoroastrian principles of sustainability, social responsibility and selfless service. The remarkable gardens of ASHA are inspired by the ancient gardens of Persia. These Persian gardens were so awe-inspiring they were described as heaven on earth. The word paradise derives from the ancient Persian word "paridaiza" which literally means enclosed garden. The reason the Persians were keen gardeners is because they believed that through cultivating their land, they cultivated their inner lives.

When I first visited the ASHA Centre in 2013, Zerbanoo and I were already discussing the possibility of organising a Zoroastrian youth initiative. In an email dated 23 May 2013 to Adrian Locher, Co-Director of the ASHA Centre, I wrote "...the Zoroastrian youth initiative will be a week-long character building/leadership development program for our youth. At the end of the week, every delegate should return home feeling very connected to their fellow Zoroastrians as they've shared an extraordinary bonding experience together".

When I returned to the ASHA Centre as a volunteer in 2017, I took on the project again. Little did I realise it would manifest the way it did in March 2018. But when the seed is sown in a fertile ground like the mysterious Forest of Dean in UK where the ASHA Centre is nestled, magic happens – a discovery I made as the WZYLf was bursting with creative energy and vitality, like none other.

It was during the process of scouting for young leaders for the Forum that I, for the first time, learnt about the outstanding calibre of the next generation of young Zoroastrians and the excellent work they do in the world. Although I had met some of these young leaders at different Congresses, I had little knowledge about the magnitude of community projects they were involved with. Being a young Zoroastrian myself, I took immense pride in the ground-breaking work young Zoroastrians engaged in within the fields of Science, Medicine, Journalism, Law, Drama, Architecture, Military, Psychology, Art and Business.

Having just returned from the Return to Roots programme in India, it was an excellent ground to meet some of the young leaders who had made an effort to discover their roots in a well-orchestrated initiative, designed to inculcate a spirit of deep reverence for Parsi religious culture within the young Zoroastrians from around the world.

Also when Edul Daver, global chair of Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce heard about the birthing of WZYLf, he was enthused enough to share some excellent CVs of outstanding Zarthushti youth leaders with tremendous potential. Soon the word got around, and we were flooded with recommendations and nominees.

Passing The Baton to The next generation

The final twenty attendees were handpicked, and we couldn't be more proud of what we achieved. The meeting of brilliant minds, the celebration of being young and the overpowering desire to contribute, to make a difference. A deep sense of inclusiveness and sharing was something that every participant was touched by. The reason I believe the Forum was a success was that although we discussed the challenges within our community at great length, we never let them derail us from our purpose which was to join forces and work towards a better tomorrow. We did this by staying connected to the core essence of Zoroastrianism - the Amesta Spentas.

What we need now is more gatherings like the WZYLF to bring brilliant young minds together - so full of hope, ambition and determination - to work cohesively towards a bright, flourishing future. There is a call for a new narrative that is greater and more nuanced, one that can hold many perspectives and move us all towards a space of greater love, integration, interconnection and collaboration. One of my favourite quotes by Margaret Mead is "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

When Dolly Dastoor invited me to be the guest editor of FEZANA Journal issue themed – 'Passing on the baton to the next generation', I took it upon as an opportunity to provide my generation with a voice to share their thoughts on what is required to reignite the flame within us. This issue includes strong and inspired voices of young Zoroastrians who attended the Return to Roots programme, WZYLF and other torchbearers that are passionate about our community.

Mentors of our young leaders and moving spirits behind the Forum, Zerbanoo, Edul and Adrian also share their views on the significance of the WZYLF in this issue of FEZANA.

I'd like to sign off with a message to all the Young Leaders out there with a burning desire for change within the community. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

PASSING THE BATON

Muktad Prayers at the Kamran Dar-e-Mehr, Boyds, Maryland, 11 August 2018

Participation by the laity in attendance during the prayers, was facilitated by printed handouts which included the scriptures, transliterated and translated into English.

At the conclusion, Kurush Dastur, who led the Jashan ceremony, explained that the word Muktad, was adopted by the Parsis from the Sanskrit language: Mukta Atma (liberated soul) to remember the dearly departed in our families.

Jamshid Parsinejad, Vice-President of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington DC Inc, ZAMWI, thanked the priests on behalf of a grateful community, for the religious services and education provided.

He welcomed Ervad Kurush Dastur, to the Washington Metropolitan area with joy, as a welcome new addition to our neighborhood.

Ervad Kurush Dastur, was tutored by Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia in Dadar, Mumbai.

Zen Panday, was tutored as a Mobediyar by Ervad Behram Panthaki in Virginia.

Hormuzd Katki from Maryland was tutored as a Mobediyar, by Ervad Soli Dastur from Florida, through a Skype program and electronic communication.



ASHAVANS AT THE ASHA CENTRE



ZERBANOO GIFFORD

For years I dreamt of bringing the youth of the Zoroastrian community together across all divides and to enable them to take their rightful place as leaders of Today. I stress TODAY and not tomorrow.

I have always found it very liberating knowing our religion stresses we have free will. I also know that when the time is right Ahura Mazda makes plans into reality. I am convinced that the first World Zoroastrian Youth Leader's Forum at the ASHA Centre in England was Ahura Mazda's doing. Everything fell into place so marvellously.

One of our extraordinary young priests at the vibrant first World Zoroastrian Youth Leader's Forum was **Jimmy Madon** who is also a nifty salsa dancer. He is my "dancing dastoor", as I love to call him. Jimmy highlighted the issues that we had to face. Lack of wisdom in our actions, dogmatism, false traditionalism, hypocrisy, and enforcing our will on others. It is also not surprising that many right thinking Zoroastrians are embarrassed by the corruption and highhandedness that passes for Zoroastrian leadership.

I just felt the time had come to be proactive and help empower a new generation of Zoroastrian leaders to act with values that have in the past identified Zoroastrians as special. Our honesty, extraordinary generosity, ingenuity and willingness to fight for other's human rights have certainly singled us out as very, very special. I think my dreams for a new leadership style based on timeless values are shared by most Zoroastrians around the world. For me, conscious dreaming is a form of planning. My plan was to see a new generation lead us all into a new Golden Age of Zoroastrianism.

Last year during the book tour in the US of my biography, "An Uncensored life" with my biographer, Farida Master, we were taken care of by some truly loving Zoroastrians. We spoke about the proposed Youth Leader's Forum. The response was overwhelmingly supportive. Edul Daver was one such supportive Zoroastrian. Edul made the time to come to ASHA Centre and to contribute his experience and extraordinary energy and enthusiasm for empowering a generation of young leaders with new styles of working. He inspired everyone into real action. Edul represented the half a dozen Zoroastrians and organisations that generously gave to see the Forum happen.

Another person was FEZANA Vice-President, **Arzan Wadia**, who was part of the Youth Leaders group at ASHA. He understands that leadership is about service. Many so called "leaders" fall into the trap of treating leadership as an excuse for self service and self promotion. Not Arzan. He is a model of our old Zoroastrian heroes who served with a purity of being. Having him at ASHA with other young leaders such as the IT/PR wiz, **Jim Engineer**, the distinguished award winning lawyer, **Narges Kakalia**, the outrageously wonderful **Benafsha Shroff**, with her boundless "can do" philosophy of life, the feisty **Layla Mazdyasni**'s determination to ensure that women have a rightful place in our faith, **Colonel Cainaz Vakharia** of the US army with her compelling drive to engage the "other" with an understanding

Passing The Baton to The next generation

of what our faith means to us and how it has influenced all the world's major religions. The talented film maker **Tanya Hoshi** from Canada recorded the events and is planning to collate photographic evidence of our ancestors for future generations. After years she was reunited with her sweet cousin, **Shireen Patel**, from Pakistan, who is passionate about social work in Lahore.

It was **Sanaya Master** from New Zealand who bravely agreed to set up the Forum. I marvel at how she just did it all. It was her devotion to the vision, her interpersonal skills and steadfastness that ensured everyone turned up and that projects that were envisaged were acted upon. The community has much to thank her for, as well as her fiancé, **Kayras Irani**, the social dynamo from Canada.

So much came out of the engagement of our young dynamic leaders during those auspicious days at ASHA in March this year. Most importantly lifelong friendships were made and global networks strengthened. They also came up with projects to reinvigorate our community's profile and energise our young and old alike. Forums, congresses, conferences are all pointless unless good action results. I guarantee that much good will come from this first Forum because everyone left determined to contribute in their own distinct way to enrich our global community.

Cyrus Rivetna was joyfully willing to use his architectural gifts and knowledge of our ancient ways of designing temples to work on a plan for building an interfaith temple at the ASHA Centre.

The accomplished and lovely **Tinaz Karbhari** inspired us all to help fund the upkeep of our Iranshah in Udvada. Our brilliant young priests, **Sheherazad Pavri** from India, the architect/ town planner, **Karl Desai** from Australia, and Jimmy the dancing dastoor wanted us to educate and give dignity back to our mobeds. How could a faith flourish if the religious leaders were never honoured or consulted for their wisdom and knowledge? All three of them inspired me to reconnect to my Zoroastrian faith through our powerful prayers.

Jehaan Kotwal, the dynamic and disarmingly charming Chair of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce youth branch, was determined to help start up a virtual and maybe even a physical centre to collate knowledge about our religion and ensure the younger generation as well as us "oldies" were taught about our glorious traditions. Our two **Shazneens** were both possessed of the most beautiful Mona Lisa smiles. They both had track records working for their communities and teaching our young about their faith. Our British star **Shazneen Munshi** had chaired the Young Zoroastrians in England and **Shazneen Limjerwala** from India used her academic skills and devotion to her people to highlight the need to take mental health issues on board as well as respecting the young and women. The graceful and kind **Diana Bharucha** was also willing to use her experience in combating domestic violence and drove home the need to empower women at all levels of society.

The youngest of the group was a gem from Toronto, **Arashasp Shroff**, who plans to start a sustainable restaurant and engage everyone in learning about our Parsee/Persian food. He is also passionate about how to responsibly save our planet. They were all magnificent. Each one taught me something precious which I treasure. They made me feel young. They made me believe Youth has no age! They gave this old "Buddhi" her MOJO back.

Then surely they can give our global community back its dynamism. I am confident we can trust them with our future. We can also trust them to guide our people and the wider world communities of faith into an era of righteousness and happiness.



Zerbanoo is a Human rights campaigner, author and founder of the ASHA Centre in the Forest of Dean, England which is now recognised globally as a leadership centre that creates opportunities for young people to experience inspiration, connection and purpose. A pioneer for Asian's in British public life, Zerbanoo made history in 1982 by being elected as a Liberal councillor in Harrow. She was also the first BAME woman to stand for parliament in 1983 receiving the highest vote of any ethnic minority in Britain.

Author of several books, she co-chaired Dadabhai Naoroji centenary and wrote his biography 'Dadabhai Naoroji, Britain's First Asian MP.' In 2014 she was recognised in Albania for her inspirational leadership for the young. And more recently she has been honoured by having a College named after her at The Dean Academy in Gloucestershire.

Testing the Mettle of a New Zarathushti Generation

How the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum (WZYLFF) will serve future generations as a catalyst for unity and harmony

JIM ENGINEER

A new generation of Zoroastrians is now serving as a legitimate catalyst for change thanks to leadership, serendipity, and a willingness to take a chance on the future.

We first met outside London's Victoria Coach Station in mid-March 2018, where we embarked on our three-hour journey to the ASHA Centre. It was at the ASHA Centre where we would spend the next ten days deep into introspection, bonding, consensus building with no shortage of laughs and hugs to make each moment an instant memory.

This timely and purposeful Zoroastrian 'coming together' of next-generation leaders would not have been possible without the devotion, dedication and leadership of Sanaya Master. Sanaya, who helped organize the Sixth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress alongside fellow New Zealander Tinaz Karbhari (also a WZYLFF team member), took on an internship at the ASHA Centre in 2017 and went on to raise funds and pursue the undertaking. It would be Sanaya's tireless energy and leadership that ultimately turned ideas on paper into transformative life experiences for all of us.

Sanaya worked closely under the mentorship of ASHA Centre founder Zerbano Gifford, a progressive, forward-thinking champion of social justice, women's rights, racial equality, interfaith tolerance and environmental sustainability for decades. Faced with death threats when she ran for elected office in early 1980s London, Zerbano went on to serve as a Councilor for Harrow and chaired the Race Relations Forum set up by the Home Secretary leading to a storied career championing human rights causes.

Her courageous example provided rare color to our efforts, and we sat in awe of her trailblazing spirit. Zerbano's life example became the fuel we needed to explore our own interconnectedness: to trust each other, to respect each other's views, and to form a vision for future Zoroastrian generations living in harmony and thriving as a united community.

At the outset, she spotlighted the contributions of legendary Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians who went *beyond* the Zoroastrian community to lead the world. She described her admiration for her heroes: from the iconic Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and Jamsetjee Tata, to well-known modern-day Zoroastrians including Ratan Tata, Zubin Mehta, Freddie Mercury, and authors Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry. Zerbano's example is tied to going beyond one's traditional comfort zone, to effect change in the world, and to pursue our dreams and endeavors without fear or favor.



Lessons of human history teach us that naysayers and doubters ultimately challenge every noble endeavor, from the smallest grassroots protests to game-changing movements. It was through our common decency and mutual respect for one another that we were able to maintain an acute focus on our shared obligations: *to form the fabric for an interconnected working group that is inspired to turn ideas into action and to foster a dialogue focused on our commonality and shared beliefs.*

The ASHA Centre achieves and imparts purpose through a myriad of techniques: the written and spoken word, meditation, visualisation and the arts, all aimed at building trust between one another and most importantly building consensus on the issues challenging the global Zoroastrian community. (photo left, Mark Gifford, a facilitator of WZYLFF)

Discussions during the day were hosted and facilitated superbly by the Centre's co-directors Mark Gifford (page 24) and Adrian Locher. Mark is one of two sons born to Zerbanoo and her husband, Richard. The couple's youngest son, Alexander, serves as the Artistic Director at the Gloucester Theatre Company. Adrian, a leading visual artist and Executive Producer at the Gloucester Theatre Company, would be invaluable alongside Mark for boundless leadership, generosity, and a depth of understanding that enabled us as a group to not just work together but to map and prioritize the maze of issues challenging our future.

IT ALL STARTED WITH A VISION.

As we began to envision our ideal Zoroastrian future, perhaps 50 to 100 years from now, we used meditation to produce visuals that ultimately would form a valuable experience. Specifically, we were given poster-sized sheets, scissors, tape, glue and boxes full of old magazines and began collaging pictures, words and other visuals to best represent our vision for an ideal Zoroastrian future. Omnipresent through the collages were themes of sustainability, care for the environment, strengthened relationships and an abundance of food, love and nature.

The lens through which we viewed the Forum was worldwide in scope, yet our experiences were tied to our home continents and regional involvements. Each one of us brought a unique perspective, view and level of leadership that qualified our involvement and enabled us to speak ardently on behalf of our experiences, and eventually on behalf of one another as a group.

Our issues were vast, interconnected, interdependent, and complex. The most daunting category: Dwindling Numbers. We explored ways to tackle such pressing issues with common sense ideas, structural policy recommendations, and action items to help move the needle.

Central to our efforts was unifying on key themes: *mutual respect for geographical boundaries, ideologies and practices – in essence, Zoroastrians all over the world worship and practice the religion and espouse both orthodox and reformist views through a prism of ethnicity, geography and adaptation into new societies.*



Photo above : Youth leaders mapping issues at WZYL

Perhaps no other issue or theme was more touching and critical to discussions on dwindling numbers. The topic of inclusion brought about a sense of empathy for Zoroastrians and their non-Zoroastrian spouses and children, many of whom were disenfranchised over the decades from being questioned on their identity while attempting to worship peacefully.

As Zoroastrians continue to migrate and build new infrastructure in the diaspora, the concept of respecting geographic boundaries became critical for us to find common ground. Ultimately no one country or geography has a monopoly on views, or the ability to dictate who can be a Zoroastrian and who cannot.

The beliefs, customs and traditions in India, for example, will be different from many Zoroastrian population centers in the diaspora. If change is meant to take place, it must take place organically and from within those population centers rather than through external forces and bodies.

With this in mind, our time was spent focused on our go-forward Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles & Resolutions. Beyond finding our own interconnectedness, we developed a kinship we expect will reverberate among Zoroastrians worldwide.

OUR WZYL F VISION :



A HARMONIOUS ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY FLOURISHING THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

OUR WZYL F MISSION:

To connect today's Zoroastrian youth leaders, fostering dialogue, and empowering diverse voices into action.

On our final formal day of work and bonding, we presented our Guiding Principles & Resolutions, comprised of vision, mission and a model for sustainability to members of the Zoroastrian community in the UK. (photo left, karl Desai presenting our ideas to the UK Zoroastrian community.

We aimed to tackle and resolve issues with future-focused common-sense ideas, and in some instances, structural policy recommendations to help organizations locally and globally usher in a new generation of Zarathushti leadership, and work toward a more inclusive future driven by responsible governance.

To start, we adhered to a circular model featuring the cog of our wheel as our state of Frashokereti, the Zoroastrian doctrine of a final renovation of the universe, when evil will be destroyed, and everything else will be in perfect unity with Ahura Mazda.

Surrounded by the cog of our wheel are the Vision and Mission statements, and seven interconnected wheels we attributed to the seven Amesha Spentas:



Asha Vahishta (Truth & Justice) to live the values of Zoroastrianism;

Vohu Manah (Good Mind) to improve tolerance and open-mindedness;

Haurvatat (Wholeness) to encourage greater engagement and participation;

Ameretat (Immortality) to have a healthy and thriving Zoroastrian population;

Spenta Armaiti: (Devotion) to achieve greater gender equality in our institutions;

Kshathra Vairya (Righteous Power) to improve the way we collaborate globally;

Spenta Mainyu (Spirituality) to cultivate knowledgeable Zoroastrians connected with their religion.

Once the Forum concluded, we returned to our pockets of the world galvanized and emboldened. We were grateful for getting to know one another and to have built lifelong interpersonal relationships. We remain indebted to the love, care, friendship and mentorship extended to us by leaders like Zerbanoo, Mark, and Adrian; by World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce Chairman Edul Daver who presented on leadership; by the passion, hard

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work and dedication of ASHA Centre volunteers; and the financial support of Zarathushti organizations and individual donors who helped turn concept to reality.

We left invigorated with a faith and trust in one another to advance our resolutions and operate as a cohesive, well-informed, connected group. We realized that we can only advance by doing so *together*; by listening to one another, deepening our conversations, strengthening our interpersonal relationships, respecting our geographic boundaries, striving for inclusion, and living a good Zarathushti life.

Our WZYLF experiences will shape our involvements and decision making over many decades to come. In just ten days, we were able to rekindle our internal flame to burn brighter than ever and embrace with optimism a future that is worthy of our beautiful and ancient religion.

Each of us today remains ambassadors and agents of change, working hard on behalf of our causes, organizations, and our beloved youth leaders Forum. We remain focused, interconnected and engaged. As a group we are focused on challenging the next generation of Zarathushti leaders and community builders to tackle the issues facing their communities, to step out of their comfort zones, and begin to realize a future that is thriving, connected, and unified.



Jamshed 'Jim' Engineer co-chairs FEZANA's Public Relations committee and is a board member of the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago. He most recently led marketing efforts for the 15th Zoroastrian Games in Chicago. Jim also serves as a founding director of NextGenNow, where he worked with his peers to foster inter-generational, unity, and leadership incubation.

Professionally, Jim is an award-winning public relations professional serving emerging, high-innovation clients in the cybersecurity industry since 1999. Jim is a Managing Partner at Naperville, Illinois-based Rainmaker Growth Partners where he parlays more than 20 years of technology public relations and marketing expertise.

NEW BOARDS FOR 2018

Zoroastrian Society of Ontario

PRESIDENT	MITRA JAM ,
EXEC. VICE-PRESIDENT	AFREED MISTRY
VICE -PRESIDENT	ROHINTON KIASH
TREASURER	ARTADNER FARHADI
ASST TREASURER	KERSI KHAMBATTA
SECRETARY	KHUSHNUMA DUBASH
ASST SECRETARY	MASHYA AMROLIWALLA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER 1	ROOZBEH FARHADI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER 2	RUSSI SURTI

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia

PRESIDENT	DINEYAR BUHARIWALA
TREASURER	PERCY BILLIMORIA
SECRETARY	AURASH YAZDAGERDIAN
DIRECTOR	BEHIN KAVOOSI
DIRECTOR	PERVIN BUHARIWALA
	(Social and education)
DIRECTOR	Yazdi Daver
	(Infrastructure and Maintenance)

WE WISH THEM ALL MUCH SUCCESS IN THEIR TERM OF OFFICE.

Turning Issues into Solutions

The issues facing our community are all too familiar, so we were determined to list them out in order for us to tackle them. Whilst the issues were numerous, we were inspired by our Amesha Spentas to turn them into solutions. Our findings are below.

Issues we currently face...	Guiding Principle	How we will solve the issues...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of spirituality Not practicing the core philosophy Individualistic mindsets, not valuing the wider community Lack of appropriate places of worship 	Asha Vahishta (Truth & Justice) To live the values of Zoroastrianism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead by example Actively engage the community through charitable causes and social services Provide programs/events that bring Zoroastrians together to celebrate commonalities Encourage Zoroastrian communities to create appropriate places of worship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of religious knowledge Lack of Zoroastrian scholarship Lack of authoritative knowledge sources 'Half-life' of knowledge through generations Lack of awareness in the global community 	Spenta Mainyu (Spirituality) To cultivate knowledgeable Zoroastrians connected with their religion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach Zoroastrians aspects of spirituality that can benefit their lives Create opportunities for lifelong learning on Zoroastrianism Preserve the knowledge that was traditionally passed down orally from previous generations Create opportunities and incentivise the study of Zoroastrianism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of effective leadership Lack of authority in priests Lack of democracy Entrenched legal disputes 	Kshathra Vairya (Righteous Power) To improve the way we collaborate globally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage, celebrate and respect current religious leaders Rethink who can become a priest Encourage priestly participation amongst the youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stigma of women marrying out (double standards) Women priests not allowed Taboos – menstruation, sexuality 	Spenta Armaiti (Devotion) To achieve greater gender equality in our institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote gender allies Foster representation of women in elected bodies Provide opportunities for voices to be heard confidentially Shatter stereotypes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwindling numbers Mental health Genetic problems from interrelated marriages Ethnicity being lost 	Ameretat (Immortality) To have a healthy and thriving Zoroastrian population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide platforms for Zoroastrians to interact with each other on a regular basis Accept practising Zoroastrians irrespective of personal preferences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement • Disenfranchised youth • Lack of support for future generations 	<p>Haurvatat (Wholeness)</p> <p>To encourage greater engagement and participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote diverse programming and activities to engage all community members • Build the infrastructure for worship and religious involvement, beyond social activities • Engage and inspire youth across all scales, starting locally and building to the global level • Empower the youth to build and contribute to their communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoroastrian vs. Parsi vs. Irani • Lack of acceptance towards mixed-marriages and their children • Ethnic purity and not accepting conversion • Lack of empathy and respect for others' views • Not adapting to a modern context 	<p>Vohu Manah (Good Mind)</p> <p>To improve tolerance and open-mindedness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate local and global youth to bring about long term, sustainable change • Advocate the need for mutual respect as a guiding principle • Consult and engage other communities for ideas and strategies that encourage inclusivity

Turning Solutions into Actions

Determined to bring about sustainable change, we transformed the above guiding principles into projects that can be implemented. The projects are intended to close the loop in solving our community's issues. The projects are listed below.

Project	Description	Primary contact(s)	Status
Asha Vahishta (Truth & Justice) – To live the values of Zoroastrianism.			
Volunteer work (especially follow up work related to the WZYLFF)	Coordinating a global movement to inspire Zoroastrian youth into action, instigated from the WZYLFF.	Karl Desai, Sanaya Master, Jim Engineer	Active
Promote Appropriate Zoroastrian Architecture	Presentations and discussions with communities about developing and promoting appropriate Zoroastrian Architecture, and encompasses environmentally-friendly principles.	Cyrus Rivetna, Arash Shroff	In Development
Support for elderly, survivors of domestic abuse	Confidential, short-term crisis intervention services and referrals for ongoing resources will be offered to the Zoroastrian community members in Seattle, Washington. Phone support may also be offered for those living outside this area, if such services are unavailable locally.	Diana Bharucha	Ongoing
Spenta Mainyu (Spirituality) – To cultivate knowledgeable Zoroastrians connected with their religion.			

Lifelong Learning Project	Cultivate knowledge, understanding and a spiritual connection with Zoroastrianism through creating a universal curriculum, educational resources and a global network of teachers, to allow Zoroastrians of all ages to integrate principles and teachings into their way of life.	Shazneen Munshi, Cainaz Vakharia, Arzan Wadia, Narges Kakalia	Active
Ask a Dasturji	Gain religious knowledge on any given topic by requesting a dasturji for information.	Arzan Wadia	In Development
Preserving cultural heritage	Preserve our rich Parsi and Iranian cultural heritage through embracing customs and traditions at organised workshops and events. For example, cookery classes, Natak and learning how to wear a saree workshop.	Shazneen Munshi	In Development
Gujarati, Farsi Language Learning Classes	Organise Gujarati and Persian language classes in local Zoroastrian associations for Zoroastrians of all ages.	Shazneen Munshi	Ongoing
Collective recording of oral history	As a lot of our customs and traditions are lost through time and mostly passed on from generation to generation, we sometimes miss out and don't really know why we do what we do. To keep an oral recording and verifying it with the collective as to the accuracy of the information.	Jehaan Kotwal	Ongoing
Zoroastrian Research Institute	Take the top Zoroastrian scholars globally (priests and laity) and have healthy LIVE debates/discussions in front of a global audience. Collect all the information from our previous generation to give our future generations better direction. The purpose is to help bridge the gap between the orthodox and the liberals by having a unified understanding of our religion.	Jehaan Kotwal	Ongoing
Kshathra Vairya (Righteous Power) – To improve the way we collaborate globally.			
Zoroastrian Memory Project	Improve the richness of Zoroastrian memories through the written and visual collection of stories accessed easily via website.	Arzan Wadia	Active
World Mobed Congress	Organise a meeting of mobeds from around the world to discuss the role they play in their religion. Similar to the WZYL held in March, 2018.	Jimmy Madon, Karl Desai, Sheherazad Pavri	Ongoing
Empowering Mobeds Project	Conduct workshops and groom the current crop of priests. Also encourage youngsters to take up the profession and lead the community.	WZO, Athornan Mandal, Sheherazad Pavri	Ongoing
WZCC Youth Leadership	Empower the Youth Globally to achieve their highest potential. By offering platforms for Networking, Mentoring,	Jehaan Kotwal	Ongoing

		Startup incubation, Industry exposure and Knowledge sharing.		
Spenta Armaiti (Devotion) – To achieve greater gender equality in our institutions.				
	Zoroastrian Women's Forum	Foster the greater empowerment of Zoroastrian women for the vital role they play in preserving our religion.	Cainaz Vakharia	In development
Ameretat (Immortality) – To have a healthy and thriving Zoroastrian population				
	Contribute to Existing Networks and Programs	Contribute one's expertise to existing programmes, for example: HPY, XYZ, Zochild, Return to Roots, Individual Baug Programmes, Mayqueen Ball, Jiyo Mobed, FOZYA youth conferences, etc.	Shazneen Limjerwala, Sheherazad Pavri, Kayras Irani, Arzan Wadia	Active
	Youth leaders acting as mentors	Establishing a network of mentors to help youth run programs or initiatives that they are passionate about e.g. senior workshops, religion classes, recreation events for the youth and general community.	Kayras Irani, Sheherazad Pavri, Jim Engineer	Active
	Yoga Classes – Seattle Zoroastrians	Yoga + Meditation Classes: Offered to Seattle Zoroastrian members, once space and interest is gauged, to promote hauvavat (wholeness)	Diana Bharucha	Ongoing
Haurvatat (Wholeness) – To encourage greater engagement and participation.				
	Celebrate youth achievements	Identify global youth who are doing exceptionally well in their profession/business annually and award them at the WZCC Global AGM, thereby providing them a greater platform to excel. We are also going to start this at a local level soon.	Jehaan Kotwal	Active
	Dedicated Youth Funding	Create a sustained, dedicated fund to support youth activities. For example, a number of the projects listed here could benefit from seed funding.	Benafsha Shroff, Layla Mazdayasni	In Development
	Global Zoroastrian Book Club	Promote Zoroastrian authors and books with a global book club. The authors will be asked to participate, and will answer questions via email, or video conference call.	Cyrus Rivetna	In Development
	Amesha Spenta Themed Dinners – Toronto	A series of tasting menu dinners themed around the Amesha Spentas.	Arash Shroff	In Development
	Professional and Career Support	Support and connect youth or adults at personal and professional crossroads through facilitating networking and providing guidance.	Shazneen Limjerwala	Ongoing
	Zoroastrian Community Centre - Auckland	Working towards building a Zoroastrian community centre in Auckland, New Zealand.	Tinaz Kharbari, Kayras Irani	Ongoing
Vohu Manah (Good Mind) – To improve tolerance and open-mindedness.				

Community code of conduct	Support strong governance within all local organisations by distributing a charter outlining best practice code of conduct e.g. removing discrimination, empowering youth, promoting gender equality.	Benafsha Shroff, Karl Desai	Active
Publications (online and print)	Keep our global community connected and well-informed by sharing Zoroastrian news stories from around the world	Arzan Wadia, Shazneen Limjerwala, Jim Engineer, Sanaya Master	Active
Zoroastrian Documentary Film	A feature length documentary that will feature 4-5 key stories about Zoroastrians around the world, who are standing tall in the face of adversity and doing great things within the community - for the community.	Tanya Hoshi	In Development

Next Steps

This is just the beginning. At the WZYL F we were able to dream up the above projects to help strengthen our community.

For us to turn words into action, we need you.

If there are any projects you would like to be involved in, please get in touch with the relevant contact. From there we'll be able to see how you might help, or be helped, with any of these projects.

Your religion and community will appreciate all the love you can give, no matter how big or small.

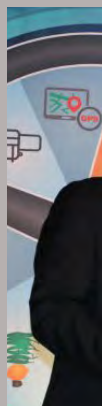
Hama azor, hama asho bed

"May we all be united in strength and righteousness"

Jehaan Kotwal, (India)

"To ignite the flame we need to build a positive common vision and empower and encourage the youth"

Jehaan Adil Kotwal is an upcoming and Visionary Entrepreneur. He started his first business when he was 17 (Joe's Cafe) with his two best friends while he was doing his majors in Entrepreneurship and minor in International studies. After learning how to grow a start-up, he decided to take over the family business and scale it. In four years, Jehaan grew the company from 10 trucks to over 100 trucks and from two branches to 10 across India. Winning two of the most prestigious Best Transporter in India Award twice from Castrol and Youth Transporter Award from Ministry of Road Transport India. His team (mainly drivers) is who he gives credit to.



He is currently building his team to reach 1000 Trucks over the next six years to become the Safest Trucker in the Country. Yet none of the business achievements make any sense if we can't give back to society which is why he is a part of the **World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC)**. As the Global Youth Director of WZCC his core team are working tirelessly to empower every Zoroastrian Youth Globally within the next five years to reach their highest potential.

1. **You are currently the CEO of JFK Transporters, you won Transporter of the Year award in 2017 and you are also the Director of the Youth Wing of WZCC. What is your leadership style professionally and within the community?**

I use the same method used by most successful entrepreneurs. It is the same with my own company and WZCC Youth Wing. We need to empower and nurture our teams.

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Give them the right purpose to keep them fulfilled and allow them to take risks by trusting them, we could not achieve any of this without our teams.

It's funny how not many see the sweat and blood put in by our



team and credit mostly goes to the so-called “leader”. In WZCC’s Youth Wing core team each of us are leaders and they all act the part as they know why they are here and what needs to be achieved.

I think a good leader is balanced and has a good mind. Everything else falls into place.

2. What are some exciting initiatives that WZCC is working on for young entrepreneurs?

There is a misconception that WZCC is for entrepreneurs only. We focus equally on professionals, at the end of the day it's about empowering our community. To facilitate this we have our five Pillars. They are *Networking, Mentoring, Industry Exposure, Knowledge sharing and Incubation*.

Networking: We regularly host Speed Networking events where people talk about what they do and what they are looking for. This encourages everyone else to give back in some form, maybe a reference or leads. To keep the action going we have formed a Global WhatsApp Networking platform and have crossed 250

members who have done substantial business. This has led to the formation of specific focus interest groups e.g. food and beverage, automotive, finance etc.

Mentoring: We arrange for leaders from every industry to mentor the youth. This helps youngsters looking for guidance to meet the right people. We bring in two great mentors every month on average. Our members can select who they would like to be mentored by and we facilitate the process.

Industry Exposure: We facilitate cross-border internships and focus groups to guide youth interested in particular sectors. This helps young people looking for new opportunities and also give the people hiring them a trusted reference.

Knowledge Sharing: We host bi-monthly panel discussions with young industry leaders who share their experience and knowledge. It brings fresh ideas about upcoming technologies and professions/businesses for people to explore.

Incubation: Recently we have also started collecting funds for the purpose of funding start-ups. Our final vision with this is to have a Shark Tank kind of structure. This way we complete the full circle from conception to reality.

3. Can you tell us about one of the projects that came out of World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum (WZYLF) that you are taking lead on?

The WZYLF was a great experience bringing in youth from around the world with diverse backgrounds but a common goal of nurturing the community. The projects I took includes cross border exposure and the Zoroastrian Research Institute. The former one where we will be identifying youth who are looking to work and learn in other countries to benefit their

own. In WZCC we have started working towards this and our first step is identifying businesses who are looking for interns or employees from other countries. The data is being collected and once we have enough businesses we will publish it on our social media platforms. The Facebook and LinkedIn page will cover most of the opportunities present for the youth.

The Zoroastrian Research Institute will give our scholars a platform to debate and come up with a set of standard regulations to guide the youth. The main intention is to prepare a lifelong relationship with religion/spirituality manual where one is given the right advice for the right time in their lives. It will also collect the oral history and traditions of our forefathers to guide us into the future.

4. In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

It is a tough question but in my limited experience of meeting young Zoroastrians globally, I find that people in the wider diaspora are more ignited to carry the torch forward. Due to the resources put in place by our forefathers in India, the drive to succeed is not as much as it was earlier. That being said, our generation has a large percentage of youth who are doing exceptionally well and involved in extraordinary work. It is not necessary that every Zoroastrian should be a leader and do life-changing work in their profession. I think it is important to be happy and spread happiness which is what I see our generation doing quite well. If you ask me how to ignite the flame I would say two steps:

1. **Build a positive common vision.**
2. **Empower and encourage the youth.**

I met Zerbanoo, for the first time, when she came to New York for the launch of her book “An Uncensored Life - Zerbanoo Gifford”. We immediately clicked and started communicating. We talked about the Spring Fezana Journal featuring Emerging Leaders of North America and she requested me to forward a few recommendations for her to invite to the WZYL (World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders) Forum at the Asha Center in the U.K. I also started communicating with Sanaya Master, who was coordinating the event and gave her a few suggestions and before I knew it, I became a “Mentor” to the event. When invited to attend the event I jumped at the opportunity and decided to participate in the last few days of the Forum.



I arrived in London early Friday morning and was picked up by Mark Moodie, ASHA Centre's gardener, and we talked non-stop during the drive through the country side. After meeting Zerbanoo at the iconic ASHA Centre's brick building, which I had seen in all the photographs, we visited the work center and I saw about 20 youth, sprawled in small groups all over the floor. Right away I could see the “free spirit creative energy” on display. Zerbanoo and Shazneen Limjerwala then gave me a tour of the grounds which are nothing short of being an enchanting wonderland. The stream with bridges across it and benches and landscaping along it's banks with meditative characteristics makes it a ‘picture book’ setting. One such corner was dedicated a few days earlier to Behroz Wadia, Arzan's Mom who had recently passed away (*photo right below Arzan with Zerbanoo*)

That same afternoon I presented a discussion about Leadership and it's key characteristics, namely, **Opportunity Driven, Shared Vision, Action Orientation and Value Driven**. The youth were totally engrossed and asked many very pertinent questions. They were particularly interested in ethical leadership which I described as a laser focus on “honesty and credibility” which is so aligned with Zarathustra's teachings. They were also intrigued by the risk factor which is a necessary part of Leadership and distinguished between calculated risk and gambling. They were in tune with the power of motivation and incentives. I believe there was a realization that good leaders had to embrace change, step out of the comfort zone and feel comfortable taking a calculated risk. I am optimistic that the discourse will have a lasting impact on their future leadership challenges.

Mark and Adrian led the group very effectively to apply the finishing touches to the identified Vision, Mission and the spokes around them which comprised the Action Elements to accomplish the dream. I was struck with the Vision's simplicity “**Our Vision is a Harmonious Zoroastrian community, Flourishing through Righteousness**” which made it that much more powerful. It was a perfect example of today's youth harnessing their collective intelligence, creating synergy and leading the community to build an inspiring future. The group finally made a presentation to the invited community leaders and elders on Saturday. It was clear that the youngsters believed in “Working Hard And Playing Hard” and Saturday night was spent at the local pub with youngsters and oldies sportingly dancing to the music of ‘Apro’ Freddie Mercury.



Sunday morning I got a special treat of meeting Nigel Hall, my buddy of 30 years who coincidentally lives only an hour away. For the last assignment, they worked in small groups to determine “Action Needed” for each of the spokes and to assure that the work started would be sustainable long term. The event ended with lunch, thank you messages and hugs and kisses. I had spent a lightening 48 hrs but it felt like an enchanting journey and I hope that I keep crossing paths with the young participants who play such a crucial role in keeping old minds young and moldable.

Thank You Zerbanoo. Thank You Sanaya. Thank You Group !

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Edul Daver was involved in the development and launch of World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) served as its Founder-Director from 2000-2006 and is now the Global President. Edul is passionate about promoting Entrepreneurship to our youth. He was president of Acu-powder International , #1 Copper based powder manufacturer in North America with a market share of over 50%.

Tanya Hoshi, Canada

“I witnessed a strong passion for change and commitment to help make the Zoroastrian community stronger among the youth...”



Tanya Hoshi is a Film Producer/Director in Toronto, Canada and is currently directing a 12-episode web series she financed through private and government funding. Tanya works full time at Shopify, where she coordinates all national and international film productions. In addition to having experience in filmmaking, Tanya is a Canadian Reserves member, where she teaches music, sailing and leadership to youth.

When I was told that I was accepted to be a participant at the first World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum, I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was very excited. One thing I can say now, after having attended, is that the experience went above and beyond anything I could have ever hoped for. The Forum has positively changed my life as a young Zoroastrian, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend it.

The 10-day Forum was organized by Sanaya Master – whom I first met during the 2017 Return to Roots trip in India. The Forum connected 20 Zoroastrian youth leaders from around the globe at the ASHA Centre in Gloucestershire, UK. The purpose of the Forum was to bring together Zoroastrians to discuss issues facing our community and to come up with meaningful and realistic solutions to tackle them.

Each day was facilitated by the Centre's co-directors Mark Gifford and Adrian Locher. Through energizing and thoughtful activities, they were able to help us dig deep into what problems we believe are most urgent to focus on and what we hope to accomplish by working together. Our daily activities and discussions helped me understand what I could do as an individual to help my community and what we could do as a collective to spread empowerment.

The ASHA Centre itself was the perfect location to host the Forum. It's a beautiful haven which allows you to escape the noise and hustle of the world to focus on inner reflection and connect with nature. The peaceful environment allowed us to connect with each other at a human level and work together to create a mission and outcome for the Forum.

The primary focus of the Forum was for us to apply our attention and energy to discussing solutions that will contribute to the betterment of the global Zoroastrian community. However, we also had the chance to participate in other activities to help us bond as a group and to allow us to explore the beauty of the location we were in. We had a great tour of the ASHA Centre and the Forest of Dean during the beginning of our stay. Being surrounded by nature was a welcoming break personally as a city person. We also had a chance to visit Oxford University and Wales during the trip. Our evenings consisted of many fun activities such as the Zoro Master Chef competition, a talent show, salsa lessons, and lots more. The days were filled with activities from morning to night and friendships were formed instantly!

One of the greatest aspects of the Forum was being able to meet other youth I could identify with and spending lots of time discussing how to make our community and religion more progressive for future generations. I witnessed a strong passion for change and commitment to help make the Zoroastrian community stronger among the youth in this Forum,

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which motivated me to stay involved in my community and focused once I returned to Toronto. The Forum helped me develop an idea for a project that has given me a sense of purpose in my Zoroastrian community. I am developing a feature documentary about Zoroastrians around the world who are standing tall in the face of adversity while they do great things within the community, for the community. I'm hoping this film allows our religion and community to connect with each and set aside our differences. It's important now, more than ever, for us to work together to keep our community strong and to be open-minded.

The Forum has made me realize how I can be more involved in making our community stronger and why it's important our youth start discussing the issues our community faces so we can strive to create progressive solutions. I am so grateful to have had this experience and to have walked away knowing I have a purpose within my community and a strong network to rely on. I look forward to hopefully attending the Forum again in the future and help more Zoroastrian youth learn about their history and hopefully ignite their passion to be more involved in the community. be more involved in their community.

Karl Desai, Australia

"The 'baton' shouldn't be a precious set of china that we must protect at all costs, but a practical set of tools that are appropriate to a modern context!"



Karl is a mobed and active member of the Sydney Zoroastrian community. He was born and raised in Sydney, and currently works in sustainability for a property management company in London. Karl loves travel and being in the outdoors – two of his main reasons for moving to London, to explore all of Europe!

Karl recently attended the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum at the ASHA Centre nestled in the Forest of Dean, England.

Some excerpts from the interview with Karl Desai.

1. You are a big advocate of sustainability and Zoroastrianism teaches us to live in harmony with nature and the environment. Tell us a little about your field of work and the role Zoroastrianism has played in your professional life, if any.

My Zoroastrian upbringing blessed me with two fundamental teachings that have shaped my career. Firstly, to always give back, recognising the value in community rather than individualism; and secondly, to value our innate relationship with nature. I think it's beautiful how these core values transpire in our practices – coming together and sharing at ghambars, our spirit of philanthropy, giving blessings towards nature etc – and am stupefied at just how simple they are.

Spending 10 days at the ASHA Centre was most assuredly a spiritually uplifting experience for all participants. I suspect it may have been the reigniting of these two fundamentals – connection with humans and nature – that brought it on. If we could all see this value, I think the world would be a better place. My move into sustainability is rooted in these two teachings. Sustainability aims to re-balance the fractured relationships between humans and nature.

I completed a Masters in Sustainable Development after completing a Bachelor's in Architecture. My career

ambition is to promote sustainability throughout the built environment. This includes re-establishing the link between buildings/cities with nature, making buildings less impactful on the environment (less energy, water, waste), and making them healthy spaces for humans to be in. There's been no better time for it.

I currently work for a large property management company where we ambitiously try to achieve these aims whilst working against tight budgets!

2. What leadership roles have you played within the community?

My parents have always been active in the community, so I followed a similar path. I never really considered myself a "leader" until I got invited to the World Zoroastrian Youth LEADERS Forum! I see my role in the community as having been born out of a passion that's been imbibed from a young age. But thank you, I will take the title as a compliment.

I organised a discussion forum on current issues facing the Zoroastrian community in Sydney in 2015 which set in motion a chain of events. Following the event, we received significant donor funding dedicated to the youth, from which I established a 'Sydney Zoroastrian Youth' Facebook group and organised several events. Today, the Facebook group has 300+ members, with a strong leadership committee carrying forward the group's events organisation.

In addition to this, I've been providing priestly services to the Sydney community for the past 20 years, including weddings, navjotes and ghambars. Last year, I was one of two Australian mobeds to become a registered religious marriage celebrant, which we are all very happy about!

3. What are your key takeaways from the Forum? Could you provide examples of knowledge gained, skills developed and attitudes changed?

My key takeaway is that we're stronger when working together. Any problem can be solved if you have a committed team ready to tackle it.

One of the most resonating experiences for me was when we all went around the room and listed the issues facing our community. It was an emotional experience because no matter which part of the world we were from we could relate to them all. It was a shared airing of grievances.

Despite the potential negative consequences of this exercise, it surprisingly wasn't. Being surrounded by a group of dedicated individuals at the Forum gave hope that these grievances could readily be transformed into solutions.

Extending this idea to the outcomes of the Forum, it feels like we can really take some constructive steps forward if we're linked up and working cohesively. If everyone is in their own corners of the world fighting their own battles, it's very easy to feel belittled. However, if you're part of this global movement where we're all working towards a common goal, you feel very spirited. You have others there right behind you.

I think I came into the Forum with a niggling degree of pessimism that the same issues will be mulled over with not much action springing from it. This attitude was changed thanks to the earnest collaborative effort of all individuals involved. The projects we have proposed to run throughout the diaspora will have a genuine effect, so long as we maintain the energy and build a global movement. It's no easy task.

The solutions that we came to be were only possible due to the expert knowledge of Mark and Adrian. They taught us a variety of practical skills focused on thinking creatively about a problem. These skills were invaluable, and I'll carry them forward into my career and personal life.

4. One of the ideas for a project that came out of the Forum is a World Mobed Congress. Can you tell the FEZANA readers a little more about this?

In essence, it would be similar to the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum where engaged participants would come together to develop a unified approach in moving our religion forward. Throughout the Forum, mobeds were highlighted as key agents for the long-term success of our religion. This was based on the integral role they play in the religion, natural leadership position and religious education. As part of the diaspora, some mobeds lack clarity and understanding of their religion, and the World Mobed Congress would help address this.

Additionally, the Congress could potentially help our religion determine global consensus on current topics of interest where currently there isn't a body that provides this.

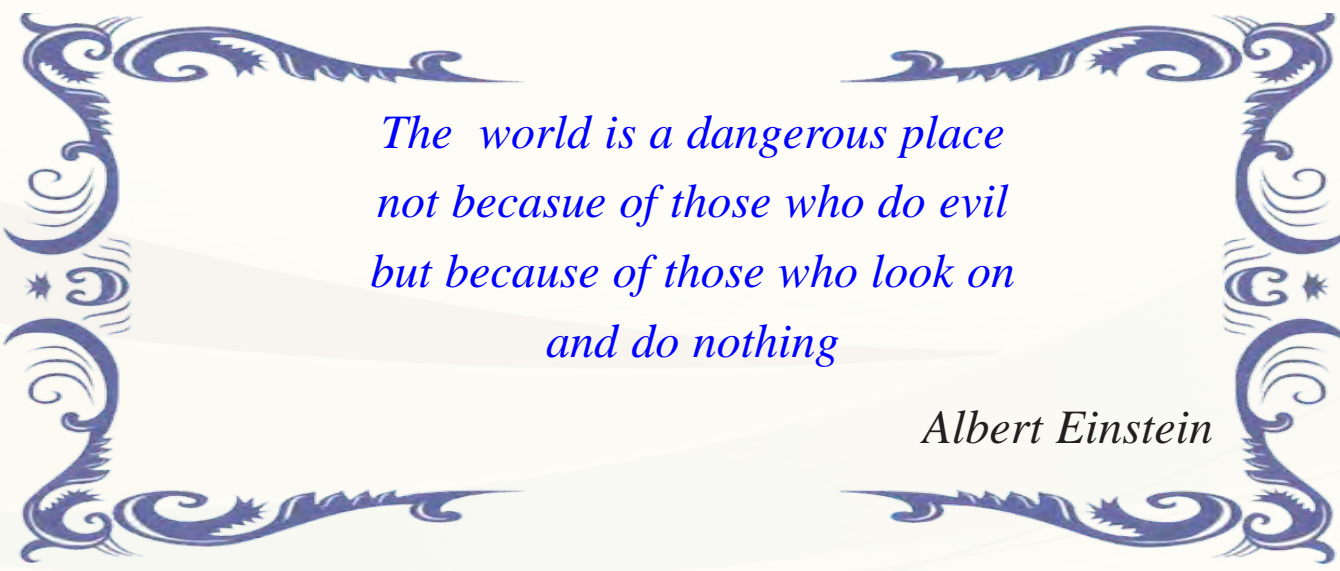
5. In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

In my opinion, the long-term exposure to negative messaging around our religion has worn away at the youth. All we tend to hear are the tribulations that our community face – dwindling numbers, pressure to marry in, extinction, not maintaining the values etc. It's been raining down on us since such a young age that it dampens the very flame we want to reignite.

The “elder” generation I think can appreciate these pressures and understand that some of it may be their doing. Taking a set of traditional values from an insulated environment and thrusting into the throngs of modernity spread throughout the world is no easy task. If the community is to survive and thrive, it needs to adapt these values. But firstly, it needs to turn off the negative messaging.

What will make the task easy for us is to have the space and agency to take forward what it is that will make our own lives, and therefore the community, stronger. The “baton” shouldn't be a precious set of china that we must protect at all costs, but a practical set of tools (community/religious values) that are appropriate to a modern context!

We have a beautiful religion that provides a practical toolkit for use. If we focus on it, rather than the supplementary stuff, the flame will be ignited very naturally throughout the youth. What will help is if the elder generation can recognise this and give the youth genuine confidence to go forward in this manner. We all need to be part of the discussion in order for this to happen.



*The world is a dangerous place
not because of those who do evil
but because of those who look on
and do nothing*

Albert Einstein

Jimmy Madon, United Kingdom

"It is in our hands to understand this beautiful philosophy of our Prophet that has helped humanity for over 3500 years."



Born and brought up in Mumbai, India, Jimmy Khushroo Madon moved to the United Kingdom in 2010. Currently, he is the Lead Software Engineer at GENE Software Ltd., a company which specializes in the field of Lean Engineering Software and Consultancy.

His passion for Software Engineering fills up his life outside his day job. He is pursuing his Masters in Software Engineering at the University of Oxford. He is also a part-time Lecturer at EM Normandie, Oxford – a French Business University where he teaches programming to undergraduate and postgraduate

students.

He is an ordained priest, a 'Navar-Martab' and has been actively performing Jashans, Navjotes, Weddings and Funeral Ceremonies for the community over the past 15 years.

Zoroastrianism is a really huge part of your identity and your passion for spreading knowledge about Zoroastrianism is inspiring. What ignited your love and sense of service for your community?

For the greater part of my childhood, I lived in a Parsi residential colony and went to a school run by a Parsi trust. So, I was surrounded by Parsis and considered my 'religion' to be solely a personal identity, i.e. a stamp on my head. Like most Zoroastrians today, I was just a follower of a set of cultural traditions.

At the age of 12, I was attending the weekly Zoroastrian Studies religion class at school and the teacher was introducing my favourite topic - Persian history. She quoted Herodotus who said, "Persian youths, from their fifth year to their twentieth year, were instructed in three things – to ride a horse, to draw a bow, and to speak the Truth." This quote changed how I viewed the religion I was born into. It made me see it as a philosophy that was practically applied by people in their day-to-day activities - a true way of life! From then on, I set out on a journey trying to discover the meaning behind my prayers, the significance of the rituals I performed as a young priest and most importantly, the philosophy of Zarathustra as in the Gathas and tried to see if I could benefit from applying these in my life. For the first time, I felt like I was in a position to *choose* this beautiful religion. I hoped to inspire others to do the same and considered it an ideal way to help our religion flourish.

Tell us about the different roles and initiatives you are involved with in the UK and global Zoroastrian community and the impact of these initiatives.

I feel the lack of knowledge of our religion is the root cause of all the narrow mindedness and conflicts within our community. Further, our previous generation have handed down a community divided into several factions based on petty differences. Hence, my endeavours over the years have focused around acquiring and spreading knowledge as well as bringing people and organisations together regardless of their individual views or differences.

I have been an active volunteer at the 'Zoroastrian Fun Club' religious and cultural studies class in London for the past eight years. We have formulated a detailed syllabus, that focuses on the Zoroastrian religion as much as it does on Parsi/Iranian culture. We organise activities outside the centre too, including trips to the Persian Empire gallery at the British Museum. I currently host a discussion group for the parents and the other adults who accompany the kids to the class. Not only does this help to increase the knowledge of the parents but it ensures the learning continues for the kids at home.

I have also been on the committee of the Young Zoroastrians group (the youth wing of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) for the past six years organising social, cultural and religious events for our youth such as Mumbai-style

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'Gymkhana' events, Salsa classes, karaoke nights and nights out in London.

I am also the youth coordinator of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) in the UK who sponsored me to be the opening Keynote Speaker at the 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress 2015 in Auckland, New Zealand. It was the perfect opportunity for me to share my passion for the religion and the relevance it still holds for the youth of today.

You are known to go above and beyond the call of duty as a priest. After every religious ceremony you participate in, you take the time and effort to explain the symbolism of the ceremony to the public. You lead by example. What does leadership mean to you?

When it comes to Zoroastrian priesthood, my father, Khushroo Madon, demonstrated true leadership. He has an unbiased mind open to discussion, a thought process that evolves with the knowledge he acquires and the courage to stand by his conscience in a dogmatic hypocritical environment. He sets aside his ego, humbly explains his thinking backed with references and never tries to impose anything on anyone. He focuses on the clear recital and significance of our prayers/rituals rather than focusing on mere paraphernalia that surround them. He was one of the first priests who started explaining the ceremonies he performed and created easy to read 'preparations lists' to make them more accessible to everyone. As I grew up, I realised these were the Gathic principles that a good Zoroastrian leader should strive for and tried my best to imbibe them. Being a Software Engineer, I have since trialled innovative ways to engage the audience attending my ceremonies, e.g. via digital presentations that run parallel to the ceremony.

In your opinion, what role does the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum (WZYLFF), that you were a part of, play in shaping/empowering young leaders of the future?

I have been a part of several youth groups, congresses and events in the past. Nothing has come close to the WZYLFF in terms of allowing young leaders to take *ownership* of a list of projects guided by their individual skills and passion. These projects aim to mitigate, contain or solve the many issues that our community faces rather than merely discussing them aimlessly as we have in the past decade. When attending the Forum, I had so many meaningful conversations where our collective knowledge has increased, and we came together on implementing constructive ideas regardless of our personal opinions or agendas. In a time where most of the committees that run major community organisations are led by an 'old boys club', many young members of the community feel their voice won't be heard. Others simply require a nudge to convert their thoughts into actions. The Forum has proved to have the potential to identify these *hidden* leaders who can vitally assist the few young Zoroastrians who are already very active within their local groups.

How can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

In his excellent speech at the North American Zoroastrian Congress 2015 in LA, Zane Dalal describes how the previous generation have done an *abysmal* job of handing down the religion to us. I cannot agree more when he states, "Facts about our religion are not presented to young people so that they will choose Zoroastrianism. *If they don't choose it, they won't keep it!*" We all call ourselves "Zoroastrians", yet few of us have actually read a single translation of Zarathushtra's message! So, the youth does not understand and cannot apply Zarathushtra's teachings in their own lives - be it in their academics, hobbies, relationships or careers.

Furthermore, the rise of community politics, bickering and people telling the youth on what they should and should not do has further caused many to distance themselves from it. They have taken the easier path from *ignorance to indifference*.

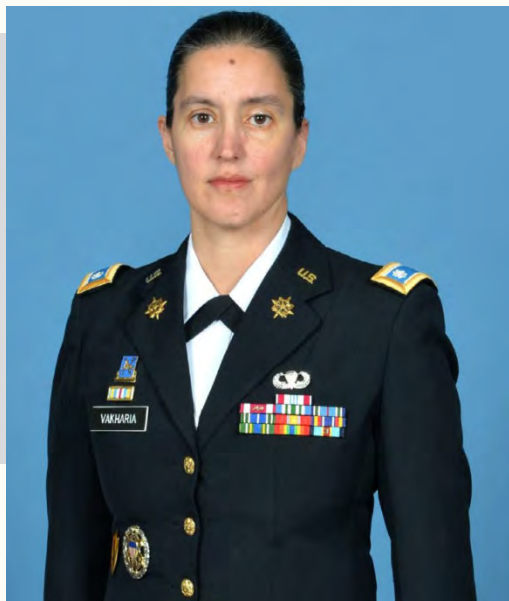
Nonetheless, I am very confident that the next generation has the power to reverse this trend. The WZYLFF initiative is such a great example. Kids today are incredibly inquisitive and curious. It is up to us now to rekindle the flame of Zoroastrian ethics and spirituality within them via a knowledgeable and pragmatic approach.

We have always feared that our minority ethnic groups that follow Zoroastrianism in one way or the other, e.g. the Parsis of India will fade away in the near future. What I personally fear more is that the message of Zarathushtra will simply end up as a little gallery in the British Museum!

So, it is in our hands to firstly *understand* this beautiful philosophy of our Prophet that has helped humanity for over 3500 years. Only then can we *choose it for ourselves, live by it and pass it on for thousands of years to come*.

Cainaz Vakharia, USA

“Leadership is about duty and selfless service”



Colonel (COL) Cainaz Vakharia graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate from Tulane University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in biology. Cainaz is currently assigned as the Army Attaché in the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India.

Community service has always been very important for Cainaz. Within the community she served as a teacher of a religious class for the youngest members in Washington D.C. for several years. She also developed and implemented the first of its kind fund-raising mechanism to fully self-fund the classes for the entire year. COL Vakharia has received numerous meritorious, commendation and achievement awards. She is married to Michael Heaton. They have two daughters, Kashmira (13) and Aryana (9), and one son, Zubin (7).

1. **You have held many leadership roles in your 23-year career in the Army including leading troops in Germany, Korea and serving on high-level staffs in the State Department, the Pentagon and U.S. Embassies in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. What has the US army taught you about leadership?**

The Army taught me that as a leader, you are assigned a mission and it is up to you to accomplish that mission. You won't have all the time you need, or all the resources, and very frequently you won't have all the facts and inputs. None of that matters – leaders make things happen. Leadership is about duty and selfless service. When you are in charge, everyone is looking to you; and falling short of the objective is not an option. The army also taught me how to be innovative and critical in my thinking. Often there isn't just one right answer. And where you may be lacking in one area, there are other things that become your force multipliers. And most importantly, the Army taught me that leaders take care of their people. If your subordinates, peers and superiors know you are taking care of the team, there is no limit to what the group can accomplish. Leadership is about loyalty to those with whom you serve and personal courage to do the right thing always.

2. **You have a highly demanding job, are a mother of three and find time to be closely involved with the Zoroastrian community. Tell us about the driving factor behind your commitment to community service.**

I think the driving factor for me is the tremendous amount of satisfaction I get from volunteering my time. There is such a sense of fulfilment and pride. But beyond this, I think it's really important to be outwardly focused. In today's world it seems we are too caught up with “me, myself and I”. It sometimes feels as though we are part of a very individualistic society, one that values the individual over the collective. This is not a bad virtue, but today's world also demands sacrifice and personal responsibility to something beyond one's self. I want my children to be focused on the needs of the world, just as much or more than they are focused on their own needs. So the desire to instil in them a broader, more outwardly focused view... this is another driving factor for me. I don't want to just TELL my children that it's important to do community service, I want to SHOW them by example – the whole “actions speak louder than words” thing.

3. **What are your insights on the first World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum as a young mother?**

For me the Forum was really invigorating and a reaffirmation of the fact that we, as a collective community, are determined to flourish. There was so much energy, insight, emotion, determination, and accomplishment, among

Passing The Baton to The next generation

just a few things. I think the Forum was hugely successful in bringing together youth from all over the world. This is critical, as there are different issues facing the different regions. We need to understand and address all of these challenges. I was extremely encouraged by not just how much was achieved during the Forum, but the amount the coordination, communication, activity and momentum that continues to this day.

4. In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

Have the expectation of our youth, expect that they WILL take on the baton, nothing less. And show faith, belief and trust in them to do so. We need to empower and encourage our youth, especially when it comes to taking leadership roles within our community organizations, or in FEZANA. How do we do this? By bringing them along – get them started at any level of involvement, not just the leadership roles. There are likely many young people among us who want to contribute, want to make a difference, want to be involved – but they don't know where to start or they are not being brought into the group. As youth show interest, we should cultivate that and channel it so the next generation can transition to carrying the baton. But this is not just about the youth and the next generation. The entire process will require mentorship and support from those who currently hold the baton. They have just as important a role to play as do the youth. I think one of the most necessary things we can do is to listen to our youth and to validate the new ideas of our youth. Time changes us and we must be willing to change with time. Give our youth ownership of our way ahead.

Sheherazad Pavri, India

“Yes, the next generation is ready! Invest in them, believe in them!”



Ervad Sheherazad Pavri is an alumnus of the Dadar Athornan Institute. He holds a Bachelors degree in Biotechnology from the University of Mumbai. An entrepreneur by profession, Sheherazad is also a practising priest well versed in the higher Pav Mahal rituals such as Yasna, Vendidad and Nirangdin. He is a volunteer with the Return to Roots Programme that takes a small group of youngsters to India every year with the aim of reconnecting the youth to their religion.

He is also actively involved with the Empowering Mobeds Programme that works towards the betterment of the priestly class by conducting workshops on developing their skills and encouraging youngsters to take up the noble profession. Sheherazad was one of the representatives from India that attended the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum held at the ASHA Centre in Gloucestershire, UK. He loves travelling, meeting new people and believes in seeing the good in every situation.

1) You are one of the few young priests to participate in higher prayer rituals as well as study Pahlavi. What ignited your love and sense of service for your community?

As I was growing up, Zoroastrianism seemed more of a culture to me than a way of life or religion, especially since I was exposed to the Parsi colony life in Bombay. Naturally, I took a lot of things for granted. Over time, it struck me hard that I had always been at the receiving end of respect and love from the community through various Associations because of the fact that I was a priest. What seemed like a mundane routine now felt

like a calling - one of serving and giving back to the community that has given me so much. Attending World Congresses in Mumbai and New Zealand as well as participating in the Return to Roots programme gave me some amazing opportunities of interacting with young Zoroastrians from all parts of the world and made me realise how lucky I was. It imbibed in me a spirit of leadership and service.

2) Can you tell us about the Empowering Mobed project you are currently involved with and the future plans for this initiative?

The Empowering Mobeds programme is being conducted under the auspices of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) and Athornan Mandal. We are conducting workshops where priests are encouraged to get out of their shells and actively interact and build connections with the laity by developing their soft skills and communication abilities. There has been no active interest from the youth to take up priesthood stemming from lack of encouragement from the current crop of priests due to it not being financially viable. We recently conducted a workshop with the theme "Empowerment through social media". Through this and the upcoming workshops, our goal is to shatter the stereotype of a priest being simply confined to the duty of performing rituals meaninglessly and develop leaders of tomorrow who understand the religion and spread its message; not just by the book but in accordance with its relevance in modern times.

3) Do you see priests taking on leadership roles or initiatives in community affairs?

Yes, I do see the change happening and for the better. Active involvement in the community affairs, especially involving youth, is the perfect platform for spreading the wonderful message of our religion while keeping the community united.

4) In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

The world is moving at a faster pace than ever before. Keeping that in mind, religion shouldn't be something forced upon a person but rather a means of uniting people and living in harmony. Practising Zoroastrianism in its true essence is the need of the hour. Adding fun elements in customs and traditions would draw the youth to participate more in religious functions. The power of collective prayers is truly magical and should be encouraged. Faith moves mountains. When presented as a solution to their stresses and problems, the youth happily embrace the religion. Yes, the next generation is ready; invest in them, believe in them!

WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WZCC) GLOBAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ORLANDO, FL. USA , MAY 1-5th, 2019



The WZCC-Central Florida Chapter will host the WZCC Global.meeting In addition to the annual WZCC Business Meeting & Elections there will be outstanding global speakers, panels and opportunities for net-working. The WZCC Awards Gala Dinner with distinguished Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker is planed for Saturday May 4th. 2019.

There will be time for optional outings to Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World and other world class attractions in the area. An optional short cruise is being planned for May 6th to May 9th. Registration with complete program details will start September 2018 giving people plenty of time to plan and attend. The Organizers are making sure to surpass your expectations. Come prepared to "Work Hard & Play Hard".

Afsaan Kermani President WZCC Central Florida Chapter Mobile : +1 (407) 803-3226 Email : Afsaank@gmail.com Website : www.wzcc.org

Passing The Baton to The next generation

Zenia Sunavala, USA

“...it’s time for the next generation to step up.”



Zenia has been an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) community since she moved to Texas at age four. She is currently assisting with the North America Zoroastrian Congress (ZAZC) 2020. Zenia has held several leadership positions and focused on getting the youth more involved in community service projects for ZAH as well as around Houston. She also co-organized one of the first youth-led fundraising events for young Zoroastrians to attend the 2011 Youth Congress in Vancouver. Recently, she assisted the team in Perth, Australia during the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress in June 2018.

Zenia has completed her Masters in Biomedical Science degree at Texas A&M and aspires to establish a career in the field of Preventive Medicine with a focus in Cancer. Her passion and dedication towards staying involved in the Zoroastrian community, locally and globally, continue to grow and she hopes to be an inspiration to the next generation of youth.

1. You are an active volunteer with the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH), a youth mentor at ZAH’s annual “ZCamp” and Sunday School, and a part of the Entertainment Committees for the North America Zoroastrian Congress 2020. What ignited your love and sense of service for your community?

I owe my ignition of being an active member in the community to my parents. Growing up watching them serve as excellent role models in being active community members themselves, allowed me the opportunity to tag along with them to meetings, help set up for functions, and observe first-hand the behind-the-scenes efforts that go in to a project, etc. They also never missed a month to drive me to Sunday School classes. The incredibly selfless teachers, who went well above and beyond their role in teaching us our culture and history, made it easy to keep wanting to come back. I was fortunate enough that my generation’s parents were all so encouraging and active, that we were able to form a very strong network at such a young age. Interacting with my peers, who shared similar values, beliefs, and backgrounds, on a regular basis sparked a deep connection with my community. Witnessing progress and evolvment happening over time due the hard work of my parents, my friend’s parents, and many of the community leaders; I knew I wanted to carry the torch and be a part of the legacy they have paved for us. I am blessed to still have that strong (and continuously growing) network of friends that also choose to take initiative.

2. As a youth leader within the community, how do you envision your leadership impacting the younger generation?

After completing school, I moved back to Houston and wanted to get more involved with the younger generations. Recently, I had the privilege of assisting Vehishta (Kaikobad) Aunty’s elementary group with their Navroz production, which was showcased at the Houston Children’s Museum. When I introduced myself to the kids, I started out by telling them I was in their exact same place doing this very production over 15 years ago. Understanding that I was in their shoes once before (literally, the same costume), they were immediately able to connect with me. The most rewarding feeling is that the kids still get excited to see me and have no hesitation in grabbing my hand to the dance floor to dance with them at functions. I hope that seeing me come back to my roots after so many years and be involved with a variety of community events, sparks a motivation in them to

do the same. My vision is not only for them to have as close of network as my generation had, but also the same desire to take on volunteering activities, plan fundraisers, attend congresses together, and always lend their hand to the community. I want them to learn from our mistakes, and I want them to encourage the next generation to learn from theirs. I am looking forward to continuing to mentor and assist in being a part of what these kids bring to the table for NAZC2020.

3. The wonderful thing about the ZAH is that the youth are enterprising enough to continue the good work their parents have done so far for the community. Can you give us some insights on how to get more youth involved in leadership roles in our global Zoroastrian community?

I think that getting involved in the Zoroastrian community is addictive. Once you have a little taste of what turning your good thoughts, good words, and good deeds into GREATER actions can do; you just want to keep being a part of the magic. I think the hardest part is not knowing where to begin, and this is where a global youth network is extremely beneficial. One of the most incredible advantages we have in this day in age is social media. We have the capability of connecting with people from all over the world, and we do not take enough advantage of this. I encourage all youth to get their foot-in-the-door by starting to get more involved within their own communities. If you like dance/fitness, offer group exercise classes every month; if you enjoy playing games, then organize a Casino Night for the Golden Group or Relay Day for the kids. You can turn it into a fundraising event to help cover travel expenses for the nearest Youth Congress; the possibilities are endless. Another way to get involved on a more global scale is to reach out to Congress boards and see if you can bring something to the table, whether it is participating on a panel or offering your technological expertise. Lean on your Zoro peers around the world for advice and make known what you are doing as you may be able to help someone too!

4. In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

Ultimately, igniting that flame must come from within. The best thing is to serve as role models and mentors in guiding the next generation of youth. Our teachers and leaders have done an excellent job at setting an example and establishing Zoroastrian communities outside of its origin. I do think it's time for the next generation to step up. In fact, I think that it is important to notice that some youth already have begun to pave the way. The resources are available, all one needs is to take the initiative to find the right opportunity. To help with the transition, we can set up a "shadowing program" of some sort where the youth can assist a serving committee member for a position they would possibly be interested in. This would be a great way to help prepare as well as encourage more youth participation.

Trust yourself

*Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life.
Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into
flames of achievement.*

*Golda Meir, (1898-1978)
4th Prime Minister of Israel*

Anahita Verahrami, USA

“If we want to pass on this baton to a generation that will continue to run with the flame ignited, we must show them that all it takes to be a part of the race is the pursuit of Vohu Manah.”



Ana has a B.S. from Cornell University where she majored in the Interdisciplinary Studies of Biology, Anthropology, and Ecology and obtained minors in Biology and Anthropology. She is currently working as a research assistant for the Elephant Listening Project (ELP), a conservation NGO at Cornell. Her work with ELP deals largely with conducting acoustic analyses in order to monitor the forest elephant populations of central Africa as well as generate a deeper understanding of how individuals communicate with one another. In her spare time, she enjoys going on hikes with her dog, Oscar, and taking photographs.

1. **You are extremely passionate about environmental and animal conservation and were recently based in Central African Republic to conduct field observations on the forest elephants of the Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve. Tell us about the role Zoroastrianism has played in your professional life.**

My Zoroastrian roots have largely informed the professional decisions I have made throughout my pursuit of higher education as well as in my career. From an early age, I was taught by both of my parents as well as the bi-monthly Avesta classes I attended to respect nature. This, combined with the three main tenets of the religion, or what I like to refer to as “lifestyle choices”, made it seem like a simple choice to pursue a career that reflected this respect. At first, this respect pushed me towards being a veterinarian, but over time, I found myself more passionate about research and less about practicing medicine. This passion led me into a diverse array of research settings where I was able to conduct research on a variety of topics including wild chimpanzee social and locomotor behavior, the pathogens of red and yellow onions, the quality of milk from cows with mastitis, and ultimately, bioacoustics and its application to conservation and understanding syntax. I fully believe that if a strong respect for nature had not been instilled in me at an early age, I likely would have never felt the same drive to protect the earth and all its creatures. Moreover, I never would have stumbled across the field of bioacoustics and gotten the chance to spend a remarkable four months finding my chi among the elephants of the Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve.

2. **You were selected as a delegate with the FEZANA United Nations NGO Committee for the UN conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in 2017. Do share your experience with us?**

I attended the UN Oceans Conference in 2017 as a delegate representing the interests of Zoroastrians as well as the interests of fellow researchers concerned about anthropogenic noise and its impact on the marine environment. From the Zoroastrian standpoint, I attended the conference in order to share with others what environmental protection means to our religion. I pointed out that if we are to continue to practice our religion, and hence respect our environment, then there must be an environment around for us to respect! From the perspective of a scientist, I shared my knowledge on how sounds such as sonar, shipping noise, oil drilling, and more, affect the marine environment and how this will ultimately impact the human species as well. The conference opened my eyes to the number and diversity of stakeholders involved in conservation decisions and also allowed me to hear the opinions of many inspiring people, including those of Sylvia Earle, a great role model of mine. I left the conference with a deeper understanding of the interdisciplinary collaboration that is necessary to save our oceans and our planet and have and will continue to pursue this sort of collaboration throughout my career.

3. **In 2017 you were part of the UN Conference as well as the RTR program. Upon your return to North America, are there any community projects/initiatives that you intend to participate in/initiate?**

I am really excited to be back in the States and pursue a deeper involvement in the North American Zoroastrian community. I plan to be a member of the Marketing committee of the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in 2019 and am looking forward to helping plan the event. Moreover, I plan to continue my involvement with the FEZANA UN committee and am hoping to work on initiatives to increase youth participation on the committee. I also really would love to participate more with Avesta classes depending on where I end up settling down for work! Technically speaking, I have no concrete projects or initiatives planned out at the moment but do know with a great degree of certainty that I want to encourage Zoroastrian youth to get more involved in their communities as well as have a greater respect for the environment. The future of the world is in our youths' hands. I think that the older generations are too set in their ways to make much change as of now. So, if we want to see positive change and want to give our children and their children access to a healthier earth than what we have, we must be the makers of that change.

4. **In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?**

I fully believe that the next generation is ready to take on the baton. I was awe struck after reading the accomplishments and dreams of each individual included in last issue's "Emerging Leaders" section. The diversity of careers and values portrayed was inspiring. It led me to think a bit deeper on my interpretation of the religion. I know that my interpretation may be different than someone else's and I think that this is something worthy of acceptance. At the end of the day, as long as one is making an active effort to pursue good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, I believe they are practicing the religion. So, in a sense, this means that these young entrepreneurs who are giving back to the world are practicing the religion, even if they are not saying their prayers every day for example. And I think that this is worth teaching our youth. It is probably not news to anyone that the younger generations are becoming "less religious". I define myself as less religious compared to my parents and my grandparents for example. But if we are to redefine the religion so that it expands outside this box we have created that dictates what does and does not mean to be a true Zoroastrian, and if we teach this to our youth, I bet that we can ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism within them. If we want to pass on this baton to a generation that will continue to run with the flame ignited, we must show them that all it takes to be a part of the race is the pursuit of Vohu Manah.



WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WZCC) AREA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE (ARO)

In numerous cities, we have a small group of individuals interested in taking advantage of the many benefits offered by WZCC. But the lack of a sizeable mass to form a full Chapter in their areas, their interest in WZCC gets restricted. To address such situations the Board of Directors have decided to establish a new category - "AREA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE (ARO)".

The ARO would allow an individual or a handful of individuals to become members and remain in contact with WZCC. They will be individual members, associated with the closest Chapter and follow the Global Bye-Laws as their guiding document.

It is hoped that over a period of time the ARO would be able to increase the awareness and interest in WZCC, in their respective cities, to a level allowing them to form a sustainable Chapter. The Regional Directors and Chapter Chairs are requested to spread the word of this concept to enlist interested Area Representatives. Any individual from around the World interested in serving as an ARO may contact their Regional Director, or any Global Director or HQ office at wzccindia@on-lyne.com

Edul Daver-WZCC Global President, +1 908-397-4443

Adrian Locher, Co-facilitator of the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum

“...as a generation they carry in their hearts a strong impulse towards healing the rifts in their community without any desire to create further ones!”



Adrian Locher, Co-Director of the ASHA Centre is an actor, voice coach and director of many years' experience. He studied the History of Ideas at Sussex University where he earned a first-class degree, before training at The London School of Speech and Drama. He was one of the co-founders of the award-winning Stroud-based Taurus Voice Theatre Company and is now co-director of The Gloucester Theatre Company. He has a diploma in Conflict Resolution from the NAOS Institute. As the Artistic Director of the ASHA Centre, he has run numerous drama-based programmes with young people from all over the world.

I had the pleasure to co-facilitate the World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum at the ASHA Centre, UK, 16 – 25 March 2018. My impressions were of a group of 20 dynamic, modern young people deeply committed to their community. From four continents and diverse backgrounds, they seemed like a big family, sharing the values of their faith as well as an appreciation of the difficulties faced by their community in sustaining it. I was struck by their keen sense of loyalty to each other. This was a group of young people who were clearly there for each other, offering their help and support and encouraging each other in their different endeavours.

During the many activities and discussions, I experienced their passion for keeping the flame of their faith alight and their dedication to healing the divisions that weaken their community. It was fascinating for me to compare their situation to other communities I have experienced, where similar dynamics are at play. There seems to be an archetypal pattern of potential divisions being created in the passing of a cultural or religious impulse from one generation to another. It would be easy to describe this as the friction between old and young, conservative and progressive etc., but it is usually more complex than this.

There are always those who feel strongly about preserving their faith or culture through the traditions that have sustained it for generations. Their fear is that an erosion of those traditions implies a dilution of the substance of their culture or faith. On the other side, there are those who feel that new forms are needed to keep their faith or culture alive and relevant in keeping with the changing times. Their fear is that sticking to old forms would keep their culture or faith trapped in the past. But what impressed me with this group of young Zoros was that they did not fall into these simplistic categories.

Deeply honouring their traditions, priests (of whom there were four present) and temple rites, they were able to discuss openly and without fear their concerns about the present state of things, the dwindling numbers in their community worldwide, the question of ‘marrying out’, the lack of knowledge and serious study of their faith and, most troubling to them it seemed, the rifts within their community. But it did not end there, as it often does in such forums, with a list of unsolved problems. Rather, through a facilitated and structured process, they were able to share their visions of what a flourishing Zoroastrian community could look like and set out in quite some detail the obstacles to be overcome and concrete measures that would need to be put in place in order to achieve it.

In this mature and serious debate, I felt there was no polarisation of views, or any sense of young versus old. Rather, there was a common aim to do right by the principles of their faith, embodied by the Amesha Spentas, which formed the basis of their action plan, and to effect positive change in their communities with all due respect and gratitude for

Passing The Baton to The next generation

what has come before them. The overwhelming sense I had after spending nine enjoyable days with the group, whether in sessions, at meal times or on trips to Oxford and Wales, was that as a generation they carry in their hearts a strong impulse towards healing the rifts in their community without any desire to create further ones!

They care enormously for the wellbeing of their community and were determined to keep alive the momentum created at the Forum when back in their countries. From the continued flurry of email exchanges since they left, I have no doubt that this group means business and that what they started here at the ASHA Centre in England will continue to take shape in their lives and communities at home. With that, I feel they are ready to step into leadership roles, each in their own way, and bring their insights, empathy and energy to serve their communities.

Afreed Mistry, CANADA

"I feel that if youth are more in the forefront of the community events, they will lead by example."



Afreed Mistry has been volunteering for the Zoroastrian Community since the age of 13. She has been actively involved with the local Toronto community, FEZANA and the Global Zoroastrian community. Recently, she was one of the Masters of Ceremonies at the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress in Perth, Australia. Afreed is also FEZANA's key representative to the United Nations.

1. As a youth leader of the community what has been the most impactful project/initiative that you've lead or been a part of?

I have been teaching religion classes in Toronto for 18 years. Our program is the largest in terms of size in North America and probably the largest outside of India and Iran. We have five levels of classes (10 years of study until graduation) and two locations so on a religion class Sunday we have 10 classes going on. The teachers in the program have been working on handouts for the children for many years and back in 2002, Daraius Bharucha, Kermin Mehta and myself put together a syllabus with Level 1 to 5 Teacher's Handbooks so that we would have a standardized program for the kids. We have done so well with this that we have shared these handbooks with the religion classes in Vancouver, Boston, New York, California and Delhi. This year, we will be working on re-vamping the syllabus and coming up with new handbooks and new material that is more relevant to kids today. We hope to have that completed by end of 2019.

2. From an early age you've been deeply committed to community service. You have been part of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) Executive Board and Archives Committee, Co-Chair of Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) and Co-Chaired two Youth Congresses just to name a few of the many endeavours. What advice would you give the disengaged and disenfranchised youth of our community?

It is very easy to feel disengaged and disenfranchised with our small community. I too have experienced

these feelings from time to time and have had to take short breaks and sometimes longer breaks from our community. Some of the senior leaders in our community make it very difficult for our youth to stay engaged and volunteer with the community because either the senior leaders are not willing to step aside, or they are not willing to listen and take a chance at ideas that the youth bring forward. I was lucky that early on in my volunteer years, I had good leaders like Jimmy Mistry and Sam Vesuna who let me take charge, listened to my ideas and helped me grow as a youth leader. This is what is missing from our senior leadership today.

3. You have attended twelve Zoroastrian Congresses worldwide and lectured at five of them. What role do you believe Congresses play in our global Zoroastrian community?

Yes, I have attended many World Zoroastrian Congresses including North American Zoroastrian Congresses and Zoroastrian Youth Congresses as well. Congresses are necessary to bring the Zoroastrians together. Not all Zoroastrians live in large cities with large Zoroastrian Centres where they can interact on a frequent basis with their own community. Many Zoroastrians live in remote cities or remote countries where there is no other Zoroastrian close by. The Congress would be one such event that people living in remote locations can attend and get to know about our community and interact with our people. For example, I met a Zoroastrian family from Vietnam at the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Pune in 2003. The father said he came to India to have the Navjote of his child performed as there are no Zoroastrian priests in Vietnam. He found out about the Pune Congress and decided to attend with his whole family! He made a lot of contacts at the Congress and even met my friend, Zubin, a young priest from UK, who gladly volunteered to make a trip to Vietnam at his own expense to do the necessary prayers and rituals for the family in the future.

4. In your opinion, how can we ignite the flame of Zoroastrianism in the youth? Do you believe the next generation is ready to take on the baton?

In my travels across the globe, I have come to see that the next generation is ready to take on the baton. The youth are given opportunities to show their leadership in our community. They are nurtured and given responsibilities so that they can experience what it is like to run a youth group or an event, or a congress, etc. If all Zoroastrian communities enforce a succession plan which includes adding a minimum of two youth to every position, every event planning committee and every congress planning committee, then the youth have a chance to get some experience. The youth also get a chance to make mistakes and learn from them in a safer environment where there are more experienced leaders to teach them. Most recently, I attended the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress in Perth, Australia and I was very impressed with the volunteers. They were mostly young people, more technically savvy and also very willing and able to help the attendees and speakers. I feel that if youth are more in the forefront of the community events, they will lead by example. Youth will be more inclined to show up and participate if they see other youth are involved. Also, we need to be more open towards the ideas of the youth today, for example, if they want to have an x box party or a Play station competition versus the traditional sports night we imagine. We should give in to their ideas and make them feel that they too can lead our community. As a FEZANA volunteer I always encourage the Presidents of all Zoroastrian Associations to bring a youth along with them to the FEZANA AGM. This is a good way to get someone younger involved in our community matters and when ready that person will be able to take over seamlessly.

Courage does not always roar,

Sometimes courage is a little voice at the end of the day that says

I'll try again tomorrow

Mary Anne Radmacher

THE ASHA EXPERIENCE:

RE-DISCOVERING MYSELF, RE-INVIGORATING THE COMMUNITY



SHAZNEEN LIMJERWALA PH.D (INDIA)

I am Shazneen, raised in Ahmedabad, married to Zubin in Mumbai. We nurture 4 year old twins, Ava and Yazad. Professionally, I'm an academic, writing facilitator, psychotherapist. I'm an active member of the Zarathushti community: I counsel individuals, conduct trainings in FOZYA (Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India) and HPY, (Holiday Programme for Youth), Ahura events and facilitate networking. This piece is my endeavour to share what was special about the WZYL (World Zarathushti Youth Leadership Forum) at the ASHA centre for me.

It was a unique blend of the place, people, food, processes, fun, warmth, discoveries, passion, persistence: the coming together of it all.

THE PLACE: The ASHA centre is absolutely breathtaking- the peace and tranquillity, the freshness of the air. The snow, the stream, open spaces and the labyrinth where I stepped on the stones and played different games.

ZERBANOO GIFFORD: Zerbano's presence: her stories, involvement with each one of us, interest in my work, encouragement to take risks and her constant questioning invigorated me and encouraged initiative.

THE GROUP: The group was diverse, stimulating and fun. Coming from different places, with varied cultures and family backgrounds, our views and priorities differed. We discovered latent parts of ourselves, as we saw them reflected in others.

THE FACILITATORS: Mark Gifford supported by Adrian Locher, was a patient group process facilitator. The facilitation was stimulating, engaging in a number of soul searching and brainstorming activities. I was encouraged to speak, initiate alternate processes. That I could add value felt empowering.

THE FOOD AND VOLUNTEERS: The food was sumptuous, delicious and healthy. Indu, the chef, a Nepali national, introduced us to various cuisines. Whilst eating, we followed a decorum and discipline, whilst also engaging with our neighbours. Prior to every meal, we stood in a circle holding hands, blessed the food, the chef and one more entity that we collaboratively selected.

The volunteers were young, came from diverse cultures and were widely travelled. They exuded warmth and friendliness. With them around, there was a constant, playful chatter around the kitchen. They were also our expert judges for the bawls talent and masterchef contests!

THE INTELLECTUAL PROCESS: I raised the following issues as priorities for the community: the community's mental and physical health, the need to network nationally and internationally, explore alternatives to litigation, such as arbitration; gender and other inequities; build a positive image of the current, contemporary community in the wider polity; initiate political representation and engage actively in nation building, support vulnerable persons and populations psychologically: those who are alone, bereaved, the elderly, economically weak; find indigenous, socio-cultural means to buttress the dwindling numbers. It would be good to have more diverse representation in our community bodies, where the youth, women, middle class have a say, so our forums are more equitable.

THE FUN, EXPOSURE VISITS, INTERACTIONS WITH GUESTS: Right from our bus journey to Asha, the WZYL was experience filled with joy de vivre! The Zoro Masterchef, the walk to the sacred pond, visit to Tintern Abbey, day spent at Oxford, interaction with the principal of Somerville college: each of these added to our learning quotient. The bonfire, sharing our date stories, learning Salsa Dance, and the Zoro Talent night were absolute hits! I read two short pieces I'd penned: one on my experience of the Udvada Atashbehram in twilight; and another on some thoughts on the practice of

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offering wood to our Fires. It took courage to share, and the response was heart warming. I also did a live interview for the BBC on the forum and Zoroastrianism. That was at once super scary and a confidence booster!

I'd give the WZYLFF a 10/10. Perhaps more!

The WZYLFF was a special blend. The beauty of this experience for me was to reignite those parts that were subdued under the traditional 'mother' role: calm, placid, non self nurturing, self sacrificing woman. Instead, I believe a mother who nurtures herself, nurtures her children. Beautifully, out of love, not merely as a sense of responsibility.

I believe all these experiences developed my confidence and leadership. It's about taking the initiative to do something different, believing that what you have to contribute to the community is unique and valuable. We need mentors who raise us, encourage us to chart different frontiers and scale new heights.

AFTERTHOUGHT: On my return, I conducted a session on Leadership at the HPY. This was my message: *we all have a leader within us. Unleash the Leader!*

Xerxes Dastur

"It is important to be that change and to do something, rather than be an armchair critic."



In a close fight to finish, Xerxes was recently elected as a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. He is also the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the Mumbai chapter of the WZCC, a Trustee and the Chairman of the Managing Committee of the Ripon Club, Treasurer of Rustam Baug Welfare Association, Secretary of The Ness Wadia Memorial Pavilion and INDIA Board Member of WZCC.

Xerxes has been a practicing CA for the last 24 years at V.S. Dastur & Co. Chartered Accountants, which is one of India's leading CA firms. He has been the Managing Partner of V.S. Dastur & Co. for the last 15 years.

The topic **Passing On the Baton** is vitally important to our community today. Our community which has always been at the forefront of progress in our country unfortunately is today in the throes of complacency as regards to so many of our community affairs. Why are we in our individual capacities so willing to push ourselves onwards and forwards for our own good, but when it comes to community affairs we seem to be willing to take a back seat and have a "Chalva de" approach?

I am often asked why I stood for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet elections. The seniors in the community were at least happy that I, who am considered as still young in our community, was willing to take an interest, but my own peers and the younger folk in our community were completely perplexed. The most common question I get is, "Why do you want to get involved in all of this?"

I think it is an unfortunate situation if the next generation have settled into a comfort zone where they no longer care or

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wish to get involved in community matters. I come from a family which has always been involved in community affairs and I wish to keep alive, a proud family tradition of serving the community and being at the forefront of community affairs.

My father, Vispi S. Dastur, founded the leading chartered accountancy firm V.S. Dastur & Co. Chartered Accountants, which have been and are honorary auditors to a lot number of Community Trusts and are associated in various capacities with a number of various community initiatives. Indeed, one of my ancestors wrote the Parsi Anthem 'Chaiye Hame Zarthosty'. My grandfather Shapoorji Dastur (Manjra) was the Principal of a school in Valsad and authored a book titled "Cyrus the Great and His Times", and I have always felt very proud of our community and our heritage. I therefore firmly feel that if we want to bring about uplift and improvement, it is important to be that change and to do something, rather than be an armchair critic.

It is important that as a community we not only take pride in our accomplishments in this country but also bear some of the responsibility for the administration of the community's affairs and its various activities. I have two young sons and I also look to the next generation to play its role in taking forward the community.

Being professionally qualified as a practising Chartered Accountant for now over 24 years, I felt that I had the necessary skill set to assist and contribute actively to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and help the community. There are a number of serious issues confronting our community and I believe we should create a new professional environment based on mutual respect and consensus to find some solutions to the many issues that are still pending. As a young professional who has audited various charitable trusts and also advised various businesses, I have the necessary professional competence and the temperament to contribute to an organisation such as the BPP. For most of my professional career I've worked closely with such institutes. Being on various community organisations had also taught me the importance of teamwork and the ability to work together with different people for the greater good. You don't necessarily need to have the same ideology to agree on a course of action. If that was required, you need a dictator and not a board. The purpose of having people with different backgrounds and experience sitting on a board is to discuss, deliberate, find a common ground, and reach consensus. Things ought not to come to a stalemate just because of difference of opinions.

I do believe that the youth in our community are doing great things but they need to be mentored and guided better. We have lots of successful youngsters who have succeeded in spite of the odds. At the same time, we have youngsters who are reluctant to take a plunge. To that effect I have been instrumental in guiding WZCC and especially its youth initiative. We have been organising "Coffee with WZCC" as an evening meeting and networking platform every month, where anybody can come to make new friends and discuss issues which they are facing in their jobs, business and professions in a friendly, informal atmosphere. I'm happy to state that this has worked really well by creating an informal support group which can advise and guide.

As a community, we don't share enough within ourselves, I am hoping that with the right type of mentorship and professional guidance, we can retool and rearm ourselves to engage better both within and outside the community. With this network in place, we should be in a position to push not only ourselves forward but also promote our friends and fellow comrades.

Our community though small, has considerable physical infrastructure thanks to our forefathers who have left us so much. Unfortunately, we are no longer building on this to create social infrastructure for children outside our housing colonies and Baugs. If we can bridge this divide and empower our youngsters to take greater risks and achieve financial independence, then so many of the issues faced by the community today such as the housing issue, late marriages, few children - all of these will sort themselves out. I am always imploring parents within our community to let the children take risks, and take them earlier. The spirit of entrepreneurship was very strong in our community and it needs to be revived and once again ingrained into our children that there are many other options beyond a job and a profession.

Let's all work together to ensure that not only does our community survive but also thrive in the years to come.

Passing The Baton to the next generation

World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum 2018 Participant List



•Arzan Wadia (USA) – Architect, Vice President of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), Board member of Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY), Program Director of Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program, Founder and Editor of Parsi Khabar



•Cyrus Rivetna (USA) - Principal of Rivetna Architects Inc, Recipient of American Institute of Architects Henry Adams Award, an expert on ancient Zoroastrian fire temples, published and exhibited photographer, involved in constructing community centres around the world



Jim Engineer (USA) - Award-winning public relations professional, Co-chair of FEZANA's Public Relations committee, Board Member of Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC-Chi), Founder-director of NextGenNow, Contributing Editor of FEZANA Journal, Founding member of FEZANA's Zoroastrian Youth of North America committee



Diana Bharucha (USA) - Child and Family therapist, Volunteered as a research assistant at the Relationship Research institute, Volunteered as a youth and community advocate at a community domestic violence prevention program, Volunteered at the courthouse as a protection order advocate, Volunteered at local schools as a child and family therapy intern



Layla Mazdyasni (USA) - Graduate of Cognitive Science from University of California, Volunteered at Summer Youth Zoroastrian Camps in California, Counsellor Zoroastrian youth at Camp, Choreographed Persian dance classes for young Zoroastrian girls



Cainaz Adi Vakharia (USA) - US Army Officer, Teacher for the youngest members of Avesta Class in Washington D.C, developed and implemented the first of its kind fund-raising mechanism to fully self-fund the classes for the entire year, received numerous meritorious, commendation and achievement awards



Narges Kakalia (USA) - Partner in law firm, Director of the New York Office's pro bono program, Teacher for the youngest members of the religious class at local Dar-e-Meher in NY, Vice Chair of the Board of a NY-based non-profit called Womankind that provides vital services to victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual assault



Benafsha Shroff (USA) - Public Relations and Campaign Strategist, Co-Founder of Agiary Connect, Youth Coordinator of Zoroastrian Association of the Rocky Mountains (ZARM), Organizing committee member of Zoroastrian Youth for the Next Generation (ZYNG), Lead volunteer for Xtremely Young Zoroastrians (XYZ)



Kayras Irani (Canada) - Advance Life Support Paramedic, Volunteered at The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) Avesta classes, senior citizen sessions and community events, Volunteered at 5th WZYC Volunteer in Vancouver in 2011, Volunteer of Return to Roots, Volunteer of Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand community events



Arashasp Shroff (Canada) - Hospitality Professional, Volunteered for various youth activities and fundraisers whilst in California including that for Zoroastrian Association of California



Tanya Hoshi (Canada) - Film Producer/Director in Toronto, Volunteer of Return to Roots program, Canadian Reserves member where she teaches music, sailing and leadership to youth

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Shazneen Munshi (UK) - Financial professional, Ex-president of the Young Zoroastrians of UK for 4 years, Fun Club lead organiser and teacher of religious education classes to Zoroastrian youth, founder of Parsi Theatre Revival Group, Management Committee member (ZTFE)



Jimmy Madon (UK) - Software Engineer, Practicing Priest, Teacher of Navjote and Navar (Priesthood) prayers to young kids, Youth Coordinator World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), Social Secretary Young Zoros at ZTFE, Keynote speaker of 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, Sponsored by WZO to give a keynote presentation on Zoroastrianism as a Way of Life, Facilitator for the Parent's Discussion Group on Zoroastrianism



Jehaan Kotwal (India) - CEO at JFK Transporters, Global Youth director of World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) that mainly focuses on facilitating and encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship amongst Zarathustis, Founder of Zainty in Pune to spread religious knowledge to the youth



Sheherazad Pavri (India) - Practicing priest, Volunteer of Return to Roots, previously involved with 16th East Bombay Zoroastrian Bharat Scout Group which trains young boys following the curriculum of Boy Scouts in India through biennial training camps



Dr. Shazneen Limjerwala (India) - Psychotherapist, Academic, Active member of the Zarathushti community in Mumbai, volunteers as a counsellor, conducts training at the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India (FOZYA) and Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY), Ahura events and facilitates networking



Shireen Patel (Pakistan) - Strategy and Corporate Planning professional, volunteered to raise funds for victims of natural disasters, volunteered with orphan children and children who have special needs, visited sick children at the children's hospital



Karl Desai (Australia) - Architect, Sunday School Teacher for eight years for 7-12yr olds, regularly practicing as a priest for community jashans for 17 years, organised the first ever community discussion forum in 2014, registered as one of two Australian Zoroastrian marriage celebrants



Tinaz Karbhari (New Zealand) - Photographer, President of 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in New Zealand, Board of Trustees of the Zoroastrian Community Trust to establish a community centre in New Zealand, Raising funds for Iranshah in Udvada



Sanaya Master (New Zealand) - Communications Specialist, Project Manager of World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum, Marketing Co-chair and Speaker at the 6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress, Volunteer at the ASHA Centre, Volunteer of community events in Auckland, New Zealand

Passing the Baton to the Youth of the Next Generation:

Firdosh Mehta, Past President FEZANA and ZAA

Human nature is basically resistant to change. We work hard and strive to attain the highest level of personal accomplishment, be it at paid work or unpaid volunteering. Then we cling tightly to that level, even if it develops into a level of incompetency; due to sheer burden of time, age, health etc. This is well known as THE PETER PRINCIPLE, a famous book by Dr. Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull. “Why Things Always Go Wrong.” But don’t lose heart, they also wrote a book called THE PETER PRESCRIPTION. “How to Make Things Go Right.”

I will focus my treatise on Community Based Volunteer work, with very little monetary compensation, sometimes not even out-of-pocket expenses, that we all contribute to. Most of us do this for two reasons. Selfless service to our fellow humans, and the joy of giving back and achieving a worthwhile objective. On the other hand, one could add politics, control or doing what one thinks is good and right for others. However, unless monetary gain is involved, the latter does not play a prominent role.

So why does a good thing like volunteering go wrong in PRINCIPLE? Fortunately, there is a PRESCRIPTION for that. True volunteers understand that, *it is better to be a nobody and accomplish something than to be a somebody and accomplish nothing.*

All volunteering is based on the premise of performing Good Deeds. However, when a Good Deed becomes entrenched and obstructive to change, growth, new ideas, new generations, progressivity, then it stifles all these human aspirations and is negative.

The old proclamation of “*THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING*”, is a thing of the past, and the King does not have to die for a new King to take over. Hence term limits are bestowed on all such endeavors, to automatically infuse new people with new ideas into the scope of activities.

Just new ideas do not mean changing age-old principles of truth, righteousness, kindness, compassion, social justice and doing good unto others. Those principles are timeless and unchanging.

The biggest arena of change is in advancement of technology, enabling us to do more with amazing quickness and make a positive difference for all. Like a simple matter of good clean water for everyone. But technology can also create more harm, and that too in a larger scope. So how can we do our best to make our community, our country and our world a better place for all?

One way is volunteering, which has been going on since before Babylon, so we are not doing anything new or earth-shaking. What we are trying to improve, is create an environment for the younger and not so younger generations to feel comfortable to learn the ropes and be ready to step up to the plate and take our community, our country and our world to greater heights of prosperity never experienced before.

To do this we have to establish that “*OLD ORDER CHANGETH, YIELDING PLACE TO NEW*”, and old folks like me need to step aside and encourage the younger folks to take over. Our younger generations are brought up to look up to us with respect and understanding, hence, they are reluctant to move in, unless we make them comfortable to do so. There is an old Persian saying....

Richness is measured in generosity and not by wealth.

Wisdom is measured by intelligence and not by age.

Most of my adult life, except a few years at university and early days of young family responsibilities, has been involved with community service in all walks of life, locally, nationally and globally. There are countless brothers and sisters of mine, who have done so and some a lot more than myself. We don’t want to be old and spent. However, we can be elderly, experienced, wise and willing to mentor those who would like us to, and encourage them at every step, be it holding elected/appointed offices or just plain get involved.



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I keep reminding my young friends that I want to be their **MENTOR and not their TORMENTOR**, so if I ever step out of line, I stand to be corrected and will respect them more for it.

This does not mean the elders have to give up on life and find a cave in the nearest mountain. In fact, our valuable experiences, acquired knowledge and understanding of the history of events, that can be shared, but not imposed upon those who will benefit from it, is essential.

I appeal to all my senior contemporaries to plan for a seamless takeover of their long-held volunteer positions and try to step aside from elected or appointed positions. Make way for the relatively younger compatriots, without leaving them high and dry, but be there for them, of them and by them; to make their efforts successful, for in their success is our success and the success of our beloved community.

The so-called generation gap should not be a divide, but a transition from one level of living experiences to another, for each one of us.

In the famous words of W. INGE, "My dear, we live in a time of transition", said Adam as he led Eve out of Paradise. The world is big enough for all of us, and if we want to live by the teachings of our faith, to progressively make the world a better place for all, a.k.a. FRASHOKERETI, then we have no choice but to help the younger folks to be stronger from generation to generation.

I have always believed that we cannot make the Future ready for the next generation, but I do believe that we can make our younger generation ready for the Future.

Atha Zamyat, Yathaa Aafrinamy!

Firdosh is a Professional Mechanical/Industrial Engineer from India and Massachusetts,; and a FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS.

A Founding member and Past President of The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta, and The FEDERATION of ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS of NORTH AMERICA. (FEZANA), Firdosh is active in Interfaith work and is Past Chair of EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTER for EDUCATION and ACTION. is currently a member of the ZSBC Interfaith Committee, he also serves on the Board of the Arbab Rustom Guiv Trust Foundation of ZSBC

Firdosh has conducted Children's Sunday School classes in Edmonton, Dallas, Calgary, and now in Vancouver. He has presented on subjects related to the Zoroastrian faith to schools, universities, churches, temples and worship centers in USA & Canada, He has also presented at International Religions and Peace conferences in Barcelona, London, Pune and New Delhi, and at the Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Firdosh is the recipient of various community service awards including The VISION FOUNDATION Award 2011, India; and the Outstanding Zarathushti Award of FEZANA 2012.

After retiring in 2014, Firdosh lives in New Westminster, British Columbia. with his wife Rashne,

PILGRIMAGE: JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY. NAIN CONNECT 2018, MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, July 31-August 3, 2018

"KHORASAN TO SANJAN AND BEYOND. A ZOROASTRIAN ODESSEY." *The presen WORLD ZOROASTRIAN tation by Firdosh Mehta traced the history from the end of the Sassanian Empire by the invading Arabs, to the final exodus from Iran to the west coast of India, and highlighted the acceptance of The Raja to permit the Zoroastrians to settle, which are still upheld as our traditions and customs. The importance of the story of SUGAR IN MILK was presented not just as a MYTH, but a lesson to the children to make their environment peaceful and prosperous where ever they live.*

On both days of the conference 10 workshops/talks with 2 speakers each were organized. Each day there were 4 off site TOURS I could visit only 2. One to the University of Alberta Botanical Gardens. and the other a visit to a Mandir, Church, Ahmadiyya Mosque, Sai Baba Center and a Gurudwara where w enjoyed a vegetarian dinner in the Langar.

There were 6 very interesting keynote speakers but the most impressive was Lt. Gen. The Hon. Romeo Dallaire, who was in-charge of the UN Peace Keeping Mission in Rwanda, which according to him was a massive failure, due to absolute lack of vision, commitment, grossly undermanned UN troops, This led to the horrific mass slaughter with deaths numbering in hundreds of thousands. He paid a personal price by suffering PTSD, He challenged every politician in the world not to allow this to ever happen again and recommended many changes to the UN procedures for effective PEACEKEEPING.

Zoroastrians were represented by Mrs. Avau Fast from the ZAA and Firdosh Mehta, both active with the EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTER [EIC], the hosts of this conference. Firdosh also attended the AGM of NAIN together with Mobedyar Maneck Bhujwala, a Nain board member who attended via weblink from California. Maneck is the co-chir of the FEZANA inter-faith Committee

Grateful thanks to the FEZANA Executive, and the Board of ZSBC, for supporting my attendance and EIC for selecting my presentation, at the conference.

HANDING OVER THE BATON



TOXY COWASJEE

“How difficult is it to ‘hand over the baton’ and when would be the correct time for a person who heads an organisation or institution to retire?” I have been thinking about these questions ever since I was asked to share my personal thoughts and views on this topic as I have served on voluntary committees, in several capacities, for over four decades. I have observed that there is something about being a head of an association, organisation, company or even political office that causes roots to set in. No one wants to step down willingly. Is it the power to control the decisions that will affect others that is intoxicating or is it the imaginary importance that strokes the ego? I have no answer as neither was of any interest to me. In fact, I am on the team that believes that organisations run by committees need to have limited terms for serving or a compulsory retirement age for committee members to ensure there is a turn-around for new people, new ideas, new vision. It also ensures that for individuals who are ineffective, their tenure is diplomatically terminated. If one steps down and allows the younger generation to come forward, there will always be someone to carry on the work. One has to encourage the newcomers, give them responsibility, and they will flourish – probably better than the generation before because they will bring in new ideas that will shake up the complacent stagnation of doing things as they have been done for decades. I have my own experience to back up these beliefs.

Way back in 1968, I joined the Karachi Zarhosti Banu Mandal (KZBM), an organisation run by ladies since 1912. I was on the sub-committee for Child Welfare, later heading it. After serving nine years, I left the committee, knowing I could do no further good for the children under my care. It was time to move on rather than just hold on to a position. I missed the children. In fact, even today, I feel it was the best time of my nearly 40 year-tenure at KZBM. I have been amply rewarded for those years during my youth, having the satisfaction of knowing that those children have done well in life wherever they are, and, to this day, carry happy memories of being with me.

After two years of being away from KZBM, I was elected as Secretary of the Managing Committee and worked with a group of ladies bearing various portfolios on the Committee. All were much senior to me, but they still held office. Each in their time had done exceptional service, but were getting on in their years and set in their ways, unwilling to look forward. A few retired gracefully, others just carried on till they ‘passed away’ as KZBM had no time bar for being on any of the committees. This stint renewed for me the idea that one should be aware of one’s own limitations. In 1994, at the age of 55, I was elected as President of KZBM and the next seven years were challenging, exciting and hectic. I was young enough to have plenty of energy and the will to bring about change. This is when I made up mind that I would retire in my prime rather than just plodding on even when I was ineffective

Towards shifting the age make-up of the Committee, women who were in their youth were encouraged to join the six subcommittees. Through workshops held and run by professionals, we brought awareness that Banu Mandal, as it was colloquially known and unlike its disparaging connotation, was not going to be an ‘old ladies’ association’. That with the help of their youthful energy and innovative ideas, it could be vibrant. This was achieved despite the myth that young people don’t have the time or wish to do voluntary work. Today, KZBM is run by capable, relatively young women, most of whom are professionals, and yet they find the time to give their best to the community. Myth exploded! There was also a commitment to bringing the constitution, which was formed in 1912, to the present day requirement before I retired. This was something that had been shelved with the excuse that ‘it wasn’t

possible'. After much discussion and debate, this was finally achieved. And one of the salient points in the new constitution was retirement of committee members at the age of 70 years. I was advocating for 60 years! Majority of the committee was against this age stipulation, but, after much resistance, the stipulation passed. Do I miss my days at KZBM? Extremely! I loved the camaraderie and, being a workaholic, a full day of work. I enjoyed working on the different projects and hopefully made a difference to my community in Karachi. But one door closed and others opened. I never had any aspirations of being President of KZBM or any other organisation, as whatever I could do for my community, it could be done without a title. Passing the baton to the next person can be done effectively if one has the will and keeps in mind that no one is indispensable however much sycophants may help one's ego to believe that is true. One fear that keeps committee members holding on past their prime is that people have short memories and there is a possibility that one's contribution will be forgotten. It needs courage to leave a post especially if you have been effective in making the organization succeed, but advancement can only come with new thoughts and new individuals. The secret is to know when to step down gracefully as there is something sad about hanging on and being redundant. Someone may have been great in their time, but they need to ask themselves whether their knowledge or skills are relevant to the present. Once the decision is made to step down, they need to pay attention to how they react to and treat their successor as that will be remembered. They should be open to sharing their experience and expertise and help in the transition.

Hopefully, the older generation who have been successful will be appreciated and approached to assist on special committees and projects when necessary. If not, exceptional leaders feel pleased that what they began continues and grows. We have an abundance of highly educated, successful young people in every field, especially in the USA and the UK. It is the obligation of those who hold the baton to mentor them and offer them opportunities by handing over the baton rather than grasping it in a tight hold and keeping the myth alive that youth are not interested. It takes will and selflessness, but the rewards of seeing your legacy flourish are immense.

Toxy Cowasjee is presently Editor of Hamazor, WZO London's worldwide quarterly publication and their Board Member; and Vice Chairman of BVS School in Karachi. Past president of KPI & KZBM besides having worked on various Zoroastrian & non-Zoroastrian committees in Karachi. She is proud to be called a Karachi-ite.

GROW OLD GRACEFULLY

With age, changes your body, in many a way.
youth and beauty for ever, do not stay.
your face wrinkles shows; and gone is the glow.
Also wanes your energy n movement becomes slow .
The shinning black or brown hair, now has grey turned;
Happily say can one; " this silver, I have with experience earned ".

Bones often creak, brittle become they, n joints may hurt.
As forgetfulness sets in, young ones; often are curt.
at times, treat they elders badly, sometimes like dirt.
spill things often elders do, on their dress or shirt.
but become not depressed, sad or towards life turn cold.
instead keep your mind and body active, and gracefully grow old.

ARMIN DUTIA MOTASHAW. (AHMEDABAD, INDIA)

Return to Roots



ZUBIN GHEESTA (MUMBI)

My Experience With Roots

The first time I heard about the Return to Roots program was at the North American Congress in LA in 2014, though I was given a rough picture about the same by a family friend who had attended the program the previous year. I was amazed at the idea of 4 youngsters coming together and chalking out a program as beautiful as this.

Since the whole program revolves around Gujarat and Mumbai, and I am a resident of Mumbai, I was more than willing to attend the program. But as I sat through the presentation, I realised that it was mainly for Zoroastrians staying abroad who are hungry to know more about our religion, its importance, where we came from and the struggle our ancestors went through. We are reaping the benefits by being free to choose any country we wish to live in.



It was my privilege to be the first Indian participant on this program. I was curious to know how events unfolded when we visited each place as I had some basic knowledge about those places beforehand. One of the primary reasons I attended Return to Roots was my eagerness to know more about the religion and the importance of the places which we visited.

The program is very well designed; keeping in mind people's busy schedules in mind, and rather than emphasizing quantity, prefers to take a small number (usually 15-20) of deserving individuals who are keen to know more about the religion and eventually give back in terms of spreading awareness and making a difference in their respective communities.

On my first trip, those 12 days really changed me as a person and my outlook towards my religion as well. I was impressed with it and would highly recommend the program to each and every young person I can think of from our community.

The greatest lesson I learned from the program was to call us as ZOROASTRIANS and not just PARSIS and IRANIS. It's needless to say that the by-product of such a program is a great bonding experience between the youth who meet on the program and spend quality time with each other, exchanging the thoughts, ideas and beliefs which are reflective of their respective communities.

If I have to describe RTR in one sentence, it would be ***DIVIDED BY COUNTRIES, UNITED BY ROOTS!***

On my first trip, I decided that I definitely wanted to give something back to this program, and the least I could do was volunteer, give my time to it, and try to promote it within my community. It's been 3 years since I attended my first Return to Roots trip, and it has been an enjoyable and satisfying experience helping fellow participants in making their trip a fruitful one.

Zubin Pervez Gheesta was born and raised in Mumbai. He is a Fitness Consultant by profession and has been in the industry for the past 9 years. Zubin started his individual Freelancing Fitness Consulting in August 2011 and there has been no looking back for him since then.

Return to Roots



AUBTIN YAZDGARDIAN (CANADA)

Sitting in pin drop silence during the middle of the night at the Iranshah Atash Behram while observing the Ushen Geh with tens of Zarthustis was my most memorable and spiritual moment on the Return to Roots trip. In my opinion, it felt like such a simple thing to do, yet the senses which it excites and the powers that radiate from the sacred fire is unimaginably the most pleasurable feeling I have had while visiting Udwada.

I was born in Mumbai, India and moved to Canada in my late teenage years. Raised as part of a conventional Zoroastrian family, I admit that I thought I would have experienced and understood the practices of a Zoroastrian more so than other attendees. I was wrong! There were various landmarks, instances, places we visited, scholars we got to meet, and lifelong bonds which I got to create with the 25 attendees from across the globe. There are a couple of instances I'd like to share, which were meaningful to me and opened my mind about our religion.

One such instance was while I was visiting the mouth of the Varoli River for the first time. I had heard about this place a few times, but it didn't feel too significant until I was physically there to witness it myself. Standing on the beach taking in the view of the vast ocean that lay in front of me, the river and the land which lay behind me, I thought to myself: what was going through the minds of the Zoroastrian refugees on the ships escaping their homeland, reaching the shores of India from Iran to save their religion? Did they fear facing persecution in uncharted territories? Or did they paddle bold and proud with each crashing wave to be the pioneers who would go down in history, the ones who helped save such an amazing culture such that it continues to thrive in an already overwhelmed India?

Visiting the various Atash Kadehs and Zoroastrian settlements in the outlying areas of Gujarat confirmed the latter to be true. These, and many other instances, such as enjoying the authentic Parsi cuisine at various baugs and Irani/Parsi restaurants in Surat, Navsari, and Mumbai, along with having the privilege of attending a Zoroastrian wedding towards the end of the trip, brought back many good memories of what it was like for me as a child growing up in Mumbai.

Towards the end of the trip, re-visiting my place of birth (the Parsi General Hospital) made me recognize the fact that hundreds of years later, despite being limited in number, we as a society are held to be valuable due to the substantial impact we have had on India at large. Whether it is in politics, entertainment, business, science or architecture, there are properous Zartushtis to be found within the mix.

My hope is that many more young Zoroastrians are able to attend RTR in the future so that they too can appreciate our heritage and legacy.



Aubtin Yazdgardian was born in Mumbai and now resides in Vancouver, BC Canada. He completed his studies in the field of Automotive, and is currently a Service Manager in an Automotive Fleet Repair Shop. He has been actively involved in the ZSBC community since 2011 and has attended various Z-Games and Congresses.

Return to Roots



CYRUS KARANJIA (KARACHI, PAKISTAN)

Purpose of visit mentioned on Visa forms: “meeting friends and family”.

Who knew that this general statement would turn into the most outstanding reality?

Born and raised in Karachi, you fall on the same latitude as India, and you think that there wouldn't be much of a difference in the lifestyles of the Indian Zarathustis. We have colonies, they have colonies, and both countries have prominent Zoroastrians who have helped in shaping both the countries, be it in business, education, medical, or shipping.

I was excited about the RTR trip, excited to go and visit historical places, gain new knowledge about our customs and traditions and travel through India. Little did I know that there would be some amazing stories and places which I wouldn't have thought existed, such as the Parsi farms and villages we visited in Gujarat. The peaceful environment was exactly the change of scene which I needed after the hustle and bustle of city life; though the lives of the inhabitants are a bit different from ours, in a way, visiting them made us appreciate how simple life used to be. Throughout the trip we saw so much of our history and our culture and its evolution, but the love which the people have for each other is still as old as time – from providing aid to the elderly, to taking care of the sick and even providing young people with boarding and lodging and helping them with their studies.

Every single one of the participants on the trip had something unique about them which powered their personality, and we got to hear various opinions and get a different point of view. We met random Parsis on the streets of Colaba (God knows what super power we have which enables us to easily recognize a fellow Parsi in a crowd) and indulged in tasty (but heavy) meals at every opportunity.

By participating in RTR, I definitely saw the community working towards new ideas, and it helped me to come up with ideas of my own, on how to share my culture and to make way for the future youth. Besides the sightseeing, learning experience, and having an amazing time with the others, we made unforgettable memories. Simply writing about this trip does not do it justice, as I believe people need to experience it for themselves in order to enjoy it, explore and understand.



Cyrus Karanjia hails from Karachi Pakistan. He is a final year student of Media Sciences, graduating with specialization in the field of Advertising and Graphic Design from SZABIST University. He debuted as the director of a documentary called Lyari Beats, and currently works as a freelance Art Director for short films.

Return to Roots



LAYLA MAZDYASNI (CALIFORNIA, USA)

Never in my life would I have imagined feeling at home in India. I identify as an Iranian-American Zoroastrian, as my parents were born and raised in Iran, and my siblings and I were born and raised in the U.S. Growing up, I thrived in my cross-cultural identity. I was privileged to have parents who cared equally about Iranian and American culture. They allowed me to explore communities on my own, including my figure skating club and school extra-curriculars, and provided me with the two strongest communities I know — Zoroastrianism and family. Being around family felt like, and always will feel like, home. To my surprise, when I went to India with Return to Roots (RTR) this past December, I felt that same sense of home.



A few summers ago, I was a counsellor at San Jose Z-Camp. One of my fellow counsellors (eternal thanks to Parisa Parsinejad) was telling us about her RTR trip to India. She piqued my interest, and I wanted to experience it for myself. Initially, I was worried I wouldn't feel any sort of returning to my roots in such a foreign country. To ease my worry, I decided to consult the best people I know. My parents explained that even if I don't feel any connection to India, I'll experience how other Zoroastrians identify with our religion. With their encouragement, I hopped on the very long, but very worthwhile 20 hour journey to Mumbai! I landed in a smog-filled haze, left my jacket on the plane, almost took the wrong taxi to the hotel, but still felt totally content.

The next two weeks were jam-packed. We saw Mumbai, Udvarda, Navsari, Surat and everywhere in between, learned about one another's understandings of religion, and drank copious amounts of Chai. I saw Atash-Behrams for the first time in my life, and felt every emotion whilst in front of those roaring fires. I questioned where I came from and the separation between Parsis and Iranian-Zoroastrians, and how I could still feel so comfortable with this group.

I grew frustrated by the implications that seemed to be tainting our religion, by the political, social, and geographical divides. As we've grown and developed in different areas, individual subgroups have created what seems to me like their own versions of Zoroastrianism. As an individual, I am very strong, yet open-minded. RTR gave me the opportunity to solidify my beliefs and my background, while listening to and questioning scholars and priests spanning the liberal-conservative spectrum.

Last month, I found myself in England and visited Sohrab, a close friend I made from RTR. We spent some time pondering over the idea of home, and both agreed it's a feeling rather than a place. It's the way someone makes you feel when they say hello, and welcome you into their presence. I found a piece of home in a place I've never been, in a place I have little bloodline. Rather than returning to my roots, RTR and India allowed me to discover another dimension of my roots, and feel that familiarity of home in an unfamiliar physical space. I think that speaks to the strength of our community across the diaspora, and a community that gives me strength.

Layla Mazdyasni was born and raised in San Diego, California. She recently graduated from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in Cognitive Science. She is interested in the complexities of the mind, and how we as humans interact with ourselves, each other and our environments. Layla teaches yoga in her spare time, and is excited to embark on her newest journey in the professional world, learning about consumerism and business management in fashion retail.

Return to Roots



I'm a young engineer who loves to dance. I've lived in Karachi, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Liverpool.

I do not write this to convince you to go, I write this if you already plan to, whatever your reasons might be.

Do not expect feather beds, casual conversation, smooth journeys and healthy food. This is not a holiday where you will return feeling energized, relaxed and ready to jump back into your regular existence.

Congratulations on pushing the boundary of your comfort zone, because if you succeed in getting on the trip, that is one place you will not be.

I lathered up the chaos of a bustling city bursting with energy, Maneuvered busy streets with buses, bullocks and bicycles, Drank coconut water from a street vendor, Washed my palate with a crisp Kingfisher.

I sang along to Queen, Explored a sleepy beach town, Opened up to individuals I now call friends, Usurped an abandoned house that was for a moment our home, Stared into flames that roared over a thousand years, Meditated under the whispers of undying faith, Wallowed in the scent of burning sandalwood.

I rode motorcycles from strangers in a city I'd never known, Ate delicious Parsee cuisine, Struggled to move after overeating yet again, Learned how to drive a rickshaw by a cook, Wore a silk scarf around my head, Became a lifetime member of a library whose books I'll never borrow,

I offered pistachios to welcoming hands, Embraced the smile from a woman too old to care, Listened to men with hands harder than mine, Held the frail hands of a woman who watched her only child die, Wept in front of a woman who couldn't see me cry,

I slept on soft beds, Befriended a stray dog on the street, Watched him get attacked by another. Danced in a circle of orphans, Drowned in their laughter, Climbed a lighthouse, Dug my toes into the cool sand just as our ancestors had, Witnessed two people commit their lives to one another, Fell in love.

I tasted sickeningly sweet, brightly colored sodas from every city, Laughed from my stomach, Killed villagers, doctors and policemen in a game of cards, Flew kites on the roofs of a

SOHRAB NOSHIRWANI (LIVERPOOL, UK)

RESENT - REFLECT - RELENT

sprawling metropolis, Got massaged on the street by a barefoot masseuse, Wrapped my face in the softest pashmina, Asked for chai wherever we went, Drank chai whenever I could,

I was talked at by men of dogma, Listened to women of vision, courage and pride, Fought with my culture and tradition, Challenged the tolerance of my faith, Questioned the community I told myself was the great.

Nothing I experienced was on the itinerary.

The trip was tiresome, lengthy, exhausting, frustrating and a once in a lifetime adventure. It was a monumental effort and is still a work in progress. It has a vague plan, but that is part of its charm.

Take a notebook and write down your observations; the highs, the lows, the elements that make you soar and the ways it could be more. What you take away from the trip is what you make of it. I left my ego at the check-in counter and entered Mumbai with no expectations.

Embrace the heat, enjoy being disconnected, stick to bottled water, don't litter,



eat less than you think you should, speak up, walk around the neighborhood before bed, don't forget your hat, help the organizers, buy the bus drivers sweets, say thank you to everyone, count your blessings, say three Ashem Vahus and five Yatha Ahuvaryo, wear your sudhra and kusti, don't forget your topi, question what you know, seek out what you don't, and never stop dancing.

Born in Karachi, Sohrab moved to Edinburgh for university, graduating with a masters in mechanical engineering. He works for Jaguar Land Rover as a manufacturing engineer, having lived and worked in both Birmingham, and now Liverpool. A few of his skills and interests include dancing, motorcycling, vintage bicycle restoration, model aviation, flat-pack furniture, writing backwards and snowboarding.

Return to Roots



TANYA HOSHI (TORONTO, CANADA)

The Return to Roots 2017 trip has positively changed my life as a young Zoroastrian. Before the trip, I was greatly disenfranchised. I had no sense of identity, didn't understand what my race was, and didn't feel connected to my Zoroastrian community on a wider scale. I chose to attend this trip to get answers to questions that have been on my mind for many years and to experience a connection to a community I haven't been engaged with for most of my life.

I was born in Pakistan and immigrated to Canada when I was 6 years old. Attending religion classes allowed me to have a great understanding of my religion - but once I entered high school and university, I began to have doubts over who I was. There was great pressure to blend in with the "majority" and I developed a fear of having others know about my birth country and my race - what if they used it against me? It was easier trying to pass as white - something I've been able to do and regret doing.



RTR allowed me to embrace my race, feel proud of who I am, and not feel ashamed about my identity. I found comfort in seeing symbols of our religion and community around the areas of India we travelled to - for once, I finally knew what it was like to see so many people just like you going about their daily life around you. I've never experienced that in Pakistan or Canada! It was a surreal experience.

I got to experience many humbling moments during the trip. We got to play with children at orphanages, went to rural villages to see how people sustain their livelihoods, visited a hospital and interacted with the elderly at a Parsi seniors' home, among many other things. We also got to eat delicious Indian food, attend a Parsi wedding, meet Parsi entrepreneurs and visit their thriving businesses, and see two participants get engaged!

One of the greatest aspects of the trip is being able to meet other Zoroastrian youth from around the world. Everyone brought their own unique viewpoints and knowledge to the trip which helped enrich the experience. It was evident that the youth in our community are hoping to be involved in finding ways to help Zoroastrianism be more progressive for future generations, and just need an outlet to gather their ideas and share them. This is why I ultimately chose to attend the 1st World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum in the UK in March 2018. At the forum I got to apply my focus and energy in discussing solutions that will contribute to the betterment of the global Zoroastrian community with Zoroastrian leaders from around the world.

The Return to Roots trip is something I will always be grateful to have experienced. I have made lifelong friendships and have gained knowledge that allows me to embrace my identity as a Zoroastrian in my own unique way. I look forward to hopefully volunteering for RTR in the future and help more Zoroastrian youth learn about their history and embrace their identity.

*Tanya Hoshi is a film and web series producer based in Toronto. Her latest projects include the documentary **TURNING TABLES** and web series **BLACKOUT**. Tanya is currently developing a feature length documentary about Zoroastrians around the world, who are standing tall in the face of adversity and doing great things within their community - for the community.*

In The News



Dr. Jamshed Bharucha is going back home as an inaugural Vice Chancellor, to Lead SRM University in Amravati, Andhra Pradesh India,

Born and raised in Mumbai, Dr. Bharucha worked as a computer programmer at his father's engineering firm while in high school. At Vassar College, US he majored in Biopsychology, and then received a Master of Arts in Philosophy from Yale University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Cognitive Psychology from Harvard University. He also has an Associate's Diploma (ATCL) in violin performance from the Trinity College of London (International Exam Board). He has received numerous research grants from the National Science Foundation in the U.S., and has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. His past research focused on the cognitive and neural basis of the perception of music, employing computational neural net models, behavioral experiments and functional MRI. More recently, his research has been on data-mining approaches to understand the comparative financial positions of American colleges.

Dr. Bharucha has held a variety of academic leadership positions, including President of The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Provost and Senior Vice President of Tufts University, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Dartmouth College, where he became the first Indian-American to be named dean of a school at an Ivy League university. While on the faculty at Dartmouth, he was the John Wentworth Professor of Psychological & Brain Sciences, and is currently a Distinguished Fellow at Dartmouth College.

SRM university is a university being built in Amaravati, a city being built as the new capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. Located by the river Krishna, the city will occupy 217 square kilometers and will be designed to the highest standards of sustainability. Plans call for 60 percent of the city to be dedicated to either green spaces or water, encouraging water taxis, electric cars, and walking.

The Amaravati campus is the most recent, progressive, and ambitious of several SRM University campuses founded by entrepreneur Dr.P. Sathyanaranan, who as President of SRM Trust has committed up to \$460 million to establish the Amaravati campus. The university's commitment to the city planners is to open schools of management, medicine, and law over the next few years, growing the student body to 10,000 in five years and 25,000 in 10 years.

As the chief executive of the campus, Dr. Bharucha's role will be to provide strategic vision in pursuit of excellence in education, research, and engagement, responding to the complex opportunities and challenges of becoming a globally recognized and nationally transformative institution. The emphasis will be on multi-disciplinary approaches, for which Dr. Bharucha is well-positioned given his own research bridging cognitive neuroscience and music. Dr. Bharucha joins a growing number of scholars who are drawn to new and exciting opportunities at international academic institutions. Under Dr. Bharucha's leadership, the university will embark on a new era, laying the foundation for a bright future on the path to academic discovery and lifelong learning.

FEZANA and the FEZANA JOURNAL congratulate Dr Jamshed Bharucha for this singular achievement and wish him great success.

In The News

Burzin Balsara and his partner **Malav Shah**, 18, are seniors graduating from Plano Senior High School in Plano, Texas and have recently received several awards for their work in science and engineering. In May 2018, the two earned the Grand Award, first in the world in the Embedded Systems category as well as the distinction as Best in Category: (<https://www.societyforscience.org/content/press-room/intel-international-science-and-engineering-fair-2018-grand-award-winners>) at the 2018 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, PA (after advancing from Districts, Regionals, and State levels). At the same competition, they also received a gold medal and the top scholarship for innovative technology in solving real world problems from MAWHIBA, which is an organization in representation of King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity: (<https://www.societyforscience.org/content/press-room/intel-international-sci-ence-and-engineering-fair-2018-special-award-winners>).



This high-stakes competition included over 1,800 students from over 75 participating countries and 420 affiliated fairs (<https://www.societyforscience.org/intel-international-science-and-engineering-fair>). Burzin and Malav hope to continue their research in engineering and will be attending the University of Texas at Austin fall 2018 and plan on majoring in mechanical and electrical & computer engineering, respectively.

Their award-winning project involved using electrooculography (EOG) to provide mobility for the quadriplegics, i.e., using eye movements to steer an electric wheelchair. Their project included the design, prototyping, and full-scale construction of an electric wheelchair from scratch. Such a system provides the possibility of mobility and consequently a better quality of life for quadriplegics and severely paralyzed individuals. Their design uses readily available off-the-shelf components and can

be implemented across the world due to its affordability. It is also possible to implement their system by retrofitting an existing electric wheelchair (<https://abstracts.societyforscience.org/Home/FullAbstract?Category=Any%20Category&Finalist=Balsara&AllAbstracts=False&FairCountry=Any%20Country&FairState=Any%20State&ProjectId=16195>). One day, the two hope the device they have developed will enable the physically challenged to easily access some degree of mobility regardless of their financial or medical situation.

In addition to contributing to the scientific and engineering community, Burzin is an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas and also serves as a mobed, performing religious ceremonies & praying alongside his father at major events and Jashans. He chose to attend UT Austin as a means of continuing his desire to do research but also plans on being a part of the university's naval reserve officer training corps to become a naval aviator after college. While a lot has been accomplished up until now, this is just the beginning of a path that he hopes will lead him to his lifelong dream of becoming an astronaut.

In The News



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

Building the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUNDING VEHICLE FOR THE YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

OUR MISSION

To build the Spirit of Entrepreneurship within the global Zarathushti community by facilitating education, networking, mentoring, trade & commerce, and entrepreneurship opportunities, thus uplifting the community and bringing economic prosperity to the Zarathushti community worldwide.

CASE FOR CHANGE

Our youth is the integral and most important part of the WZCC mission. In addition to education, networking, mentoring and facilitating trade & commerce, the youth have identified the availability of and access to funds, to help entrepreneurs and professionals start-up business and grow, as THE most critical need.

WZCCI (World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce - India) and WZOTF (World Zoroastrian Organization Trust Funds) announced a plan on March 7, 2018 to collect funds for this purpose in India, and also requested proposals for funding. Collected funds would be dispersed to worthy candidates after close evaluation by a Business Advisory Committee (BAC).

CAPITAL NEEDS

Collect INR 5 crores from individuals and corporations all over India as well as the Zarathushti diaspora outside India. We request all Zarathushtis to join by contributing INR 5-25 lakhs each. Individual contributions of INR 1 crore and higher will be specially recognized in a mutually acceptable manner. Our objective is to collect the entire amount of INR 5 crores within three years.

Projects will be funded only after a trigger amount of INR 1 crore has been collected. Currently, the total amount raised is INR 97 lakhs and is expected to surpass the trigger during July 2018.

Individual funding will be returned over a predetermined schedule, without interest burden, enabling funds to be recycled to others.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

- Obtain donations from all Zarathushtis and Zarathushti supporters in India and worldwide. Objective is to seek donations in the range of INR 5–25 lakhs, but any amount larger or smaller is most welcome.
- Entertain proposals from Zarathushti **entrepreneurs and professionals who are in need for funding for their start-up and early growth mode.**
- Proposals received will be screened and evaluated by the BAC, who would also be responsible for monitoring progress. Depending on expertise required, the BAC may seek help and advice from other specialists.
- Businesses will be funded in the range of INR 5–25 lakhs and the base amount will be required to be returned, without interest charges, over a predetermined schedule.
- Operational expenses, if any, would be borne from the Capital Fund.

In The News

WZCC BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Please contact a Business Advisory Committee member for further questions and/or information.

Percy Master, WZCC-India President
percym@mastergroups.com 98210 12869

Xerxes Dastur, WZCC-India Director
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Adi Siganporia, WZCC-Global Secretary
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Secondary Review for Final Approval:

Sam Balsara, Business Advisory Director
sam@madisonindia.com 98920 00678

Dinshaw Tamboli, Chairman WZOTF
dinshawtamboly@gmail.com 98200 50168

Edul Daver, WZCC-Global President
eduldaver@gmail.com +1 (908) 397 4443

CURRENT STATUS OF DONATIONS

Monies collected and pledged as of May 31, 2018:

INR 5 CRORES (GOAL)

India:	INR 45 lakhs
USA:	INR 32 lakhs
Hong Kong:	INR 20 lakhs
Total:	INR 97 lakhs



INR 4 crores

INR 3 crores

INR 2 crores

INR 1 crore **TRIGGER POINT**

We sincerely appreciate all donors who have contributed generously to get us to the start line within 4 months of the initial announcement.

India (INR 1 lakh and higher):

Homai & Sam Balsara; CMD: DR.S.K. Bhungara; Rati & Nadir Godrej;
Capt. Percy & Erin Master; Minoo Rustamji Shroff; Thrity & Yazdi Tantra.

Outside India (\$1,000 and higher):

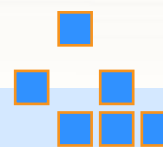
Dogdo & Temo Arjani; Shernaz & Feroze Bhandara; Hira & Toos Daruvala;
Niloufer & Edul Daver; Yasmin & Rustom Engineer; Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali; Katayun Kapadia;
Satu & Cyrus Mehta; Yasmin & Shapur Pavri;
Roshan & Rohinton Rivetna, Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton & Macao.

Thank you for your generosity! We are confident the community will benefit from this endeavor and step up to help meet our goal and objectives.

CURRENT STATUS OF APPLICATIONS

Since the initial announcement launching the Program in March 2018, WZCC has received 16 funding request applications which are undergoing initial review. Some applicants have been requested to provide more details and specific information for further processing by the BAC. Selected applications shall undergo a secondary review for final approval during the next couple months.

In The News



Zoroastrian Faculty Network – (ZFN)

A Joint Project of the Global Working Group (GWG) and the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC). Dr. Farrokh Mistree a long term advocate for WZCC to develop a Zoroastrian Faculty Network (ZFN) that would empower Zarathushti students to create economic, cultural & intellectual value. GWG represented by Farrokh Rustomji and Behram Pastakia were to find ways of helping students from India to gain admission into foreign universities and address related questions.

After some discussions at the WZCC AGM in Bangalore 2017 and GWG discussion in Mumbai 2017 it was felt that a Joint Project between WZCC & GWG would enable us to attain this objective on a more sustainable and fast track basis. This concept was whetted by Neville Shroff who also endorsed it.

ZOROASTRIAN FACULTY NETWORK was formed.

For the **VISION MISSION AND OUTCOME** see below The first webinar was conducted on May 5, 2018 at 9.00 a.m. **IST** by Prof Farrokh Mistree and Prof Janet Allen for students applying to graduate school in the US. It was a joint initiative sponsored by GWG/WZCC. Parents were encouraged to participate. The theme of the webinar was

“KEY ELEMENTS OF SECURING ADMISSION AND FUNDING AT GRADUATE SCHOOLS IN THE US”

The second webinar was conducted on June 24, at 9.00 IST by Prof Farroukh Mistree; (USA) Neville Shroff, of Hongkong, T. J Ravishanker of Tata Funds, M George of Parsi Education Foundation.

The theme: “FINANCING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FOR INDIAN STUDENTS” VISION

The GWG/WZCC in partnership with Zarathushti faculty in academia empower Zarathushti students to learn how to create economic, cultural and intellectual value.

MISSION

The GWG/WZCC in partnership with Zarathushti faculty in academia to make it possible for Zarathushti youth, through higher and specialized education, to prepare for 21st Century careers in industry, government, and academia as well as entrepreneurship.

Core Team

- GWG: Farrokh Rustomji (India); Behram Pastakia (USA)
- WZCC: Yazdi Tantra (India); Edul Daver (USA)
- Academia: Dinyar Pestonjee (India); Farrokh Mistree (USA)

Please provide names of people in academia who would like to become members of the ZFN.

DESIRED OUTCOMES – ZARATHUSHTI FACULTY NETWORK (ZFN)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>a. WZCC business community partner with ZFN faculty to launch start-ups.</p> <p>b. ZFN could be requested to provide mentoring services pro bono to prospective students and to provide business consultation to companies on chargeable basis.</p> <p>c. ZFN members mentor young Zarathushtis in their home country to get into university. WZCC could sponsor a webinar on this topic. This refers to undergraduate students.</p> <p>d. ZFN members mentor young Zarathushtis to gain admission for graduate studies to institutions.</p> | <p>WZCC could sponsor a webinar on this topic. This refers to graduate students.</p> <p>e. ZFN members collaborate within themselves.</p> <p>f. ZFN members provide information on faculty openings, post-doctoral positions, need for research assistants, etc. We discussed establishing portals but experience has shown that people do not have the time or inclination to visit portals/websites. It has to be social media or something that goes to each ZFN member such as E-Blasts.</p> | <p>g. Senior faculty in ZFN provide career advice to junior faculty in the ZFN. Help junior faculty prepare their promotion and tenure documents. Help aspiring faculty prepare their job applications and give mock interviews, etc.</p> <p>h. ZFN members promote faculty exchanges. For student exchanges this should be on the basis of paid internships at Universities / companies / hospitals etc. for a couple of months. WZCC to help in the case of companies internships.</p> <p>i. ZFN members promote faculty and student exchanges.</p> |
|---|--|---|

In The News

ERVAD RUSTOM GHADIALI - RECIPIENT OF INTER-RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION AWARD 2018 AT THE IRO DAY. EVENT HELD AT THE PGP HALL ON 18 MARCH 2018 OFFICIATED BY MS. GRACE FU, MINISTER OF COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND YOUTH

CITATION – Read by Ameerali Abdeali JP, PPA (G), PBM

Ervad Rustom M. Ghadiali is a long-standing member of the Inter-Religious Organization (IRO) of more than 30 years and to his credit is the only person who has served as the President of IRO on 3 occasions as its President.

Rustom has been a champion of the interfaith movement in Singapore and has represented the Zoroastrian faith at all levels, not only in Singapore but far across her shores. He is a man driven by a passion to improve the lives of others, in particular, the needy and disadvantaged, regardless of their ethnic background or religious affiliation.



He has dedicated a major part of his life in tirelessly working for noble charitable causes not only in the IRO but in his capacity as the President of the Parsi Singapore Zoroastrian Association, the Rotary Club of Raffles City, Singapore and the Singapore Kindness Movement.

In the year 2009, under the leadership of Ervad. Rustom Ghadiali, IRO worked together with the Singapore Buddhist Lodge and the China authorities to hold the first ever China-Singapore Exhibition of historical religious artifacts at the Suntec City Exhibition hall which attracted more than 10,000 visitors thus strengthening the good relations between the religious communities of China and Singapore.

Ervad Rustom's dedication and strong support for the cause of inter-religious

cohesion and harmony has contributed in no small measure to the progress of community engagement in Singapore and in raising comfort levels in inter-faith interaction. He has tirelessly committed his time, energy and ideas in the development and implementation of various IRO initiatives and programmes to promote religious harmony in Singapore.

IRO recognizes Ervad Rustom Ghadiali as a distinguished personality and a missionary in inter-faith and community work. His humility, approachability and unassuming manner have won him the affection and admiration of people from all strata of society in Singapore. We commend him for his achievements and we congratulate him for being the 9th recipient of the Inter-Religious Organisation Award.

It is my distinct honour now to invite Ervad Rustom Ghadiali to receive the Inter-Religious Organisation Award.



In The News

Go Team Canada! Go Sofia Go!

Sofia Dell, daughter of Roshni and Daren Dell of Oakville Ontario, is a 16 year old Martial Artist who recently qualified to represent Canada on the WKC National Team. She medaled in 4 divisions at the National Championships which allows her to travel to Dublin in October to the World Championships and to Guatemala in February to the Pan-American Championships. Sofia recently graded for her first degree black belt and will be presented with it in August. She has done karate for 8 years and continues to train regularly.

Sofia is the grand daughter of Marzi and Kermin Byramjee of Regal Press Canada.



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ACCOUNTABILITY IN AN AGE OF ACTIVISM

IMPRESSIONS ON THE 62ND ANNUAL COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW),
MARCH 12, 2018 , UN, NEW YORK


SABRINA BILLIMORIA



From Left Monaz Mistry, Sabrina Bilimoria, Diana Mistry, and Tanya Bharda in front of the UN emblem and flag in the UN Headquarters.

Following International Women's Day, the 62nd Annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) kicked off on March 12th in the General Assembly of the United Nations with speeches by two accomplished women — UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Commission Chair Geraldine Byrne Nason. At CSW, women from around the world gather to share their work and experiences fighting for gender equality. I represented FEZANA alongside Tanya Bharda, Diana Mistry, and Monaz Mistry. As delegates, we spent the two weeks of CSW attending panels and round tables of UN ambassadors, policy makers, civil society activists, and scholars. Each event took a unique approach to addressing CSW 62's priority theme of empowering rural women and the review theme of women's access to technology. We had the unique opportunity to watch UN ambassadors propose and vote on resolutions that had been developed throughout the conference. I personally enjoyed the opportunity to speak with such successful women as Dr. Habiba Sarabi (Deputy Chair to Afghanistan's High Peace Council) and Jackie Weatherspoon — civil rights activist and former New Hampshire State Representative. These two weeks provided new perspectives on how to approach the nuanced and unique issues women face around the world every day.

The insights I gained from the activists at CSW 62 on how to approach women's empowerment and achieving gender parity boil down to two overarching principles — prioritizing, but never compromising and tackling harmful social norms. First, while it is important for a community to focus on their most pressing issues, achieving the ideal of



equality means not stopping after the first battles have been won. For example, it is not enough for one woman to be at the table, there needs to be equal representation of and equal weight afforded to women's voices. As Dr. Habiba Sarabi poignantly argued, it is not enough to fight for bringing women into government and political discourse, it is a continuing fight to demand that their voices are heard and respected. Second, when we get past some of the issues that seem bigger, that many can agree on — such as access to education and ending child marriage — we must continue by tackling the lesser seen and understood issues. As UN Women Executive Director said on one of the first days of CSW, we must “fight against the normalization of unacceptable behavior everywhere.” Habits like holding double standards between men and women, blaming survivors of gender based violence, and questioning women's bodily autonomy have become harmful norms. Fighting for gender equality requires uprooting a system of prejudice and discrimination against girls and women that sees them as second-class citizens who are both undeserving of certain rights and autonomy and owe their bodies and their lives to their families and communities. This means that achieving true equality goes beyond ending the most grotesque instances of violence and discrimination against women that most would agree are wrong. If we are going to fight for equality, we have to be consistent about holding strong to that ideal as it permeates through every aspect of life. As Rural Women's Movement founder Sizane Ngubane said at the outset of CSW, we must “persist, resist, insist.”

Freedom from discrimination is structural and requires the cooperation of legal institutions, but freedom from prejudice requires a change in mindset for the individual and the collective. Achieving gender parity requires top-down legislative efforts to meet with bottom-up grassroots social movements. The first step in tackling harmful social norms requires looking deeper at how we talk about women, women's rights, and gender equality. Many experts and organizations at CSW emphasized the importance of including men in gender equality discussions and programs. What I felt was lacking, however, was the recognition that this is not strictly a men versus women issue. Women often internalize sexism and engage in the same harmful practices that marginalize women — everything from prioritizing boys' education to participating in blaming survivors of sexual violence. For example, I was shocked to find that fiercely anti-abortion activists were given a platform to speak at the UN when UN experts have repeatedly declared that access to safe, legal abortions are a human right, many going so far as to say that preventing a woman access to a safe and legal abortion is cruel and unusual punishment. What struck me most about the anti-abortion activists who spoke out — namely former United States Representative Michelle Bachmann — was their suggestion that women should accept their place in society, a notion that quite directly forces women into their place as second-class citizens without bodily autonomy. This is just one of many examples of how women's lives are endangered when political rights-based issues are muddled by a double standard in how we allow women to express their autonomy and access their rights.

At its core, realization of gender equality requires respect for each individual's human rights in law, practice, and mindset. The notion that because we have more rights than others should not stop us from pursuing true equality and from fighting against the issues that we continue to face every day. The bottom line is that if we are holding equality as an ideal to strive for then we have to remain consistent as we tackle the problem as a whole. The biggest point of debate I took issue with at CSW was the notion that as women, we should sit politely and ask for our rights as we calmly explain why we want them, and that we should applaud any men or women in power who state their support for our movement. While education on the depth of the issues we are fighting for is important, sitting politely and asking for our rights has yielded very little for women in the past. The Commission on the Status of women should not be seen as an isolated educational event, it builds upon a host of recent movements that demand better from our systems of governance. Time's up on compromising on our rights — it's time to stand up and demand our rights, on the streets, in corporate boardrooms, in court, and in Congress.

Sabrina Bilimoria holds a B.A. in Psychology and International Studies from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. She cited the work of Dr. Habiba Sarabi in her undergraduate honors thesis which focused on women's civic participation and gender based violence in U.S. occupied, post-Taliban Afghanistan. In the long-term, Sabrina plans to pursue a dual JD/MPP graduate degree in international human rights law with a focus on women's rights.

FEZANA Supports the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN



FEZANA Call for Participants to the 63rd Annual Commission on the Status of Women Conference ~ 11 to 22 March 2019

The FEZANA UN-NGO Committee is looking for participants to attend the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York from March 11-22, 2019.

This year's priority theme is, "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" and the review theme is, "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development".

For more information on the NGO CSW63 check the NGO CSW Website:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw63-2019>

Individuals interested in attending the conference, are requested to send their resume and letter of intent by

October 20, 2018. Please send the e-mail to both individuals below:

Behram Pastakia (bpastakia@aol.com)

Afreed Mistry (mistry.afreed@gmail.com)

While FEZANA, as an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] and the Department of Public Information (DPI), will facilitate registration to the CSW Conference, the selected participants are expected to make their own financial arrangements regarding visas, tickets, accommodation, food, and transportation in the city. Details about the vision, mission and activities of the United Nations can be accessed at www.un.org.

Personal Profile

A HIDDEN TREASURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH NAOMI MOBED

By Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

Naomi J. Mobed is a culinary entrepreneur who started Le Bon Magot®, a line of inspired condiments in 2015. The ethos of Le Bon Magot is to create products from heritage recipes using high-quality seasonal produce, custom-blended aromatics and no preservatives. In just three years, the company has made a place for itself, winning five SOFI™ (specialty outstanding food innovation) Awards in 2017 and one Good Food Award in 2018.



Please tell Fezana Journal a little about your family and memories of growing up in Pakistan/ Iran.

I was a child that had the best of both worlds – I grew up in Tehran, which in the 1970s was the hallmark of a modern city, yet with a deep sense of its own history (both pre-Islamic and Islamic); while spending my holidays in Karachi with grandparents and extended family, which was truly a celebration of family and community. These neighboring cities (less than a three-hour flight away) could not be more different. Tehran was lustrous with its snow-capped peaks, manicured parks, tree-lined avenues and fashionable population. Karachi was its counterpoint – raw and tropical, a bustling city of ports and commerce with teaming markets, colorful textiles and the unmistakable odor of sweat and spices clinging to the air. These contrasts had a profound effect on me, but so did their synergy. Iranians and Pakistanis had one thing in common – the passion for their respective local food traditions. Food was centripetal to gatherings and played a critical role in how families and friends came together. Each city, community and family

had their unique blend of ingredients – meats, produce and, of course, spices. My mother fused these traditions without artifice. It merely became the way we lived and a metaphor for our continuing assimilation in the countries we inhabited. In addition to Karachi and Tehran, I was educated in Hong Kong, USA and UK. As an adult doing my graduate work in International Relations and a career in banking led me to living in numerous other locations including London, Muscat and Dubai. Secondments to Cairo, Istanbul and Johannesburg along with extensive business travel further helped to expand my love of food.

Did being a Zarathushti shape your identity? Your world view?

How could it not? We are all shaped in one form or another by our cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions. Being Zarathushti from the broader Indian Subcontinent – for me, at least – means that I am not confined by a strict, state centric interpretation of history. This was reinforced by successive moves from one country to another. My identity as a Zarathushti was important in grounding me even when everything else around me was changing.

Why did you start Le Bon Magot? Why did you choose this name for your company given that your products are more east-inspired than French?

My mother and friends challenged me when I moved back to America after living overseas for the previous past 25 years. I was already in finance, but I wanted to go in another direction. I had talked about being involved in the restaurant industry for much of my adult life. The question was ‘what?’. A restaurant seemed the obvious answer, but I wanted more geographic flexibility. It seemed like the ready-foods side of the industry would allow me to keep my personal footprint both here and in Europe, so that was a huge advantage. So, along with Mom, I embarked on a



Personal Profile

mission to seal and jar the tastes from our home kitchen to diners seeking luxury spices and ingredients. I incorporated Le Bon Magot® in February 2015 and we hit shelves in August of the same year. Le Bon Magot® (mă-gō') means “the hidden treasure”, but it does have other synonyms as well – depending on usage, it could mean booty, bounty or coffers. It is useful to have no fixed meaning in English, and I find the tongue-and-cheek of it, given my background in banking, amusing! I did derive a French name for the brand rather deliberately. Not only was it a language I grew up speaking, but as the universal language of culinary technique, it enabled me to avoid affixing a particular ethnicity or cultural specificity to our products. While the flavors may be inspired by parts of Africa, Middle East and South Asia, the ingredients may not be nor is the usage.

Previous immigrant entrepreneurs have made hummus and Greek yogurt mainstream. Do you think you will be able to do the same for murabas and chutneys or will it remain a foodie experience?

The use of spices is no longer a “foodie” experience in America. Over centuries of immigration and integration, American cuisine has become as diverse as its people. Different regions have cultivated their own cuisines, each as broad as the cultures that thrive here. In fact, Sarah Lohman, who has written one of the definitive and most accessible books on how spices have shaped modern American cuisine, has found out that eight popular and enduring

flavors emerged from 1796 to 2000: black pepper, vanilla, curry powder, chili powder, soy sauce, garlic, MSG and Sriracha. This gives me hope that Le Bon Magot® will find a space in many more pantries than simply the gastronome.

Given the current debate around immigration and immigrants’ role in building the US, how has your experience as an immigrant impacted your work?

I was always a super shy child. When we found out, rather last minute I should add, that we were moving to the USA, I was excited, but wary. My father gave me some stern advice on my first day of school in Bartlesville, OK as he was dropping me to the bus-stop. He said, “there was no room for shy, scared people in the US. You have to speak up and take what you want” Falter or succeed, the US is all about making bold strides towards what you want and relentless tenacity. I haven’t forgotten that.

What advice would you give other new entrepreneurs or those who are on the fence about starting their own business?

It is an important decision and not one that should be taken lightly. Passion is wonderful and certainly a factor – you have to love what you do. However, before you take the plunge, there are practical considerations (e.g. how much are you prepared to invest) that should not be ignored. Also, make sure you validate or vet your idea early on. Talking to friends and family is fine but seek out industry professionals and consider their views on your business or product. For instance, each time we launch a new flavor, we validate the taste, texture and marketability through a panel we assemble. The panel may change from one product to the next as our industry reach and network increases. Also, be realistic in defining your goals – what do you want your company or brand to be as it matures? Business or hobby? Mass market or niche? This will help keep you on the path to prioritizing your work flow and realizing your goals.

What’s next?

Watch this space...!



Photo Credits Le Bon Margot

BIRTHS

Lila Guzder-Williams, a girl, to Karmin Guzder and Brooke Williams, granddaughter to Zenobia and Jal Guzder (Houston, TX) and Lynn and Richard Williams (Atlanta, GA) in San Francisco, CA on November 8, 2016.

Arianna Leigh Faiman, a girl, to Daena and Jordan Faiman, granddaughter to Toni and Viraf Ghadially in Ewing, NJ on September 1, 2017.

Shirin Sandy Jussawalla, a girl, to Delila and Zubin Jussawalla, granddaughter to Ming Law, Roshan and Dinyar Jussawalla, sister to Nazneen, grand niece to Freny Engineer in Toronto, ONT on February 4, 2018.

Charlie Thomas Nagarwalla, a boy, to Gerritt and Stephanie Nagarwalla, grandson to Pheroze nad Renate Nagarwala and Thom and Sue Balistrieri on February 15, 2018. (ZA-Chicago)

Percy Firdosh Bhesania, a boy, to Firdosh and Rushna Bhesania, brother to Kaizad and Jayhan Bhesania, grandson to Kersy and Meher Bhesania (Dubai, UAE) and Perviz Baji Patel (Chicago, IL), nephew to Deenaz Patel (Chicago, IL) in Kirkland, WA on April 27, 2018.

Jahan, a boy, to Deena Guzder and Peter Turner (New York), grandson to Zenobia and Jal Guzder (Houston, TX) and Julie and James Turner (Taos, NM) in New York on April 29, 2018.

Darius Nowsherwanji, a boy, to Huzvak and Mona Nowsherwanji, brother to Cyrus Nowsherwanji, grandson to Yasmin and Kerman Nowsherwanji, Niru and C.D Patel in Toronto, ONT on April 30, 2018.

Zubin Cyrus Sarosh Manekshaw to Cyrus and Lauren Manekshaw, grandson to Gulu and Sarosh Manekshaw of Houston in Dallas, TX on May 2, 2018. (ZAH)

Erick Firdosh Ghyara, a boy, to Firdosh Rohinton Ghyara and Armaity Falak Irani, brother to Darius Firdosh Ghyara in Issaquah, WA on May 7, 2018.

Arman Shahrukh Tarapore, a boy, to Mantreh and Shahrukh Tarapore, on May 12, 2018. (ZAPANJ)

Ario Behi, a boy, to Mandana Namdari and Mobed Ardeshtir Behi in North Vancouver, BC on May 20, 2018.

Rhea Damkewala, a girl, to Jamshed and Nazneen Damkewala, sister to Katie Damkewala, granddaughter to Erach and Rhoda Vandrewala and Parvez and Daulat Damkewala (India) in Seattle, WA on June 7, 2018.

Sebastian Avir John, a boy, to Joe and Sufna John, brother to Elias Varun, grandson to Chacko and Rosemary John and Vispi and Viloo Gheyara in Little Rock, AR on June 14, 2018.

Kaia, a girl to Ariane Namiranian and Bardia Moosavi sister to Ryan, granddaughter to farzaneh Izadi and Homayoon Moosavi and Mitra Bahrami and Hoshang Namiranian in Montreal, August 3, 2018.

Yasmin Daruwala, a girl, to Shireen and Jimmy Daruwala, grand daughter to Parvez and Nilufer Daruwala and Farhad and Shahnaz Cama, in Boston, MA 11 August 2018.

NAVJOTE

Shavir and Rohan, children of Shahnaz and Viraf Jangi in Vancouver, on July 8, 2018.

Zerxes Dabhoiwala-Marolia, son of Dilshad Marolia and Zal Dabhoiwala, grandson of Soonnoo and Rohinton Marolia (Montreal) and Nurgez and Noshir Dabhoiwala (Switzerland) in New York, on June 23, 2018.

Darius, son of Spenta and Farshd Hormozdyan, in Virginia, on July 29, 2018.

Ava and Karl, daughter and son of Niloufer Dastur and Vincent Dumas, grandchildren of Thrity and late Soli Dastur and Guy and

late Marie Dumas, in Montreal, Quebec, on August 5, 2018 .

WEDDINGS

Marc Irani son of Parinaz and Khodi Irani to Simi, daughter of Joseph and Marykutty Mullappallil, in Houston TX on April 7, 2018.

Neville Irani, son of Pervin and Jehangir Irani (Montreal, QUE) to **Delna Bharucha** (Boston, MA), daughter of Dolly and Homiar Bharucha (Mumbai, India) in Montreal, QUE on April 14, 2018.

DEATHS

Faruk Behram Presswalla, 76, (Chester, VA) husband of Daisy Presswalla on November 1, 2017.

Soonoo Kanga, wife of late Ervad Fali Kanga, mother of Deelnavaz (Daraius) Tarapore, grandmother of Kayan, Eric, Neville on December 16, 2017. (ZAC-LA)

Rusi Jehangir Siganporia on December 24, 2017. (ZAC-LA)

Namdar Aspiandiar Khoramshahi on January 2, 2018. (ZAC-LA)

Boman Meheraban Iranpur on January 3, 2018. (ZAC-LA)

Mehlli Bhagalia, husband of Perin Bhagalia, father of Niloufer, Zarosh, Xerxis on January 4, 2018. (ZAC-LA)

Tehmina Bhikhaji Mistry on January 17, 2018. (ZAC-LA)

Piroja Pirojshaw Ustad, 97, wife of late Pirojshaw Burjorji Ustad, mother of Homi, Hoshang, Aspi Ustad (Vancouver, BC), Gool Darayus Veviana, mother-in-law of Darayus Veviana, Maharukh and Zenia Ustad, in India on February 28, 2018. (ZSBC)

Rohinton Randelia, husband of Daisy Randelia, son of Mani and Ratansha Randelia, father of Farah, Friya in Parsippany, NJ on March 5, 2018.

Homi Phirojshah Bhappoo, 88, husband of Nergish Bhappoo, father of Dilnavaz Mirza, late Maharukh Marshall, Zenobia Hansen, Mehernaz Zarolia, grandfather of Zarin, Zal, Arzan, Kainaz, Arish on March 15, 2018, (ZAGNY)

Phiroze Warden, husband of Behroze Warden, father of Kurshed (Farzana), Pearl (Paul) in Mississauga, ONT on March 18, 2018.

Iraj Yektashenas on March 18, 2018. (IZA)

Coomi K. Patel, mother of Cawas (Gulrukh) Patel, Jimmy Patel and late Dolly (Manchi) Baliwalla, grandmother of Viraf (Mary) Baliwalla, Persis (Cyrus) Banker, Meher (Joe) Luv, Ron (Michelle) Patel, Daniel (Deenah) Patel, Firoza (Malcolm) Jussawalla, Cyrus (Hana) Patel on March 26, 2018. (ZSO)

Mobed Keykhosrow Khorshidian, 88, husband of Roohangiz Khorshidian, father of Fereshteh Namdaran, Fariba Khorshidian, Faranak Parsinejad, Kathy Khodi-Elhami, father-in-law of Farzin Namdaran, Farhad Parsinejad, Farid Elhami, grandfather of Afsheen Namdaran, Nikta Mody, Neda Hemati, Parvin Guiv, Cameron and Parisa Parsinejad, Ryan and Dana Khodi, great grandfather of Aiden Mody in Los Gatos, CA on April 3, 2018.

Russie Pestonji, husband of Jini, father of Lehnaz, Mehernosh, father-in-law of Maureen, grandfather of Maeve and Tanya, brother of Dhun Noria, Freny Pavri and Soli Pestonji in Toronto, ONT on April 17, 2018.

Villie H. Homji, wife of late Homi Homji, mother of Kavasji (Doris) Homji, Rashna (Stephen) Jeffries, Coombi (Darius) Karanjia, grandmother of Lara, Christopher, Kevan, Jaime, great grandmother of Mia in Toronto, ONT on May 1, 2018.

Adil Rustom Tarapore, husband of Natasha (Bamji) Tarapore,

son of Ruby and late Rustom Taraporewala, father of Aarman, Maya, Zoya Tarapore, brother of Pervaiz and Maha-zarine Taraporewala, brother-in-law of Lyla and Ramie Daroga (Houston, TX) in Houston, TX on May 2, 2018.

Parvin Anousheh-Khosravi, wife of Shahriar Khosravi, sister of Paridokht Anousheh-Soroushi, mother of Homa, Sima, Bahram, Shahram Khosravi, mother-in-law of Shahbahram Mavandadi, Khashayar Anjam, Louisa Khosravi, Anahita Bonshahi, grandmother of Sam, Sepand Mavandadi, Arya, Persia Anjam, Vista, Arvin Khosravi in North Vancouver, BC on May 6, 2018.

Freny Degamwalla, wife of late Hormusji Degamwalla, mother of Mehroo Homavazir, Noshir and late Adi, mother-in-law of Dara Homavazir, grandmother of Armaity, Zenobia (Blair) Beesley, Persis, great grandmother of Anaita, Neville, Aidan in Toronto, ONT on May 19, 2018.

Bahman (Khodarahm) Abadian, husband of Simin Tirandazian Abadian, father of Yasmin, Sousan, Khodarahm, Jamshid on May 21, 2018. (ZAMWI)

Jal Setna husband of Perin Setna, father of Farokh (London, UK), Rustom, (Houston TX) Kaezad (Cincinnati, OH) and Dinaz Bomanji (London UK) in London, on May 22, 2018. (ZAH)

Minoo Khoorshed, 79, husband of Nadia Khoorshed, father of Moorad (Anne), Arish (Kathleen), Rushad (Neelam), Jehan (Laura) in Toronto, ONT on May 27, 2018.

Dolly Irani, wife of Tahmasb Mondegarian, daughter-in-law of Khorshed Mondegarian in Toronto, ONT on June 14, 2018.

Shirin Ostovar Tafti (Khodabakhshi), mother of Rostam, Sima (Patel), Cyrus, grandmother of Nima,

Taraneh, Tina, Sina in Los Angeles, CA on June 20, 2018.

Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, husband of Arnaz Marker in Karachi, Pakistan on June 21, 2018.

Darius Bejon Kandawalla, husband of Spenta in New York on June 26, 2018.

Nargis Rohinton Jasavala, 81, daughter Rati and Dina Bulsara, wife of late Rohinton Jivanji Jasavala, sister of Daras and Roni Bulsara, Naju Wadia, mother of Rayomand (Armaity), Farshogar (Jasmine), Jehanbakhsh, Yesna, Teosar, Hutokshi, Tobin on June 27, 2018. (ZSO)

Hushang Kavooosi, husband of Pari Kavooosi Goshtasbi, father of Mojgan, Mehran (Tanya) in Vancouver, BC on July 1, 2018.

Bapsy Buhariwala, wife of Parvez Buhariwala, mother of Dineyar (Pervin) Buhariwala, Rashna (Shahrokh) Kianipour, grandmother of Natasha, Farah in Mumbai, India on July 3, 2018 (ZSBC)

Yezdi (Les) Pavri, 61, son of late Jamshed K. Pavri and late Roda Pavri in Vancouver, BC on July 4, 2018.

Percy Vazir, husband of Aban Vazir, father of Gulshan in Mumbai,

Paridokht (Haji) Varjavand, wife of Jahanbakhsh Varjavand, mother of Bahram and Mahrokh Varjavand, Tahmineh Farkhani, grandmother of Parisa, Sasan, Saman, Pedram Varjavand, Ashkan Dehghan, sister of Pourandokht Varjavand. (CZC)

Cyrus Karanjia, 74, husband of Nerges brother of Noshir (Nergish) Karanjia (New Jersey) in Mumbai. on July 9, 2018. (ZAPANJ)

Neville Doodha, 55, husband of Rashna, father of Zubin, son of Jer and late Pesi Doodha, brother of Kamal Desai, in Calgary, Alberta, on August 17, 2018.

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, 33, 5' 9", MS in Aerospace Engineering, working as Applications Engineer in California. Contact bpsavai@gmail.com. [F18.19]

Female, 28, Juris Doctor (JD) and Masters in Social Work (MsW), working as Criminal Defense Attorney in New York area. Contact tdaruvala@gmail.com. [F18.24]

Female, 27, 5' 5", Masters in Physiotherapy, working as Physical Therapist in clinic in Maryland, USA. Contact hufrihr@gmail.com. [F18.27]

Female, 28, 5' 3", Masters in Cell and Molecular Biology (IIT, Chicago), studying for PhD at Case Western U, Cleveland. Contact ddaruwalla@gmail.com. Or +91 98 21126841 [F18.31]

Female, 39, 5' 5", slim, well-qualified (B. Com, MBA Finance) working in a senior position with a large corporation in Mumbai. Only child in a well-placed family residing at Cuffe Parade, Mumbai. Contact mkb4548@gmail.com. [F18.32]

Female, 29, 5' 5", Master of Arts in Teaching, currently working on her PhD at Florida State University. Interested in meeting a well-educated man, who is socially active, and kind, with a good sense of humor. Willing to relocate. Contact mschemprof@gmail.com. [F18-34].

Male, 63, 5' 7", real estate broker, also a para-professional for Special Ed (mostly autistic) severe needs children. Owns and lives on a mini-ranch in Colorado. Contact hmrealty@bresnan.net. [M18-35]

Female, 24, 5' 3", good-looking, double degree educated professional, brought up in Australia. Would like to connect with a suitably accomplished Parsi man, brought up in the West (N. America, UK, Australia, New Zealand). Contact zavyss93@gmail.com. [F18.36]

Male, 57, degree in Business Management, working in Retail Management in Pennsylvania. Contact 631 645 7588. [M18.37]

Male, 25, B.S. (Accounting with Management) from University of Westminster, London, UK in 2015. Pursued post-graduate studies as Affiliate member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, UK. Currently working with Ernst & Young in Kuwait. Keen golfer. Contact hormuzda@gmail.com, +965 9720 5568. [M18.40]

Female, 34, 5' 5", B.Com., IATA/UFTA (Montreal), 10 years experience in travel industry -- International and Domestic airline offices, MNC and other noted travel organizations. Presently General Manager in a reputed travel organization. Good personality, smart, intelligent, loyal, caring, understanding, tolerant, with good family values. Career oriented, but also loves and dedicated to family. Interested in well-educated, well-settled, loyal family-oriented man in USA/Canada. Elder sister married and settled in Florida. Contact suitablematch83@yahoo.com. [F18.41]

Female, 24, 5' 6", Doctor of Pharmacy, working as Pharmacist in Chicago area. Contact [Nilu301@yahoo.com](mailto:nilu301@yahoo.com). [F18-42]

Female, 41, B.A., residing in Toronto, Canada and working in the IT department at a bank. Interested in meeting Parsi gentleman between 38 to 49 years of age. Contact: +1-416-302-9754. [F18.44]

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MAHRUKHM83@GMAIL.COM



Professor John Russell Hinnells

27 August 1941–3 May 2018



of Religions, the *New Handbook of Living Religions*, and the *Who's Who of World Religions*. Very popular are also his *Handbook of Ancient Religion*, the booklet *Zoroastrianism and the Parsis*, and the richly illustrated *Persian Mythology*, which was reprinted many times.

While taking a broad approach to religions, John worked tirelessly for the practical application of insights gained by researchers, thus anticipating the importance of “impact” decades before “impact” became a government criterion for the evaluation of scholarly works. A case in point is the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, of which John was one of the founders in the early stages of his academic career after a conference on ‘Comparative Religion in Education’ at the Shap Wells Hotel in Cumbria in 1969. One of his very first publications, the collection of studies entitled “Comparative Religion in Education” (1970), which he edited, is a fruit of this work. It has a foreword by Edward Short, then Secretary of State for Education and Deputy Labour Leader, who emphasises the importance of teaching a range of different religions at schools, and to accept and promote diversity. This was a significant endorsement of the Shap perspective, and it laid the basis for a profound move to a much more diverse style of teaching religion in both schools and higher education. John retained a keen interest in the Shap Working Party right

As Professor of Comparative Religion, John Russell Hinnells held Chairs at four universities: Manchester, SOAS, Derby and Liverpool Hope. The title of his professorship describes the wide remit of his scholarly work and expresses in an almost programmatic way the concept, which he represented: Comparative Religion. John Hinnells developed a thematic basis for the study of Comparative Religion by working on themes such as Religion in health and suffering, religion and art, charitable giving and inter-faith relationships. The important topic of religious violence was the focus of the work he edited with Richard King on *Religion and Violence in South Asia*, published by Routledge in 2006. John Hinnells contributed to establishing appropriate research methodologies in the study of religions through the *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, which influenced methodology in the study of migration, and human geography as well as in religion. John was deeply devoted to work for the popularisation of the study of religions, as exemplified by a range of books he edited for Penguin, including the *Penguin Dictionary*





to the end of his life. It is almost iconic that one of his friends and colleagues there, Peter Woodward, spoke to John on the phone just a day before John's passing. Peter notes that John was his usual bright and cheerful self, though saddened by the fact that his beloved football team, Manchester United, were now only the second best team in the country (!), and by the news that the Shap Working Party was likely to close after celebrating its Jubilee in 2019. However, even if his beloved Shap draws to a conclusion, feeling that its work is mainly done, the annual Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals, in the production of which John shared right up to the very end, will still continue as a descriptive booklet, a wallchart and as a pictorial presentation. John's heart and soul were then as ever passionately dedicated to the organisation he was responsible for founding. John Hinnells was a champion of religious equality, an equality campaigner tackling prejudice wherever he found it, not only in race and religion (campaigning, for example, for women priests), but also in his work with the NHS and the Police. His advice was also widely sought by institutions improving disabled access, especially in universities and colleges, and at the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge.

In addition to championing the study of Comparative Religion in the widest possible sense, John's second major academic field was the study of the nowadays tiny community of the Zoroastrians. Undertaking a journey from ancient to modern and contemporary, John Hinnells started off with work on the question of the historical links between Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians and then moved into the study of Mithraism. His early work on ancient Zoroastrianism and on Mithraism helped set the base for analysis of how one religion influences another. John Hinnells's work on the Parsi community is ground-breaking. Here, too, his approach was truly global, in the literal sense of the word. He developed methodologies, up to then unprecedented in Zoroastrian Studies, to solicit information from members of this global community in the form of questionnaires. His Katrak lectures on *Zoroastrians in Britain*, delivered in Oxford in 1985, were a decisive moment in his career, in terms of both his external profile and internal self-confidence, and the resulting monograph, published in 1996 under the same title, was complemented in 2005 by his monumental *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration*. It was John's eternal disappointment that he could not go back to Iran after the Fall of the Shah and study Zoroastrians in Iran as well as those in India and the diasporas. John loved the company of Zoroastrians and their life-affirming religion. The Zoroastrian community acknowledged his contributions in 2007 by conferring on him the title of "Honoured Friend of the Zoroastrian

Trust Funds of Europe". In collaboration with the World Zoroastrian Organisation, John was instrumental in setting up the Kutar Memorial Lecture at SOAS in 1997 and, together with Professor Mary Boyce, he developed the vision of a Chair in Zoroastrianism at SOAS. This vision became a reality through the generosity of the brothers Faridoon and Mehraban Zartoshty and of Professor Mary Boyce. He was absolutely delighted by the news of a further very significant donation to SOAS by Shapoor Mistry



to endow in perpetuity the Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies, which was launched on 27 June 2018 to provide funds for a lectureship and student scholarships in Zoroastrian Studies, and for outreach activities.

The work of John Hinnells is as profoundly important today as it was in the 1970s, and he seems to have been a long way ahead of his time in anticipating how crucial it is for today's world to understand religion, migration and inter-faith relations.

Written by Almut Hintze, Zarthosty Brothers professor of Zoroastrian Studies, School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), University of London .



Jamsheed Marker

November 24 1922 - June 21 2018



JAMSHEED MARKER, who has died aged 95, commanded a minesweeper in the Royal Indian Navy during the Second World War, pioneered cricket commentary in Pakistan in the 1950s, and served as a highly respected diplomat, representing Pakistan in the US and a dozen other countries for more than three decades, culminating in a posting to the United Nations.

Jamsheed Kekobad Ardeshir Marker was born on November 24 1922 in Hyderabad, in British-ruled India, into a Zarthushti family with business interests in Quetta and Karachi. His grandfather, Ardeshir Marker, had moved to Quetta in 1880 from Bombay and established himself as a supplier to the British military.

Jamsheed's father, Kekobad Marker, developed the family business, expanding into pharmaceuticals, shipping and other areas, and became a notable philanthropist. His mother, Meherbano, was a pioneer in social work, a feminist and the author of a history of the Parsees.

Jamsheed was educated at the Doon School in Dehra Dun where the name of the Marker family is still celebrated in the form of "Marker cups", awarded to students for academic excellence. He went on to study at Forman Christian College in Lahore, graduating with top marks in Economics.

During the Second World War, Marker served as an officer in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve in command of a minesweeper, which became the first such vessel to enter Rangoon to liberate Burma. He then served on combined operations in Burma.

As partition approached, Jamsheed's father Kekobad led the deputation to Muhammed Ali Jinnah which secured assurances about the future of the Parsee community in the new Muslim nation. Jamsheed, meanwhile, was working for the government of India's home department under the future Indian prime minister Morarji Desai.

In 1954 Jamsheed, a keen schoolboy cricketer, was contacted by a former teacher who had become director general of Radio Pakistan: "He called me to say that the English commentators that he had like Jack Coles and some other gentleman are not liked by the Pakistan public because they cannot understand their accent, so why not join us in the box with a newcomer, Omar Kureishi. I hesitated, but he was insistent."

Marker worked in his family's business until April 1965, when he was appointed Pakistan's High Commissioner to Ghana, with concurrent accreditation to Guinea and Mali. Over the next three decades he represented his country in Romania, the Soviet Union, Canada, East Germany, Japan, the United Nations Office at Geneva, West Germany, France, the US and finally the United Nations in New York.

As ambassador to the US from 1986 to 1989, Marker, was intimately involved in forging a joint strategy with the Reagan administration, which culminated in the Geneva Accords in 1988 and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

At the UN, Marker acted as spokesman for the non-aligned nations and served as chairman of the Security Council. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, by the time he officially

retired in 1995 he had been "ambassador to more countries than any other person".

Later, under Kofi Annan, he served as a special adviser to the UN Secretary-General and in 1998 Annan appointed him his Personal Representative for East Timor, in which capacity he conducted negotiations between the governments of Indonesia and Portugal and East Timorese separatist leaders, which brought an end to a 10-year conflict and led to the independence of Timor Leste. In September 2004, Pakistan's then prime minister Shaukat Aziz named Marker as ambassador-at-large for his years of service, and he continued in this role until 2008 under the Musharraf regime.

Marker published two books of memoirs. Among highlights of his diplomatic career, he recalled his time as ambassador to the Soviet Union a few weeks before the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, the head of the Indian Army, General Sam Manekshaw (a fellow Parsee and an old friend of Marker's from pre-Partition days) visited Moscow for an urgent consultation with his counterparts in the Soviet military. The Soviet hosts took the visitor to the Bolshoi Theatre where they were amazed to find the Pakistani ambassador waiting to greet them, and even more amazed to see Marker and their guest embracing warmly and breaking into friendly chat in Gujarati.

Marker is survived by his wife, Arnaz, and daughter Niloufer. His first wife, Diana, died in 1979, daughter Feroza predeceased him. Aban Marker Kabraji is his niece. Condolences to the family

Adapted from Parsi Khabar.

Prof Farhang Mehr

As many of us peacefully aslumbered during the morning of March 3, 2018, Ahura Mazda welcomed the urwan of a truly outstanding Zoroastrian, Dr. Farhang Mehr, into His Abode of Song and Light. Dr. Mehr accomplishments paled those of most others. He was the first and only Iranian Zoroastrian to put our community on Iran's political map, while concurrently advancing, uniting, protecting, and extending our well-being. Such persons are born only once-in-a-generation!

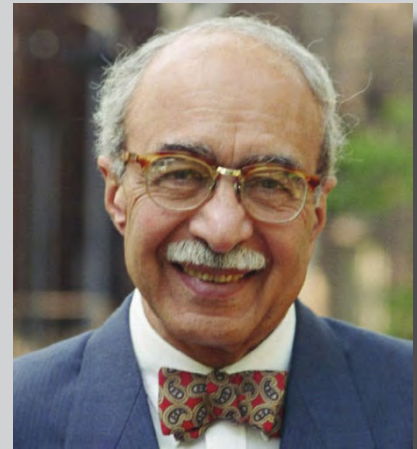
Dr. Mehr grew up in an Iran when Zoroastrians were denigrated. Yet, after returning from UK as a trained lawyer, he won the respect and confidence of the Shah of Iran by organizing the highly successful international anniversary celebration of Cyrus the Great in the early 60s while serving as the Chairman of the Tehran Anjuman. This success led to Dr. Mehr being the first and only Zoroastrian to be successively appointed by the Shah as Iran's minister of finance, economy, energy and oil, and ultimately, its Deputy Prime Minister. He was then entrusted with making Pahlavi University into the Harvard of Iran, which he successfully did as its Chancellor. His political contributions to his country, led to considerable changes in Iranian attitudes towards Zoroastrians—from deprecation to great respect and acceptance. Because of his exemplary competency and trustworthiness, more Zoroastrians were allowed to hold military, teaching, judicial, and other governmental appointments, which were previously unavailable.

While serving his country, Dr. Mehr worked to unite Zoroastrian

associations in Iran and make them part of the world-wide Zoroastrian community. To do so, he pioneered organizing periodic World Congresses in Iran and elsewhere to meet, share, discuss, and resolve religious and community issues. Being a Zoroastrian scholar, he also wrote prolifically about the roots, philosophy, and history of the faith, while lecturing and participating extensively in seminars and colloquy to successfully position Zoroastrianism on the world map as the world's first monotheistic faith.

In the late 70s, apprehensive that the Khomeni era might lead to the expulsion of Iranian Zoroastrians from Iran or their forced conversion, he explored with senior political world leaders as to how the international community could protect Iranian Zoroastrians from such a fate. He was advised that they could only do so if approached by a "world body" (a common voice) of all Zoroastrians. Dr. Mehr then embarked on a global endeavor to create one. But, unlike other religions, he only found one organization, ZTFE in UK, whose directors' agreed to establish and manage a World Body headquartered in London. Thus, the community became united for the first time under the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO). In its first 5 years, WZO worked solely to have UK, European, Scandinavia, Canada, and the United States extend refugee status to displaced Iranian Zoroastrians.

Dr. Mehr believed that Zarathustra's faith is universal and available to any person who believed in and practiced its tenets. He diligently advanced that conviction by speaking, writing, discussing, and propagating the themes of acceptance



of these believers into the faith and permitting mixed marriages and navjot ceremonies for children of such marriages, at every opportunity.

But, he paid a price. The Khomeni regime issued a fatwa against him, forcing him to flee west across the Alborz mountains into Van in Turkey. Dr Mehr ultimately found safe refuge in the US at Boston University as a professor of international affairs. FEZANA Journal offers its deepest condolences and shares a great sense of loss with Dr. Mehr's widow Paricher (Naderi) and their 3 children, Mehrdad and Narika (Varza) Mehran and Mitra Mehr.(Esfandiar Sorouchyari) grandchildren Roxana, and Cyrus Sorouchyari, Nakhostin and Mahvash Mehr. Zoroastrians from around the world have lost an outstanding and committed leader. He was a once in a generation gift to them and humanity!

Prepared by Adi Davar, from Washington DC a long time friend and past president of ZAMWI

Hello World, let's start a conversation!

Author: Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Illustrator: Gulshan Pagdiwala

pps 26 pages,

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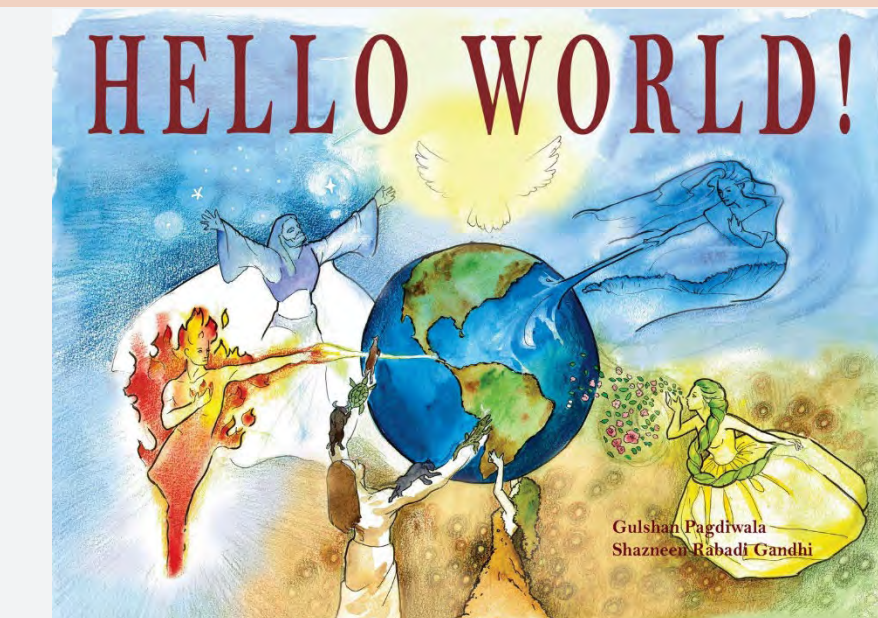
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Reviewer: Trity Pourbahrami

As a Zoroastrian studies teacher I am always on the lookout for interesting books to read and share with my students. I was delighted to learn that a friend and fellow Zoroastrian studies teacher, *Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi*, has written a new children's book "Hello World!" which is beautifully illustrated by *Gulshan Pagdiwala*. The book tells a simplified version of "the Zoroastrian creation story" but as a Zoroastrian, who grew up in Iran and Canada, I had never heard of Zoroastrians having a creation story nor the Pahlavi work "Bundahishn" which is referenced as the original source of the story. This is not the first time I have encountered such differences between the teachings and practices of Zoroastrians around the world. When I encounter such diversity of thought and approach I see it as an opportunity to learn and build bridges between the different parts of our community. The author of this book clearly shares this view because she states in the book "as with



any creation story, it is a good starting point for conversations about faith." She encourages us to use the book to start conversations and "engage our children in a positive, life-affirming way." I also encourage you to do the same and as a starting point, here are a few of my thoughts and observations.

Some of the characters in the book such as Gayomard, Jahi, Mashya, and Mashyani are unfamiliar to me, therefore I am going to take a more active role to learn about them and bring them up in conversations with others who may know more about them. On the other hand, the Amesha Spentas are very familiar concepts or "characters" to me and I loved the way the book brings them to life. I especially was moved by the illustrations and connections made between Spenta Armaiti and Mother Earth and the depiction of Ameratat which is described to be a "... youthful spirit [which] breathes the sweet scent of flowers upon the world, even as she protects all the plants."

The central conflict in the book is between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman complete with an "epic battle

between [the] powerful forces of good and evil ... as Ahura Mazda and his Amesha Spentas ... protect his creations from Ahriman." As a Zoroastrian teacher who does not assign gender to Ahura Mazda, but rather describes the concept as life and wisdom I struggled with the male pronoun used. I shared this with the author and she explained, "it was a deliberate decision to personify Ahura Mazda and also to use the male pronoun. The primary audience of the book is young children and I felt that personifying Ahura Mazda made it more possible for them to envision God and a personal relationship with him. In the original Avestan the pronoun used for Ahura Mazda is a neuter pronoun (i.e. one that is gender neutral). In the English language, the only gender-neutral pronouns are "it" or "they". "It" did not seem appropriate as it is commonly used to refer to inanimate objects, and "they" is typically used as a plural pronoun and having taught young Zoroastrians that there is only one God, I did not want to risk confusion by using a pronoun that they only know in its plural use." I greatly appreciated

Books & ARTS

this explanation from the author and am planning to bring this up as a conversation starter when reviewing the book with my Zoroastrian studies students in the upcoming school year.

Speaking of class room discussions, I was excited to find a list of questions at the end of the book to guide conversations with young readers. Some of my favorites are:

“what does it mean to ‘believe’ the creation story?” and “How do you reconcile scientific theories of evolution with the creation story?”

I want to extend my greatest appreciation to *Shazneen and Gulshan* for putting in the time and effort to create this beautiful children’s book. Our community and libraries are richer and more vibrant because

of dedicated individuals like them who continue to share their vision, creativity, and commitment to Zoroastrianism through the creation of new works. Now it is your turn to pick up this book and share it with your community. Start a conversation and enjoy the journey it takes you on.

VALIANT PARSIS in War and Peace

By Marzban Jamshedji Giara

Published by: Bapsy and Marzban Giara - Price: INR 700.00

Book Review by Brigadier Behram M. Panthaki (Retired)

available from Marzban J. Giara e-mail: marzbang@gmail.com

The author, Marzban Giara, deserves compliments for having collected and compiled the life sketches of over 550 Parsis, and published a compendium of over 300 pages, single handedly, with very little financial help, either from individuals or any community organization. His earnest attempt to bring awareness to our community of the yeomen services rendered and sacrifices made by many famous and some lesser known Parsi men and women, in and out of uniform, needs to be commended.

While the dust jacket gives the reader the impression that the book exclusively covers Parsi officers of the Indian Armed Forces, this is not the case. The scope is much wider for the book includes the British India period and post-independence, there is mention of Indian and Pakistani service officers as well as those who served in the Indian Civil Service (ICS), the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), the Indian Medical Service (IMS), the Border Security Force (BSF), Home Guards, the Indian Railways, and the Fire Department.

For me, personally, reading the book was akin to taking a walk down memory lane for it revived memories of many a service officer and government official



whom I have had the privilege to either know or serve with, some of whom have departed this world for greener pastures.

While some Parsi officers do not find mention in the book, this is for no fault of Marzban’s. Despite repeated requests for information through community journals and periodicals and by word of mouth, the response was not as forthcoming as one would have expected.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, Mr. Giara has very thoughtfully devoted ten pages (Pg. 13-22) to pre and post-



independence medals with coloured photographs and relevant explanations. Our community should take great pride that a Parsi has been a recipient of each of these during the course of India’s (and Pakistan’s) history. Readers will notice that some of our stalwarts in uniform were awarded civilian awards of Padma Vibhushan and Padma Bhushan. The practice to award civilian awards to men in uniform has since been discontinued. While on the subject of awards, it will not be out of place to mention that the late Lieutenant Colonel Adi Bujor

Books & ARTS

Tarapore was one of the 21 recipients of India's highest military decoration, the Param Vir Chakra (PVC), which was awarded to him for distinguished acts of courage at the cost of his life during the 1965 war with Pakistan. Lieutenant Cyrus Pithawalla, (retired as Major General) is the recipient of India's highest peacetime military decoration, the Ashoka Chakra, awarded for courage and professional acumen in capturing the leader of an extremists group in the Eastern State of Manipur in July 1981.

Did the author consider the community's contribution in the field of politics? Names of Minoo Masani and Piloo Modi (known for his histrionics) of Swatantra Party and Homi Daji, Communist Party, come to mind. It reminds me of an anecdote that at the time of petrol crisis in late 70s when the price of this commodity suddenly

shot up, Indian Parliamentarians assumed ways to conserve government expenditure by adopting novel ways to commute to Parliament House. Morarji Desai of Congress Party, then Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, walked to his office where as Piloo Modi decided to ride an elephant. While overall the book is a good read, it would have benefitted from some critical editing or consultation with a service officer since most of the profiles are of armed forces personnel. There are some factual inaccuracies, incorrect dates and names that have been spelt differently at different places. The layout lacks standardization; some life sketches are less than a page while others cover granular details of spouses, children and grandchildren. That having been said, the book inculcates a sense of pride. Despite our miniscule numbers in India's

burgeoning population, the contribution made by members of the community in every walk of life are remarkable, once again proving Mahatma Gandhi's adage that "in numbers the Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare". It is regrettable that this spirit of adventure and patriotism is fast diminishing and almost absent from our youth today. We have talent and ability but no desire.

I recommend that "Valiant Parsis" be bought and read by every Parsi, for not only do current and successive generations need to know, but they need to be inspired to be future torch-bearers and continue to contribute to nation-building as those before them did.

Overall, a valiant and commendable effort by Marzban Giara.

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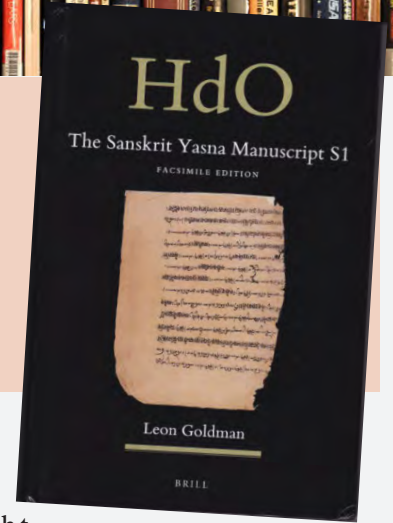
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Leon Goldman (2018)

The Sanskrit Yasna Manuscript S1.

Handbook of Oriental Studies 32/1, Corpus Avesticum Series. Leiden–Boston, Brill.

Review by Prof Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo, Professor in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilization University of Toronto



This book is a facsimile edition of the manuscript S1, which contains the Avestan text of the *Yasna* ceremony with its Sanskrit translation. Avestan texts were interpreted and firstly rendered into Pahlavi during the Sasanian period (ACE 224–651). After the Arab conquest, this exegetical tradition remained nevertheless uninterrupted. New Pahlavi translations were produced in Iran as well as in India thereafter, but the Iranian language of culture was soon substituted by its equivalent Indian one, Sanskrit, when Zoroastrian communities moved from Iran to their new homeland. Probably as early as the 12th century ACE, Parsi scholars in India rendered into Sanskrit several Avestan (*Yasna*; *Wisperad*; *Widēwād*; *Xorde Avesta*; *Yašt*; *Aogəmadaēcā*) and Pahlavi texts (*Mēnōg ī xrad* “The Spirit of Wisdom;” *Škand gumānīg wīzār* “Explanation to dispel doubts;” *Ardā Wīrāz nāmāg* “Book of the righteous Wīrāz;” *Cim ī kustīg* “The significance of the sacred girdle”). The most renowned among these scholars was Nēryōsangh Dhaval, composer of the Sanskrit version of the manuscript S1, one of the oldest and most important of its type and subject of Leon Goldman’s publication.

This manuscript has a long history. Karl Friedrich Geldner (1886–1896, Prolegomena xiii), critical editor of the Avesta, was the first who called it S1, because it formerly belonged to Mobed Mancherji Barzoi Powri of Surat. It was later in possession of Dastur Kaikhusro Jamaspji, on behalf of whom Prof. A. V. W. Jackson eventually donated it to the Columbia University Library, in New York City, where it is currently preserved. Thanks to the generosity of an

anonymous donor through FEZANA in memory of Shams-ul-Ulama Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla, former student at the Columbia University, and to the joint effort of Prof. Ehsan Yarshater and the library of this university, the manuscript S1 was restored in 2015 and could subsequently be studied.

From the point of view of its content, the text of the *Yasna* in S1 extends from 1.6 to 46.19, according to the standard division in Karl Friedrich Geldner’s (1886–1896) critical edition, the rest of folios containing the other passages being lost. In spite of this loss, S1 remains one of the oldest and most important witnesses of the manuscript transmission of both the Avestan and the Sanskrit versions of the *Yasna*. Its collation is therefore necessary for any critical edition of these texts.

Some years ago, Leon Goldman, a leading expert in the field of Avestan philology, indexed and made this manuscript available online on the *Avestan Digital Archive* (<http://avesta-archive.com/>), where scholars and general public can easily find the beginning of each passage of the *Yasna* in its original Avestan version, followed by its Sanskrit translation. His recent book reproduces that indexed version.

The book can be divided into three main parts:

1. introduction (pp. 1–55);
2. facsimile edition of the manuscript in colour images (pp. 57–366);
3. references (pp. 367–371).

Among some other relevant details of the introduction to the facsimile edition, I highlight Leon Goldman’s accurate

insight

into the Parsi Sanskrit tradition, also interesting for a general public, and the most extensive palaeographic study of a Sanskrit translation of an Avestan text so far. Especially because of the latter, his book is pioneer, and will definitely be taken as a model for further studies on this important, yet unexplored field extending between Indian and Iranian Studies.

As regards the second, largest part of the book, the facsimile edition, I would just underline that the colour images of the manuscript have been reproduced in high quality and are easily readable (obviously for those acquainted with the Avestan and/or Sanskrit languages). Although they might seem quite small at a first glance, actually the size of the pages is similar to that of the folios in the original manuscript (31 x 23 cms). Finally, the references include the most relevant editions and studies on the Sanskrit translations up today, as well as a list of other manuscripts of the *Yasna* available online, some of which are counted among the same type of Avestan manuscripts with Sanskrit translation.

FEZANA must be proud of its contribution to the restoration of this manuscript. It has been verily decisive to complete a chain of knowledge that started with this valuable copy of the text of the *Yasna* by a Parsi scholar many centuries ago, and ended up in modern times in its exquisite facsimile publication by Leon Goldman.

Books & ARTS

"Like Sugar in Milk" by Majlend Bramo

Reviewer: Nazneen Spliedt

Self published by the author 2018 hardback, 194 pages; 134 images

available Parsiana Bookstore, Mumbai www.parsiana.com

from Majlend Bramo www.majlendbramo.com

ISBN 979-12-300 -2963-6



Majlend Bramo a documentary photographer- an Italian of Albanian heritage- has produced an aesthetically well photographed book - as a photo essay and commentary on the Parsis of Bombay.

His journey to India started with a genesis of an idea, when he came across the name Zarathushtra in a book he was reading. This piqued his curiosity with vague memories of Nietzsche's book "Thus Spake Zarathushtra" in his mind. He decided to learn more about the religion and its adherents by reading and discovering Zarathushtra and his message.

He tells the story of his journey of discovery by using his artful photography and interweaving it with the pictures of ordinary people and places around Mumbai, with his quest to find the true message of Zarathushtra.

He was fortunate to have found a place to stay in Mumbai with a Parsi lady, who then introduced him to various people in true Parsi fashion. He also met Ramiyar Karanjia- the Principal of the Dadar Athornan Institute who guided and mentored him and opened many doors for him as well as allowing him access to the Athornan Institute's lone student and premises, where he could photograph religious icons and sacred spaces.

A beautifully bound book- self published, with 134 photos by the author, one on each page, and without captions. The photos are meant to speak for themselves. Most Bombay-ites will easily identify the places and spaces he has photographed and perhaps even some of the people therein.

In telling this story he follows the legendary story of the Parsis arrival in India from Iran, with quotes from the tale of "Kissa-i-Sanjan" and the 5 demands the ruler Jadi Rana made, before agreeing to give sanctuary to the refugees. The final promise to the king that 'we shall be like sugar in the milk' leads to the title of this book.

As the author mentions " While shooting this story I got to know this community; they are a funny people with an open mind towards life. The religion they practice, Zoroastrianism, is such an old world heritage that it is in danger of disappearing along with the community itself. The last Indian census showed the parsi population at 57,000.

Another interesting thing about this story is that it is an example of great integration of one culture into another. When they arrived in Gujarat they were refugees in the same way we see refugees nowadays seeking shelter in Europe. Indians were wise enough to let them find a place in their society allowing them to flourish and eventually make a massive contribution to India and the City of Mumbai "

As this is a book without any words, with only notes from the author at the end of the book and as the photographs have no captions, it may be hard to appreciate and understand, until one has read the author's notes at the end as well as seen and read the captions for the photographs which appear at the end of the book.

On a second closer look the books simplicity and in- depth charm becomes more apparent.

My Mother's Persian Tales

Saeid Shammass & Shaunie Shammass

Reviewed by: Nima Firoozi

Publisher: Kotarim International Publishing, Ltd. 2018

184pages for the English part & 173pages for the Persian part.

Available at Amazon.com Price \$20

My Mother's Persian Tales

The book is written by Saeid Shammass and translated from Persian to English by his wife, Shaunie Shammass. This is a well written book for children. The folklore as we know is world heritage and has been traveled from culture to culture. The writer has chosen the tales some of which are so common, these are some of the tales that his mother recited for him when he was a child. So he tried to continue the efforts of his mother and in fact to share his culture with others.



نام کتاب: داستان های مادرم
نام نویسنده: سعید شماس و شانی شماس
نقد: نیما فیروزی
نام انتشارات: انتشارات بین المللی کوتاریم
سال انتشار: 2018
تعداد صفحات: 173

در سایت آمازون به قیمت \$20 در دسترس همگان و آماده ی خرید است.
کتاب داستانهای مادرم، در واقع حکایتهای فولکلوریک است که مادران برای فرزندان نقل می کنند. سعید شماس نویسنده به نام و یاد مادرش "زینب" این قصه های برخاسته از افواه عموم مردم را به رشته ی تحریر در آورده است.
خودش گفته که تمام این سی قصه را از میان قصه های مادرش به نحوی جدا کرده که دست کم معروف و تکراری نباشند.
آنچنان که اظهار می کند سه داستان آخر را نیز به رسم قصه سرایی قدیمی ها آورده است. نشر قصه هایی از فولکلور ایرانی برای فرزندان نسل دوم که در خارج از میهن زندگی را می گذرانند به خودی خود نیک است.
می دانیم که فولکلور نقش اساسی و کلیدی در انتقال فرهنگ دارد. و اسطوره های قصه ها بیش از آنچه تصور می کنیم در ساخت شخصیت کودکان مؤثر است. همسر سعید شماس، شانی شماس انگلیسی زبان و علاقه مند به ادبیات کودکان به نظر می رسد. ایشان همه این سی قصه را در 184 صفحه ی بخش انگلیسی کتاب به انگلیسی ترجمه کرده است.
همین که این بخش پرارزش فرهنگی ایرانی و فارسی به زبان انگلیسی ترجمه شده ارزش این اثر را دوچندان می کند. با اینحال باید گفت که دوری نویسنده از فضای ادبیات فارسی در کتاب به خوبی مشخص است. با این حال کلمات غالبین درست هستند اما به نحوی خاص به کار رفته اند که تمایز آنرا با اصل ادبیات فارسی نشان می دهد.
برای هر دو نویسنده این کتاب ارزشمند آرزوی موفقیت می کنیم
نیما فیروزی

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