

## JOURNAL

Fravadin-Ardibehesht-Khordad 1389 AY (Fasli) • Avan-Adar-Dae 1389 AY (Shenshai) • Adar-Dae-Behman 1389 AY (Kadimi)

**NOROOZ PIROOZ BAD 🌸 NOROOZ MUBARAK**



**Pairsi-Daiza**  
**Persian Gardens—Paradise On Earth**

**PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA**

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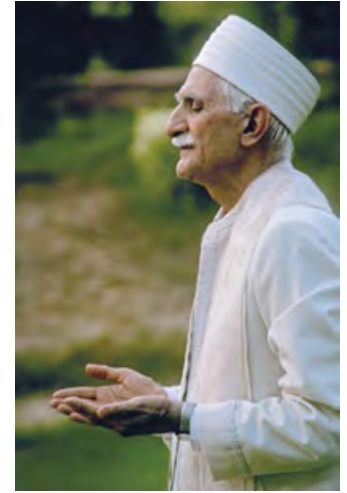


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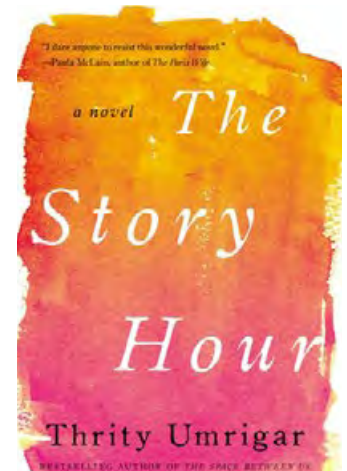
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**Summer 2020, guest editor: Farishta Dinshaw**

**THE PANDEMIC**

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**SPRING 2020 1**



WE are only three months into 2020 and we seem to be living in unprecedented times with coronavirus pandemic and global attempts being implemented to flatten the curve. However frightening this event is, it has brought out the best in people, the youth of different associations are organizing teams to respond to calls for help from the most vulnerable. And yet when we hear of “jama” being on fire we realize that for the last 10 years nothing has been done.

On March 14, the jama of Mobed Nozar Vazifdar whilst praying in the Aslaji Agiary caught fire, was taken to a hospital but died two days later of a heart attack. There were six fire extinguishers but on the floor below. And this is not the first time that a jama has caught fire while performing ritual prayers. In North America, we have built beautiful places of worship in New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Boyd (near DC) and Houston but have we provided for these eventualities? Have we posted a protocol for fire during a prayer ceremony?

2020 is the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment of the US Constitution, giving women the right to vote, the most significant reform movement whose fight lasted for more than seven decades. Securing this vote was essential to achieving women’s economic, social, and political equality, whose benefits we reap now. However, Zarathushti women have still a long way to go for religious practice rights. Another change which the establishment has to bring about.

We now turn to the accomplishments and progress of the community which we read in the following articles.

The uplifting accomplishment of all our young award winners: Academic scholarship, the Performing Arts scholarship, the sports scholarship, the new culinary scholarship, the scholarships of Chothia Foundation and the Vahshoori Foundation.

The achievements of Janet Mistree and Kainaz Amaria

and the donation of Bella Tata and family for much needed medical equipment, the experiences of Ervad Adil Minocherhomjee and Amy Engineer, at the Summer Course in Zoroastrianism in Rome, sponsored by SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Religious studies. Sanaya Master, Miraal Mavalwalla, Shirin Mehri, Ferzeen Dadabhoy, were FEZANA’s panel for CSW64 in New York on Women’s Empowerment through Education and Enhancement in the Workplace. It got canceled because of the COVID 19. But the FEZANA panelists transformed their presentation into a webinar (pg 80)



K E Eduljee writes on the beauty of the famous Persian gardens and the relationship of their architecture to the Zarthushti religion. Additionally, the delightful project of Chicago’s Religious class (6-12 years) also reflect on the beauty of the gardens.

Neville Panthaki, in his article on Black history reminds us what the diasporic Zarthushtis can learn, that faith and fellowship can only remain relevant when the adherents remain self-critical and reflective.

Zoroastrians were in the news with the naming of Freddie Mercury Close in Feltham, London, and the unveiling of the statue of Cyrus the Great at the California Zoroastrian Centre at the Abadian building in Los Angeles

The Udvada Utsav, the WZCC Annual Global enclave in Lonavla, and the Annual Meeting of Global Working Group in Mumbai are all reported by Behroze Clubwala of ZAGNY.

As we enter Zoroastrian year 1389AY, 3757 Z, the FEZANA Journal wishes all our readers the very best in health and happiness, a year with COVID 19 under control. Stay healthy and look after each other.

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D

## Vision & Venture: My Final Message as FEZANA President

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve our community as FEZANA President and contribute to this organization's many laudable pursuits. I am grateful for the opportunity, for your confidence and support, and for the joy of working with the constant help, suggestions and guidance of my fellow executives, the FEZANA Administrator, member associations and corresponding group presidents, various committee chairs, volunteers and donors.

I have always believed that "[v]ision is not enough. It must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must also step up the stairs." (Václav Havel) In the last four years, this group of fellow Zarathushtis and I have stepped up for FEZANA.

### **FEZANA in the Public Square**

FEZANA's vision is to support and represent a North American Zarathushti community that is well connected, educated, grounded in Zarathushti values and ethics, respectful of diversity, strong in collective giving, and economically prosperous. Our participation in the public square creates awareness of our community and its contributions to the world.

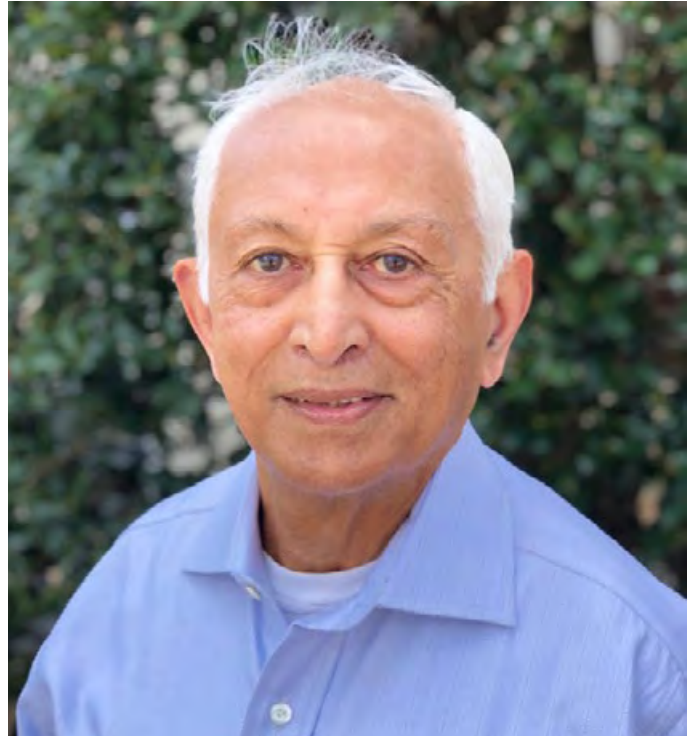
Our increased participation in interfaith activities was highlighted by the participation of 35 Zarathushtis at the 7th Parliament of the World's Religions. Our Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastur has been nominated as the Honorary Co-President of the World Council of Religions for Peace International, one of the largest interfaith organizations worldwide.

Speaking up on issues affecting our community, and standing in solidarity with our human brethren when we cannot countenance human rights violations, allows us to be a credible presence on the world stage, motivating our allies to give us support when needed.

### **Preservation & Study of Zoroastrian Heritage**

Our work in the larger community has also included the promotion of the study of Zoroastrianism and creating opportunities to make it more real by affording non-Zarathushti scholars a Zarathushti perspective with our collaborations.

To promote new scholastic research in ancient Zoroastrian languages, FEZANA has partnered with the University of Toronto (UoT) to endow a perpetual Professorship of Zoroastrian Studies there. If FEZANA raises \$1.5 million USD, UoT will add \$1.5 million



CDN to fund this program. FEZANA has begun to raise funds towards this goal.

The FEZANA Information Research Education System (FIRES) has made substantial progress with its goal of making existing scholarly materials available to support an academic exchange program.

In 2018, FEZANA sponsored archaeological excavations of the joint Bukharan expedition of the Hermitage Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. The excavations in Paykand Fire Temple resulted in the discovery of novel details of the most ancient fire temple in Central Asia allowing scholars to reconstruct important aspects of Zoroastrian history in the Bukhara region.

All these goals require more Zarathushtis to support of FEZANA, financially and otherwise.

### **Making Room for Next Generation Leaders**

A goal for many in my generation, critical to FEZANA's longevity, is to pass the baton of community leadership to the next generation. To that end, FEZANA has supported and advocated for youth in many ways. FEZANA partnered with youth as they staged a successful 7<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Youth Congress.

FEZANA collaborated with WZCC and WZOT for financing youth entrepreneurs in India. In partnership with WZCC, FEZANA established the Zarathushti Entrepreneurship Development Foundation to finance entrepreneurs and new businesses in our North American Zarathushti community. FEZANA invited youth to participate in interfaith and UN events, where they successfully hosted panel discussions and seminars, and presented papers on social issues.

FEZANA committee chairs took on youth co-chairs, with a view to mentoring them and passing on leadership roles. We need to do more to give youth more freedom to act independently of senior members to fulfill their committee's mandates. I have full confidence that they will fill the gaps if we make room for them.

#### **Funding Communitywide Endeavors**

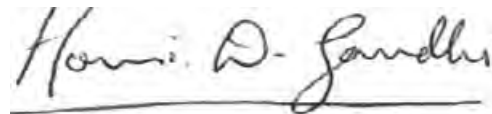
Over the past four years, FEZANA's financial position has improved significantly, with new initiatives put into place for budgeting and accounting, and with an uptick in donations to the organization – a welcome development and a very tangible vote of confidence from Zarathushtis for FEZANA's work.

But to fulfil FEZANA's many objectives, more funds are needed.

FEZANA will continue to raise funds to provide critical assistance when needed around the globe. Our endeavors with FIRES and UoT need further financial support. We added 10 more scholarships, including the addition of four new endowment scholarships, to support our students. But more than half of the applicants did not receive any financial support in 2019-20 for lack of funds. More funding would further alleviate this need.

As I look back on the last four years, I am proud of the work we have continued. I am aware that our decisions have not always been popular, but they have been made in the service of our community. Even as I step down as President, FEZANA's work will continue. With the best interests of my beloved community at heart, I will support this work to the best of my ability in the years to come.

March 8, 2020



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## ZAMWI @ 40: FOUNDED ON AN IDEA, FLOURISHING IN PRACTICE

Anne Khademian



*(The ZAMWI Community Celebrates 40 years of Great Volunteers in June 2019)*

**The** Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (ZAMWI) turned 40 in 2019. We have much to celebrate in our 40 years, beginning with the opening of the Kamran Dar-e Mehr and Cultural Center in 2014 and ZAMWI's special partnership with the Kamran Foundation, Inc. to manage, care for, and operate our Dar-e Mehr. We are also celebrating our continued engagement with the interfaith community of Washington, DC metropolitan area; the dedication and commitment of our religious leaders and the installation of a full time mobed in 2019; our long standing Avesta Classes and dedicated coordinators and teachers who



bring our children together to learn and to build lifelong friendships; our Gathas Study Circle and the intellectual engagement of our community members; and the leadership among our youth to take on the many challenges all around us and to boldly explore the meaning and practice of the Zoroastrian faith, today. We are embarking on a major fundraising effort to complete our prayer room (architect's rendering above) and establish sustainable resources for our Dar-e Mehr, and many of the young adults and youth of our community are working hard to organize and host the Z Games in July 2021



With these milestones and highlights across the arc of our community history, the ZAMWI Board of Trustees, along with multiple committees and many volunteers organized a series of events throughout the year to celebrate our religious, cultural and organizational history.





(Members of the ZAMWI Community perform at the Interfaith Concert in the National Cathedral in 2004)

## Mosaics of a Zoroastrian Landscape



On April 20, 2019, ZAMWI hosted *Mosaics of a Zoroastrian Landscape*, an afternoon of oral histories, music, dance and community building. The event was a celebration of the founding of ZAMWI, and our shared culture. In addition to our ZAMWI community, we invited our neighbors across Boyds, Maryland, home to the Kamran Dar-e Mehr, to learn more about our community, traditions and faith. Fereydoon Kesharvarz hosted this innovative event and interviewed past and present ZAMWI presidents to record and capture our history. ZAMWI's founding president, Adi Davar (pictured left) was interviewed, as well as a previous Board president, Board member, and legal expert, Kersi Shroff (pictured below). Jamshid

Goshtasbi, a previous president and the current leader of the Gathas Study Circle, and Anne Khademian, current ZAMWI president, were also interviewed. Dance performances by Silk Road Dance Company, piano performances by the late Meherji Madan, and classical Iranian music performed by Ali Analouei, Zavosh Shadmehr and Mamadreza Kazemifar brought energy and enjoyment to the afternoon.





## 40 Years of Great Volunteers



*From left Ervad Kurush Dastur, Ervad Noshir Karanjia, Ervad Adi Unwalla, Ervad Pervez Patel, Mobedyar Zen Panday, Mobedyar Hormuzd Katki, and Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaki with an opening prayer for the Celebration of ZAMWI's volunteers*

In June 2019, ZAMWI hosted the *40 Year Appreciation Dinner for our Great Volunteers*. Over 220 members attended and cheered as Avesta Class teachers, the Kamran Family and members of the Kamran Foundation, Board members from 1979 to the present, ZAMWI's legal eagles, and volunteers who have helped with special events and activities for many years were recognized. FEZANA President Homi Gandhi (pictured right) opened the evening as an honored guest, congratulating the ZAMWI community on its anniversary. ZAMWI welcomed and felicitated Ervad Adi Unwalla, Ervad Noshir Karanjia, and Ervad Pervez Patel from New Jersey and New York, and honored our long time mobed, Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaki, our full time mobed, Ervad Kurush Dastur, and our mobediyars Hormuzd Katki and Zen Panday for their dedicated service to the community. Ervad Soli Dastur was also recognized.





## Celebration of our Youth



Finally, in September 2019, the dedication and accomplishments of our young people were recognized in the *Celebration of our Youth* organized by the Women's Group. Following a delicious picnic and generous donation of hotdogs and hamburgers by Darius Golwalla and his family, attendees had the honor of a performance of "September Morning" a musical tribute to 9-11, composed by David M. Kanter and performed to a hushed audience by a remarkable visiting choir of volunteer performers. Our young musicians Meherzan Gai performed on the piano, and Feroz and Dinaz Campbell performed "Imagine" by the Beatles. Sousan Abadian spoke of the opportunities and challenges our youth face in the future. While every youth was recognized for their contributions and participation, several youth were recognized with Congressional Certificates from the office of Congressman David Trone of Maryland's 6th District for outstanding dedication and accomplishments. We wrapped up the evening with birthday cakes for ZAMWI @ 40. Our neighbors and interfaith colleagues from across the region were all invited and many of them attended all three events.





## Arts and Culture and Reviving our Gahanbar Celebrations

In 2019, an anonymous donor gave \$80,000 to ZAMWI to establish an endowment for advancing the arts, music and culture in our community and to establish ZAMWI as a leader in promoting the arts across the diaspora. The ZAMWI Board established the Zoroastrian Arts and Culture Council -DC (ZACC-DC) to support this mission. Pictured left are the council members Behram Pastakia, Farzad Aidun, Shirin Bafava, Perinaaz Gandhi, Pashna Munchi, and the late Meherji Madan. In addition to our first piano donated at the time the Dar-e Mehr opened in 2014, ZAMWI received an anonymous donation in December 2019 of a grand piano for performances by our youth and community members, and guest performances. Meherji Madan, a founding member of the Arts and Culture Council, in honor of his mother, a long time piano teacher, gave in support of the accessories required to move, store and protect the piano.

The ZAMWI Board also established an endowment fund for donations made in support of our annual Gahanbar Celebrations organized by the Women's Group. Through several anonymous donations, this endowment fund now totals \$71,000. The investment income from the fund will support Gahanbar celebrations and promote giving in our community.



## A historic commitment to a progressive and inclusive community

While 2019 was a year to celebrate our community--all the volunteers, our youth, our mobeds, the many boards and leaders, our history, and vital milestones--it was also a year of reflection, learning and insight. Why was ZAMWI established? What was the vision? Who wrote the Constitution? What were the controversies and what were the points of celebration? Who are ZAMWI members, and why are they members? Throughout 2019, the layers of ZAMWI's history and the motivation to come together and stay together have been revealed in bits and pieces through the planning and research and moments of great celebration.

Fundamentally, however, this anniversary year revealed that the founding of ZAMWI is rooted in an idea: A commitment to a progressive and inclusive community, welcoming to all believers in the Zoroastrian faith. That commitment has been nurtured through the years by strong foundational leaders and community scholars and teachers, and by robust discussions and disagreements-- for the most part in the spirit of critical thinking and the search for truth. Our community has deep roots in Iran, Pakistan and in India, and members who were born in America, England, and Iraq. We have community members who came to Zoroastrianism by choice, and community members who were born into the faith. We have Gujarati lessons after Avesta Class on Sundays, and "Farsi through Music" lessons at the same time. We are one of the first communities in North America to have a full-time mobed, and the first to ordain a mobediar in North America, yet we are still working to complete our prayer room. We have long running discussions and disagreements about what should be taught in Avesta Classes, yet we are one of the few associations where children from Iranian homes and children from Parsi



homes have always been in class together, with teachers who are from Iran, India, Pakistan and America. We love to dance, eat, laugh and enjoy drinks at the bar, and we love to sing “Khan Ashem Vohu” before hundreds of people at the Interfaith Concert each November. We are complex and diverse, but we share the root of a community founded upon progressive ideals.



*Members of the ZAMWI Board of Trustees 1978 to 2020*



*Zenobia Taraporewala, Shehernaz Verahrami, and Cainaz Vakharia*



*Mina Aidun, Manijeh Aidun, Parvin Dehghanian, and Rostam Farahifar*



## Looking to the future

We look forward to the next 40 years working with our fellow associations and Zoroastrians across North America and the world to share the wisdom of the Gathas through our daily lives. With appreciation for our community, gratitude to all our volunteers who make each event, activity and milestone possible, and hope for the future, here's to another great 40 years of progressive thinking and community building.

*ANNE KHADEMIAN a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Washington, DC for 17 years, has taught Avesta Class, organized musical performances, coordinated events, organizes the Kamran Seminar with her husband Zarir and a great team, and now serves as president of the ZAMWI Board of Trustees. She is a professor and presidential fellow, working with the office of the president of Virginia Tech on strategic initiatives for the university.*



*Artin Aidun on violin at a ZAMWI event.*



*Past ZAMWI President Navroz Gandhi, Perinaz Gandhi, and Mahnaz Marolia*



*Montgomery County Executive Marc Eldridge holds the Proclamation for the recognition of Nowruz in Montgomery County Maryland, surrounded by members of the ZAMWI community.*

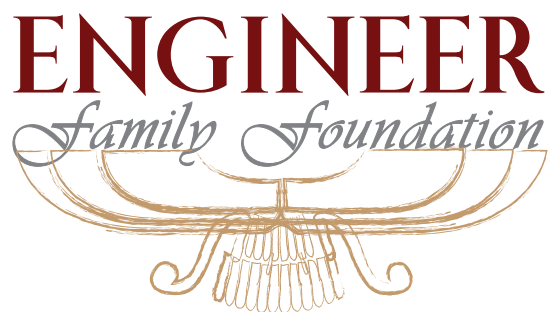


## *Impacting Lives Positively One at a Time*

Engineer Family Foundation (EFF) is a philanthropy minded charity institution that aims to make a difference in the lives of talented and aspiring individuals and those in need of assistance for basic human needs like food, clothing and shelter.

Our charity invites applications from students aspiring for education, pursuing work related technical diploma's and seeking excellence in the fields of sports and fine arts.

We also accept applications from individuals in need of assistance to access basic needs like food, clothing and shelter.



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



## CYRUS THE GREAT DAY & STATUE UNVEILING

**October 27, 2019**

October 29th is semi-officially known as the “Day of Cyrus The Great”. In the last 2 decades multiple programs in various countries & across the globe have shown this historical character as a man of honor & integrity, known as the founder of the first declaration of human rights, the father of Persian empire, the ruler of hearts and the “Messiah” for the Jewish people as repeatedly mentioned in the old testament, the holy Torah.



On Sunday October 27, 2019, the California Zoroastrian Cultural Center at the Abadian building in Los Angeles (CZC-LA) in association with several other institutions & individuals celebrated the day of Cyrus The Great. The program was well planned and managed by the board of directors at CZC-LA with cooperation from various other organizations and individuals. It consisted of speeches, artistic performances and eventually lead to the highlight of the day, the unveiling of the statue of Cyrus The Great, at the center of the Abadian building in Los Angeles. (photo right)

**DR. KHOSRO ESFANDIAR MEHRFAR**

The MC for the program Mr. Hasan Khayatbashi, is a well known Iranian actor/artist for over 50 years. The speakers were councilman Bob Blumenfield, of the city of Los Angeles, District 3, the representative of the congressman Brad Sherman of the U. S.



Congress for State of California, District 30, President of FEZANA, Homi Gandhi, Professor Farshid Delshad, Bijan Khalili of Ketab corporation and myself. In between programs several classical music pieces were played and traditional dances performed, by professional groups of artists from dancing studios. The Babylon victory speech of Cyrus The Great & his coronation by his wife, queen Cassandane, where this powerful ruler



kneels down in front of his wife to be officially king of the Persian empire were among the highlights of the day. The program was planned, managed and performed by a group of Iranians lead by Dr. Farrokh Shadab. The complete video of this program along with the unveiling of the statue can be viewed on URL address; **CyrusSociety.org/ABCXYZ**

The statue of Cyrus The Great was the brainchild of the late Nic Amini-Sam who initially started to study &



plan for it more than 20 years ago. He created the initial design of the statue and manufactured several hundreds of them in bronze & in small sizes, about 18 to 22 inches. He asked me to join in his efforts about 2 years ago. We started to run it as a deliverable project. Over the years we had given several of the statues, (a sample of



its picture is seen below), to the white house, to Chelsea Clinton, to George Bush, to Bill Clinton, to FEZANA, other organizations and individuals from whom we had received a supporting endorsements.

However, after more than 2 decades it was the leadership of Behnam Abadian (above) who helped the project tremendously through careful planning and well managed operation from beginning to the end. Behnam had started supporting the project about 5 years ago by purchasing and distributing the statue. This was just one of the designed/engineered Cyrus The Great statue projects which he was supporting along with some other efforts that were going on at the same time. (see image below)

In early 2019, Behnam officially joined our Cyrus The Great Statue project & took over the management of it. All legal rights were purchased and we started to plan the next phase of the project which very early on lead to the cooperation between various groups headed by the president of the board of directors of CZC-LA, Mrs. Mitra Zartoshty and her team of capable directors & supporters along with other individuals and institutions including Mrs. Sholeh Shams of the prestigious Rahavard publications, a very well known and well liked Iranian actor and artist, Mr. Hasan Khayatbashi and our own Behnam who generously funded the whole event along with the \$10,000 contribution from the trustees of the Arbab Rostam Guiv Foundation under president of

the trust, Dr. Daryoush Jahanian which was given to the CZC-LA board of directors to help cover partial costs of the manufacturing of the statue in large size which was done by Behnam's company Saxton Industrial Inc.

As mentioned earlier, the summit of the event and the highlight of the whole program was the moment when the statue was unveiled by Behnam at the CZC-LA Abadian building. A few minutes prior to that, 2 Mobeds, a male and a female prayed and recited verses from Avesta & hymns from Gathas of Zarathustra, creating an ambiance of love, peace and joy for all. The Abadian building was full of people and some estimate showed a relatively large crowd perhaps at some points close to several hundred people who could not be accommodated inside due to lack of space, were all gathering in the streets next to the building and watching the unveiling ceremony from outside. It was a proud moment.

Thanks to the cooperation from many organizations and individuals involved in this event, the October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 unveiling of the statue of this great man of human history, the ruler of People's heart, - someone the current rulers need to look up to & learn from- was a great day for all of us & not just for Zoroastrians &/or Iranians but for every single human being to be proud of & learn from his way of life based on the guiding light & the three ever-fresh, ever-lasting principles of "Good Thoughts, Good Words & Good Deeds".



◆ *Dr. Khosro Esfandiar Mehrfar born in Tehran, Iran moved to U.S. in 1979 to pursue his higher education. Dr. Mehrfar has served the Zarathushti community in many capacities. He lives in Southern California with his wife and two children and two grandchildren.*



## Nepal Trip

With great appreciation to Behram Pastakia, I was introduced to the existence of Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children (HRDC) in Nepal.

From December 24, 2019-January 3, 2020 I, my wife Mitra and my 3 daughters Nadia, Tara & Roxana had the opportunity to visit Nepal. The first 4 days of our trip was in a city 5 hours drive west of Kathmandu called Bandipur where we participated in a 4 day Yoga and meditation retreat.

It was a wonderful experience being the fresh air of the mountainous region with the view of the Himalayan Mountains and interacting with the locals and the children.

The weather was cold and our rooms did not have any heating at 3 degrees Celsius but the warmth of the people hosting us made up for it.



For 4 days I attended HRDC where I provided a post-graduate orthopaedic training to 27 physical therapists. The students had travelled from various regions of Nepal to attend the course, however most resided in Kathmandu.

The course was a great success from excellent feedback received. There are very limited opportunities in Nepal for continuing education for clinicians wishing to expand their skills. This course was provided at no tuition fee



which was greatly appreciated by the attending HRDC staff and the attending students.

The program provided the physical therapists with various methods of evaluating, manual therapies and exercise prescription for children and adults with various orthopaedic lower extremity conditions and disabilities. While I was teaching the course, my daughters were interacting and playing children's games with the



residing patients. Their laughter could be heard while I was teaching.

We spent the final 3 nights in Kathmandu experiencing the capital city and several tourist attractions and temples. The air in Kathmandu was quite polluted which made breathing difficult, however the hotel room where we stayed had heating which provided us with much comfort.



We all had an extraordinary experience in Nepal and I was made to promise to return again to teach the upper extremity program in Kathmandu in one year. The kindness of the people we interacted with was overwhelming.

Thank you .

Sincerely, Bahram Jam, Toronto, Canada

Member of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO)



## PARSIPANU CONTINUES ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS

Once a month Zoroastrian Association of California holds Religious classes for children and youth. They are taught by Shahzneen Gandhi, Houtoxi Contractor, Gulshan Pagdiwalla, Zarrir and Zerkxis Bhandara.

Children and youth engrossed in prayers with Zarrir Bhandara at the Zoroastrian Association of California

Photo credit, Zarrir Bhandara





# FEZANA UPDATE

**ZAMWI WELCOMES ALL ATHLETES, SPECTATORS, AND VOLUNTEERS TO THE  
17TH ZOROASTRIAN GAMES JULY 2 - 5, 2020!**

**REGISTER NOW FOR THE 17th Z GAMES:**

[www.zagmes2020.com](http://www.zagmes2020.com)

**Compete as an individual or with a team!**

Join the fun and sign up for Hawaiian Night, an evening tour of Washington, DC,  
and the spectacular July 4th Gala Night.

Register and consider making a donation or purchase a  
sponsorship package to promote your business.

Frequently asked questions can be found on the [FAQ page](#),  
or you can write to [zagmes2020@zamwi.org](mailto:zagmes2020@zamwi.org)

Look for community updates and reach out  
to your local association Z Games Ambassador, as well.

*Lace up your sneakers, wear your community t-shirt, bring your signs and messages,  
compete, cheer, celebrate, and enjoy the camaraderie and fun of the 17th Z Games!*



## Part I—Concept of the Persian Paradise Gardens

Gardens are commonplace today. Exceptionally beautiful gardens are also found the world over. In yesteryear's world known to the ancient Aryans and Greeks, paradise gardens were rare and uniquely 'Persian'. They were and are an intrinsic part of Zoroastrian heritage.

### 1. Paradise Gardens

The Jewish Garden of Eden and the Christian garden-like heaven are called paradeisos in the Greek translations of the faiths' respective scriptures. In writing the first English translations of the two scriptures English writers rendered the Greek paradeisos and its Latin form paradisus as "paradise". As we learn from Classical Greek author Xenophon (431-354 BCE), the Greek word paradeisos was itself the Greek version of an Old Persian word for garden estates.



K. E. Eduljee



Shazdeh Bagh, Kerman, Iran UNESCO World Heritage site.

Image Credit: Mehr News Agency at Wikimedia.

## 2. Oldest Known Use of ‘Paradeisos’ by the Greeks

If the term paradise is commonly used today, it appears that it was unknown to the West before the Greeks came into contact with the Aryan Mada and Parsa—Medes and Persians.

The oldest uses of the word paradeisos in extant texts are in the works of Greek historian and mercenary Xenophon (431-354 BCE) who used paradeisos (paradise) as the name of the estate gardens of Persian nobility. Scholars in turn universally attribute the origins of that Old Persian name to the Avestan term pairi-daeza.

There is an even deeper Zoroastrian connection. The vision of an exceptionally beautiful paradise filled with nature’s bounty existing in peace and harmony without fear or death—encapsulated in the Avestan word pairi-daeza was based on another Zoroastrian concept, frasho-kereti, which has its roots in Zarathushtra’s Gathas—a connection we will examine in Part II. First, let us examine what Xenophon had to say about Persian paradeisoi (the plural) a bit further.

## 3. Persian Roots of Paradeisos

In his *Oeconomicus* (*Economics* 399 BCE) at 4.13, Xenophon states, “In all the districts he resides in and visits he (the Great King as Achaemenid Persian kings were called by the Greeks) takes care that there are paradeisoi as they call them, full of all the good and beautiful things that the soil will produce, and in this he himself spends most of his time.”

## 4. Examples of the Persian Paradeisos/Paradise Garden Estates

From the many, here are two short examples of the Persian paradeisos/paradise garden estates described by Xenophon and other classical Greek writers.

In his *Anabasis*, Xenophon described the paradeisos/paradise garden estate of fifth century BCE Achaemenid Persian Prince Cyrus (not Cyrus the Great). Cyrus the ‘Younger’ was a satrap, vice regal governor, of the Asia Minor countries Lydia, Phrygia & Ionia. “He had a palace with a large paradeisos—a wonderful park full of animals... through which flowed the river Maeander.” Other Persian nobles also possessed paradeisoi in Asia Minor.

The other example: Chitrafarnah (NP Chehrfar, Gk./Eng. Tissaphernes 445–395 BCE), Persian satrap of Sardis (in Asia Minor) had a paradeisos that also contained a river and had been laid out at great expense with plants and meadows “and all other things that contribute to

peaceful pleasure.”

Chitrafarnah owned yet another paradeisos in Ionian Greek town of Tralles on Asia Minor’s Aegean coast.

## 5. Avestan Roots of Paradeisos: Pairi-Daeza, a Walled Compound

Pairi-daeza, the Avestan word from which paradeisos stems, is widely understood to mean a walled compound. Pairi-daeza is also attributed as the root word for the New Persian ‘ferdos’ meaning paradise or paradise-like garden.

Precisely speaking, pairi-daeza was the (walled) estate that contained a bagh/garden.

## 6. Baghs

We will now introduce another Persian word of gardens, baghs, and see how it relates to the Avestan word pairi-daeza.

Aryans were certainly enthralled with beautiful gardens—called baghs in New Persian—and could well have been the originators of the concept.

However, the word does not seem to have started off as a word for a garden. Instead, for this writer, the meanings for bagh/baug in Avestan, Old Persian and Middle Persian that fit most foundational contexts are akin to ‘divine phenomenon’, ‘miracle of good fortune’, ‘wonderment’ or ‘marvel’. In later texts, bagh evolved to mean garden—a place that held all these meanings.

## 7. Why Gardens within Walled Compounds?

Baghs became the gardens found within walled pairi-daeza compounds. But why locate a garden within a walled compound?

The reason for enclosing a garden within a walled compound may lie in the environment in which these gardens were first envisioned and created. The lands of Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau are given to extremes in climate, from severe winters with blizzards, to burning summers with blinding dust storms. In those areas where the mountains were barren and rocky or where deserts presented the risk of sand encroachment, the Aryans saw a latent inner beauty—like that of a gem encased in rock. They left the countryside for the main part pristine, admiring it for what it was as nature intended—and sacred as a manifestation of Ahura Mazda’s creation. Where land was required for human habitation, rather than scaring the earth, they helped make it blossom and become a refuge not just for themselves, but for animals and rare plants as well. That was the ancient ethic encapsulated in verses 3.4 and 3.24 of the Vendidad—verses that exhort the believer to cultivate barren land and bring joy to Ahura Mazda’s creation.

To illustrate this concept, a picture paints a thousand words and images of B

A large enough pairi-daeza with a water source, a variety of plants and beneficent animals could also be self sustaining for supporting, say, a family. It would have been a short step to then organize the bagh and realize its latent beauty. Thus over time, the meaning of pairi-daeza would have evolved from an enclosed compound to that of an enclosed garden and eventually to an exceptionally beautiful garden—a peaceful paradise on earth that was nevertheless functional.

## 8. Formal & Informal Gardens



Shazdeh Bagh, Kerman, Iran UNESCO World Heritage site.  
Image Credit: Mehr News Agency at Wikimedia.

We can observe that two main types of gardens emerged (and a number of sub-types such as courtyard gardens). The first, described by Greek authors and observable in the gardens of today, is the formal bagh of the nobility. The second, also observable today, is the informal bagh of the rest of the population.

Both types of baghs, the more stately regal estate gardens and the more plebeian (though no less delightful) walled sub-urban baghs, served as places of peace and beauty as well as places where family and community bonds could be cemented.

### A. Formal Gardens

As we have noted, the works of Xenophon and other classical Greek authors describe several gardens in Asia Minor belonging to the Persian nobility. Xenophon wrote that these Persian nobles excelled not just in war but in gardening as well. They collected plants, fruit bearing trees and animals encountered during their foreign expeditions and placed them in their paradeisoi—paradeisoi

gardens they had gone through great lengths to author. Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* at 4.13 states, "The (Persian) Great King... in all the districts he resides and visits... takes great care that there are paradeisoi as they call them, full of all the beautiful things the soil will produce."

The Persian gardens and the ethics behind their making, became objects of great wonder to the Greeks (who likely had nothing similar in their own tradition) as in Xenophon's description of a visit by Spartan Admiral Lysander to Cyrus the Younger's paradeisos at Sardis.

Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* at 4.20-25 reads,

"Lysander himself related once to a stranger at Megara that when he went to Cyrus bringing the gifts he had brought from their allies, Cyrus welcomed him as a friend and personally showed him around his paradeisos at Sardis. Lysander admired the beauty of the trees in it, the accuracy of the spacing, the straightness of the rows, the regularity of the angles and the multitude of the sweet scents that clung round them as they walked; and for wonder of these things he cried, 'Cyrus, I really do admire all these lovely things, but I am far more impressed with your employees' skills in measuring and arranging everything so exactly.' Cyrus was delighted to hear this and said, 'Well, Lysander, the whole of the measurement and arrangement is my own work—and I did some of the planting myself.' 'What,

Cyrus?' exclaimed Lysander, ... 'did you really plant part of this with your own hands?' 'Does that surprise you, Lysander?' asked Cyrus in reply. 'I swear by Mithra that I never yet sat down to dinner when in sound health, without first working hard at some task of war or agriculture, or exerting myself somehow.' On hearing this Lysander congratulated Cyrus with these words, 'I think you deserve your happiness, Cyrus, for you earn it by your virtues.'"

The Persian nobilities' formal gardens were then well planned and laid out with mathematical precision. In describing Chitrafarnah's (Tissaphernes') paradeisos, first century CE biographer Plutarch (Alcibiades 24.5) adds, "Of his paradeisoi the most handsome had lawns and refreshing waters. Its retreats and its manicured lawns displayed unimaginable royal luxury."

The chahar bagh (four-fold garden) of Cyrus the Great (c. 600—530 BCE) at his capital Pasargadae in Persia are of equal fame. The chahar bagh design became the core de-



*Jubilee Gardens of Jamshedpur, India, based on the chahar-bagh concept. A gift from the Tata Iron and Steel Company to the citizens of Jamshedpur.*

*Image credit: Various contributors.*

sign for subsequent formal Iranian gardens including the gardens of India's Mughal rulers. The gardens of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India are based on Cyrus' Chahar Bagh design and are so named even today.

The image of the public gardens at Jamshedpur is an extended form of the chahar bagh concept with more than four sections.

## **B. Informal Gardens**

The other type of walled baghs that abound today in Iran are those belonging to members of the population at large. Many of them have a mixture of natural and planted vegetation including shade and fruit trees; many have wells, ponds and other bodies of water as well as small cottages or shelters with takhts (seating platforms). Water played a significant role in the design and in the creation of the bagh's micro climate as well as its calming environment.

When this writer visited walled baghs in Iran just outside Tehran, the transformation upon entering the gates of the bagh was breathtaking. In summer, when the surroundings were hot and dry, upon entering the bagh one was greeted by a cool fragrant air and a soothing microclimate.



*Walled baghs at Koocheh Bagh Tarasht, Tehran, Iran.*

Indeed, it was a heavenly microenvironment compared to the blistering and energy sapping dry heat outside. The baghs had a spiritual quality about them as well.

Beyond being oases and a place of refuge when the climate was harsh, the baghs were places for restoration of spiritual, physical and community health. Families and friends would congregate in the baghs on weekends and holidays. Meals cooked there seemed more delicious and the whole experience was heart-warming especially during the festive Nowruz season when nature paraded itself in all its glory.

## **9. Zoroastrian Concepts behind the Persian Gardens**

For this author there was only one greater joy than having had the opportunity to visit and experience the wonder of the baghs, the Persian gardens. That joy coupled with an even greater sense of wonder was experienced in later years during an exploration of the con-

cepts of our ancient but ever meaningful faith that lay behind the baghs—concepts we introduce in part II of our account on the Persian gardens.

### **Notes:**

Παράδεισος.

Older works using the word are cited by other authors but are not extant.

V 3.18, 5.49 et seq.

Based on a translation in Xenophon in Seven Volumes (several authors) Harvard University Press (Cambridge, 1979).

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Lysander was a fifth cent. BCE Spartan admiral who defeated the Athenians at Aegospotami in 405 BCE.

Based on a translation in Xenophon in Seven Volumes (several authors) Harvard University Press (Cambridge, 1979). For more details see <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/garden/index.htm>.

## 1. Creating a Paradise on Earth. Frasho-Kereti & Gardens

The ultimate goal for this world in the religion of Zarathushtra is the attainment of Frasho-kereti—a heaven on earth—when the full potential of Ahura Mazda’s original creation will be manifest; when fear, deceit and evil will have been utterly obliterated, and when humanity will live in ushta—abiding peace and bliss.

The ‘kereti’ in Frasho-kereti is equivalent to ‘kar’ meaning both ‘make’ and ‘work’ as in New Persian. The mission of human beings alluded to in the Gathas of Zarathushtra (“ferashem kernaon” = to make excellent) at Yasna 30.9 is to work tirelessly and diligently towards the goal of building a physical existence that is ultimate excellence and the epitome of wholeness. Our deeds—not words or protestations—demonstrate the efficacy of our beliefs.

According to the Pahlavi Rivayet, at the attainment of Frasho-kereti (Middle Persian, Frashgird), “The earth will resemble a garden in spring in which there will be all kinds of trees and flowers. It will be the ultimate manifestation of Ahura Mazda’s (Ohrmazd’s) endowment.” [cf. *azem dadham* = I gave/endowed ].

[The ancient Aryans lived in a temperate belt that stretched from Asia Minor in the west to Central Asia and beyond in the east. In some districts, winters were very harsh while spring was like a transformation to a heaven on earth. Spring was when nature blossomed to reveal the true splendour of Ahura Mazda’s endowment to the physical existence that including humanity.]

Ninth century CE scholar and author of a Zand work, Mobed Zadspram adds, “[The making of Frashgird] is like springtime ...when new leaves shoot from dormant plants and trees and ...seeds sprout and bear blossoms everywhere.” It is in a garden with a variety of vegetation and plants that showcase the wonder of nature where we can witness this transformation; it is the garden that reminds us of our mission to work and transform this blessed earth into a paradise.

Rather than seeing the earthly existence as a form of hell from which one must escape; rather than fixating our minds in trying to gain admittance to a heavenly garden paradise through membership in a particular religion or sect, the Zoroastrian religion exhorts humanity to work, prevent or remove that which pollutes or disfigures this earth and build in its stead a garden-like paradise that is the realization of the full potential of Ahura Mazda’s endowment—a heaven on earth.

Creating exceptional gardens is an expression of that imperative.

## 2. Special Place for Trees

Achaemenid Persian monarchs and nobility who were personally involved in planting and maintaining the pairidaeza baghs, attached great importance to trees. Author Bremmer notes, “One tablet (at Persepolis) inventories 6,166 seedlings at five places including three partetas [Elamite, cf. Av pairidaeza], in which there were also 4,931 trees. The prominence of trees may be surprising, but the Persians attached great value to trees.” “When finding a fine plane tree (chinar) a day east of Sardis, Xerxes decorated it with gold and appointed a perpetual guardian (Herodotus *Histories* 7.31 etc.). Cyrus the Younger showed Spartan Admiral Lysander the paradeisos at Sardis and stated he had personally planted some trees. Strabo (*Geography* 15.3.18), who probably goes back to fourth century BCE sources, even mentions that during their education, Persian youth were ...trained in the planting of trees.”

Farrokh Vajifdar contends that in Ferdowsi’s (a name likely derived from pairidaeza) *Shahnameh*, the structure forty cubits square, that King Vishtasp built around the divinely sent Cypress that Zarathushtra planted was a pairidaeza, the Avestan root word for paradise. Vajifdar notes, “At Kashmar, then, this tree (the Cypress of Zarathushtra) gained height and girth to legendary proportions, and a pairidaeza or enclosed park was created around it.”

There is a side story. According to several Arabic accounts, the wretched Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847 to 861 CE) ordered the hewing down and cutting to pieces of Zarathushtra’s Cypress. In destroying the heavenly tree, Mutawakkil embraced the forces of hell and was himself cut down by his Turkish slave just before the 1,300 camel-caravan transporting the hewn tree across nearly 1,500 km arrived at Iraqi Samarra where the caliph had planned to use the cypress’ wood in the building of his palace. That town too has never known enduring peace since.

From the Ashem Vohu prayer, Zoroastrians learn that selfless goodness is its own reward. From the Mutawakkil story we learn that base ambition is its own curse.

## 3. Gardens as a Place to Become Whole & Rejuvenate Spiritually

The pairidaeza garden baghs are ideal places to rejuvenate the spirit. They are meeting places of all elements of the spiritual and material creation; they are a place for personal reflection as well as strengthening family, friendship and community bonds; they are places, if a person so chooses, to reconnect with one’s spiritual self; they are places to take a hiatus from active life and



*Chenar/Plane Tree at Urgut, Zarafshan Valley, Uzbekistan.*

continue a spiritual quest.

The pairidaeza garden baghs are places to cultivate the soil with one's bare hands, grow nutritious plants and healing herbs. As Xenophon stated in *Oeconomicus* 5.1-3 (in summary), "I relate all this to you to show that high and mighty people (of Persia) are devoted to gardening and are thus thrice blest for it combines luxury with the satisfaction of an improved estate and physical exercise. The earth freely offers to those that labour, all things necessary to the life of a human being."

The baghs are also places to realize the ideals of the six Amesha Spentas including Armaiti (serenity), Haurvatat (wholeness that embraces universal mental and physical health) and Ameretat (overcoming untimely death in this life and an immortal soul in the next). They are places to reflect on the lessons of the year past, the spiritual significance of Nowruz, and plans for the New Year.

#### 4. Gardens as the Place to Renew our Commitment to the Faith & its Tenets

Shirazi poet Hafez (1315—1390 CE) said it best:

"In a garden, renew your Zoroastrian faith.

Yes, in the sanctuary of the Magi they honour us,  
For the fire that never dies burns strong within our hearts."

#### 5. The Metaphoric Garden

Zarathushtra may have been the world's first poet to use meter and metaphor to convey his messages—thereby allowing us to contemplate his verses by peeling away their layers of meaning to reveal fresh insights the deeper we delve. His followers and those he inspired followed his lead. Iran became the incubator for poets most sublime who used metaphorical verses as secret codes for their most ardent thoughts.

Hafez saw the garden as a metaphor for the sanctuary of the Magi, and there are those who saw the cypress as a metaphor for Zarathushtra's flame and so much more. In this tradition, the garden-bagh and its every component can in themselves become metaphors. Sitting on a takht or by the edge of a pool, one can possibly look around and allow nature to reveal the transcendent messages of the faith.

Some transcendent values that Zoroastrianism holds, above others, are those embodied in the concepts of Asha and being Meheraban—being thoughtful, kind and caring. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and John Ruskin saw those values reflected in the garden with these immortal words:



Hafez Mausoleum & Bagh, Shiraz, Iran. Image credit: tourhq.com.

"Kind hearts are the gardens,  
Kind thoughts are the roots,  
Kind words are the flowers,  
Kind deeds are the fruits.  
Take care of your garden,  
Keep out the weeds,  
Fill it with sunshine,  
Kind words and kind deeds."

Invite the garden into your heart and perhaps you too may hear the song of Zarathushtra.

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◆ *K E Eduljee of West Vancouver, Canada, past director of ZSBC and founding trustee of Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr Trust for BC, is the author of the Zoroastrian Heritage website at [www.zoroastrianheritage.com](http://www.zoroastrianheritage.com) and the Zoroastrian Heritage blog at [zoroastrianheritage.blogspot.com](http://zoroastrianheritage.blogspot.com). He hosts Facebook's Zoroastrian Heritage group and has written several monographs on subjects such as the Farohar/Fravahar motif. His efforts in maintaining the Zoroastrian Heritage site are directed towards providing objective information on the Zarathushti religion and its heritage,*

*Cypress called the Cypress of  
Zarathushtra, Abarkuh, Yazd, Iran.  
Photographer unknown.*



## FIRST ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO YOUTH PROJECT FAIR SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2019

*The children in the religion class of ZAC did a unit on Persian Gardens in 2019, focusing on the structural, historical, and religious influence of these public spaces. 40 children and youth from the ZAC Religion Class (ages 6-13) participated and displayed the incredible effort they had put into designing and creating educational projects of their own choice related to Zoroastrianism. Topics included The Navjote Ceremony, Persian Gardens, Articles of the Zoroastrian Faith, Heroes of the Shahnameh, Life of Zarathushtra, Asha vs. Druj, Nowruz/Haft Seen, Three Yazatas, The Zoroastrian Creation Story, Farohar, and Amesha Spentas.*

There were three projects on Persian Gardens in the Youth Project Fair. The children all ranged in age from 8-12 years



Team 1. Serena Elavia and Jayden Ullal



Team 2 Rayhan Guard and Katy Daruwala



*Team 3 (left) Zara Engineer (age 11) answers questions about her project on Persian Gardens for which she made a mixed media 3-D model to represent important concepts*

In this issue we present a summary of the Persian gardens project by the three teams.

## Presentation Summary on the Persian Community Gardens

### *Iran as a Garden - By King Khushrow I*

*Iran is like a lush Spring **garden**  
Where Roses ever bloom  
The army and weapons are the garden's walls  
And lances its wall of thorns  
If the garden's **walls** are pulled down  
Then there would be no difference between it and the wilderness [beyond]  
Take care not to destroy its **walls**  
And not to dishearten or weaken the people  
If you do, then destruction will follow  
And also the battle-cries of riders and the din of war  
Risk not the safety of the men, women, children, and lands by bad policies and plans*



### **Pairidaeza – Bagh – Walled Garden**

Pardis, meaning paradise is the root word here. See the connection between why a garden was called Pairidaeza and the poem above.

Long ago, in the distant past, there ruled over Iran a great king whose name was Vishtasp. Vishtasp had immense wealth and many victories to his name.

One day Vishtasp was returning to his capital from a visit to the provinces, when his entourage passed by an orchard of exceptional beauty. The land around the orchard was desolate. It was clear to the eye that preparing the land for cultivation would have been a task beyond the abilities of most people. The people tending the orchard must have worked with great foresight, wisdom, dedication and diligence. Within the grounds, Vishtasp noticed a group of people engaged in earnest discussion.



Vishtasp turned to a minister travelling with him and enquired about the orchard and the people. The minister told the king that this was the renowned sage Zarathushtra's garden. The king had heard of this wise man and his growing fame. He decided to invite Zarathushtra to his palace to answer questions which the King's many advisors had not been able to answer to his satisfaction.



When Zarathushtra was brought before the king, the king invited Zarathushtra to his palace to discuss how a person could gain wisdom. Zarathushtra asked the king to excuse him since his work in the orchard could not be neglected. However, Zarathushtra reached in to his satchel and gave the king a grain of wheat. Zarathushtra told the king the grain had been his teacher and had answers to many questions.

At first the king felt annoyed with Zarathushtra's response. He nevertheless returned to his palace with the grain. On the chance the grain had some magically properties, the king placed the grain securely in a gold box. Everyday he opened the gold box and looked at the grain hoping to find the answers to his questions. Everyday he was none the wiser.

After some months of frustrated waiting, the king decided to visit the sage once more. The king showed Zarathushtra the grain in the gold box, and asked him what lesson the grain was supposed to teach. Whereupon Zarathushtra asked the king what would have happened if instead of placing the grain in a gold box, the king had planted the grain so that it could receive food and water.



Together they reflected on the many lessons they could learn from that simple act. First, in order to grow and transform, the grain would need to be removed from the gold box and grounded in the earth. As with the grain, the king realized he needed to step out of his comfortable surroundings. Then, in the same way the innumerable forces of nature would flow towards the grain to nurture its growth, so would he be nurtured with knowledge and understanding.

The grain was only as apt to teach, as the king was ready to learn.

The answers to the many questions he had, lay around him. The ability to understand them and grow in wisdom lay within him. Instead of just seeing, he would observe; instead of hearing, he would listen; instead of demanding answers from others, he would develop his own mind and seek answers through insight. King Vishtasp's quest for wisdom had begun.

At a time when kings oppressed their people, Zoroastrian kings created public gardens which everyone could enjoy – Equality!



For Persian gardens, number 4 is very important!!  
Persian garden are based on 4 seasons  
Persian gardens have 4 components – water, sunlight, shade, building



### Zoroastrian Ideals in the Persian Community Gardens

- Ushta – Peace and Happiness
- Armaity - calm environment to enable a person to refocus is not an end in itself
- Equality
- Friendship
- Deep Thinking - a place for calm dialogue and a philosophical discussion
- Trust
- Kindness & Sharing

Formatted by Sanaya Master.



*Eram Garden in Shiraz*



### *Mukhtad poem*

A lovely poem to mark the first day  
of our Mukhtaad prayers.....

Do you look back at me  
When I look at your silver vase?  
Do you smell the flowers  
I bring so lovingly on all ten days?

Those flowers so remind me of you  
Vibrant, fragrant and fresh!  
Those divas so remind me of you  
Ever so bright and warm to feel

Not a day goes by  
That I don't think of you  
But, these ten days bring fresh hope  
Of your refreshing presence

I go to your table expecting a response  
To the pointless questions I can't get across.  
Sometimes in my mind I forget that you're dead  
Because I keep you living in my mind

I love you so much  
It makes me sad  
I can't hear you say it back  
The one thing that would make me so glad!

*\*Noshir H. Dadrawala\*  
March 21, 2020*

### *The space that binds us*

I keep washing my hands  
20 seconds they say,  
20 seconds of eternity.

From Wuhan to Milan  
the breezes blow, invisible currents  
connecting microbes and mortals.

Safe at home, I convince myself,  
lulled in the backyard patio  
this is the place where my soul strings loosen.

They float among double delight roses  
sweep over decomposed granite walkways, swoop-  
ing, encircling, then streaming out over caverns  
remote

for I am everywhere and nowhere,  
shredding bits of flesh I never owned,  
preserving merely essence

the space between an illusion  
for there is no space between us,  
spiritual brethren  
all.

*Deenaz Coachbuilder Ph.D  
March 15th. 2020*

## THE BIRTH DAY OF PROPHET ZARATHUSHTRA DECLARED A NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN IRAN

**On** December 24, 2019 Iranian Majlis of the Islamic Republic of Iran passed the bill declaring the birthday of Prophet Zarathushtra as a day of national observance. Iranian calendars starting 21st March 2020 will introduce 6th Farvardin 1399 as the birthdate of “Prophet Zarathushtra” within all national calendars and hopefully in all memorandum, diaries etc.



This was finally approved by the MAJLIS, the government and religious authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to the persistent efforts of Dr. Esfandiar Ekhtiyari, the democratically elected MP. The birthday of Asho Zarathushtra will now be incorporated in the list of national Bank holidays in the Iranian national calendar. For the first time in Iran's recent Islamic history that this day has been recorded as a National Celebratory Day in the Iranian Calendar.

The Zoroastrian community in Iran has been overwhelmingly rejoicing. The added benefit of this significant step of the national holiday is that every Iranian will now get to know more about the teaching and insights of Asho Zarathushtra Spitaman.

Traditionally in Iran this day is celebrated at the height of the Jamshidi Novrooz celebrations. All information for Novrooz is sent out in advance about this auspicious day, which is referred to as Zaad Rooz e (= Birthday of) Ashoo Zarathushtra. The celebrations include prayers, social gatherings, welcome speeches by local community leaders, cultural programs and refreshments.

Celebrating Novrooz in March in spring where all vegetation is sprouting makes a good case for observance of the Fasli Calendar. Farvardin Yasht (Ushtaa ne zaotoo Aatrava ....) also reminds us of spring blooming flowers rejoicing over the birth of an Athravan-- Asho Zarathushtra.

Future celebrations will have special acknowledgements of Dr Ekhtiyari who will be able to invite high ranking government and state officials to participate and bring their own greetings and message to the Zoroastrian community on this auspicious occasion.

*Special report from Mobed Mehraban Firoozgary*

# IRANSHAH UDVADA UTSAV 2019

Report by Behroze Clubwala



Bravo, the third Iranshah Udvada Utsav (IUU) from 27-29 December 2019 was an amazing success. From a festive presence on every street corner, decorations on the homes and special artistic creations on the walls, our Udvada was welcoming and looked beautiful.

Several structures along the route to the Utsav site from the Iranshah were well thought through... the most favorite being the “I love Udveda” mural and the “Farohar” wings where you could place yourself in the middle for a photograph and the “Jamva Chalo Ji” painting on the walls. The street along the Iranshah was lined with an exhibition of beautiful photographs by Sooni Taraporevala titled, “Parsis – A Photographic Journey (1980 – 2004)”. Another photo exhibition, “Parsis – A Timeless Legacy” by Shantanu Das was exhibited at the refurbished Zoroastrian Information Centre. Every inch of the town reminded you of our rich cultural heritage and a sense of pride filled my heart. The imagination, zeal, enthusiasm and creativity of the local people and organizers deserve a thundering applause. Everyone felt proud to be a Parsi and felt the Iranshah’s blessings.

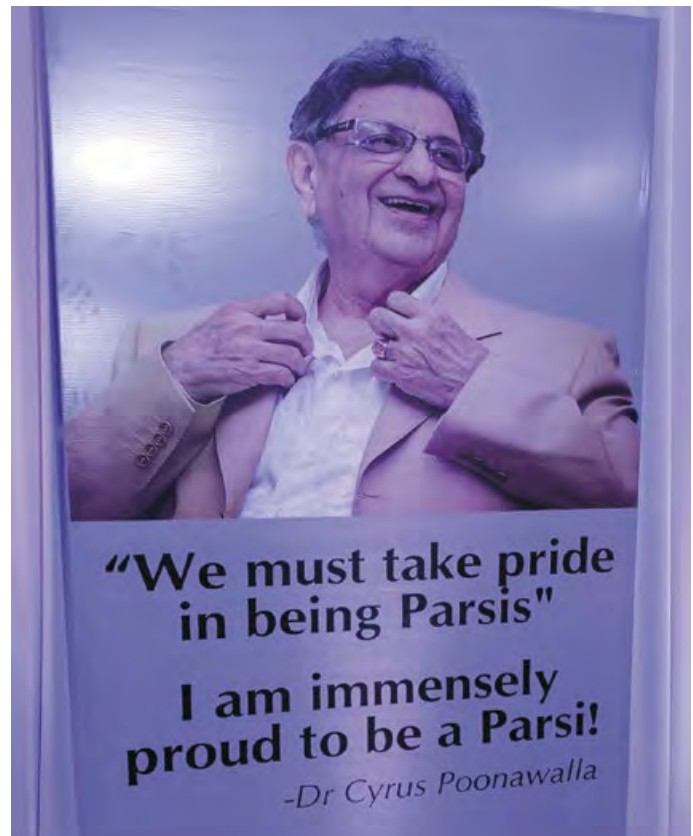
Welcoming close to 2000 delegates, who had registered for the first time on line, the lights, colors and music enhanced the sense of Parsi Panu and warmth from the local community. 27 December began as a cool morning for most local folk, but a bus load of local Mumbaiites came with a group of about 35 Parsis from Canada and USA who were delighted with the perfect weather conditions. Picked up from the Sethna ni Agiyary and Dadar locations in Mumbai, they travelled in a bus to attend the Utsav, representing the biggest Zarathusthi community growing in the diaspora. They were jubilant to share in the historic 3<sup>rd</sup> Utsav. Of course, we had “Pora Pav”( egg omelet) on the bus, and true to our Parsi Panu we had “koila” jokes and “mahjah”(fun).

Conceived in 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Utsav celebrations have grown into an event that is not only a reminder of the time that the Zarathushtis first landed on the shores of Sanjan, a reminder of the legacies and contributions of the Parsis in India every name one can recall, Godrej, Shapoorji Pallonji, Tatas, Wadias and innumerable others, but most importantly that the fire that burns in the Iranshah today has been alive from 1742.

***That is our pride, our legacy and our heritage.***

We must unite to keep that flame alive and glowing in an Udveda that is flourishing economically and where the infrastructure is constantly being improved. The old charming bungalows, now sadly fewer than the past, were endearing to observe as

you walked through the streets. The Utsavs have certainly united the local community and provided that framework, but much remains to be done. The serene smile, the gracious welcome and the warmth of Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor, our High Priest of the Iranshah at the opening ceremony barely gives us a glimpse into the difficult, often precarious journey he travels, with many detours and challenges, as he plans and executes each Utsav. But his vision is clear, his goals tenacious and his resolve unflinching. His energetic wife Havovi mirrors his commitment and is always at his side, leading the organizing team.



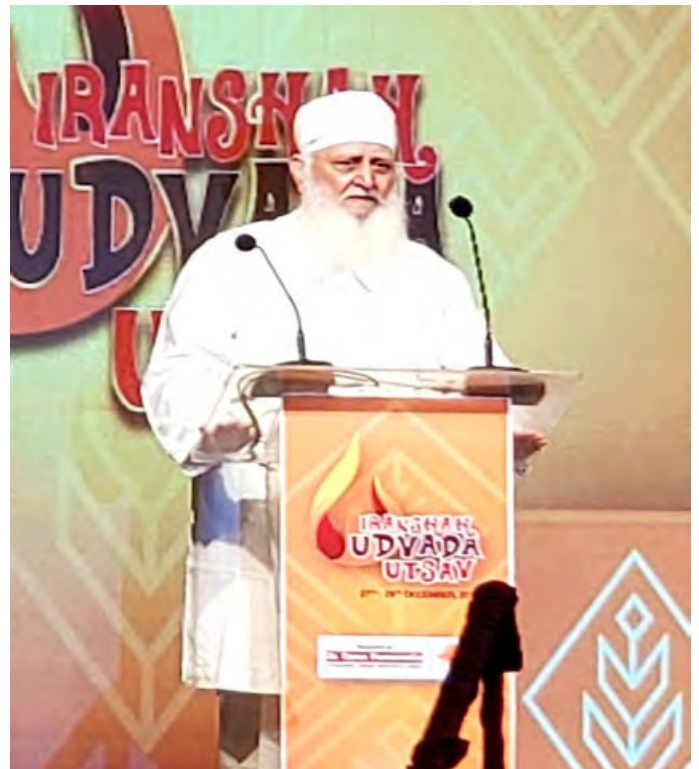
Hosted by the Foundation for Development of Udveda, sponsored by Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla, Founder and Chairman of the Serum Institute and promoted by Gujarat Tourism, the IUU is now on the map as a Parsi biennial event. Apro Cyrus is today’s living Parsi legend in having created the Serum Institute of India, which is a world class center for manufacturing low-cost vaccines. Today, under his leadership it is the world’s largest producer of vaccines by number of doses, producing more than 1.5 billion vaccines a year, used in 170 countries. As a grateful Parsi community, we

salute and thank him for sponsoring so many major Zarathushti events. Dr. Poonawalla's endearing photographs adorned the streets from the Iranshah to the Utsav grounds wherein he reminds us in his own words, "We must take pride in being Parsi. I am immensely proud to be a Parsi!"



Welcoming the gathering at the ceremonial lighting of the traditional lamp, Vada Dastur Khurshed Dastoor was joined on the podium by Mr. Praful Patel, Administrator of Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, the High Priest of the H.B. Wadia Atash Behram, Vada Dastur Dr. Firoze Kotwal, Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, Trustee WZO Trusts, Hoshaang Gotla, IUU Core Committee Members, Mr. Sam Bulsara, Advertising Guru of Madison World, Mr. Adille Sumariwala, athlete and President of the Indian Olympic Association and Mrs. Havovi Dastoor. Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor reminded us that the Utsav "was not only to show Parsi Panu to the world, but to bring together like-minded people. "I will not share my religion, but we must share our thoughts and the teachings of our religion." "The Utsav", he said, "brings our local community together. It has the blessings of the Iranshah, not only for the Parsi community, but for all the residents of Udvada. "Those who change with change will survive, but those who cause the

change will lead" Khurshed Dastoor ended his welcome with a Sanskrit translation of the "Ahmai Rascha" prayer, very profound.



Vada Dasturji Dr. Firoze Meherji Kotwal, High Priest of the Seth H.B. Wadia Atash Behram since 1977, urged the community to be "united in strength and in righteousness. We will be friends to all Indians." "Hameh bhala kamo karta aviyah cheh, ane bhala kamo karta rahiysu. (We have done noble deeds and will continue doing so)." Although frail, his presence generated a sense of pride among those present for his tremendous knowledge and wisdom of our religion that he has shared and recorded in his many publications. For me, I recall the pride I felt as the only Zarathushti present, to hear his voice resonate loudly as he recited our Ashem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo and other prayers in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations Headquarters in the early 1990s.

Mr. Patel delivered a passionate long speech, reminding the community to marry within, have large families and "marry now." "Aavi community mallseh naih, (you will not find a community like this)," he cautioned. "The Parsis are not a micro community, I prefer to call them a leading community." He said the time for action is now. Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, a stalwart in our community

was deservedly felicitated for his unstinting contribution to social service and philanthropy for over 40+ years for our community. A well-earned tribute from his community for the work he and his wife Bachi have led, initiated and championed over years. Many were missed at the events like Cyrus Poonawalla, Fali Sam Nariman our Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India and many others. One of the highlights this year was the Winter Fest games conducted by Wings. For the first two days sports events were enjoyed by our youth, in football, volleyball, cricket, etc. The venue will now be a permanent cricket playing field for the Udvada community. The Utsav was honored to have the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani who has been a staunch supporter of the Parsi community. FELICITATIONS AT THE UTSAV WERE GIVEN TO:

**Mr Mickey Mehta**, Holistic Health Expert, who said that how can the Parsi community be healthy when we say “khahvo, peevo and maahjah karo (eat, drink and make merry), when what we need to do is to focus on exercise and on adopting a healthy lifestyle;

**Ms. Sooni Taraporevala**, Film maker and Cinematographer;

**Mr. Behram Mehta, MD**, an Ahmedabad based entrepreneur who has elevated the Ava Mineral Water brand to global standards;

**Ms. Scherezade Shroff**, Fashion Vlogger and one of India’s leading fashion and lifestyle You tubers;

**Mr. Viraf Patell**, T.V. Personality and Actor;

**Mr. Malcolm Bathena**, Superintendent of GST. AWARDS WERE ALSO PRESENTED TO:

**Mr. Keki Kapadia**, Project Director, Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad, for the design and development of Anti-Tank Guided Missiles.

**Mrs. Dolly R. Desai**, Educationist, current Director of Ninat Engineering and Medical School in Bardoli, Surat;

**Mrs. Sunnu Kasad**, Entrepreneur and Catering Queen of Navsari, known to have made 800 dar-ni-pooris on Ava Roj (day) and Ava Mahino;(month)

**Mrs. Perin Bagli**, Educationist for 47 years, currently Principal of Activity High School. Mumbai;

**Mr. Jehan Daruvala**, Sportsman and award-winning young Indian Racing Driver securing 3<sup>rd</sup>



place in the FIA Formula 3 Championship; and **Mr. Jehaan Kotwal**, Entrepreneur, and at 28, CEO of his family business JFK Transporters and the Youth Director of the World Zarthushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC).

Entertainment was well woven into the three days, starting with the audio-visual presentation of “Nemasate Iranshah” (Greetings Iranshah), citing the virtues of the consecrated fire and stating that “devotees will come and go, but Pak Iranshah will go on forever.” Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia who provided the voice-over for this presentation indicated that this was specially created for the Utsav, with the guidance of Mithoo Jesia. Garden Groove provided a lively beat, with our own Parsi JAM Master Hormuz Ragina; which some traditionalists disapproved of. Parsi talent was presented. The docudrama, Amar Jyoti Zarathushtra, on the life of our Prophet conceived by Mithoo Jesia was very well received by the audience and culminated to a thunderous applause. A comedy review was well presented and added typical Parsi humor to the event. Indian dance performances and Monajats were also included. A song presentation by the local school children drawing attention to environmental conservation was excellent. A gujarati play, “Arsi Amhe Parsi” by Padma Shri recipient Yezdi Karanjia with a performance by his daughter Mahrukh Chichgar was thoroughly enjoyed as it portrayed how Parsis are woven into the fabric of Gujarat.

The outstanding event was an unusual display of exclusive hand-embroidered garas in a fashion show by Ashdeen Lilaowala, stunning designs, color and



artistry. It was not a traditional walk down the ramp show, but a beautifully choreographed dance display by beautiful models set to lights and music, brilliantly choreographed by his niece Rian Mistry. His creativity is absolutely first-class. The second evening ended with the youthful sounds of the band Soul Yatra – Filmitronix that kept us entertained for over an hour. Dinners each day were a feast of great Parsi bhonu.

The Zoroastrian Information Centre in Udvarda, the venue for registration, was refurbished with the assistance of architect Jamshed Bhiwandiwalla and researcher Firoza Punthakey Mistree. The results were well appreciated as the Center was a “must visit” item on everyone’s agenda. Firoza had done an outstanding job in providing the substantive input while the technical input came from Jamshed. The Bazaar was interesting...traditional divas, embroidered topis and legas for Navjotes and parsi embroidered Kurtas. One of the highlights for many was the three-minute

Virtual Reality experience of a recital extracted from the Yasna prayer. Created by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London and filmed while Ervads Asphandiar Dadachanji and Adil Bhesania were actually reciting the prayers, the presentation was but a glimpse of an interactive subtitled film of the entire prayer that lasts about 150 minutes. Researcher and student at SOAS Kerman Daruwalla also informed us that an edition of the written texts by scholar Dr. Almut Hintze will complement the film and will answer questions about the meaning and function of the Yasna prayer. The SOAS team has also cataloged, labeled and photographed most of the collection of approximately 80 Avestan, Pahlavi and Persian manuscripts at the Kayoji Mirza Library. The 1950s Library Building and a viewing of the manuscripts were from the personal collection of the Mirza family. This was the last stop on the Heritage tours organized by the Bhiwandiwalla team. Two publications released during the Utsav were “*Marvels in the Life of Prophet Zarathushtra*” authored by Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia and illustrated by Katie Bagli, which depicts, for children, the life of our Prophet. Also released was a beautifully published book “*My Golden Book on Zoroastrianism: a basic guide with FAQs.*” edited by Dubai resident Meher Bhesania and sponsored by Dinshaw Tamboly, Trustee, WZO Trust. The book describes our religion in simple terms in 100 pages and includes a DVD on the right gestures to be observed while performing a kusti ritual. The Parsi Times Weekly also issued a special edition at the Utsav.



*Arzan Wadia (left) and Homi Gandhi, President FEZANA (center) presented Daštūrjī Khurshēd Dāstūr with two cheques for the upkeep of the Iranshah.*

As explained by Arzan Wadia, VP FEZANA, the project Iranshah Initiative is an interactive website created by Tinaz Karbhari from New Zealand now residing in Hong Kong, for our future generation across the globe to get involved through Education, Inspiration and Donation. (www.IranshahInitiative.com). This Initiative aims to enhance awareness of the need to preserve and maintain the holiest of the fires of the Zarathushthi. This was the first Utsav where registrations were online and should have been a great incentive for the younger generation to sign on and be there, but sadly not many participated. I understand

that many agreed to even fund the younger generation's participation, but that group was not well represented. Future Utsavs could perhaps have the youth at the planning table, organize smaller discussions in which the youth are at the core and build on ideas and plans that would engage them. We hope that the announcement by the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) Global Chair, Edul Daver, on the creation of a US \$ 1 million fund by the end of 2020 to fund the Zoroastrian Entrepreneur Development Fund initiative, might be one of the factors instrumental in bringing this young generation to such events.



after seven coats of paint have been painstakingly removed from the stone columns, the original wood ceiling panels shine above, the flooring is being restored to original designs with black marble and mother of pearl inlays, the grandeur of the portraits and paintings within the Iranshah are being restored and the upper level accessible by a wooden staircase is being restored to its original wood finish, which had never been exposed for more than 50 years. We were requested not to take photographs inside, but for me and the next generations, there is no end to the gratitude we will have for the Shapoorji Pallonji generosity in funding this restoration. It is a priceless gift. Let us boldly commit and resolve that we will all maintain and preserve our Iranshah forever in its original architectural style, beauty and design.

For me the highlight of the Utsav was the tour given by Shapoorji Pallonji's onsite team managing the restoration of the Iranshah (photos above). Our generation and the future generations will always be grateful to the Pallonji's for their generosity, foresight and vision in restoring the Iranshah to its original glory. The natural stone has re-emerged

**Photo Credits: Astad Clubwala**

◆ Behroze Astad Clubwala lives in Hawthorne, New Jersey. She is an active member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY). She retired as a Human Resources Advisor from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) after an almost 40 year career.





# WZCC AT IUU – Keeping The Fire Of Enterprize Burning Bright In Udvada

EDUL DAVER, WZCC Global President

Friends, I am honored by your kind invitation to speak about WZCC – World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. WZCC is a beautiful concept and a unique organization working hard to ‘Build the Spirit of Entrepreneurship’ to positively impact and uplift our community. Let me take a few minutes to explain how WZCC got started and the meaning of Entrepreneurship, then what WZCC is actually doing and/or planning to do. I will do this in the 10 minutes allocated and hopefully I will leave you with feeling that, “YES WZCC is a unique worthwhile organization; YES I should consider becoming a member; and more importantly, YES I should think about becoming an Entrepreneur.

**How did it get started?** In the 1990’s business people in the USA met informally in Las Vegas to talk about their businesses, network with each other and to create Synergy. In 2000 at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce was launched with the vision to “*Build the Spirit of Entrepreneurship and thus bring economic prosperity to Zarathushtis*”. The visionary for this and the first president was Rohinton Rivetna. I served as the Secretary on the first Board. Within a few months we realized that the organization needs to be Global and the name was modified from Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce to World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce. In 2015, President Minoo Shroff’s term was ending and at his urging I became the WZCC Global President.



## What does Entrepreneurship mean and when & how was the word coined?

In 1911 an Austrian Economist, Joseph Schumpter wrote a book, “Theory of Economic Development” in German. He observed that there was continual infusion of energy into small companies and he called this “*enternehmer*” whose literal translation into English is “Care Taker”. He became Austria’s finance minister but then because of the bad political climate he emigrated to the US in 1932 and became a Professor at Harvard University. In 1934 he published a new edition of his book in English and the word *enternehmer* became Entrepreneur in English. He defined this as

the ‘Continuous creative energy seen in new start-ups and small companies, but he also observed it in pockets of large companies. The concept did not get much traction until the 1970’s when businesses were challenged following the 1974 oil embargo. Then in the 1990’s it became mainstream and Harvard business school defined it best - “Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity beyond the resources currently controlled.” The first step is recognition of an opportunity but when resources are not in hand one has to be creative and innovative and risk is implied--calculated risk and it cannot be a gamble. This is seen not only in start-ups and small companies but also evident in large corporations, non-profits, education, government.

## What is WZCC doing and what can you do for WZCC?

WZCC provides opportunities for education, net-working, mentorship, and most importantly funding to worthy entrepreneurs and professionals. But I would like to remind you that it is always a two-way street and WZCC cannot succeed without your support and involvement.

Here is a sampling of recent accomplishments: WZCCI-WZO Trust Funds, Entrepreneurship funding plan was implemented in late 2018. Five Entrepreneurs have received funding without interest and all are paying back as per schedule. A couple more are in the pipeline. In North America, WZCC & FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian



Associations of North America) have jointly founded a new entity called “Zoroastrian Entrepreneurship Development Foundation (ZEDF)”. We have been officially incorporated but are waiting for “Not for profit, tax free status” approval. Our Objective is to collect \$ 1,000,000 and start funding entrepreneurs by late 2020.

In May 2019, for the first time ever WZCC held its 2018 AGM in conjunction with the FEZANA AGM and GWG meeting in Orlando which was historic and indeed a resounding success.

In July 2019, for the first time ever there was a WZCC Day at the 7WZYC. The Youth Wing under the leadership of Jehan Kotwal, Rashna Sanjana and a host of youth volunteers organized the entire program-Speakers, Panels, Speed Networking and a first ever Zoroastrian Shark Tank event. 300 Zarathushti Youth present, from around the world, will undoubtedly

think about entrepreneurship as they enter the work place or better still become entrepreneurs themselves. This was clearly a Grand Slam for WZCC.

The Youth Wing has been doing great stuff in India and we are impatient to spread these activities globally. We have now formed a Youth Team comprising of Youth Director Jehaan Kotwal, Directors Zubin Sethna (UK), Afsaan Kermani (USA) and special appointee Rashna Sanjana to spearhead this effort. Friends, this is just the tip of the iceberg, with WZCC involved in many other innovative concepts, such as, “kidpreneurship” which exposes kids 5 yrs & up to entrepreneurship; Youth Net-Working activities including a WhatsApp group & Coffee with WZCC ; Socio-Economic projects like the Bardipada Clean Water project; Zoroastrian Faculty Network(ZFN) which is in the process of selecting the ZFN scholar

for studies in the USA under Dr. Farrokh Mistree and of course our World Class Synergy Journal. WZCC is clearly living by the entrepreneurship mantra, **“Be First, Be Different, Be Best”**.

Many governments at present are becoming nationalistic and creating barriers for trade and commerce which may win the politicians some brownie points in the short term but will be disastrous for global prosperity in the long run. We are seeing many traditional institutions failing us, amid staggering inequality, social upheaval and political paralysis.

WZCC, MARCHES ON to make the organization more Globally centric; a more dynamic & participative institution; having a clear shared vision & road map; being a more action oriented change agent; and being value driven.

However, in the race to succeed & win we need to heed the words of 16yr old Greta Thunberg, the climate change advocate who at the United Nations recently said, “ We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. HOW DARE YOU”,

In our chase for our economic dreams we have to remember our Zoroastrian Values:

**Think good thoughts!**

**Say good words!**

**Do good deeds!**

Think of the environment, make sure what you are doing is sustainable for the next generation. There is nothing wrong in making money the right way and giving back to the less fortunate but also remember that the end never justifies the means. Yes, the end never justifies the means.

THANK YOU!



# World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce Global Conclave

Power of Youth Driving Future Generations  
3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 - Rhythm Resort, Lonavala

**Global Conclave, WZCC AGM 2019**

**THE POWER OF YOUTH DRIVING FUTURE GENERATIONS**

**2-5 JANUARY 2020.**



“The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) was established to keep alive the spirit of Zarathushti entrepreneurship and professionalism. Its main objective is to encourage and facilitate trade and commerce, provide a link between Zarathushti professionals, entrepreneurs and financiers, and be the catalyst, so that the Zarathushti community may remain vibrant for continuing economic prosperity, by the Grace of Ahura Mazda.”



**I**risk repeating the entire text above, but with a conscious purpose, to reiterate the importance of building the spirit of entrepreneurship in our community and restoring the era of the birth of great Parsi business empires. Let us make 2020 the year to move this agenda item to fulfillment. To this end, no effort was spared, no stone left unturned and the spirit and enthusiasm from the Global Chair, Edul Daver and the India Chapter Chair Captain Percy Master, his wife Erin and his team ensured that this event was a resounding success.

The AGM was a part of the global conclave held from 2-5 January 2020 at the beautiful Rhythm Resort in Lonavala. Themed as the “Power of Youth driving future generations,” the close to 200 present for the three days were fully engaged in the interesting discussions to promote entrepreneurship in the beautiful Rhythm Resort. (photo page 40)

On 2 January, our bus rolled along from Mumbai to our first stop at the **Tata Archives** in Pune. What an extraordinary experience, an amazing collection very tastefully housed to preserve the history and ancestry of the Tata family starting with the erstwhile Patriarch of the family Jamsetji N. Tata, (1839-1904). Founder of the Tata Group and Tata Steel, he took 19 years to achieve his dream of building a steel manufacturing plant in India, in spite of continuous hurdles from the then

Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. While our brief three hour visit was only able to focus on his journey, through a brief glimpse at a part of the film entitled “Keepers of the Flame” the tenacity of the man, his dreams to develop businesses that were for the benefit of India and his vision, demonstrated that while the Tatas built businesses and empires, the paths were not always easy or glamorous. It was also very interesting to note that when Jamsetji came to London he was wholeheartedly assisted by Sir Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. Again, Parsis helping Parsis. Are we trying to accomplish this in today’s era, are we keeping the community vibrant and promoting entrepreneurship? WZCC and this Global Conclave are issuing a call for action now. Let us unite to make this happen.

When Jamsetji set up his Empress Mills in Nagpur in 1877, he created a truly empowering working environment for his employees, he built a crèche for child care, he set up benefits for all his employees, created a Pension Fund and provided accident insurance for his employees. A mind and personality whose thinking was way ahead of the times and the then prevailing practices in business. Imagine that this was in 1877 and that decade! “There can be no freedom without economic independence” he said. He was visionary and Esplanade House was the first to be furnished with electricity in those times. He believed





that “a country that has steel, has gold” and hence he relentlessly pursued his goals to build a steel manufacturing plant. I could have spent a day or several there and I strongly recommend that if you want to be inspired and motivated to build enterprises and business, you will learn a lot from the Tata Archives. Mr Zubin Mistry and his team gave a very insightful presentation and extended a

warm hospitality. To my Zarathusti community in North America and outside India, put this on your to-do list.

The afternoon’s experience can be described in equally superlative terms. A visit to the world-renowned **Serum Institute of India** was inspiring. This world-class facility makes low cost vaccines and is today the world’s largest producer of vaccines by number of doses, producing more than 1.5 billion doses a year used in 170 countries and works in close synchrony with the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. The factory was pristine with state of the art equipment. The finest medical and technical minds proudly demonstrated the capacity of the plant and its advanced production equipment and technology.



We were fortunate to experience Cyrus Poonawalla’s classy, extravagant and generous hospitality. In his extraordinarily designed board room, overlooking his stud farm, where the engraved and painted ceilings did not take away from the many equestrian trophies on the tables, we had high tea served par excellence. I’m sure, the Queen of England too would have been impressed at it all, minus the samosas, which we desis loved anyway.

Cyrus Poonawalla, through his entrepreneurship, has put us Parsis on the global stage. It is easy to see where his mind was focused in 1988 when he completed his Ph.D. thesis “Improved Technology in the Manufacture of Specific Anti-Toxins and its Socio-Economic Impact on Society.” In 1966 he embarked on a journey to establish the Serum Institute of India (SII), and today he has created an Institute which is producing life-saving vaccines to combat infections from Rabies, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, Influenza and Meningitis, among others.

Our Parsi community has benefitted tremendously from his philanthropy. To mention a few: Iranshah Udvada Utsav, sponsorship in 2015 and 2019; The Everlasting Flame, Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination, an

exhibition in collaboration with SOAS University in New Delhi in 2016; and Across Oceans and Flowing Silks: from Canton to Mumbai, 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

It is a testament to his vision, grit and innovative approach that the SII has attained world leadership, has received numerous international awards and accolades. The global impact of his work is undeniable. Today, SII is the world's largest producer of vaccines by number of doses, producing 1.5 million doses a year that are used in 170 countries, saving the lives of more than 20 million children in 170 countries. This was achieved by his vision to "make vaccines available at very affordable prices." He has built a world class institution with leading edge scientific experts and production facilities.

His personal passion makes him an icon in the field of thoroughbred equine horseracing and breeding worldwide. He has received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 2009 in Paris, France, for his outstanding contribution in the



field of horseracing and breeding.

On January 3, the **WZCC formal events** began with a Jashan by Vada Dasturji Ervad Saheb Keki Ravji Meherjirana of Navsari and his son Ervad Hormuz. In photo above Vada Dasturji Ravji with Capt. Percy Master (middle) and Edul Daver (right) the lighting of diva. Following the beautiful jashan, our Vada Dasturji (photo above right) addressed the group on "The Relevance of Religion in Business." He said, "Dhando and Vehpar ma hamesha saari riteh paisa kamavanu (In Professions and Businesses, we must earn our money always in the right way)". This implies the use of a code of morality and ethics and the principles of righteousness. Our Master of Ceremonies for the morning was the talented Zarine Commissariat. Percy Master welcomed the gathering reminding us to focus on issues facing our community, particularly the need to unite for the survival of our religion.

**Diana Bharucha** presented a very interesting profile of the work accomplished by Kinder Trust working with differently abled people in a spectrum of activities ranging from support to those needing assistance in finding government aid to building toilets in public schools and support to farmers for bee population enhancement to environmental care.

**Ashdin Doctor, Habit Coach** addressed "Wellness Micro Habits" urging us to ensure that we have "intentions" to change our habits and then move ahead making "tiny" changes. "Making them easy and never missing two days in a row to implement change ensured success" he said. "It is essential to stop doing things that harm us" he encouraged. He stressed on the importance of refueling your emotional energy by feeling a sense of gratitude



while also feeding our spiritual energy. “Wellness” he concluded “is all about still having energy at the end of the day. Lack of movement, poor breathing and posture also contribute to not feeling well. Intermittent fasting should be considered.”

Entrepreneurs funded by WZCC -*Cyrus Pithavala – (Container Yards)*, *Cyrus Mistry – (Ecosmart Jewelry)*, *Urvakhsha Tavadia, (Solderless Kits)*, presented great stories of their business successes and lessons learnt. Behroze



Daruwalla, the Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon sessions masterfully moved the agenda along. Edul Daver gave us a great summary of the global status of WZCC activities and the growth of some new city chapters. “Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources controlled.” The call to continue activities, pursue greater youth involvement and develop an on-line program called “Entrepreneurship 101” was highlighted. There is great strength in working jointly on programs and on keeping the agenda and goals of WZCC alive and strong. He highlighted various activities in many regions and I was impressed with the Youth Leader in Mumbai, Jehan Kotwal organizing sessions titled “Coffee with WZCC”. (Photo left)

A beautifully crafted torch resembling the Olympic torch, was symbolically handed over to Zubin Sethna for the next

WZCC Global Enclave to be held in London, UK, 28-31 May 2021.

The event honored Mr. Rohinton Rivetna, Founder, President and immediate past President Minoo Shroff as President Emeritus of WZCC.

A speed networking session organized by the youth covered topics such as Taxation, Shipping, Logistics and Power, Automobiles, Legal, Manufacturing and Management, Media, Human Resources, Real Estate, Social/CSR, Finance, Professor and entrepreneurship, IT and Pharma created an interesting buzz.

Panel Discussions followed: “Catapulting your Brick and Mortar Business with Technology at the forefront”, “Pitfalls in Business and How to Prevent the Same,” “The importance of the process of innovation from small to multinational firms, “Zarathushti Businesses, Past, Present and Future.”

**Meher Pudumjee**, (right) non-executive chair of Thermax Limited, in a fire-side chat with Viraf Deboo shared, in her gentle and sophisticated manner, glimpses of her journey, from a very young age, when she was thrust into managing the Company with her mother, following her father’s untimely demise. In an era, which was not ready for leadership from women, Meher navigated her way successfully. Following a corporate study, moving into the role of non-executive Director helped the Company grow. It is essential therefore to make difficult decisions.



**Lara Bulsara** moderated a session on “The Importance of the Process of Innovation from Small to Multinational Firms” with panelists from left **Jehangir Mehta**, **Naozer Dalal**, **Lara Bulsara Vajifdar**, **Hormuz Sholapurwala**,



**Pervez Damania.** A lot of food for thought. Jehangir Mehta demonstrated that even in his profession, his culinary skills were not going to keep him competitive forever and in the lead, hence his passion for sustainable cooking; his embracing of environmental preservation in the restaurant industry where these issues were often not focused on has put him in the forefront of the current dialogue. He now works with multiple Universities in the USA endorsing sustainability in the food industry while still managing his New York City restaurants.

The most interesting event was the **2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Zoroastrian Shark Tank**. Five entrepreneurs presented their business plans to four sharks: Alayar Dabestani, Real Estate Investor, Neville Patel, Founder and CEO of Qualitas Global PWR, Nadir Godrej, Managing Director of Godrej Industries Ltd, and Cyrus Katgara, partner of Jeena and Company. The presentations of the 5 young entrepreneurs were clear, concise and very substantive and the interest



generated was concrete and productive. Bravo to the young entrepreneurs. I hope to hear their success stories at future AGMs.

The highlight of the event, in my view, was the presentation at the awards ceremony by **Dr. Mashelkar, Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research**. Recipient of the three highest Indian Civil Awards, Padma Shri in 1991, Padma Bhushan in 2000 and Padma Vibhushan in 2014, visiting Professor at Harvard University 2007-2012, fellow to 15 prestigious International Academies, honored by 42 Universities from around

the world and on the Board of Directors of many leading companies, his message was significant, profound and inspiring. His personal journey was inspiring. Raised by a mother who provided household help, with barely a home for him as a child, in Mumbai, she raised him alone ensuring an education, if nothing else. Speaking very engagingly, humbly and softly, he said “the ‘I’ in India should not stand for imitation and inhibition, it must stand for innovation.” The key drivers for success he stated were “Talent, Technology and Trust.” Referencing his book, “Creating Next Gen – Pole Vaulting Entrepreneur Leadership” he said that “they (successful entrepreneurs) do not know that it cannot be done.” “What sets them apart” he said, “is that they see what everyone sees, but think of what no one else thinks.” Can you my young Zarathusti community...challenge yourself to do so.?

Mashelkar went on to tell us how he started his educational journey by going to the Tata Trusts to pick up his education grant on a monthly basis from the Tatas and, in the last decade received simultaneously award with Ratan Tata. He reminded us that the Tata Trust was started in 1892, the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913 and the Ford Foundation in 1936. We need a strong paradigm shift, to pole vault our community into entrepreneurship success he said, not just to “leapfrog” forward. The feared frog leaps forward, the community today needs to ‘pole vault’. Sadly again, not too many youth of our community were there to be inspired by his journey and his words of encouragement and advice, we oldies sat there and nodded. Sad. What do we need to do to bring our young talent to these events so that they can be inspired and encouraged, challenged and motivated to build “entrepreneurship”



into a game-changing strategy? The efforts of WZCC can only be given a pat on the back... slowly but surely, they are trying to influence the next generation.

Dr Mashelkar gave out the WZCC global entrepreneur awards to **Farrokh Cooper**, Chair, Cooper Corporation in Satara as Outstanding Zarathusti Entrepreneur for 2019, **Cyrus Hirjibhedini** from MIT Lincoln Laboratory (now residing in Boston USA) received the Outstanding Zarathusti Professional award (not present to receive the award) **Pervin Taleyarkhan**, a legal counsel at Whirlpool Corporation received the Outstanding Young Zarathusti Entrepreneur/Professional Award (not present to receive the award) **Mira Mehta**, founder of Tomato Jos, a tomato paste company based in Nigeria, received a new award on Social Entrepreneurship

In the picture above Dr Mashelkar, Farrokh Cooper, Mira Mehta, Edul Daver, Global President, Nadir Godrej, Shark at Shark Tank Event, Capt. Percy Master, Chair, India Chapter, WZCC



The Iranian delegation above from left Khodayar Attaie, Alyar Debastani, Nariman Parineh, Dr Bahram Partovi, Kourosh Azargoshasbi

Special Advisor on WZCC's Business Advisory Committee Phiroze Kharas rhetorically questioned if all members of WZCC were doing what is necessary for the growth of WZCC. Financial support for the WZCC Mumbai office needs to be strengthened and urged all members to help in getting sponsorships to raise resources. Behroze Daruwalla gave us an impressive peak into the many activities supporting the Women's Empowerment portfolio she manages. Support was afforded to help women achieve higher economic standards, workshops were held on developing business plans, joint programs were organized with other Women's Organizations and much more. Kudos to you Behroze.

Much was shared, much was discussed, but I like to end with the advice of my friend and personally admired advertising guru Sam Bulsara of Madison World. I admire him not only for his own low-key encouragement to our young community at large, but because he has encouraged and steered his two daughters to entrepreneurial success. He said that success in business requires: 1 Trust which as a Parsi community we have it in good measure. 2 A competitive advantage. 3 Patience. 4 A combination of a good education with entrepreneurship education. Can we make it happen in the next 25 years that we have a new generation of new entrepreneurs who leave behind legacies like our ancestors did? *Report Behroze Astad Clubwala Photo Credits Astad Clubwala*

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# THE GLOBAL WORKING GROUP ACHIEVES APPLAUSE ON THE CREATION OF THE GCZT IN 2020

Report by Behroze Clubwala



Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI).

The meeting was loud at times, issues were debated rather tersely, clarifications were sought not always congenially and the

genuinely concerned about the last draft which had not been internally discussed within their membership. Yazdi Desai, faced almost 120 minutes of difficult remarks, questions and clarifications. He himself noted that “a Parsi Irani Zoroastrian is not defined in the trust deed.” BPP Trustee Noshir Dadrawala stated that the Trust



7 January 2020... the room is set with the traditional chairs and tables surrounding the four sides of the room at the Banaji Atash Behram Annexe Hall in Mumbai. The greetings of Happy New Year are heard around the room, many have assembled on time. Some stern “Shebjees” were heard and others milled around as the key players Neville Shroff, non-Executive Chair of GWG and President of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macao called the meeting to order with Yazdi Desai, Chairman, Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) and President of the Federation of the

tensions focused on the 21<sup>st</sup> draft of a document for the creation of the **Global Council of Zoroastrian Trusts (GCZT)**. Burjor Desai who had produced the 21<sup>st</sup> draft, and who is credited as being the architect of this document, which was shared rather recently with members, pleaded for unity. He stated, “you join us, if not bye-bye.” He hoped that this was the end of a long journey and he pleaded that it was essential that the global Zarathushti community unite. “Apra saatheh malyeh aneh saatheh bhalai na kam karyeh.” (Let us come together and perform noble deeds.)

BPP members present were

covers “Parsi/Zoroastrian”. Should there be a slash between the two words?” Kersi Randeria, BPP Trustee responded that FPZAI also had an ambiguous definition of Zoroastrian.” BPP Trustee Viraf Mehta asked “Who are the settlors and trustees? Who has chosen them? I find the process of selection neither independent nor transparent. What is their term?” Mehta also noted that no BPP Trustees for FPZAI representatives have been included in the new Trust. Questions continued on the tax-exempt status of the Trust, and it seemed that the creation of this new Trust was questionable.

Burjor Desai again pleaded impatiently for collaboration. “Let us be positive not negative. Some throw stones, instead we should build a house with bricks.” Neville Shroff commented “the GWG needs to be effective and we need a trust and a bank account. We are here to support each other and not undermine the good work many of us are trying to do for the well-being of our community. Let us put aside our personal differences for the well-being of our community, refrain from derogatory comments.” Yazdi Desai reiterated, “This Group is determined to go ahead with the formation of the GCZT. I would request each one of you to look at it in a broader perspective.”

Neville Shroff clarified that the Settlers and Trustees were selected by the 14 founders of the team only a day or two ago. “They have agreed on Burjor Antia, Dinshaw Tamboly and Kersy Bhesania (of Dubai) as the Settlers, while Antia, Meher Bhesania (of Dubai), Yezdi Tantra, Vice-President of WZCC and Sam Bulsara, Chairman and Managing Director of Madison World will serve as Trustees.” He also went on to clarify that Settlers will serve for life, while Trustees will have a four-year term. Discussions and clarifications stormed on. Meher Bhesania clarified further that “once the Trust is formed, more trustees from other regions can be brought in since there is a provision for 15 trustees. “Please be happy that the Trust is in India.” she pleaded. “We fought with Rohinton Rivetna, founder President of FEZANA, who promoted GWG, that the Trust has to be in India.”

The arguments only seemed to multiply further and tension seemed to mount even higher with personal accusations when President of the Zoroastrian Association of New York (ZAGNY), Astad

Clubwala stepped in and cooled things down. He calmly reminded the participants that at the start of the meeting, the Code of Civil Conduct was adopted which included respect for peoples view points with tolerance and understanding. He stated, “It is commendable that the real intent of the Trust is philanthropic” and then succinctly explained that “whereas the concerns of some of the BPP trustees, that those at the helm appeared to be a family connected group, were legitimate; we can allay their fears by recognizing that the role of the settlers would be to assist in funding, while that of the trustees will be for operating”. “Let us therefore move ahead for the good of our community in India.”

Dorab Mistry, former President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) explained, “People on the ground who have been involved for a long time in the creation of GCZT like Rohinton Rivetna, Neville and I have pulled back our names from being Trustees because of Indian laws, yet our commitment to the project remains 100%.” He continued to clarify that “the BPP and ZTFE have been historical allies, both classified as traditional anjumans. We at ZTFE have gone through the Trust deed with a fine-tooth comb and we are completely satisfied with its bonafide intentions for community service by western anjumans.” “The diaspora is well off, poverty exists only in India. If you trust ZTFE, this is kosher and completely in order, something for which the time has come. Please go ahead.”

And thus, GCZT was born, for charitable work for the community. Behram Avari, President of the Karachi Parsi Association Trust Funds (KPATF), attending the GWG for the first time, referred

to a scheme introduced 4 years ago where families from Pakistan are being resettled in Canada. He thanked Dastur Khurshed Dastoor for facilitating visas for Pakistani youth participation in the Return to Roots program.

Astad Clubwala, co-chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) said that it will be held in New York City at the Hilton Midtown from 1 to 3 July 2022, with “Bridging the Global Zarathusti Existence” as the theme, the Congress will reflect the aspirations and challenges of the larger Zarathusti community on the cusp of emerging from the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Besides the Executive Steering Committee, other committees were being formed while the results of 176 entries for the official logo competition were being evaluated by judges from around the world. This Congress wants to ensure that youth are well represented, and will work on a Legacy Project in which historical information and visuals of thriving and defunct community properties will be documented and exhibited.

Katayun Kapadia, Chair of FEZANA’s Congress Committee, stated that the 18<sup>th</sup> North American Zoroastrian Congress will be held in Houston from 29 to 31 December 2020 with the theme of “Generation Z - Propelling Zarathusti Resurgence.” “From previous experiences in Houston, their hospitality and entertainment is fantastic..... here is a call to all to register early.”

Arzan Wadia, Vice President of FEZANA, also reminded the GWG of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Youth Zoroastrian Congress to be held in London in 2023, by ZTFE, and requested the GWG to rewrite the outdated Youth Congress guidelines.

Edul Daver announced the launch of a Zoroastrian Survey at a cost

of US\$ 275,000. It will aim to gather attitudinal, behavioral and demographic data from every Zarathusti worldwide. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, will be responsible for the data input,

analysis and compilation. All in all, the meeting concluded with its greatest achievement, the creation of the GCZT and Rohinton Rivetna commenting “Let it be recorded in the annals of our history that after what seems like

an eon, our worldwide community without borders came together to work for our mutual benefit and for the prosperity of our worldwide community.”



The group at the Global Working Group meeting

*Photos courtesy Astad Clubwala*

## KAINAZ AMARIA, RECIPIENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS ASSOCIATION (NPPA) JOHN LONG ETHICS AWARD

The NPPA honors individuals whose efforts make the profession stronger, build communities and expand the reach of NPPA in its mission to promote visual journalism and journalists. They recognize individuals who contribute to the profession in a myriad of ways. They honor people who elevate photojournalism, photojournalists who have reached



outstanding technical achievements, leaders who advance NPPA goals, people who fight for First Amendment freedoms, and educators who inspire.

This year the **John Long Ethics Award** was awarded to

Kainaz Amaria, an outstanding photojournalist turned editor, first on NPR’s Visual Team before becoming the visuals editor at Vox. This award recognizes an individual who has, through her efforts, upheld, shaped and promoted ethical behavior in all forms of visual journalism. Amaria’s career as a photographer speaks for itself, having held her own work to the highest ethical standards. And now she paves it forward by being a leading voice in the industry and framing the conversations of visual journalism through the lens of representation, always advocating for people to do more and do better and calling out those who don’t.

Kainaz has had varied experiences as a Visual Editor, starting for the St. Petersburg Times in Florida, then as a freelance photojournalist based in Mumbai, India where her clients included The New York Times, Vogue India, and Reuters. In 2010, she was a Fulbright Scholar and completed a short film on the Parsi Zoroastrian community in Mumbai. Kainaz now runs an interdisciplinary team specializing in graphics, interactives, photography, data and design.

Kainaz is the daughter of Dhun and Yezdi Amaria of Foster City, California who are active members of the Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC) and niece of Ervad Kobad Jamshed, the mobed of Northern California.

# Shahrokh Khanizadeh appointed as Editor-in-Chief Archives of Phytopathology and Plant Protection



Taylor & Francis  
Taylor & Francis Group

Shahrokh born in Kerman, Iran and received his B.Sc. in 1975 in Agricultural Engineering, Tehran University. He received his M.Sc. in 1983 and Ph.D. in 1989 from McGill University. He completed his post-doctoral research in 1992 in Breeding-Genetics and Statistics while working at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and teaching at McGill and Laval Universities from 1992-1995.

He was Member of Agricultural Institute of Canada board of directors (2009-2013) and the Scientific Journal Committee, responsible for the general editorial and publication policy of the three scientific Journals and policies.

In 2005, he was elected as president of [Canadian Society for Horticultural Science](#) and in 2007 he was appointed as the president of [Plant Canada: The Federation of Canadian Plant Science Societies](#). He is currently the National co-ordinator of Fascination of Plants Day.

He accepted the position of Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of Canadian Journal of Plant Science from 2007 to 2013 and in 2014 was appointed by Taylor & Francis as EIC of [Archives of Phytopathology and Plant Protection](#). Shahrokh was the founding member and Board member of the [Global Plant Council](#).

Currently he is on the editorial board of the [International Journal of Horticultural Science](#) and Technology and a member of the editorial board of [Scientific Reports](#), [Nature](#), [Plant Biology](#) and [International Journal of Fruit Science](#)

He received over 20 national and

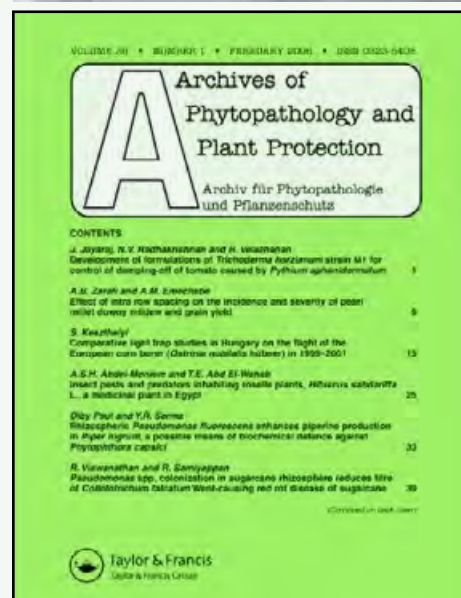
international awards including: Honorary life membership of [Canadian Society for Horticultural Science](#); Distinguished member award of Canadian Society for Horticultural Science; Gold Harvest award in recognition of exceptional commitment to the qualities of excellence and innovation, partnership and team building, leadership, client-Centre work, and inclusiveness [from Government of Canada](#). He has an honorary appointment as Professor of Beijing Engineering Research Center and Nominated by Board of Directors as Honorary Member of Iranian Society for Horticultural Science.

In 2015 he was awarded the Khwarizmi International Award for carrying out outstanding efforts in improving the effectiveness of Science and Technology.

He received a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding performance and lasting contribution as President of Plant Canada 2007-2015 in 2015 and in 2019.

Shahrokh has [fourteen US patents](#); two European Plant Variety Right's Certificates, two Gene Bank registrations and published over 300 scientific articles, 17 books and book chapters.

He developed and released [14 new strawberry cultivars](#), one raspberry, [five new apple cultivars](#), 17 Dwarf apple rootstock, two red flowering strawberries and 3 ornamental apples for northern climate and Hanhong an Asian pear through his collaboration with Pomology Institute Academy of Agriculture Science of Jilin Province, Gongzhuling, China.



He is currently working for ELM consulting, a private company consulting in the area of genetic improvement of horticultural crops and rare genetic diseases of children.

He is currently appointed as senior advisor of Shandong Six-Trees Agricultural Development Co., Ltd., Qingdao, Shandong, China.

**Shahrokh has been involved in graphic and layout of FEZANA journal since 2006 & volunteers his time to ZAQ social media and <http://ZAQ.org> website.**

**Additional info is posted at Meet the Editor in Chief including a Question & Answer session. [https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/gapp\\_meet\\_the\\_editor/](https://think.taylorandfrancis.com/gapp_meet_the_editor/) or <http://khanizadeh.info>**

## PROF JANET K ALLEN AWARDED THE HIGHEST AWARD OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS – THE RUTH AND JOEL SPIRA OUTSTANDING DESIGN EDUCATOR AWARD



Janet K. Allen, John and Mary Moore Chair of Engineering and Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering at the University of Oklahoma, received the 2019 Ruth and Joel Spira Outstanding Design Educator Award, one of the highest honors presented by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. The citation reads:

*“Janet K. Allen through her long career in academia has modified her research thrusts and developed courses and curricula to meet changing needs in education. She continues to make contributions to the scholarship of knowledge discovery, the scholarship of synthesis of knowledge, and the scholarship of knowledge transmission (teaching, publication, etc.). Further she continues to mentor undergraduates, graduates and faculty. On account of her past and continuing contributions to furthering engineering education through scholarship, teaching and mentoring Janet K. Allen is clearly a role model to emulate.”*

For further information about this award and Professor Janet K. Allen see write-up in the Norman Transcript.

[https://www.newswise.com/articles/ou-industrial-and-systems-engineering-professor-recognized-with-award-for-supporting-students#.XhU\\_qjWFDm8.email](https://www.newswise.com/articles/ou-industrial-and-systems-engineering-professor-recognized-with-award-for-supporting-students#.XhU_qjWFDm8.email)

Janet K. Allen is married to Prof Farrokh Mistree. Their children, Dinsha and Behram and their wives Fareeza and Kristen, respectively, live in California. In the North American Zarathusti community, Janet K. Allen is known as Yashfara Mistree. Yashfara is one of the co-founders of the Sunday School for the Australian Zoroastrian Association (AZA) in Sydney. She started the library for AZA in Australia and operated a library from her home for the Zoroastrian Association

of Houston, till she moved. In 1990 she co-edited (with Farrokh) the Proceedings of the North American Zoroastrian Congress that was held in Houston; this was the last one circulated in print. Together with her mother-in-law Nergesh, she hosted the Atlanta Zarathushti Anjuman's monthly Sunday School for 11 years in Atlanta. Yashfara, together with Farrokh, offers a seminar entitled “A Seminar for College Age Kids and Their Parents.” Currently, she is an active member of the Zoroastrian Faculty Network focused on mentoring and financially supporting Zoroastrian students who wish to pursue graduate studies, succeed, and give back to the Zoroastrian community.



## FREDDIE MERCURY CLOSE, STREET SIGN UNVEILED WHERE THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION'S HQ IS LOCATED

On February 24 2020, on a very damp morning at a short ceremony attended by Kashmira Bulsara, the sister of the legendary singer, the Mayor of the London Borough of Hounslow, Councillor Tony Louki, Lord Karan Bilimoria of Chelsea, Seema Malhotra, the local Labour MP, Shahpur Captain, Chairman of WZO, family, residents and fans of the legendary singer, the UK committee members and supporters of the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO), Kashmira pulled back the special cover to reveal the new street name. The sign is placed outside the WZO head office., whose address will now be 1, Freddie Mercury Close, Feltham.

In the photo (right) Freddie's sister Kashmira can be seen under the umbrella, and to her right is Toni Louki, the Mayor of the London Bureau of Hounslow. Lord Karan Billimoria is standing with his right hand outstretched and Seema Malhotra, Member of Parliament for Feltham and Heston is in front of him. Ervads Jimmy Madon and Falli Madon are in the background.

The Bulsara family moved to Feltham in West London after fleeing the revolution in Zanzibar in 1964. The family lived a short walk away at 22 Gladstone Avenue. In 2016 that site was marked with a blue plaque as a heritage site (photo right below).

Local authorities agreed to rename part of Hanworth Road, the address of the headquarters of the World Zoroastrian Organization. after one of its most famous resident – Freddie Mercury.

Freddie was born Freddie Bulsara to two Zoroastrian parents and practiced the Zoroastrian religion during his lifetime . He died in 1991 aged 45 due to complications from AIDS. The Mercury Phoenix Trust, a charity set up after his death, supports projects fighting HIV and AIDS worldwide.

*Photo courtesy WZO*





## SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies



*Two Zarthushtis from North America, Ervad Adil Minocherhomjee and Amy Engineer, attended this first Zoroastrian Summer School a joint venture of SOAS, Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies and University of Bergen. This is a photo of the group on the terrace of the Norwegian Institute in Rome.*

## LEARNING ABOUT THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION IN ROME



I had the chance to attend a short weeklong summer course in Zoroastrianism in Rome sponsored by SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies and the University of Bergen. It was held at the Norwegian Institute in Rome. Before I attended, I had many preconceived notions of what taking an academic view of a religious community entailed. While I personally view religion as a personal framework for making decisions, this seminar took a different perspective as it emphasized Zoroastrianism as a religious community in Iran.



Adil Minocherhomjee

Yet, I did wonder what it would be like to see the world through another's eyes - be it through the lens of a different time, place, or community. The seminar applied a visual lens to the rediscovery of Iran in the 17th century through an architectural survey, a small lens through which to see many antiquities in a museum from the Achaemenian, Parthian, and Sassanian periods, a taste lens through eating Persian cuisine, a verbal lens through an in-depth discussion of recent Iranian Zoroastrian experiences in their villages, a touch lens through the pre-reading content of Professors Jenny Rose, Sarah Stewart, Michael Stausberg, and Touraj Daryaee, and an audio lens through viewing the similarities between Jewish and Iranian Zoroastrian culture.

One particular lecture that resonated with me was the story of Manekji Limji Hataria and Amelioration of the Condition of Zoroastrians in Persia (“The Amelioration Society”). The Amelioration Society consisted of affluent Parsis who wanted to help the Iranian Zoroastrians with financial and political support. In 1884, Hataria and a few others took an extended trip to live with their coreligionists in Yazd and Kerman. Hataria took detailed notes of the struggles of the Iranian Zoroastrians based on their poverty, living conditions, diets, and worst of all: a sense of fatalism and impending doom.

Hataria’s response to the fatalism and doom was inspirational. He lobbied the Parsis back in Mumbai and set a personal goal to convince the Iranian leadership to remove the “jizya” poll tax on Zoroastrians due to the ongoing economic burden. While Hataria was working on the politics to abolish the jizya, the Parsi community in India offered to pay the tax for members of the Iranian population. With help from the British, Hataria was able to get the jizya removed for the community. Even with the tax removal, there were other unresolved communal issues, such as the unequal treatment of Zoroastrians under the law or with education. Hataria and the other Parsis encouraged the Iranian Zoroastrians to either build infrastructure for themselves or to migrate to India for better opportunities.

After this lecture, I believe that, as a community, we have a lot to learn from our recent history. Helping others less fortunate than us by either donating or sacrificing time and money is a difficult thing to do. However, we can help others in our community search for better opportunities or migrate to a location where they can be better off.



I found the ambiance of Rome to be energetic and the facilities of the Norwegian Institute to be simple and effective. Most of the participants were religious studies majors. Hence, the discussions around insider versus outsider perspectives on Zoroastrianism were also quite interesting. One missing piece in my viewpoint from this course was a lack of references to Zoroastrian scripture. The course was very focused on religion as a community but lacked any references to the religious interpretation of texts and how arguments may influence the view of society and vice versa. I brought this up to the facilitators of the course, and they mentioned they may include these textual references in the future.

Out of the 10 students, there were 4 Parsi Zoroastrians and 6 religious studies students, which inevitably led to exciting discussions about the religion from an “insider versus outsider” perspective. The pre-reading coursework required was two books and a selection of other papers, including interviews from Professor Stewart’s research in contemporary Iran. While I took the course out of interest in modern religious studies research, a student could submit a final paper to receive college credit.

The course inspired me to continue my own personal research and education around our religious community. If you are interested in getting a bit of a kickstart to learning more about our religion from an academic perspective, I would recommend attending the next event.

The second session planned for 22nd to 26th June 2020 around “Zoroastrianism: Views of the Future,” had to be cancelled because of the corona virus lock down in Italy.

◆ *Ervad Adil Minocherhomjee holds a Masters in Business Administration from UCLA and a Masters in Information Systems from Indiana University, Bloomington. He is a Product Manager living in Salt Lake City, Utah.*

# ZOROASTRIANISM IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN- A WEEKLONG EXPLORATION

The first annual Zoroastrian Summer School was a joint initiative between SOAS University of London and the University of Bergen. It was hosted at the Norwegian Institute in Rome from September 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>.2019. When I saw this opportunity advertised in a newsletter, I was intrigued. I am a Parsi Zoroastrian and I have a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology, so being able to explore my religion and culture in an academic setting was enticing. The opportunity to study Zoroastrianism from a scholarly standpoint wasn't something that was ever offered to me before, so I knew I had to apply. I filled out the application not knowing what to expect- a week in Rome was a very far off idea at that point in time. After attending the Avesta classes with ZAMWI throughout my childhood, I was eager to know more about the cultural and religious variability of modern Zoroastrianism. While the Avesta classes were a useful introduction to the religion, this class gave me an outsider perspective on my faith. The topic covered during the class, Zoroastrianism in Contemporary Iran, was useful for me to explore because the experiences of other Zoroastrians was not something ever presented to me before. After receiving admission to the class, came a frenzy of readings, plane tickets, and months of waiting.



**Amy Farrokh  
Engineer**

On the first morning, I walked to the Norwegian Institute of Rome not knowing what to expect. The walk to the school was long and mostly uphill, and it didn't help that it was a hot and humid morning. After making it to the idyllic Norwegian Institute in Rome and meeting my fellow classmates, we hiked up five flights of stairs to the balcony, where the views of Rome were spectacular. There were 10 students, five of whom were Zoroastrian, all Parsi, one Iranian student, and four non-Zoroastrian, non-Iranian/Indian students who attended out of an interest in religious and anthropological studies. An unfortunately small class size as there were more Iranian students admitted, who were unable to secure visas in time for the class.

We settled in and our instructors for the week, Jenny Rose, Sarah Stewart, and Michael Stausberg got right into the introduction of the topics and schedule for the week. *Jenny Rose* is a professor in the Zoroastrian Studies program in Claremont Graduate University's Religion Department. The main organizer of the class, *Sarah Stewart*, is a professor at SOAS University of London and the Co-chair of the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies. *Michael Stausberg* is from the University of Bergen's Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion. The lectures gave us a broad category of topics, meant to give us a comprehensive overview of Zoroastrian life in Iran. Our professors alternated giving the lectures, about a range of topics including gender roles, food and ceremonies, texts, religious education, law, politics, and the influence of Indian Zoroastrians. It was fascinating to learn about how Iranian Zoroastrians and Indian Zoroastrians relied on each other and influenced each other's practice of the religion. Particularly of interest to me was the legacy of Parsi philanthropy that came about as a concern for their Iranian coreligionists. While helpful in many respects, the movement also became quite paternalistic in nature as Parsis took on an authoritative role in Iranian Zoroastrian's lives. However, these philanthropic initiatives were successful, a success which included repealing the *jizya*, or poll tax. The nuances and delicate balances of this relationship were insightful and gave additional context to how Iranian and Parsi traditions differ.



My favorite part of the class was the excursion to the Persian restaurant and the museum. We dined on typical Persian food such as Zerehsheh Polu, Chelo Fesenjan, and Salad Shirazi. Followed by tea, we headed over to the museum district to look at artifacts of ancient Persia. The following days were focused on presenting our assignments from Sarah Stewart's *Voices from Zoroastrian Iran* to the class. Each student presented one of the interviews from the book and commented on what they found noteworthy about the interviewee, given the socio-religious context. It was interesting to hear my classmates integrate what they have learned from the lectures into commentary on their assigned interviews. Sarah set up this session to allow for individual opinion and comparative analysis, making it a good wrap up to the week's lectures.

After the class was over, students had the option to submit a paper on a subject of their choice to receive college credit from SOAS University of London. The class was well organized and offered enough context and information to allow students to be able to analyze the interviews and engage with the thoughts and feelings of those represented in the book. Overall, this class was very enjoyable and fulfilled its promise to immerse students in an intensive learning experience of Zoroastrianism. I would highly recommend the next installment of this class to anyone who wants to gain a more nuanced understanding of Zoroastrianism or is interested in religion from a scholarly standpoint.

◆ *Amy is a recent graduate of the University of Florida, with a degree in anthropology, and minors in business administration and health disparities. She works at the University of Maryland to connect the University and its students with the local non profit community. She and her family have been active in the ZAMWI community for many years.*

# COLORECTAL DEPARTMENT OF ST PAUL'S HOSPITAL IN VANCOUVER, BC. GETS NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, THANKS TO A DONATION FROM BELLA TATA AND FAMILY



The famous red-vested greeters of St. Paul's are a special group of people.

First, they volunteer their time—and that is the most precious gift of all.

Second, for any anxious or nervous patient that comes through our door, their warm smiles and offers of help are a calming force—and they show you the very best way to get where you're going, as they know every twist and turn of every hallway.

It has been said of a long-time volunteer Bella Tata that, in her role as hospital greeter, she makes you

feel as though she is welcoming you into her own home. To anyone who knows her, that statement is quickly accepted as truth. That's just what Bella's like, they say.

Now, thanks to a generous gift from Bella and her family, Dr. Manoj Raval and Dr. Carl Brown can welcome people into one of British Columbia's most technologically advanced conference rooms at the St. Paul's Colorectal Department at St Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, Canada

Dr. Raval says: "Thanks to a gift from Bella and her family, we now have a teleconferencing system that is connected to more than 300 health care facilities province-wide. We can now do high quality video transmissions of surgical procedures. We have direct video contact with patients, other physicians, and students and residents for teaching sessions. This gift also upgraded existing equipment such as microscopes and cameras. This act of kindness from Bella and her family will help patients for many years to come."

The gift was given by Bella and her spouse, Farrokh Namdaran, and Bella's sister, Zarine Dastur and Zarine's



In photo above Piroj Amroliya, Nanu and Zarine Dastur, second and third from left , Alayar Dabestani, Farrokh Namdaran and Bella Tata, first, second and third from right.

husband, Nanu J. Dastur. The new system was unveiled and demonstrated in the colorectal conference room in June, a function attended by Bella and her family and some friends, Drs. Raval and Brown, and representatives from St. Paul's Foundation.

We are reminded of the importance of such support from the community when we realize that colorectal cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada. It is also the second leading cause of cancer death in men and the third leading cause of cancer death in women.

St. Paul's continues to maintain its leadership position in this complex area of medicine. In addition to being a Centre for Excellence and a leader in research and patient care, St. Paul's is also a teaching hospital and training center for colorectal surgeons for University of British Columbia (UBC)

Charitable gifts from individuals and families are part of the achievement and success of our medical teams at St. Paul's, as well as help from community support.

Bella volunteers at St. Paul's Hospital which is famous for its heart, kidney and other transplants, She has trained many volunteers at the hospital and is proud of how well they have turned out – dedicated and always smiling and helping

Bella also volunteers at the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, where she is a patron, and the West Vancouver Community Centre where she goes to make sandwiches which they sell, etc., etc. Bella says "I don't know how many hours I volunteer, but this is the least I can do whilst I am alive and still in decent health. Then there is ZSBC and our own community! Health is the most important thing and I hope I continue to have reasonable abilities."

Bella has been a long serving member of the FEZANA family. The Zoroastrian Community is very proud of her for all her dedicated services for so many years for so many people. Bella, we salute you. ED.

## ZOROASTRIAN CENTER OF CALIFORNIA RECEIVES 2020 BEST OF WESTMINSTER AWARD

WESTMINSTER March 6, 2020 -- Zoroastrian Center of California has been selected for the 2020 Best of Westminister Award in the Religious Organizations category by the Westminister Award Program.

Each year, the Westminster Award Program identifies companies that have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and our community. These exceptional companies help make the Westminister area a great place to live, work and play. Various sources of information were gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category.

The 2020 Westminister Award Program focuses on quality, not quantity. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the Westminister Award Program and



data provided by third parties.

The Westminister Award Program is an annual awards program honoring the achievements and accomplishments of local businesses throughout the Westminister area. Recognition is given to those companies that have shown the ability to use their best practices and implemented programs to generate competitive advantages and long-term value. The Westminister Award Program was established to recognize the best of local businesses in the community.

The mission of the program is to recognize the small business community's contributions to the U.S. economy.

## WHAT DIASPORIC ZOROASTRIANISM CAN LEARN FROM BLACK HISTORY



A week before his death on April 28, 2018, I invited Rev. Dr. James H. Cone (Union Theological Seminary, New York) to participate in the Asha Vahishta Initiative (AVI) Conferences, informing him that the main theme was “Re-Imagining Faith, Re-Claiming Fellowship in Diaspora”. Despite poor health, his correspondence with me was generous.

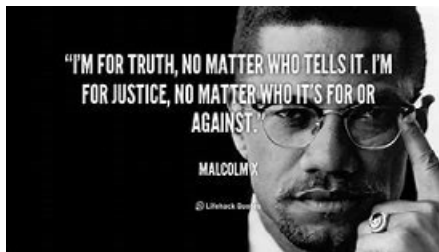
Black History Month is an opportunity for diasporic Zoroastrians to understand, critical reflection keeps faith relevant. Black leaders held theological positions that inspired and revitalized their community.



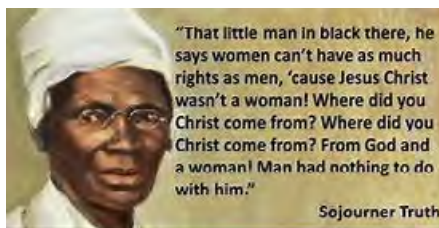
The Black diaspora of North America was created 400 years (1619-2019) ago through the violent act of enslavement. Violence was not only physical but spiritual, resulting in the dispossession from Blacks in North America, of their West African languages, cultures, and traditions. What is both unique and inspirational about this tragedy, is how Black faith and fellowship were re-imagined and re-claimed, in diaspora, to become the instrument for Black sociocultural liberation and renewal.

Christianity had been utilized by many within the White American establishment, to justify Black oppression. Successive Black intellectuals and activists began to

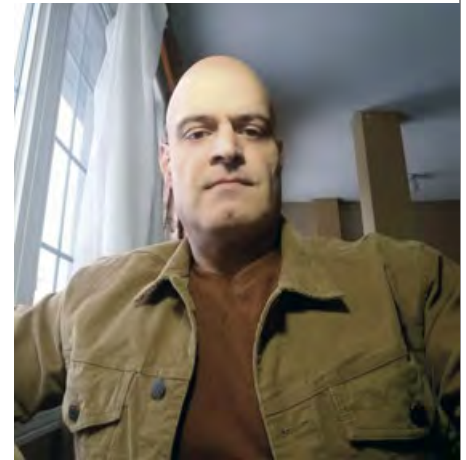
re-conceptualize Christianity so that it became a liberating force of Black expression. In order to do this, faith and fellowship began to be emphasized as a quest for social justice. Theology was decolonized, from an expression of archaic European-centered concerns and expressions fixed in time (centuries past, or of specific ethnic origin and concern); to an active concern for the present.



More about Christian theology up to this point (late 1960s) must be known, but suffice it to say that this was ground breaking, since mainstream doctrinal positions were hitherto interpreted as advocating that the poor and oppressed should quietly accept their lives on earth, in order to seek, or be rewarded with, the kingdom of heaven.

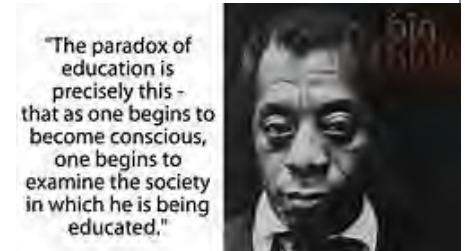


Re-conceptualizing the meaning of religion, began with figures such as ‘Sojourner Truth’ (born Isabella Baumfree, (1797-1883). She was born into slavery, escaped, and became an activist not only for abolition, but specifically women’s rights. What is notable is that formally un-educated,



**Neville Panthaki**

she expounded rational argument based on scriptural interpretations, for equality. In other words, the name she took (Truth) was the truth she perceived that God’s justice did not predestine either a single race, or a gender, to subservience.



James Baldwin (1924-1987), after completing high school, lived in Paris where he developed as an author and playwright. He contributed greatly to an awareness that education must be a site for democracy, otherwise it becomes a propaganda tool for the maintenance of oppression. In this way, education and theology, must always be critically revolutionary. Baldwin was also a proponent against gender and sexual orientation discrimination (gay rights). Through his works of social commentary, Baldwin began to critique the liberal middle class and Christian congregations, as being hypocritical in relation to their

professed ideals. Baldwin influenced later Black intellectuals, who began to move to unify their opposition to all discriminations (gender, race, sexual, class, ethnicity) within a single pronouncement of faith.



Baldwin encouraged his friend Maya Angelou (born Marguerite Annie Johnson, 1928-2014), to develop an autobiographical account of survival, explaining how Black people re-conceptualized the meaning and purpose of faith in order to overcome. *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* (1969), is a study narrating the intersectionality (gender, colour, class) of discrimination faced by Black women, told through episodes of Angelou's life. Angelou was instrumental in that she transmitted divergent ideas about Black faith and liberation across continents. She counselled the first free African nation of Ghana (former Gold Coast), while also associating with Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. It was Angelou, who emphasized that ethos and atmosphere (creating an emotional connection between thought and action) is what gave



worth to theoretical frameworks.

By the 1960s, the Black community was polarized. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. only had a third of its support, compared to Malcolm X.

Whether Christianity could actually provide a basis for sociopolitical mobilization and spiritual salvation, was doubtful to many Blacks. It was Rev. Dr. James Cone (1938-2018), who unified King's inspired message, with Malcolm's emphasis on action. Cone produced the idea of *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), which concluded that religion (faith) could only be true (of divine inspiration or in accordance to God) if it was an inclusive expression (fellowship) opposed to all forms of injustice, against everyone, everywhere.

So, what should diasporic Zoroastrianism learn from Black

◆ *Neville Gustad Panthaki is a Canadian born Parsi. He completed a Tri-Program Collaborative Ph.D. in Social Justice Education, Comparative International Development, and South Asian Studies. Neville also completed Ph.D.(ABD) work in History, earned his M.A, B.Ed., and B.A. The Asha Vahishta Initiative (AVI) was his attempt to promote the re-conceptualization of Zoroastrian identity and belonging in diaspora.*

## Asha Vahishta Initiative



## AVI: Pledge 101!

history? Faith and fellowship remain relevant only when they remain self-critical (reflective), and their leaders promote theological positions promoting social justice.

**Retirees, see what the 3 established 55+ Communities in the Tampa Bay area of Florida offer by visiting the link below.**

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## FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS (2019-2020)

*Applications are invited for:*

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS AND SIX FEZANA ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI (MMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE—THE FEZANA SCHOLAR

FEZANA 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

MORVARID GUIV ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

PURVEZ AND ABAN RUSTOMJI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

YASMIN AND SHAPUR PAVRI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

SOONU AND JAL BIRDY ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

VILLY AND HOMI GANDHI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

JERRY AND CELESTE 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

BANOUBAI AND MANECKSHAW KAPADIA (BMK) ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

DR MINOCHER RUSTOM AND DOWLAT MINOCHER VESUNA, WZO CANADA ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

SHEROO DARABSHA KOLSAVALA ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP

THE NAMES OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE PUBLISHED ON FEZANA.ORG, IN THE FEZANA JOURNAL AND WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ONLINE ACCESS.

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

**SCHOLARSHIPS**—For the 2019-2020 academic year will be awarded in September 2020.

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

- Proof of USA or Canadian citizenship. (For non-citizens, a minimum of one year or two semesters residency in USA or Canadian academic institution is required).
- Past academic records and accomplishments (attach documentation of the past four years only)
- Program of study.
- Annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions, or the institution of choice.
- Other financial assistance available from family and friends.
- Community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations.
- Two reference letters (one preferably from an association nearest to you).

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

The Mehraban and Morvorid Kheradi Endowed Scholarship of \$5,000 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary FEZANA Scholarship \$3000 will be awarded to post graduate students for scholastic excellence.

The Purvez and Aban Rustomji Endowed Scholarship and Yasmin and Shapur Tata-Pavri Endowed Scholarship of \$5,000 will be awarded to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrates financial need and academic achievement.

The Morvarid Guiv Endowed Scholarships of \$1,000 will be awarded to one graduate and one undergraduate student who demonstrates financial need together with academic excellence.

The Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowed Scholarship of \$2,000 will be awarded to an undergraduate student with good academic standing who demonstrates financial need.

The Soonu and Jal Birdy Endowed scholarships of \$2,500 will be awarded to a post graduate student and to an undergraduate student with good academic standing who demonstrates financial need.

Dr Minocher Rustom Vesuna and Dowlat Minocher Vesuna WZO Canada Endowed Scholarships will be awarded to a graduate and an undergraduate student with good academic standing who demonstrates financial need.

The Sheroo Darabsha Kolsavala Endowed Scholarship of \$1,000 will be awarded to an undergraduate student with demonstrated financial need and good academic standing.

The Villy and Homi Gandhi Endowed scholarship of \$1,000 will be awarded to an undergraduate student with good academic standing and demonstrated financial need.

The Jerry and Celeste Kheradi 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary Endowed scholarship of \$1,000, will be awarded to a graduate student with good academic standing.

**APPLICATION FORMS**—Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) or from Dr Dolly Dastoor [academicscholarship@fezana.org](mailto:academicscholarship@fezana.org).

**Completed applications should be sent electronically by July 1, 2020, (11.59 EST) to [academicscholarship@fezana.org](mailto:academicscholarship@fezana.org)**

# FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS—2019

**Dolly Dastoor PhD**  
Chair, FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program

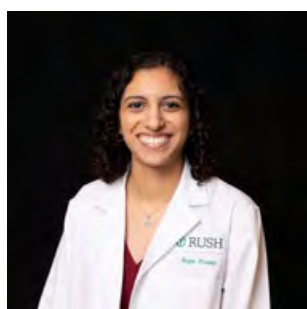
*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world*  
*Nelson Mandela*

Education and training continue to fuel the engine of social mobility and contribute to social cohesion and integration in our ever more diverse societies and cultures. The benefits of education go beyond the economic returns—contributing also to better health, citizenship, and lower crime rates. In the words of JFK “The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth.”

Investment in our youth is an investment in the future of the Zarathushti community. The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason to hope. You have given hope to our youth by your donations. Your faith and trust in the FEZANA Academic Scholarship Program—as demonstrated by your support and endowments—are appreciated by your committee and the recipients. Thank you.

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

## **MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP** **THE FEZANA SCHOLAR (\$5,000)**



**YAZMIN RUSTOMJI, Rush Medical College, Chicago, IL, Doctor of Medicine, First Year**

Yazmin Rustomji graduated from Marquette University with an Honors Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences. She is now a first-year medical student pursuing a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree at Rush Medical College in Chicago, Illinois. Yazmin hopes to become a leader in patient-centered primary care, focusing on geriatric medicine. Her interests include discussing the importance of holistic care, engaging with the local community, and eliminating health disparities as a healthcare provider.

Yazmin is extremely grateful to receive this scholarship. It will help alleviate her financial burden so that she can focus on her medical education and become an extraordinary and empathetic physician. She is excited to bring positive change to her patients' communities and her Zoroastrian community.

Yazmin's vision for the Zoroastrian community includes increasing awareness about Zoroastrianism, establishing connections between local Zoroastrians, and participating in acts of service. She is a manager for the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAMC) Facebook page which aims to educate the public and showcase ZAMC events. Yazmin is passionate about meeting others with different backgrounds and educating non-members about the Zoroastrian faith to promote tolerance, inclusivity and awareness.

## **FEZANA 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (\$3,000)**



### **TANAZ NATERWALA, Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, 1<sup>st</sup> Year Medical Student**

My name is Tanaz Naterwala, and I am a first-year medical student at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) in Chicago. I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Northwestern University in December with a major in Neuroscience and minor in Computer Science. I was accepted to FSM through the NU Premedical Scholars Program (NUPSP), which is a competitive, early acceptance program. During my time at Northwestern University, I volunteered weekly at a nursing home/rehabilitation facility in which I assisted physical and occupational therapists in rehabilitating elders who had suffered injuries. I also served as a Senior Facilitator for organic chemistry through the Peer Guided Study Group program. In this role, I tutored groups of 6-8 students in organic chemistry and led weekly meetings with other organic chemistry tutors to help them prepare for tutoring sessions. Additionally, I was a biology lab TA, helping students learn and perform lab techniques and analyze data. At FSM, I have been elected as a College Senator, which allows me to help affect changes in the medical school curriculum and programming through meetings with FSM leadership and the Student Senate.

I am so grateful for this scholarship, as it will help me finance my studies at FSM and alleviate some of my student loan debt. I aim to use this scholarship to make my Zoroastrian community proud by working hard in medical school and continuing to commit myself to the service of others through volunteering. For example, I will volunteer at community clinics throughout Chicago to help provide healthcare to those who cannot afford it, and I will join Chicago Street Medicine, which is a group that provides healthcare and resources to the homeless population in Chicago. I feel so blessed to have received this award and to be a part of the Zoroastrian community—a supportive, philanthropic, and global community which has helped to shape me into the person I am today.

## **MORVARID GUIV ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (\$1,000)**



### **JAMSHED DESAI, Florida Atlantic University, Doctor of Medicine**

I am a Doctor of Medicine student at Florida Atlantic University graduating in 2023, specializing in Cardiology or Anesthesiology. I was born in Boston MA, have grown up in California and Florida and have two sisters. I enjoy spending time outdoors, working on electronics and cars. I have a passion for brewing coffee and try to master all the different brewing methods, from French Press to Espresso.

I was named after my Grandfather Jamshed Darius Desai, who came from a little village of Valsad, in Gujarat, moved to Bombay and worked hard to raise a family. My dad, Darius Jamshed Desai, came to the USA at age 19 years and worked hard to raise his family. I carry on the family tradition of excellence, and hard work. I have a 4.0 GPA throughout college, perfect scores on the ACT, and MCAT exam, and was awarded "Outstanding Junior" in college. This scholarship is a trust placed in me by our community, and I am very proud and thankful.

## **FEZANA SCHOLARS (\$2,000)**



### **ARMAN IZADI, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University of Virginia, Ph.D. Candidate in Civil and Environmental Engineering**

Arman Izadi is a Ph.D. candidate majoring in civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). His research area is modeling, simulating and optimizing air transportation systems to improve the efficiency and safety of flight operations. He is the recipient of 2019 Halaby graduate student fellowship which allowed him to continue his research on mitigation of weather impact on aviation besides leading atmospheric scientists in the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). During his Ph.D. program, he joined the executive board of Iranian

Society at Virginia Tech (ISVT) and served as the “Graduate Advisor.” Arman has been a significant force behind unifying the Iranian community and showcasing the Iranian culture to the Virginia Tech campus. He takes pride in his Zoroastrian heritage and has worked tirelessly to present Zoroastrianism to the Iranians and other nations. He believes that the Zoroastrian community can become more developed with training well-educated generations who are also connected to the roots of our holy religion. Arman intends to continue his collaboration with the Zoroastrian associations after his graduation. Undoubtedly, FEZANA scholarship helps him to have more academic accomplishments and community services.



**NILOOFER MOZHGANI, University of California, San Francisco. School of Dentistry (UCSF)**

I was born and raised in Iran and moved to the United States when I was 19 years old. I am a second-year student in UCSF School of Dentistry. In September 2018, I was awarded the Dean’s Excellence Scholarship by UCSF, which covered a portion of my first year’s tuition as a dental student. At UCSF, I am one of the board members of an organization called SNDA, which provides education and experience that pre-dental students need in order to get into dental school in the Bay Area. I am also one of the members of an organization that provides free oral health for kids and high school students called “Give Kids a Smile.” Every second Wednesday, we provide free dental care for homeless and low-income population of San Francisco in UCSF clinic through a non-profit organization managed by dental students such as myself and it gives me

so much joy to be able to be part of the community and serve people in need, and I am very honored to be one of the recipients of FEZANA Scholarship. Dental school is very expensive and this scholarship allowed me to purchase some of the tools I needed for school and it was a great financial help for me. My ultimate goal has always been serving people in my community and I am happy that I can use the art of dentistry as an outlet to provide everyone with tools and knowledge they need to manage their oral health. I have grown up believing that religion and Zoroastrian community need to be an important aspect of my life, so I should know about it, care about it and contribute to it. Therefore, I wish to continue serving my community as a Zoroastrian and soon-to-be dentist.



**POUYAN POURESFANDIAR, Western University of Health Sciences, CA, Osteopathic Medicine**

I graduated from UC Irvine with a Bachelor in Biological Sciences. While at UC Irvine, I conducted research on memory decline and aging correlation and received the Robert Ernst prize for excellence in research. I also served as the President of the Iranian Student Union, and co-founder of the mindfulness club on campus. I recently started medical school at Western University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine.

I am very honored and grateful to have received this scholarship from FEZANA. This scholarship not only helps me financially, but also encourages me to give back to the community in any way I can. Receiving mentorship from members of the Zartushti community around me has been very helpful to get me to where I am today. This has encouraged me to work towards creating a network of Zoroastrian professionals with diverse career backgrounds to mentor the younger community members set on a similar path.

**ERRATUM.**

**In the report on "Central Asian Arts & Archaeology: Selected Zoroastrian Themes and Sites" (FJ Winter 2019), the credit for the wooden panel with Nana (pg. 26) belongs to the Japanese-Uzbek archaeological expedition (Alisher Begmatov, *The Fire Layer that Covers the Citadel: Excavations at Kafir-kala* (2018), [academia.edu](http://academia.edu)).**

## **FEZANA 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ENDOWED FUND**



### **SHAYAN BHATHENA, Baylor College of Medicine, (\$1,000)**

My name is Shayan Bhathena and I am so grateful to receive the FEZANA scholarship again this year. I am currently an MS2 at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. This scholarship has eased my financial burden throughout school, allowing me to focus on experiences that enrich my medical education. Though, at present, I am unsure of what specialty I want to pursue, I hope to one day treat underserved populations in my community. In addition to my classwork, I serve as student Co-Chair for the Doctors for Change Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, and am currently organizing an initiative to train members of my community on how to respond to opioid overdose.

Alongside medical school, I hope to continue giving back to my Zoroastrian community in Houston, which helped raise me to be the person I am today. My vision for the Zoroastrian community is to encourage the exchange of ideas between Zoroastrians of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds so that we may all grow to appreciate the rich diversity that exists within our faith.

## **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY JERRY AND CELESTE KHERADI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**



### **SHIRIN EZZATTI, West Coast University, Los Angeles, CA, Pharma D**

My name is Shirin Ezzati I am 28 years old. Three years ago, my family and I came to the US from Iran. America has opened so many opportunities for me and my family. After much persistence and multiple attempts, I was accepted into the pharmacy program at West Coast University in Los Angeles. The pharmacy school gave me a especial opportunity to participate in meeting and conferences about the most recent research and news of pharmacological science. In addition, it helps me to contact other pharmacists and know about their projects.

I received a scholarship from FEZANA in September that helped me buy some of the important books and materials for the pharmacy program and also covered the costs of transportation. I really appreciate the help as it would have been very hard to pursue this profession without FEZANA's help and support which I am forever grateful for and try to return the favor to our community whenever and wherever.

Following on from the 2019 Congress, I saw how successful and fun it was, bringing the Zoroastrian youth together. In the following year or so I am determined to help in organizing events with Mabad aimed specifically for the youth such as camps and evening events which I think is important as it keeps the youth connected to other young Zoroastrians as well as opening many opportunities for them to also be involved in the community in future and making sure they understand the basics of Zoroastrian culture. Therefore, they can be proud of their background and answer any questions other people may have.

## **WZO CANADA- SAM MINOCHER VESUNA ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP, Dr. MINOCHER RUSTOM VESUNA, WZO/CANADA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$3,000)**

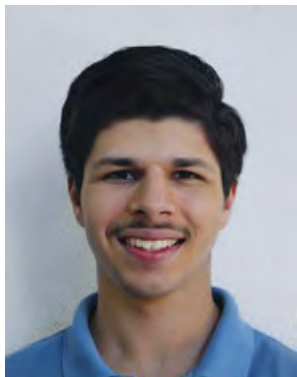


### **CYRUS DARUWALLA, Baylor College of Medicine, Dr. of Medicine**

I grew up in San Antonio, Texas with only a handful of other Zoroastrian families. Although our group was small, these people were like a second family to me. With their support, I was able to graduate from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and a minor in Government. During this time, I was accepted into the Health Science Scholars Honors Program and the Archer Fellowship Program. I gained a strong interest in public health while interning for a semester at The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Washington, D.C. This experience led me to write my thesis on the opioid epidemic in America. I am currently a first-year medical student at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Receiving a FEZANA scholarship reminds me that I have the support of a widespread religious community. I hope to represent us well!

## UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

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



#### **RUSTAM GANDHI, University of California, Berkeley, Chemical Engineering**

I'm so honored to be awarded the Purvez and Aban Rustomji Endowed Scholarship. I am studying chemical engineering at UC Berkeley, and this scholarship is a step towards my financial independence. It will help me reach my academic goals as well as reduce the financial burden on my family throughout my academic career.

I have always been interested in chemistry/chemical engineering and the sciences in general. Throughout my high school, I received departmental awards in physics, chemistry, biology, and math, but chemistry was always my favorite subject. My interest truly formed when I investigated the electrolysis of water to produce hydrogen, an environmentally friendly fuel that has much potential in the energy economy of the future. This project received the Ingenuity in Chemistry Award at the Stanford Synopsys Science Fair. The following year my entry on another chemistry related project, also won

a Synopsys Award. Perhaps more importantly, these projects cemented my passion for chemistry.

Growing up in the Bay Area of Northern California, I have been a long-time member of the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC). As a member of ZANC, I have taken part in and helped with numerous events such as food drives, shoe drives, and other charitable work. I also assist at many of the functions and events of this organization, from setting up tables and chairs to teaching members how to ice skate at our annual ice-skating party. ZANC has provided me with a wonderful helpful and supportive community. Our Bay area also has another Zoroastrian association and there are a couple of Zoroastrian associations in California. My vision, therefore, is for more connected network and greater interaction of Zoroastrians: locally, nationally, and globally.

### TATA-PAVRI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$5,000)



#### **ZENAZ SARKARI, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, Physiological Sciences**

I am a freshman at UCLA, majoring in Physiological Science. I volunteer at the Ronald Reagan Medical Center. I address mental health issues in the Synapse club on campus where I interact with brain injury survivors. Consequently, I have been able to talk about my book *Down with Dementia*, which is selling on Amazon. It is amazingly satisfying to serve those with Alzheimer's through my work at Belmont Senior Center in LA.

I am honored and humbled to receive the FEZANA Pavri-Tata Scholarship. It is a fine example of the numerous resources that are available to us, and how Zoroastrians take care of one another. Our youth need encouragement and strong support to pursue their dreams.

I am optimistic that we will continue adopting pragmatic ways to thrive, grow, and contribute to our community. I will champion for elder care among Zoroastrians and find ways to keep our culture vibrant.

## KAPADIA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

### FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND ACADEMIC STANDING (\$2,000)



#### **ANAHITA HORMOZDYARI, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA, Kinesiology**

My name is Anahita Hormozdyari and I am a Kinesiology Exercise Science major at California State University Long Beach. I am extremely grateful and honored to be a recipient of the Banoobai and Maneckshaw Kapadia Endowment Scholarship for academic excellence. In addition to financial support, this award is yet another example of the Zoroastrian community's kindness and support of the younger members of the community who are going in for higher education.

I was born and raised in Iran. Since immigrating to the US five years ago, I have

been actively involved in the Zoroastrian community, serving as a youth educator and Farsi language teacher at the California Zoroastrian Center. For the past three years, I was planning the 7th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress as the Vice-Chair of Operations. My passion for the Zoroastrian community is rooted in my deep bond with my family, who have long been involved at various aspects of leadership with The Zoroastrian community at Iran, and as I continue my journey of connecting to my roots, culture, and community, I am beginning to find myself more and more determined to give back to my Zoroastrian community. I believe that I have a responsibility to act in defining a future that is bright and welcoming for future generations.

#### **MORVARID GUIV ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**

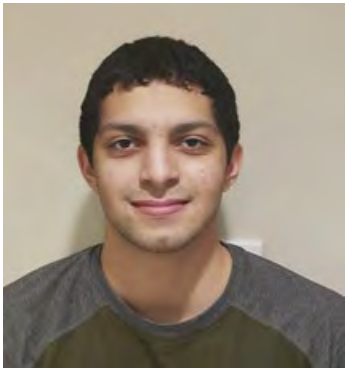


##### **ARASH DEHMEHRI, California State University, Long Beach, Computer Science**

I am currently studying Computer Science at California State University, Long Beach. My areas of interest within the field are cybersecurity, data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. For me, this scholarship means that I can graduate sooner and begin working in a career that I love and am passionate about. It is my vision for the youth of the Zoroastrian community to become more knowledgeable about our religion history by using technology in a positive and constructive way. For example, to build a platform to disseminate knowledge of historically correct information about our religion. Lastly, it is my vision to develop an application that detects and removes Arabic words from Farsi texts and replaces them with pure Farsi equivalents, to preserve Farsi

from losing its genuine form.

#### **JERRY AND CELESTE KHERADI 30TH ANNIVERSARY SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**



##### **ZAHAN BAMJI, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, NEW JERSEY, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING**

My name is Zahan Bamji and I am currently a freshman, studying Industrial Engineering at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. I am currently a member of the Rutgers Formula Racing Team where students from our school, work together every year to build a formula style car and compete against other schools around the world. In high school, I was inducted into the national honors society and received the National AP Scholar award. I hope that in the future, our community will continue to prosper as it has for so many years prior. I also hope that together, we will be able to help those in need within our community so that they can be the best possible versions

of themselves. This scholarship means a lot to me as it has enabled me to pursue my education with less financial burden. I greatly appreciated this award and am honored to have received it.

#### **VILLY AND HOMI GANDHI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**



##### **NIKAN OSHIDARI, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY,**

Since Fall of 2019 I am studying biology at UC Berkeley with the intentions of becoming a successful entrepreneur one day. Last spring, I graduated from Sage Hill School, where I was the founder president of the sports team, the philosophy club, and was a leading member of the robotics team. In addition, I volunteer to tutor the underprivileged elementary students and participate in my school's Tennis Team. Our community is a very special one and in order to maintain such an amazing community, I think it is important to fundamentally change how we treat each other and embrace the idea that we are a collective. Allowing our focus to shift to how we can help one another versus normal societal behavior. This scholarship means that I will be able to pay for my school's tuition without having to take out predatory loans.

## **WZO-CANADA SAM MINOCHER VESUNA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

### **DOWLAT MINOCHER VESUNA SCHOLARSHIP (\$3,000)**



#### **MITRA KHODADADI, McGill School of Music, Montreal**

Mitra Khodadadi is currently a second-year music student at McGill University. Her program allows her to learn more about theory, performance, composition, musicianship, and music history. All these courses will allow Mitra to improve her performance skills and have a better vision of different pieces and composers.

Mitra started learning the piano when she was four years old. She continued her studies in a general high school, in mathematics, and took private piano lessons at the same time. She acquired a high GPA in high school and then changed her field of study to Arts to be more concentrated on theory lessons. Mitra acquired a high GPA in pre-university. Meanwhile, she decided to apply for McGill's Music School. She was rewarded

with admission to the Music Performance program at McGill University in 2018. She has participated in charity programs from 2011-2017 for children suffering from cancer.

She has participated in Jam-e-Jambakhtegan Sports competition standing first in swimming. She was a swimming coach from 2013-16

As a Zarathushti, Mitra's vision is to see as many as possible Zarathushti youths studying in high-rank universities. Also, she always had this vision to see more experienced Zarathushtis nurture other Zoroastrians to become professionals in the future. Furthermore, Mitra expects to see her community becoming more united by helping each other through all difficulties. She will try to do her part as a young Zoroastrian in the best possible way to make these visions come true.

The FEZANA scholarship has lightened Mitra's financial burden, which allows her to focus more on the most important aspect of her life, including school and learning.

### **SHEROO DARABSHA KOLSAWALLA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**

#### **JEHZAN MUNSHI, Centennial College, Toronto, Business and Marketing Diploma**



I was born in a respected family from Navsari (Gujarat), India. At the age of 6 years I lost my father, Lt. Cyrus Munshi in a Train Bomb blast in Bombay. Since then my mother, Mrs. Farzin Cyrus Munshi and my maternal grandparents brought me up with great love, care, and desire to make myself a successful person. My mother has taught me about how to face the ups-downs of life and how to deal with any situation.

I am very proud to be born a Parsi. Since being a child of single parent, I received educational help and scholarships from Parsi Charitable Trust, which is a boon to Parsi deserving families like us. It is such a great blessing from our Community! I am really thankful and obliged to you and your Trust for helping me shape my career. In my needful time of studies, your kind support was a great help to me and my family.

### **ALUMNI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (\$1,000)**



#### **PARSA KHODABAKHSHI, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING**

I am a second-year mechanical engineering student at the University of British Columbia and I am privileged to have been honoured with FEZANA's generous Alumni Scholarship. My career aspirations are to work in the electric car industry, as it combines my areas of interest with an effort towards a sustainable future for our planet. However, being financially limited makes it exponentially difficult to take part in extracurricular activities such as university design teams. But with help from FEZANA, new opportunities are available allowing me to grow further. My vision for our community is to help the youth

learn about their religion and stay connected. I have taken part through teaching in Vancouver's Dar e Mehr and our Sunday schools. I plan to join my university's newly formed Zoroastrian Student Association and help it grow by reaching out to the Zarthushti and non-Zarthushti students; bringing them together with fun and relevant activities.

## **FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP (\$2,000)**



### **ERVAD YAZAD K. SIDHWA, Texas A&M University, College of Engineering, TX, Computer Science**

I feel so honored to be chosen as one of the FEZANA academic scholarship recipients for 2019-2020 from across North America. As a Zarathushti, being recognized by my own community is something very special to me and means a lot, besides it also gives me a sense of immense satisfaction as it enables me to contribute towards my educational goals.

I am currently enrolled as a Freshman at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX in the College of Engineering majoring in Computer Science. My field of study gives me the ability to innovate and create new things for commercial applications to meet the needs of the world and the engineering concepts really interest and excite me.

My vision for our Zarathushti community is manifold although at present I would continue offering my services as a Mobed whenever I can as well as learn, and mentor our Youth on the importance of our prayers and what they mean to us.



### **SANAYA BHADHA, University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business**

Sanaya Bhadha is currently a freshman in the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC) double-majoring in Business Administration (BS) and Intelligence & Cyber Operations (BA). As the business leader of her high school's robotics team, she led her teammates in winning the Aerospace Valley Chairman's Award, qualifying her team to attend the World Championships in Houston. She is an active member of USC's Design for America, a club that focuses on designing solutions for social problems within the greater Los Angeles community.

Additionally, her success in Public Forum debate qualified her for the California Speech and Debate State Championships. Through the program STEM Goes Red, she worked with executives at the American Heart Association to spread awareness of the symptoms of heart disease on women as well as educate the community about preventative actions. She earned her Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Award and has completed over 200 hours of community service by mentoring 4th-8th grade Girl Scouts in LEGO robotics. She thanks her ZAC community and FEZANA for their constant support and she is very grateful for the many role models she has within the Zoroastrian community. She is proud to see Zoroastrians continuing to embrace and spread the tenets of "Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds" in their everyday acts.



### **JEH MOREY, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan**

I have a keen interest in quizzing, reading, and current affairs, among other things. My prolonged exposure to life in both India and the United States (having lived for seven years in the former after a decade in the latter) has profoundly impacted how I perceive the world. I am a sophomore studying Business at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

This summer, I interned on Capitol Hill for Congressman Ron Kind (WI-03), where I assisted his full-time staff in summarizing proposed legislation and policy hearings and prepared briefing materials for his July 2019 Cameroon tour. As a full-time student, I worked in a University Dining Hall and interned for Gretchen Driskell (MI-07) during the 2018 midterms. Aside from multiple academic awards in high school, I interned with Laugh Out Loud Ventures, a start-up specializing in humorous educational content for Indian schoolchildren, by winning a nationwide essay contest with 25,000 entries. Over five years, I won multiple Bombay-level quiz contests and appeared in nationally televised events, such as the Bournvita Quiz Contest and India Today's NewsWiz Quiz. I served on the Secretariat of the 2016 and 2017 Cathedral Model United Nations (the oldest Indian MUN) and participated in my schools' basketball teams and choirs. Additionally, I played active leadership roles in Campion and Cathedral & John Connon Schools as House Captain and Vice-Captain, respectively. During a community service project, I helped construct two toilet blocks for the residents of Jawahar, a village in rural Maharashtra, and participated in a cultural exchange with the inhabitants.

This scholarship would represent a substantial acknowledgement of my accomplishments by my community, and as such is highly cherished. I recognize the sense of belonging afforded by my faith and am highly committed to enhancing this connection during my time in the United States.

# 2019 winners

## ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON



**NATALYA MEHTA**  
**ZAH LEGACY AWARD**

I plan to be a Biochemistry Major. I am not sure what college I will be attending, but I am very excited to experience college and further expand my education.



**ROXANNA IRANI**  
**ZAH LEGACY AWARD**  
(Shared with Anosh Irani)

I have not yet decided what university I will be attending next year. I will be studying business with a focus in management sciences.



**ANOSH IRANI**  
**ZAH LEGACY AWARD**  
(Shared with Roxanna Irani)

I plan on attending college once I have finished high school. The college I am going to attend is University of Texas at Dallas. My major is going to be Computer Science.



**CYRUS MISTRY**  
**THE CYRUS R DESAI AWARD**

I will graduate with honors from Stephen F. Austin (SFA) High School in May 2020, and two distinguished endorsements - Public Services Health Sciences Pathway, and STEM Math Pathway.

I will attend the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) and major in Biology with a Pre-Med Concentration.



**DINA HORMUZDI**  
**NALI & DANESH DESAI LEGACY AWARD**

I will be studying business at the University of Texas at Austin starting in the fall. Thank you to the Zoroastrian community for always inspiring me to strive for greatness.



**CONGRESS 2000 LEGACY**

## ZAH- The Mike N. Engineer (MNE) Scholarship

The MNE Scholarship is a need based academic scholarship established by Houston resident Mr. Mike Nadirshaw Engineer in memory of his beloved parents, Nadirshaw and Homai Engineer, and his grandparents. This scholarship will be awarded to deserving Zoroastrian students to further their post-secondary education at any accredited College or vocational or IT institute with credible certifications. Education institutions will be given preference in the following locations (presented in order of preference):

- Greater Houston TX area including College Station TX
- Any location in Texas or Louisiana
- Anywhere in North America

This years winners are:



**Zubin Master**, (left) a freshman at the University of Houston, majoring in Business Administration and Management (\$3,500 scholarship)

**Natalya Haveliwala**, (right) a post-graduate student at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree (\$2,000 scholarship)

Both Zubin and Natalya excel academically as well as strive to make a difference to their community through their involvement in ZAH activities. We are confident that they will continue to be mentors to our youth for many years to come.

Congratulations to Zubin and Natalya! We wish them continued success in their academic endeavors.



## THE PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS

### SHAHZAD BHIWANDIWALA

I am Shahzad Bhiwandiwal, a 27-year-old photographer currently pursuing my Master in Fine Arts (MFA) from Academy of Art University, San Francisco.

I am currently amongst the first professional toy photographers from India and am now expanding into the Conceptual Advertising Photography field through my master's program.

Photography is a means by which I tell my own stories and bring to life the myriad ideas and worlds I have created in my head. In the future, I will be using the technical knowledge gained from this course and applying it to my ideas to create a body of work that would act as a springboard to working with consumer product and lifestyle brands.

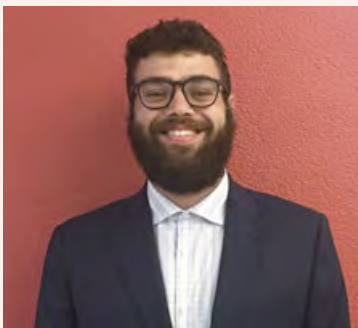




### **TANYA HOSHI**

Tanya Hoshi is a film and web-series producer in Toronto, where she currently works at Shopify Studios creating documentaries about entrepreneurship. Tanya has been a participant of the Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program and the First World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum. She has created a short film for both programs, which have screened at Annual General Meetings and most recently at the 7th Youth Congress in Los Angeles, 2019.

Tanya strongly believes that the Zoroastrian community is a thriving one, which is why she enjoys creating films about her community. She plans on creating more films about Zoroastrians, especially youth, with the hopes of reaching disenfranchised youth in the diaspora and hopefully reconnecting them with their cultural and religion.



### **RYAN MARAWALA**

Ryan Marawala is a 4th year student at UC Berkeley studying Neurobiology and Music. He is primarily a saxophonist and is in the UC Jazz Ensembles program. His music curriculum has allowed him to take courses that have enriched his understanding of performance, music theory, and what it means to be a musician. He thanks his community for believing in his academic endeavors and hopes to continue using music as a creative outlet by playing with others for as long as he is able.



### **SHANAYA SALES**

Shanaya Sales is currently attending her first year at The University of Southern California, where she is studying to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. She has chosen to study acting at USC because with a class size of only 14 people in her BFA Acting program, she will have the opportunity to focus on developing her Vohuman in her own individual way alongside the change-makers of tomorrow. She is ecstatic to have received the Performing & Creative Arts Scholarship for the year 2019 as it will serve as a constant reminder of her heritage and the aspects of her life that are most important to her. Shanaya grew up fully immersed in her Zoroastrian community in the Bay Area, and wants to use the opportunity that Fezana has given her to bridge the gap between the Zarthushti lessons of following the path of Asha which have guided her throughout her life, into the mainstream

media that she will be pursuing a career in, to create an example that the youth in her community can look up to and see themselves in--just as she longed for when she was growing up.

## **APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR FEZANA PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE YEAR 2020**

Applicants should be involved in any Performing or Creative Art study and plan to follow this as a major career choice, though not exclusively. This scholarship should help enable the recipient to study with experts in their field. For Applications go to

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

## FEZANA EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP (EXISS) FUND FOR YOUNG ZARATHUSHTIS

The FEZANA Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS) fund was established to provide financial support to young Zarathushtis who have performed exceptionally well in a sport and have become recognized as such. The Fund's purpose is to provide financial scholarships to enable the recipients to get world-class training and/or study with experts in their field; thereby fine tuning and enhancing their talents and capabilities.

2020 APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED, DUE AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2020 FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT <https://fezana.org/scholarships/sports/> .

### ERVAD YAZAD K. SIDHWA

I am very thankful to the FEZANA EXISS Scholarship Committee and its judges for choosing me as one of the scholarship recipients for 2019-2020. Soccer is such an integral part of my daily life and being recognized by FEZANA for it is something extremely special to me. This scholarship will go a long way in assisting me with my pursuit of achieving excellence.

As a Varsity athlete, I am very proud to be the recipient of the best athlete of the high school award for 2018-2019. As one of my current activities, I am involved in the Soccer leagues at Texas A&M University and look forward to assisting my team achieve greater success. "If you can dream it, you can do it." – Walt Disney and "You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get." — Michael Phelps. These two quotes have always assured me that all dreams are achievable. I graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School in May 2019 as a Magna Cum Laude graduate and I am currently enrolled as a Freshman at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX in the College of Engineering majoring in Computer Science.

My vision for our Zarathushti community is broad although specific to the Sports front, someday I would.

their soccer aspirations like to open a soccer clinic to teach other Zarathushti Youth interested in soccer and assist them achieve their soccer aspirations .

### Darayus Parakh

I am proud to be the recipient of the 2019/20 FEZANA Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS) in fencing. As a high school junior, I

compete in Cadet and Junior Men's Épée, one of the three weapons used in modern sport fencing. Fencing at the National level requires competing in numerous tournaments across the country, and the EXISS scholarship helps with the costs associated with participating at this elite level. I hope to be a collegiate athlete, fencing for an NCAA Division I team while pursuing a business degree. My vision for the Zarathushti community is to openly represent Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, ideals I try to incorporate in every aspect of my life. I believe I can be a good representation of not only a Zarathushti athlete but any kind of athlete; I am dedicated to my community, my religion, and my sport.



## BAPSY IRANI Culinary Arts Scholarship

The Bapsy Irani Scholarship for the Culinary & Fine Arts was set up and dedicated in memory of their mother—Bapsy—by her children, Cyrus Irani, Kerbanu Pudumjee, and Roxan Bottlewala. The aim of the scholarship is to enable students pursuing an education in the Culinary or Fine Arts to study at an accredited institution.

### ZIUS SHERIYAR IRANI

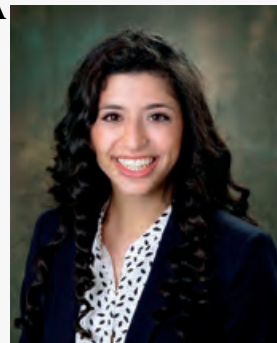


Originally from Mumbai, I have been studying at Fleming College in Peterborough, ON, Canada for the past year doing my Culinary Management Diploma. This scholarship coming at this time in my studies, is a huge help for me to be able to continue with my

further studies in this field. I hope to be able to continue to pursue my degree in Culinary Management and one day open my own restaurant.

I am very thankful and grateful to the donors of this scholarship in helping me to achieve my educational goals and hope one day to circle back these benefits to my community in the future.

### SERENA RUSTOM SETNA



I am a senior at the Conrad N. Hilton College at the University of Houston where I will receive my BS in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Upon graduating, I would like to continue my journey working with large scale contract food service companies. I have interned in healthcare, higher level education, and sports and entertainment lines of businesses and hope to continue trying all the unique aspects of food service. I would like to thank everyone in the Zoroastrian community who have always supported and guided me in a field in which they are not too familiar with. I am so grateful to be receiving this scholarship, and I cannot wait to see what my future holds in the hospitality world!

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## FALI CHOTHIA CHARITABLE TRUST SCHOLARSHIPS 2019

We are pleased to announce the winners of the 2019 Fali Chothia Charitable Trust scholarships:

**DILSHAD PATEL** is working toward an MS in Exercise and Health Science at the University of Houston, Texas. She has invented movement therapy methods (some of which are already being utilized in hospital settings) to help professional athletes as well as patients in medical rehabilitation. Dilshad works extremely hard to juggle school with work, as well as to establish a framework for her new movement therapy techniques.

**ZEN PANDAY** is the youngest mobediyar in North America! He has cheerfully helped the Washington D.C. Zoroastrian community with jashans, muktads, and other religious ceremonies since he was 13. He is working toward a degree in Mass Communication at Virginia Commonwealth University and hopes to use his skills to market music through social media.

**BEZON RUSTOMI** is obtaining a degree in Osteopathic Medicine at Western University of Health and Sciences, Pomona, California. Bezon has laid the foundation for becoming a physician by seeking to excel in a wide variety of fields, including competing in the junior Olympics. By putting his life's mantra of good thoughts, good words and good deeds into practice, he looks forward to succeeding as a physician and inspiring other young Zoroastrians to do the same.

**YAZMIN RUSTOMJI** is studying to be a Doctor of Medicine at Rush Medical College. She is passionate about pursuing a career in primary care with a focus on geriatrics, and about using her Zoroastrian paradigm to affect patient well-being in the future. She has taken a leadership role in many organizations during her undergraduate years and has been a stellar volunteer with the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

**FRIYANA SIDHWA** is working toward a Master's in Human Resource Management at Texas A&M. Friyana has taken the lead in several scholastic and non-scholastic organizations and has won numerous honors and awards. She has also been an active member/volunteer of the Houston Zoroastrian community since she was six, and, among other things, has chaired the first ever blood drive for the Zoroastrian Association of Houston.

*We are pleased to announce that we have received a generous endowment this year that will enable us to substantially increase awards in future years.*

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust was established in 1988 to help provide scholarships and interest-free loans to needy Zoroastrian students. Awards are based on financial need, educational achievement, and community service. The trust is established under the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. (ZAMWI), and has awarded scholarships to students from all parts of the U.S. and Canada.

To demonstrate solidarity and trust between organizations while serving community causes, the U.S. Chapter of the World Zoroastrian Organisation is once again joining the Fali Chothia Trust's Scholarship Program by adding up to fifty percent to every scholarship we give from our trust's resources. This partnership enables us to significantly increase the amount of our scholarships. The Trust is grateful to the WZO U.S. Chapter, and thrilled that its support is resulting in a significant increase in the help we are giving to our young scholars.

Continued financial support remains of utmost importance. Your help is essential in assisting our deserving youth to attain the level of education they are capable of achieving. If you would like to contribute, please send your check payable to "ZAMWI/Fali Chothia Charitable Trust" to: 10300 Farnham Drive, Bethesda MD 20814.

# VAKHSHOORI FOUNDATION

## PROMOTING LEADERSHIP AMONG ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH IN ACADEMIA, PUBLIC LIFE, AND THE ARTS

Vakhshoori Scholarship Recipients for the Academic Year 2019-2020

We are happy to announce this year's winners:

- **Mr. Ruzbeh Hodiwala: \$5,000**
  - Doctor in Religions, specializing in Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), England, UK
- **Ms. Nasreen Bhumgara: \$2,000**
  - BA in Public Health Sciences, University of Maryland, Maryland, USA
- **Ms. Shanaya Sales: \$2,000**
  - BA in Dramatic Art (Acting), University of Southern California(USC), California, USA
- **Ms. Tarana Kaovasia: \$2,000**
  - MS in Biomedical Engineering, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland, USA
- **Mr. Jamsheed Cooper: \$1000**
  - M.A. in Development Studies, University of Sussex, England, UK
- **Ms. Kashmeera Patel: \$1000**
  - M.A. in Development Studies, University of Sussex, England, UK

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

*Koorosh Vakhshoori*  
*Member of the board of directors*

### 2020-2021 Call for Applicants

**The Vakhshoori Foundation invites young Zoroastrians to apply for scholarships for the academic year of 2020-2021. These awards range between \$10,000 and \$1,000. For more details and application form please visit the foundation web site at [www.vakhshoori.org](http://www.vakhshoori.org).**



**Ruzbeh Vistasp Hodiwala** is pursuing his doctoral studies in Zoroastrianism at SOAS, University of London. He completed his Bachelor's in Economics from St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad in 2015 and Master's in Iranian Studies from SOAS in 2017. He served as the vice president of the St. Xavier's College Student Council and was instrumental in reconstituting the India Society at SOAS in 2016, where he served as the co-president during his postgrad program.

Ruzbeh was a recipient of SOAS Kamran Djam Scholarship for Iranian Studies in 2016-17 and in 2019, as well as a SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji scholarship to pursue his doctoral studies. His postgraduate and doctoral project has received continuous support from various Zoroastrian Trusts in India, UK, USA and Hong Kong.

In 2010-11 he was awarded an AFS Intercultural Programs' annual cultural exchange scholarship to study in Italy. In 2012 Ruzbeh attended the IV Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan as part of the Zoroastrian delegation

headed by Dr Homi B. Dhallia and a follow up round table hosted by the Kazakhstan Embassy in New Delhi in 2013. In 2014, he was nominated as a youth member to the International Association for Religious Freedom's (IARF) Gujarat chapter in India and he represented Zoroastrianism at the 34th IARF World Congress in the United Kingdom in 2014.

Ruzbeh has a keen interest in Indian polity. After the completion of his MA in London in 2017, he returned to India and worked as an assistant to a Member of the legislative assembly in the State of Gujarat.



**Nasreen Bhumgara** is currently a Pre-Medicine student at the University of Maryland. I am very dedicated to my career goals and have worked very hard to get where I currently am and will continue to do so until my goals have been achieved. I strive to get my Bachelor's degree in Public Health Science. The Public Health field is one of the most diverse fields to get a degree in which will help me expand my knowledge on the health of greater populations, preparing me to hopefully get accepted into a reputable Medical School. My final career goal is to become an in-patient pediatrician. I want to use my education to help children improve their quality of life, by making sure that they are physically and mentally healthy. I hope to develop long-term relationships with a diverse group of students from all over the world during my undergraduate and medical school education. For the past four years, I volunteered to teach the youngest class of our organization's religious classes. I teach the kids the basics of Zoroastrianism, and what it means to be a Zarathushti. I take pride in teaching the youngest class and hope to make a similar contribution to the larger Zoroastrian community in the future.

**Shanaya Sales** is currently a Freshman at the University of Southern California where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting for Stage, Screen, and New Media. Born and raised in San Jose, California she attended the Dar eh-Mehr as a baby--accompanying her older sister and mom. This community became an integral part of her bi-weekly routine, her life values, and most important friendships, her involvement and devotion increased. She volunteered to help lead crafts for the younger students, fundraise, and act as an assistant director alongside Parinaz Kianian for the plays that were performed during Norouz every year. It was these plays that sparked her craving to pursue theater professionally.

Shanaya attended Archbishop Mitty High School where she was a heavily involved member of the Speech and Debate team which won the California State Championships for the four years she was on the team and as a team captain she won the National Glenbrook Tournament in Chicago, ranking fourth in the State of California for her individual events. Additionally, Shanaya was involved in the Performing Arts department as a cast member in 12 plays and musicals with roles including Madamé Thénardier in *Les Misérables* and Madame in *Cinderella*. In 2018, Shanaya won Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Dolly in *One Man Two Guvnors* by the National Youth Theater Awards.



After her Sedreh-Pooshi, Shanaya joined the Teen Interfaith Council of Santa Clara in order to share her faith with others and explore it more deeply. They met on a monthly basis to brainstorm religious peace, and travelled to Orange County and New Mexico for a week long exploration of interfaith service and conversation. The depth of understanding of Zoroastrianism offered to her through this council was a catalyst for her decision to study acting for film: she discovered the power of representation.

**Tarana Kaovasia**, born in Mumbai and brought up in Pune, India. She attributes her family for playing a vital role in shaping who she is today. They encouraged and supported her in all her endeavors- from introducing her to piano at the age of five, supporting her when she represented her state in soccer and now sending her to pursue her Master's at John Hopkins University. "They taught me that if I went after my goals with good thoughts, good words and good deeds, then the sky is the limit to what I can achieve."



She did her undergraduate degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering at SRM Institute of Science and Technology and received the Jimi N. Kathawalla Memorial Prize. During her undergraduate years she had the opportunity work on space research (as an ADCS Engineer in Team SRMSAT), hybrid electric vehicles (as assistant in a review paper), renewable energy (project lead). In her third year she realized that her interest was more in Biomedical Engineering, as that would allow her to improve the quality of lives of individuals. That year, she presented a paper on autologous blood transfusion at the New Tech Congress' 18 in Spain, and two papers she co-authored were published. Her senior design project entailed developing a mechanism to aid people with partial paralysis to mimic their natural gait.

In addition she was actively involved in the organizing a team of a national level techno-management fest-Aaruush which receives a footfall of approximately 20,000 people. Yet

she maintained her academic standing, maintained her grades-receiving a performance-based scholarship every year, graduating second in her department.

Wanting to further her knowledge-base in a field she had come to love she is pursuing her Master's in Biomedical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, USA. She aims to contribute to the healthcare system by making quality healthcare devices which are both economical and available to larger sections of the society. "Throughout my journey I have been fortunate to be surrounded by people- family and community who have taught, supported and encouraged me. I hope and aim to have a similar impact on people".

**Jamsheed Cooper**, was born in Mumbai, India and raised in Dubai, UAE. He graduated with a BS in Biomedical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and is now pursuing an MA in Governance, Development, and Public Policy at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Brighton, UK. During his undergraduate year at Georgia Tech, he played an active role in the Engineers without Borders Society by planning and implementing a large water distribution project in Uganda, eventually leading the transition team between the first and second phase of implementation in 2016. His team would plan the size and routes of boreholes, types of pumps, daily pump capacity, and filtration systems. A successful transition phase allowed for the unhindered construction, assembly,



and testing of the pump and filtration units. This remains one of his proudest leadership moments, as they independently developed a technical framework which would improve lives and livelihoods of people on the other side of the world.

Being a political activist. He joined in 2015, the Atlanta chapter of RESULTS, a grassroots organization advocating for increased access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunity, and its sister organization Citizens Climate Lobby. He became an office holder in each chapter organizing fundraisers and information sessions on campus, and conducted meetings with US congressmen and health secretaries to advocate for specific health and education bills.

At the US Senate, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, and Community Led Total Sanitation Foundation (CLTS), he worked with various policies and projects related to foreign affairs, weapons of mass destruction, international displaced persons (IDPs), infectious diseases, healthcare, and sanitation. At CLTS he was intimately involved in efforts to end open defecation and expand sanitation behavior change in West Bengal and the rest of India, which inspired him to focus on water management and sanitation policy in South Asia.

At IDS, he aims to research and study the political, social, economic, legal, and administrative shortcomings responsible for slow progress in sanitation and public health in South Asia, especially given rapid economic growth. In the future, he intends to pursue a Master's in Public Administration to develop the management, administrative, and financial expertise necessary to develop, implement, finance, and monitor public health policies as an international civil servant or a policy consultant.

**Kashmeera Patel** born and raised in Delhi moved to UK in September 2019 to pursue her Masters in Development Studies from the Institute of Development Studies. She aspires to become a development specialist and work towards inclusive and holistic development in the near future.

Excellent academic performance has always been her priority. A high aggregate in her school board exams secured her a place in the prestigious Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi for her undergraduate degree in Sociology where she also minored in Economics.

Her parents encouraged her to learn about her religion and culture from a young age and was an active member of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. Curiosity about her culture led her to write two research papers. The first titled *The Creation Myths Of Christianity And Zoroastrianism- A Functionalist And Structuralist Study* looked to the similarities and differences in the creation myths of the two religions, the second titled *Kinship Relations Amongst The Zoroastrians* studied kinship relations through Surnames, Inheritance, Religion, Location and Migration and Membership through Adoptions.

Along with a keen interest in academics, she has contributed to the community. Her love for animals pushed her to volunteer with Friendicoes SECA, Delhi's oldest animal shelter. Within six months, she was promoted as Project Head with a team of 50 volunteers under her supervision. She has also spent some time volunteering with The Robin Hood Army. Her biggest take away from this experience was the realization that while she has ambitions and aspirations for herself, she has to try, to achieve them by extending a helping hand to those less fortunate.





# UN panel



## THE PEACE AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME AT THE ASHA CENTRE CHANGES LIVES & COMMUNITIES

SANAYA MASTER

ASHA  
Centre

*Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) was to meet in New York to find ways to implement the Beijing Platform of Action for Gender Equality. FEZANA was selected to make a presentation as a side event on March 13 2020.. The four panellists were Sanaya Master (Canada/New Zealand), Miraal Mavalwalla, (Pakistan/Canada), Shirin Mehri (Pakistan), Ferzeen Dadabhoy (New Zealand) . Due to COVID 19 the CSW 64 was cancelled. In this issue we publish the presentations of Sanaya Master, and Miraal Mavalwalla.*

*To hear the presentation click on the link <https://fezana.org/womens-empowerment-through-education-and-enhancement-in-the-workplace/>*



In 2004, human rights campaigner, the founder of the ASHA Foundation, and a personal mentor, Zerbanoo Gifford, was awarded a NESTA Fellowship for which she interviewed 300 women from 60 countries, whose inspirational lives have changed our world.

One of the inspirational



women she interviewed was Lila Poonawalla, former CEO of Alfa Laval and TetraPak India, who set up the Lila Poonawalla Foundation from her retirement fund. The Lila Poonawalla Foundation offers scholarships for secondary and postgraduate education to girls from

disadvantaged backgrounds in India.

Zerbanoo suggested she could host the Lila fellows at the ASHA Centre and so started this meaningful partnership resulting in a Peace Ambassadors Programme at the ASHA Centre.

The ASHA Centre is a UK based charity working for the empowerment of young people, worldwide located in the Royal Forest of Dean. The ASHA Centre is known for being exceptionally beautiful. The ASHA landscape is inspired by the ancient gardens of Persia. The Persians believed that by cultivating the land they were also cultivating and beautifying their inner lives. The ASHA Centre has an outstanding track record in delivering transformative education in the fields of ethical leadership, interfaith understanding, sustainable development and the performing arts.

The Peace Ambassadors Exchange Programme has since seen 166 young postgraduate women who have achieved academic

excellence but have experienced economic hardships, visit the ASHA Centre for a three-week transformation training programme. In the early years, the ASHA Centre hosted the girls free of charge. More recently, Samena Capital, an investment firm sponsors this project as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.

The purpose of the Peace Ambassadors' program is chiefly to provide young Indian girls with a promising future with an opportunity for personal and cultural expansion. In India, there is a heavy emphasis on academic studies, this leaves little time or space for themselves and their personal development. The girls are usually in great need of some facilitated personal reflection exercises and self-development tools. In my personal experience, they respond extremely well to activities that engage their entire being.

There are four pillars to ASHA's non-formal educational approach:

- Learning through head, heart and hands
- Harnessing the power of nature
- Fostering a global community
- Nurturing Creativity and Innovation through the Arts

All these elements are incorporated into 'The Peace Ambassadors Programme'. The Lila Fellows participate in activities that teach them about different aspects of the human condition.

For example, they have an activity where they learn about different personality types. Through another activity, they learn about meeting life's challenges through the Wisdom of the Mahābhārata. There are plenty of other activities that encourage them to learn about empathy and fostering positive relationships. They get to connect with nature by learning about biodynamic gardening and working in the gardens. The young ladies are giving the opportunity to explore their creativity by putting

◆ Sanaya Master (New Zealand/Canada) conceptualized and organized the first World Zoroastrian Youth Leaders Forum (WZYLFF) at the ASHA Centre in the UK in March 2018. She is now organising the second WZYLFF to be hosted at the ASHA Centre this May. She has been a speaker at global and local Zoroastrian events including the 7th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in California, USA and the Jamshed K Pavri Seminar in Vancouver, Canada in 2019. In August 2019, Sanaya attended the 68th UN Civil Society Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah and compiled the Rapporteurs Report on behalf of FEZANA.

together a production at the local theatre that showcases their journey of growth at ASHA. Another highlight is the field trips and visits to different communities they have never been exposed to before.

In my personal experience, what I observed is that when they arrive, they are shy and lacking in self-confidence. During the course of the programme, you see them blossom beautifully. They are highly engaged throughout the process and it's very rewarding watching them enjoy every second of their experience. They leave with a much stronger sense of self-worth, an enhanced feminine power, and a strong sense of life's purpose.

The impact of this programme is dramatic. The young women use their new-found confidence and the

ability to transform themselves to their advantage as they initiate community projects in India.

Examples of such projects are teaching health and hygiene in villages, hosting leadership workshops for young girls in lower-decile schools, cleaning up slums, tree plantations, caring for the elderly and the disabled-- the list goes on. Below shows Sanaya in the middle with Peace Ambassadors.

Such investments also impact on their static communities, who often do not value the importance of girls' education. In the long run, it is well demonstrated that the entire community changes their attitude towards women when they see their girls return from the ASHA experience and voluntarily take up challenging

leadership roles.

Of the Lila Fellows who have been part of 'The Peace Ambassadors Programme' -

- 92 are employed in India, USA, Germany, Malaysia and Australia
- 26 are Entrepreneurs
- 9 ph.D. holders/pursuing
- 70+ are involved in social projects
- 3500+ lives have been touched through social projects

The combined transformative experience of Lila Foundation working along with the ASHA Foundation continues to be a source of strength and inspiration in their lives and work.





## EMPOWERING YOUNG GIRLS IN PAKISTAN THROUGH SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) EDUCATION

MIRAAL MAVALWALLA

Aahung is a Pakistan-based NGO established in 1995 that works on improving the reproductive health of men, women and young people. Through capacity building and advocacy, Aahung focuses on the creation of an enabling environment where young girls can have access to reproductive health education, practice healthy behaviors and are able to exercise their rights.

The low education status of girls is one of Pakistan's most pressing challenges. The country ranks 150 out of 164 on the Gender Inequality Index, reflecting gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. Young girls desperately need sexual and reproductive health information and yet lack avenues for obtaining reliable information. Consequently, adolescents are left in the dark while going through a host of physical, emotional and social changes.



*In photo above Students participating in a school drama based on core components of the Life Skills Based Education curriculum.*

In response to these problems, Aahung developed a Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) program for school-going adolescent girls and boys. LSBE refers to an interactive teaching methodology that imparts factual information about health and the body to adolescents, while equipping them with skills to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

Aahung develops the capacity of teachers to integrate quality LSBE into the school curriculum. Teachers are equipped with accurate knowledge and participatory teaching tools to be able to engage with students and discuss adolescent issues as well as more challenging topics such as child sexual abuse.

The LSBE program is holistic as it looks at knowledge-based education and combines it with a promotion of healthy attitudes. The content focuses on gender equality, nutrition, body protection, and builds core life skills including decision-making and communication skills. More complex topics such as early marriage, family welfare, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and stigma are addressed at a later stage with older students. In addition to the workbooks, students are given the opportunity to apply what they have learned through extra-curricular activities such as art competitions, dramas and debates based on LSBE topics.

To date, Aahung has empowered over 200,000 adolescents in more than 200 secondary schools across Pakistan. Integral to the foundation of the LSBE program is the "Mera Jism Meri Marzi" (My Body, My Will) concept – as a result, students are more aware of their sexual and reproductive health and rights such as the importance of birth spacing and choice in partners. Their confidence and communication skills are enhanced, gender inequalities are explained and recognized, and masculinity stereotypes are broken down through this program. One of the participants is quoted to have said "After the LSBE curriculum I have become aware that education is my right, and nobody can force me to leave it. If my brother can go to university, why can't I? I want to complete my education and will do it."

In an ever-globalizing world, it is important for communities to work together to solve problems faced by young women everywhere. Integrating programs like this in conservative societies afflicted by gender inequities is indeed a promising approach. Notably, the cost of running this program is approximately \$2.25 per student, per year – less than the price of one Starbucks coffee.

Conclusively, we envision a future where the rights of adolescents are respected, protected and fulfilled; where all young people have access to resources and are able to make informed decisions related to their sexual and reproductive health.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/aahungngo>



*In photo above A group of students during one of the Life Skills Based Education sessions – measures are taken to promote gender equality and break masculinity stereotypes both in the classroom and beyond.*

♦ *Miraal, from Pakistan, is a graduate student at McGill University pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health. Miraal has worked with organizations like the Aga Khan University Hospital, WHO Sri Lanka and Palladium in the areas of Maternal and Child Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health. She recently completed her graduate placement at the Pan American Health Organization in Washington D.C., in the Department of Public Health Emergencies.*

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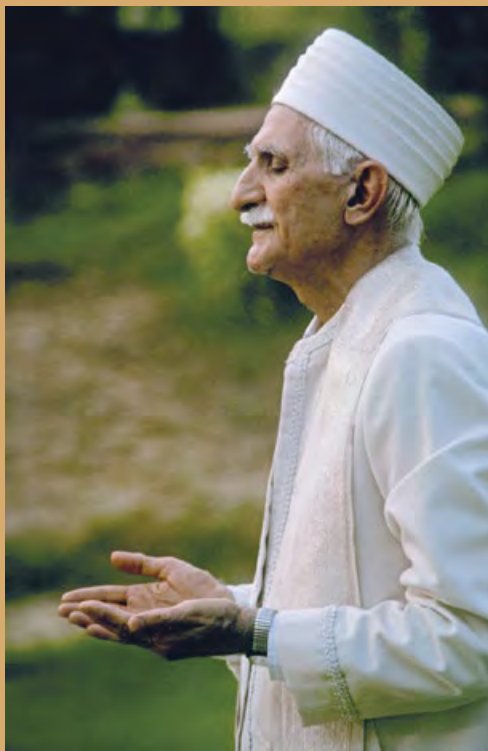
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## OUR NOBLE MOBED - OUR WORDS OF GRATITUDE

FEZANA Journal would like to dedicate this article to Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary who has been an inspiration for serving the worldwide Zoroastrian community, his willingness to share his knowledge, and for his contribution of articles to Fezana Journal on various religious subjects. We salute him. ED



FEZANA Journal offers special thanks to Mr. Babak Salamaty, Editor in Chief, Amordad Publications, Tehran, for permission to reproduce Ms. Firouze Foroudi interview of Mobed Firozgary in Farsi. The text was translated in English by Mobed Firozgary, and Dr. Deenaz Coachbuilder wrote this (tribute) article. Additional information was provided to Dr Deenaz by Mobed Firozgary during several e.mail communications.

## The Story Of MOBED MEHRABAN FIROUZGARY's Long Journey

*Deenaz Coachbuilder Ph.D*

In Amordad Publication Ms. Firoze Foroudi's perceptive, loving and glowing December 2019 interview of Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary she asks him a key question, the genesis of his desire to become a mobed. His reply, "Yes, all along, I had the desire to follow my father and my two brothers as Mobeds". His is a long and sometimes turbulent journey spread across many years and over continents. An Iranian by birth, Firouzgary's illustrious professional career commenced in India in 1958, continued unabated in Iran for decades. Then, much later, came that eventful year, 1987, when his "Novzooti" took place. He never gave up on his vision.

Firouzgary was born in Yazd Iran, in 1933, though officially registered two years later. Even his birthdate is propitious, Yalda, the winter solstice night of December 21<sup>st</sup>, considered to have been the birth time of Meher Yazata. As a first grader, he attended elementary school with four or five classmates, fifteen years or older. When he had completed the fourth grade, at about twelve years of age, he was uprooted from a warm, comfortable, predictable environment by his father, who took him to India for a worthy cause: the intent of enrolling Firouzgary in the Cama Athornan Institute so that he may gain "Religious insights", including attaining mobedhood. Father and son were shocked when he was denied entry. It would have meant free residence, a "high level" of education, and the culmination of his dream, a Navzooty (initiation into priesthood) at his proper young age. They welcomed him but declared him unproficient enough in Gujarati to understand their teachings.

Disappointed, father and son visited a friend who owned an Irani restaurant, Mondegar, next to the Regal Cinema in Mumbai, a popular destination to this day. Immediately after lunch, and with consultations with the owner, Firouzgary was put to work. He worked diligently, "from dawn to dusk", seven days a week, where the food was good, and the workers friendly. An ideal situation for a twelve-year-old, free from "school studies, homework and punishment". At night he slept in the "upper floor of a dark, almost windowless hall" in the Dadiseth Agiary, where his father worked. As one can imagine, he also picked up some bad habits. A year and a half later, he was rescued by his brother, Mobed Sohrab, to live with his family in Nasik. Firouzgary began attending school, placed back in the fourth grade, but took to education with a passion. He was given private tuitions, worked with zeal, and graduated with an S.S.C. (Secondary School Certificate) at the age of eighteen, in 1953. On this momentous occasion, one of his joys was winning a prize bequeathed by his dad, "changing my rickety Hindustan brand



bicycle to a Raleigh with gears”.

That bicycle remained his sole means of transport during his entire university education. We see this pride emanating from the photograph on the left.

After completing three years of pre graduate studies at Jai Hind College of Science, with mathematics as his main subject, Firouzgary enrolled in St. Xavier’s Technical Institute, Mumbai, choosing Industrial Electronics as his major. In 1958, he acquired a bachelor’s degree in the same subject. He was immediately employed by a Parsi owned engineering firm, J.N. Marshall & Co., in their Mumbai office. He worked with the company for ten years, holding responsible positions all along. He was appointed the Service Manager at their Mumbai, Delhi and Madras branches, as well as Branch Manager of their Kanpur and Bangalore branches.

Soon after his employment he married Miss. Piloo Irani, with whom he had been engaged for six years. While they lost their first son about a year after, their second son Farrokh was born in Mumbai in 1963, when Firouzgary was posted to Delhi. Mother and child were left to the care of Piloo’s parents. When Farrokh was seven months old, Firouzgary took

mother and a very sick child to live with him in Delhi. Soon upon arrival however, Piloo fell terminally ill and passed away, of encephalitis. She is buried in the Delhi Cemetery. Firouzgary was left with all the grief, a very sickly child on one hand, and a much-crowded backlog of job responsibilities.

Eventually his sister in law, Gulestan, came from Nasik and, in spite of her difficult life and her own three young children, she took Farrokh and cared for him, lovingly. Farrokh, now fifty-seven, is very happily married and lives in Houston, Texas, with his son Ervad Bahrom, and daughter, Gohar. In 1968, Firouzgary married Mehrangiz, from Iran. Their son Mehrdad, also lives in the U.S. with his wife and ten-year-old daughter.

In 1969, Firouzgary along with Mehrangiz, returned to Iran. He was employed by I.B.M. International, then transferred jobs to Honeywell Controls, in Tehran. His fluency in English, helped to keep him updated in the burgeoning area of computer science, and I am sure, his congenial and professional approach, allowed him to hold positions in a variety of companies, as suited his improving status and reputation. He was the head of the electrical and instrumentation department of a glass container making plant, and in the medical automation field for twenty years. The firm he worked with “was the sole representative of some of the most famous American Blood Analytic machines and was widely welcomed in Iran.” In his work capacity, as in India, he traveled to different cities in Iran, and abroad. In 1992 he returned to the glass industry, as Project Partner for five major glass plants around Iran, retiring officially in 1999, but working otherwise, until 2016.

All along, while working diligently at his career, Firouzgary’s “urge for Religiosity deepened”. There was a shortage of mobeds. He joined the newly activated Anjuman e Mobedyars Council, stating he, “started from about 1979 and tried to work my way up to my priestly duties. I acquired as many Avesta books and literature in Farsi and in English that I could, and studied them throughout my leisure hours, including in my travel routine”. The mobed remained a member of the Council for forty-four years, an amazingly long years of service. Starting in 1981, he learnt his Avesta recitation and rituals from Mobeds Shahzadi and Firooz Azargoshasp. His Navzooti took place in 1987. In time, Firouzgary officiated in the Yasna rituals, by now having trained five very proficient mobeds to replace him in that role. *(photo on right, Mobed Mehraban Firozgary in green sash with Mobed Feridoon Shahzadi being led to his Novzooty)*



At present, Firouzgary is the senior most and much esteemed Iranian mobed. He has been awarded the “Chehre Mandegar” (Everlasting personality) by the Tehran Zarthoshty Anjuman. He has been appointed as the Marriage Registrar for Zoroastrians of Tehran, by the Justice Ministry of the Iranian government. He has been a pioneer in Avesta recitations through the best researched pronunciations and has spread them throughout his conducted classes and teaching media as well as audio recordings, together with his published *Khorde Avesta* book, which has been standardized for teaching and public recitations. He also “spearheaded the basis and graduation of eight lady mobedyars (para mobeds) in Iran.”.

Firouzgary has represented Iran, and participated in panels in several venues: the Parzor UNESCO Filing of Novrooz amongst UNESCO’s World Cultural listings, The Tehran World Zoroastrian Congress, and Tehran University celebrations of UNESCO’s declaration of the 2000<sup>th</sup> year of Iranian Culture. He has been involved in scores of national and international seminars on Iranian culture and inter religion get togethers, the last being his Panel and Prayer sessions at the Ninth European Conference of Iranian Studies held at Berlin University, Sept.9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> 2019.



*Mobed Firozgary invited to attend the UNESCO PARZOR’S Conference Prof Jamsheed Choksey on his left. Dasturji Kotwal in background.*

How does Firouzgary perceive creation from Zarathustra’s viewpoint? In Farudi’s interview he replies, “To the followers of Zarathushtra, the basis of creation is wisdom. Wisdom necessitates diversity all along. Mankind’s commitments, to our creator Ahura Mazda is that we accept the responsibility that we will strive and struggle for the progress and improvements, world over, to the benefit of all...”



*Mobed Firouzgary being felicitated in 2017 at the Iranshah Udvada Utsav by Dasturji Kurshed Dastoor*

What are the mobed’s views of Paradise? His reply in the interview: “the existing Diversity in this world. We praise those aspects of creation, all along in our daily prayers. We praise five periods of the day, for their diversity. Cooler mornings, warmer and rest inducing noontime, and after, for the nourishments and rest (especially for our Iranian ancestors, agriculturist and animal husbandry) refreshed evenings after food and rest, darkness and sleep inducing nights for life sustenance, midnights would be the start of a new day... We have prayers for each of the Five ‘Gaahs’, just as we have praises and festivities for each month, their days and seasons of the year”.

Firouzgary believes that pain, fear, jealousy, anger etc. have their own benefits, for if used with wisdom, they “can induce a healthy, competitive and progressive attitude. Good and evil are not absolute but relative.”

Particularly enlightening is the mobed’s view of prayers. “...*our prayers are entirely for praise and thanksgiving about each and every aspect of nature and creation as well as lessons for living a clean and Righteous life. If we make wishes, they ought to be for everyone. That is how they are worded in our daily prayers and the only way they will be answered*”. The italics are mine, the lay person.

As Zoroastrians, we grew up believing that Lord Zoroaster was the first environmentalist. As adults, we seek ways to follow in his footsteps. Firouzgary confirms our belief. “Our religious canons and culture, strictly stress over the clean maintenance of ecological factors, mainly air, water, soil and fire (pollution over fire will pollute the air). All such foresights, some four millennia back when hardly anyone could even think of polluted

air, water, soil or fire. Animals, domestic and wild, were held pious and a boon to nature for their cleaning and ecology preserving instincts.” He reminds us how our ancestors would place the dead “over a distant hill platform for birds to feed on. An act of charity even after death. That included equal treatment, between the rich and poor...”

Firouzgary states, “Nothing ever perishes but changes form. Our belief is that the changed form of our life, the Soul, is a God given entity for serving us as our conscience and guardian during lifetime. Soul, to us, is the Creator’s own attribute and, after death, joins a realm of Godliness”. True to his very core and simple to the end, he has donated his body, after death, for medical research, “as a symbolic charity but mainly to avoid the soil pollution factor and all its showing off”.

Firouzgary declared that the religious part of every marriage he conducts in the Marriage Registration office, is a source of pleasure and sweet memories. Ms. Foroudi, his interviewer, describes his looks as being “kind and with a smile, that he always has, he looks kinder than kind”. After all, his name is “Mehraban” which means kind. All those who know him are impressed by him, the person who is “gifted with a spiritual and luminous face, emitting positive energy along with the knowledge and ability to propagate the messages of our prophet Zarathushtra”. He is referred to by all who know him as a “Peer”, the eldest, most informative and dedicated Iranian mobed. But with predictable modesty, he likes simply to be referred to as “Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary”.



◆ *Deenaz P. Coachbuilder, Ph. D., CCC-SP, is a writer, educator, artist, and environmental advocate, wife, mother and grandmother. Her poetry, commentaries and essays have been published internationally and her books of poems, **Metal Horse and Shadows: A Soul's Journey and Imperfect Fragments**, have been received with critical acclaim in the U.S. and abroad. Deenaz is the recipient of several awards, including President Obama's "Volunteer Service Award," is a board member of literary and environmental organizations, and stays involved in community associations.*



# DARIUS IRANI AND A FRIENDSHIP FOR THE AGES

Anne Khademian

On Saturday, February 8, 2020, I had the privilege to spend the day with Mr. Darius Irani in Southern California, and to meet his longtime friend and colleague, Dr. Ali Jafarey. One day is hardly sufficient to learn about a life distinguished by tremendous devotion to family, faith and friends, professional accomplishment, a persistence to progress through good thoughts, words and deeds, and a friendship for the ages that has paved the way for individuals like myself to adopt and openly practice the faith of Zarathustra. Nor is one simple article, a mere snapshot, sufficient to share with readers Darius Irani's contributions to our faith in support of our youth, and in support of the knowledge and opportunities for anyone around the world to learn, grow and live through the wisdom of Zarathushtra. I will try to share here what I learned in the sweep of one day with Darius Irani and a visit with his dear friend Dr. Ali Jafarey. It was a day I will always remember and hold dear.



## *“A Zoroastrian who has chosen of his own free will”*

An early morning fog blocked the view from Darius Irani's sun room of the Southern California coastline that stretches from Malibu to Palos Verdes Estates. We walked through his home, taking first steps toward a conversation, chatting about the fog that would soon lift, the many pieces of art throughout the house and living room representing Persian and Indian culture, admiring a small gold framed hand-painted image he inherited from his grandmother's brother, and counting the multiple languages he has learned over the years--Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Marathi, Farsi and English. Portraits and photos of his family, his dear departed wife Bapsy, and his children and grandchildren filled the room with warmth, and gave meaning to Mr. Irani's belief that “the smallest unit in existence is the family,” and that “happiness of the whole family is dependent upon the happiness of the least happy member.” A simple maxim, but powerful, and one that has guided his life choices.

As we reviewed the schedule for the day, Mr. Irani spoke with excitement about introducing me to Dr. Ali Jafarey, founder of the Zarathushtrian Assembly and a life-long student, author, and teacher of the *Gathas*. He spoke of Dr. Jafarey's work across the 99 years of his life to advance Zarathushtrian universality and acceptance of the religion based upon free will. Dr. Jafarey has faced resistance and disdain among those in the Zartoshti community who do not believe Zoroastrianism is a choice. He has also endured death threats and four attempts on his life by agents of the Iranian government because of his rejection of Islam.

Dr. Jafarey's life-long work inspires and informs Darius Irani's daily life and his powerful sense of identity and responsibilities within the faith. He too has faced slurs, turned backs and rejection because of his support for Dr. Jafarey and the Assembly, and his many efforts to open opportunities to the faith, such as his support for the Dadgah Asha Vahishta in Pune which is open to any Zoroastrian regardless of birth or marriage “*I am proud to be a Zoroastrian who has chosen of his own free will to accept the religion,*” Mr. Irani stated. “*This type I am*”.

## *“The envelope said, from the Office of Robert McNamara, United States Secretary of Defense”*

The fourth of five children in his family, Darius Irani was selected as one of 150 students in the entire state of Maharashtra to attend university as an engineering student in India. He earned top marks among 453 students in the first year and received scholarships every term to pay his fees. Completing his undergraduate studies two years early, he went to the University of Toronto in 1952 to study for his Masters in Electrical Engineering. He completed the course work scheduled for two years in nine months and at the top of his class! Encouraged by the head of the department to pursue his doctorate, Mr. Irani said, “*Professor Tracy, I have to absolutely apologize, I come from a rather poor family and I get support from my dad's uncle . . . so I need to get a job.*”

He was offered a job upon graduation by Westinghouse working on the Canadian sonar program for the Navy and moved to the city of Hamilton, Ontario. His career success resulted in another on-the-spot offer to work in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1963, followed by a move to Southern California in 1964 to work on the weapons of war programs supported by the United States Department of Defense. With each move, his reputation for hard work and leadership preceded him, and his successful career in real estate has followed a similar path of excellence.



Indicative of the importance of his work and contributions to the US Government, and recognizing that Mr. Irani would need to travel to India to be with family and friends, then-Secretary of the United States Department of Defense Robert McNamara, provided a letter stating that Darius Irani was to be admitted to the United States without hindrance. *“I think it was Saturday when the mailman delivered the letter. I was trying to fix my car, and my neighbor was with me. The letter said, from the Office of Robert McNamara, Department of Defense.”* When Mr. Irani presented the letter upon return to the United States at the port of entry, the immigration officer replied, *“Sir this is completely beyond my paygrade.”* He went to talk to his supervisor and when he returned, Mr. Irani recalled, *“the guy looks at me, and he says, ‘welcome home’.”*

***“A guardian angel said she is the one”***

In February 1957 Darius Irani married his late wife Bapsy at Iran Shah in Udvarda. They met on his first trip to India after his graduation from the University of Toronto. He was introduced to Bapsy at the wedding of a family friend, and within weeks knew he *“found the girl he wanted to marry and unbelievable happiness.”* At the ceremony in Udvarda, Darius Irani’s granduncle, *“the one who I adored,”* gave him away. Mr. Irani had to return to Canada immediately after the wedding, and Bapsy joined him 6 months later when her visa came through. They raised three children who all live within a mile and a half from their father, and now have 8 grandchildren.

***“There was a fair amount of interest and a fair amount of fear”***

At the heart of The Zarathushtrian Assembly, organized in 1990, is the friendship, dedication and hard work of many individuals, but in particular, Darius Irani and Dr. Ali Jafarey. One cannot know the depth of a friendship that traverses a harrowing escape from Iran after the revolution, resistance from within the Zoroastrian community and danger from without, and most importantly, the dedication to critically understand and enact the *Gathas*, and to share the *Gathas* with anyone interested from Mexico to Venezuela to Khurdistan and California. My window on this remarkable friendship was only one day, but the care and mutual respect was evident. Reflecting on their friendship, Mr. Irani said, *“Most importantly I learned everything I know about Zoroastrianism from this absolutely top notch expert that we are going to have lunch with. And it has just been wonderful.”* A few days past his 99th birthday, Dr. Jafarey moves carefully from the house to the car and back, but he does so with the arm and support of Darius Irani.

A plan for the day fully formed, we traveled to an Armenian-Iranian bakery, and then to the Zoroastrian Assembly office to see the place of seminars, discussions, and initiation ceremonies, and to talk about the history of the Assembly. In the early days of the Assembly, Mr. Irani noted, there was *“a fair amount of interest and a fair amount of fear.”* People came out of curiosity and interest, but were cautious given the threats to Dr. Jafarey’s life. Yet talks by Dr. Jafarey would fill halls and courtyards.

### *“The fog has lifted”*

Back at the home of Darius Irani, we stood at the edge of the driveway and looked across the coastline that was now visible after the sun burned off the fog. The moment was symbolic and clarifying. The location of his home from atop a high peak, the sweeping view of the ocean, and the end of a long day of discussion and reflection highlighted the successes of a life lived with determination and courage, as well as kindness and generosity. From the love of his children and grandchildren, to the accomplishments of the Assembly and the realization of the vision he shares with Dr. Jafarey, Mr. Irani believes deeply in the guidance and inspiration of the *Gathas* for the happiness in his life.

*“There’s only one path we have,”* he noted, *“and its success is guaranteed.”* As we moved inside to meet his daughter, Kerbanu, he shared a poem about the eternal fire, a symbol of ancestral heritage, abundance and warmth, and closed with the stanza, *“With good thoughts, good words and good deeds I should live my life.”*

Bio of Anne Khademian see page 11.



**IN MEMORIAM**  
**MEHERJI KAIKAUS MADAN**  
**NOVEMBER 6, 1942 – DECEMBER 28, 2019**



**Born** in Bombay to Kaikaus Meherjibhoy Madan and Gai Kaikaus Madan (formerly Bamboat), Meherji began his incredible life journey. It was period of incredible change as the birth of Modern India was about to take place. Father Kaikaus was an Agent and head accountant for Tata Iron & Steel Co. (TISCO) and mother Gai was personal secretary to JRD Tata. In his early years Meherji was diagnosed with respiratory issues with doctors recommending that he

be situated in an environment of clean air. After an exhaustive review of the options the hill station of Panchgani the home to St. Peter's School was chosen.

Meherji arrived in Panchgani, in 1947. The location was magical, almost 5000 feet high on the leeward side of India's Western Ghats and between mid June and mid September, the monsoon season, it received an average of 90 inches of rain. Here Meherji embarked on his academic, music and sport education – activities that he would hold dear for the rest of his life. Friends have affectionately recalled how Meherji excelled at St. Peter's. Here are some of the musings:

*I have known Meherji since we were in the 4<sup>th</sup> standard almost 70 years ago. He was always the smartest kid in the class and won first prize. But our bond was more in the Music room under Miss. O'Shea- a teaching tyrant who made sure we passed our Royal Academy exams. My violin and I scrapped through grades 1 & 2, but Master Madan went thru with flying colors. Meherji won the first prize at school every single year.*

From St. Peter's Meherji entered the Cathedral School in Bombay as a pathway to higher education abroad. Being in Bombay brought changes to his life in many significant ways. Mother Gai wanted to tackle his respiratory issues head on. B.K.S. Iyengar, the legendary yoga teacher held classes at Nepean Sea Road every Saturday. Meherji (and I) found ourselves in that class for a life changing inspirational experience. With the kindest, gentlest and most motivating teacher we found ourselves bending, stretching, breathing and doing the backbends we never imagined. While in Panchgani an asthma attack would

knock Meherji out, with Iyengar's breathing techniques and better all round condition Meherji would continually challenge anyone to a game of his beloved squash and play competitively to the end without disclosing that he had an attack.

From the Cathedral School he went to the London School of Economics where Meherji marveled at the opportunities to grow academically. While carrying a full load he, all on his own, found a piano, the time to practice and took the exam and qualified as an Associate of the Trinity College of Music – a professional music degree in his first year at college! Music would run through his entire life. He graduated from the London School of Economics and started his accounting career, in the footsteps of his father, at Price Waterhouse where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant.

Meherji was attracted to the opportunity to work at the World Bank in Washington, D.C. where his passion for music, work and squash continued. His forays on the squash court led him to meet many prominent persons one of whom enticed him to join Sallie Mae (Student Loan Marketing Association) as the Director of Internal Audit. This was a remarkable time of his life. He grew professionally. His passion for squash led him to play and rank nationally in the top 25 in the Men's Over 50 group. He developed his closest friends and he and two others qualified as one of the earliest US Squash National Referees refereeing international squash tournaments held in the US. His competitive and officiating travels sent him all over the United States and to Europe, Central and South America, Ghana and Nigeria. In the early 2000s he was the President of National

Capital Squash for two years. Meherji was an avid competitor and in playing against one of his referee friends in an early match as relayed by him they were evenly matched, played a full 5 sets to determine the outcome and ended up in one of the last points wrestling on the floor!

In D.C. he was fortunate to reconnect with an old St. Peter's friend, Cyrus Bharucha, and the two of them embarked on the creation of a docudrama, *"On Wings of Fire"*. This was a work of absolute love for Meherji. He hosted Cyrus and a script committee at his residence. He hosted a group of scholars to review and discuss the script. He camped out at the doorsteps of large Parsi Industrial Houses in Bombay to assist in securing funding for the film and stayed through the shooting of the film. Maestro Zubin

Mehta graced the project with his participation. Meherji saw this as a project to get young Zoroastrians involved in discussion of the Faith. He screened the film to almost any group that requested it – some as far away as Australia to capacity screenings. In 2018, he screened it at the Convention of the Parliament of World Religions in Toronto.

Meherji was a Man for All Seasons. His passion for life drew him close to many. I have received so many kind words about him from friends so that in closing I will borrow from them. We are blessed to have known Meherji and shared many great and memorable times together and shall miss deeply his presence from this day forth. His passion for music and our community inspired us to reach beyond our grasp and made us better Zoroastrians. I do

not have words to express the depth of loss I feel except to say Meherji, heartfelt thanks for your friendship, your compassion, your sense of humor, and your love of life. May your eternity be an unending symphony of music that was such an integral part of your life here on earth. May your soul find its way speedily into the abode of songs and light that Zarathustra sings about in His Holy Gathas.

Bless us O Mazda with Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Meherji leaves behind his beloved brother, Jamshed, his nephews Cyrus, Jehangir, Benjamin and his niece Scheherazade. To the very end he cared deeply for his wife Bakhtawar.

*Your Brother Jamshed.*

#### **FURROKH DASTUR FOUNDING MEMBER OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA AND FOUNDING TRUSTEE OF CALIFORNIA ZOROASTRIAN CENTRE**

**DIED FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

Furrokh Dastur rightfully deserves to be honored as one of the founders of the

(ZAC) and the founding trustee of California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC).

In the early days

welcomed by Naju and Furrokh. They opened up their hearts and their home for the gathering and accommodated the entire community with love.

actually form an official association. A collection was made for membership and the Zoroastrian Association of California was formed.



Although I was not present in those days, I have heard numerous old-timers of our community talk about the early days. Enough for me to know that their love for the community was very genuine. It was that spirit which they instilled in us which has helped to make our community a close-knit and caring unit.

In those early days we were all together as Zarathustis. On this occasion we come together again to honor the man who helped create such a large and thriving community.

Thank you Furrokh for your vision of togetherness. And thank you Naju for all that you have helped to create.

Our condolences to his wife Naju and his children Jehangir and Rashna

Zarathushti community in Southern California.

He was the founding member of Zoroastrian Association of California

whenever a Navroze or Pateti holiday was observed by the few Zarathustis who lived in the area they were always

It was at one such gathering at the Dastur residence that Armaity Irani had announced that it was time to stop free-loading on their generosity and

***Rooky Fitter  
President of ZAC***

# PALLAN ICHAPORIA

## AUGUST 15, 1939 - FEBRUARY 22, 2020



Scholar and author Pallan Rustomji Ichaporia passed away on February 22, 2020 at a nursing home in Oklahoma City. Husband of late Hutoxi Ichaporia, he is survived by his children Burjor Ichaporia, Farida Ichaporia and Mani Hagood of Oklahoma City, Aban Boman of Phoenix, AZ and Rashna Ichaporia of Reading, PA.

Pallan Ichaporia, PhD, MBA, who served as chair of Research and Preservation Committee of FEZANA, and was co-founder of SSZ (Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism) has left an invaluable legacy of research on Avestan and Gathic texts, and imparted his learning through publications and presentations at International Gatha and Avesta conferences. Among his many contributions to Zoroastrian Journals, most relevant at this time, is his thesis on "The Doctrine of Afterlife - as Expounded in the Avesta, Pahlavi Texts and the Gathas" [*FEZANA Journal*, Winter 2005, at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)]. His rich library of books has been donated to the FIRES (Fezana Information, Research and Education System) library in Houston, where his legacy lives on with his name emblazoned for posterity in each book.

Dr. Ichaporia has contributed in no small measure to enrich and inspire our community members and scholars worldwide, for which the Zoroastrian community owes him a debt of gratitude.

Condolences may be sent to Burjor Ichaporia ([JoeParsi@gmail.com](mailto:JoeParsi@gmail.com), 1-631-645-7588). Donations in Dr Ichaporia's name, may be sent to any Parsi charity in India, or to FIRES ([fires-fezana.org](http://fires-fezana.org)) or SSZ ([s-s-z.org](http://s-s-z.org)) for research in Zoroastrianism. Contact Burjor for further information.



Detail from an antique jhabla with 'cheena-cheeni' (Chinese) motifs. Commonly shown are figures wielding sticks and swords to ward off evil, and carrying banners and fly-whisks to awaken the spirits of the dead.

# doctrine of afterlife by Pallan Ichaporia

As expounded in the Avesta, Pahlavi texts and the Gathas

**T**he doctrine of life after death is well elaborated in the Avesta and further clarified in the Pahlavi literature. A person's soul meets, after death, an exact counterpart of his actions in this world. If he lived a good, honest life he gets blessedness in the next life, and if he has lead a dishonest life he gets anguish, pain, sorrow and suffering. Nowhere is there the slightest notion of reincarnation – this is alien to the Zarathushti religion. We will also discuss the Gathic doctrine.

## Avestan texts

**Vendidad.** The Vendidad [*ch. 19*] paints a picture in idyllic fashion, when Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda:

"What becomes of the deeds of charity which a person confers for his soul in the material world? Where do these [such deeds] go? Where do these [deeds] spread? Where do these [deeds] recompense?"

Ahura Mazda replies:

"After the death of a person ... the fiends (*daevas*) and twisted lies do their work (i.e. putrefaction and decomposition of the body sets in). When, after the third night, the dawn brightens and the [morning ray] shines ... then, a deceitful-god Vizaresha carries away the soul of the wicked *devayasan* (worshipper of deceitful gods/fiends), a sinful person. [But] the souls of the truthful and the untruthful go towards the account-keeper's bridge (Chin-

vat) made by Mazda, where the consciousness (*baodhascha*) and soul (*urvanemcha*) are asked to account for their deeds in the corporeal world.

"There comes that exquisite, well-defined, courageous, watchful, distinguished, elegant, intelligent, bright illumination. This [illumination] depresses the sinful soul of the untruthful in gloom, but it carries the soul of the truthful to the other side of *Haraberezati* (the highest abode) and guides him across the account keeper's bridge, the bridge of the spiritual yazatas (the adorable ones).

"Then Vohu Manah (Good Thought) rises from the golden seat and says, 'O truthful one, how [perfectly] you have come here to this deathless existence from the transient existence.'

"The soul of the truthful one goes in tranquility towards Ahura Mazda, and the Amesha Spentas, towards their golden seats, and then to *garo.mana* (house of song) which is the palace of Ahura Mazda, the palace of the Amesha Spentas, and the palace of other holy ones."

[*Vendidad, 19.27 et seq.*, tr. Pallan Ichaporia, "New Translations of Selected Chapters of Vendidad," Heidelberg, forthcoming.]

In this passage, it is the bright 'illumination' that meets the departed, and both the soul and consciousness have to give account for their behavior in the material world.

**Vishtasp Yasht.** In this yasht, we find a counterpart of the 19th chapter of Vendidad, but here it is a maiden (Av. *kainin-*) and not the 'illumination' that comes to greet the soul. The soul is said to repose during the first night on Good Words, during the second night on Good Actions, and then on the third night goes towards the account keeper's bridge (Chinvat).

**Hadokht Nask.** A more augmented version is found in the Hadokht Nask. Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda:

"When a truthful person dies, where does his soul sit during the night after death?"

Then Ahura Mazda replied:

"It sits near the head singing the Ushtavaiti Gatha [see Note below] and entreats the Ushatat prayer, 'I desire that stability and strength should come as He desires, to whomsoever Mazda Ahura, ruling as He desires, may grant what is desired.' The soul earns as much satisfaction as the whole living world (eams)."

For the second and third nights, Ahura Mazda's reply is the same. The account then continues:

At the end of the third night, when dawn approaches, the soul of the truthful passes through trees, inhaling aroma. Towards it (the soul) comes aromatic wind, more aromatic than other winds, blowing from the south ... In that wind his *daena* (religious view) comes forward in the form of a maiden of aristocratic mien, beautiful, brilliant, white-armed, well-formed ... the best among all creatures.

"I am Daena, of your body, O valiant man of good thoughts, words and deeds, you are accepted on account of your goodness and your victory over malice. When you saw [others] burning [corpses], worshipping idols, cutting off trees, you [opposed and] did not sing the Gathas, protected the good waters, and fire ... With your good thoughts, words and deeds, you made me more attractive, you made me more beautiful, and more charming than I was, you elevated me from where I was."

We find that the soul of the truthful goes to heaven and then to the final destiny, the *garo.mana*, the house of song, the seat of Ahura Mazda. Again, there is no indication of reincarnation.

Hadokht Nask [ch. 3] paints the opposite picture about the soul of the sinner, the untruthful. His soul also sits for the first three nights near the dead body, but utters words of despair [Ys. 46.1]:

"Where and which part of land shall I go to succeed?"

During the first three nights after death, the soul of the sinner suffers as much misery as suffered by the whole world. At dawn after the third night,

**NOTE.** Perhaps there was the tradition of praying Ushtavaiti Gatha at the funeral ceremony, but nothing has been discovered to justify this, and the praying of the longest Gatha, Ahunavaiti, may be appropriate for the departed soul; although there is a reference in the Vendidad of praying all the five Gathas at the funeral for the benefit of the departed soul as well as for protecting the living against defilement from the dead body.

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"the soul of the sinner passes through the filthy place, full of stench, along with the blowing of the putrefied wind from the north, which is also extremely foul, the like of which the sinner had never inhaled ..."

Further description from the Hadokht Nask is lost, but its translation is preserved in the Pahlavi texts – Menog i Khrad and Arda Viraf Nameh.

## Pahlavi texts

**Menog i Khrad** (Spirit of Wisdom) in the second chapter speaks in an illusory fashion about body and soul. In this account, the impartial judgment at the Chinvat bridge is given by Meher, Sarosh and Rashnu, the righteous, who holds the balance where the deeds are weighed. (Note: the figure of a blindfold lady holding a balance is an epitome of justice).

Menog i Khrad alludes that the soul of the untruthful is accosted by his bad deeds which take the form of an ugly woman. This personification of bad deeds then torments, reprimands and chides the untruthful, whose soul, taking four steps goes to 'worst-existence' (hell).

An important point of difference between the passage in Vendidad [ch. 19] and the rest of the Avesta and Pahlavi is very profound. The Vendidad has no maiden (beautiful or ugly) greeting the soul; only bright illumination meets the soul of both truthful (which it comforts) and untruthful (which it depresses).

**Dadestan i Denik** describes the destiny of the soul in chapters 20 to 25. Here there are five major statements, dramatically depicted in an exquisite fashion, not found anywhere else:

- (1) Those souls whose good deed and bad deeds are equal do not go to the 'best existence' (heaven) or 'worst existence' (hell) but to a place called '*hamestagan*' (equal, stationary).
- (2) The design of the 'account-keeper's bridge' is described in detail: many wooden beams, with broad roads for the truthful, and roads narrow as a razor's edge for the wicked.
- (3) When a truthful soul departs, the creations: water, earth, trees and animals mourn; and Ahura Mazda sends a new truthful unborn soul to the world.
- (4) As in the other texts, one's deeds come to meet the soul, but not as a maiden. Here they are referred to as '*ganjobar i kerf*' (the riches of one's deeds).
- (5) Since neither the truthful or untruthful souls are all-good or all-bad, we see for the first time how this is taken care of. The truthful souls, while enjoying pleasure on the first two nights, gets some punishments on the third night for wrong deeds it may have done. Likewise, wicked souls, while undergoing punishments on the first two nights, derive some pleasure from any good deeds they may have done in the material world.

Noteworthy is this basic dictum of the religion – freedom of choice in all actions, and consequent responsibilities. Nobody is going to carry your cross for you, nobody will undergo the punishments on your behalf and nobody will exonerate you (not even Ahura Mazda or Prophet Zarathushtra). There is no shortcut, save your own actions, to the state of ‘best existence’ – paradise.

**The Greater Bundahishn** elaborates on these concepts and introduces some new materials, such as the allusion to keeping a fire burning near the dead body, as is the custom among Parsis, to repulse the evil forces, and withstand the ‘demon of separation’ Vizaresha, and also help light the path of the departed soul.

**Arda Viraf Nameh.** The missing Avestan passages from Hadokht Nask are found, translated in Pahlavi, in the Arda Viraf Nameh. Here, in addition to Meher, Sarosh and Rashnu, we also find the presence of Astad Yazata, at the account-keeper’s bridge.

Except in the Vendidad, where the departed soul meets a bright illumination, all the extant Avesta and Pahlavi books speak of the idea of a ‘maiden’ welcoming the souls. All these celestial stories have but one goal – to inspire men to live truthful lives full of meritorious deeds performed with good thoughts, words and deeds. Neither the concept of the ‘maiden’ nor the bright illumination appears in the Gathas.

## Afterlife in the Gathas

It should be stressed that the Gathas are not a religious handbook with carefully coordinated paragraphs ... but poetical texts of visionary character [Humbach & Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, 1994, Germany, p 16].

The Gathas are silent in many ways: for example, on how death is defined (the Younger Avesta defines it as ‘separation of consciousness from the body’ [Vendidad 5.57; 7.2, 8.81; 9.43]; or the time of individual judgment at the Chinvat Bridge (which is defined in the Hadokht Nask as chahrum, ‘dawn of the fourth day’). Perhaps it may have been of little concern to the Prophet.

The prophet recognizes “the sad end of existence of the deceitful” and that “the best will be in store for the truthful one” [Ys. 30.4] and also [Ys. 45.3]:

“...for those among you who will not practice the manthra in the way I (i.e. the Prophet) think and pronounce it, then woe will be the last word of their existence.”

Zarathushtra also describes afterlife and the universal judgment [Ys. 43.6]:

“At the turning point (i.e. universal judgment) to which You (Mazda) come with your Holy Spirit ... pronounces judgments on these here, (the judgments) of your intellect, which nobody can deceive.”



The prophet recognized two lives, the mundane life with man’s deeds on the earth and another after death and beyond, as he says [Ys. 48.4]:

“By action and words he follows his pleasures, desires and preferences. In the end he will be variously recorded in Your (Mazda’s) intellect, here and there.”

Zarathushtra warns in no uncertain terms [Ys. 51.6]:

“The very worst will befall the person who does not care for Him (Mazda), at the final turning point of his existence (i.e. death).”

In numerous stanzas of his Gathas, Zarathushtra demonstrates the secret knowledge given to him by Ahura Mazda, one such is the retribution for the soul of the deceitful (which is further elaborated in the Younger Avestan and Pahlavi literature) [Ys. 49.11]:

“But the deceitful of bad power, bad actions, bad words, bad religious views and bad thoughts, their souls come to meet them with foul food. They will be real guests in the house of deceit.”

The Prophet calls hell ‘*drujo demane*’ or house of deceit, while he calls heaven ‘*garo demane*’ or house of song, as for Ahura Mazda he sings the praise [Ys. 45.8]:

“For Him we lay down glorification in the house of song.”

Furthermore he says [Ys. 50.4]:

“I will worship You, praising You, O Mazda Ahura ... (and) I wish to be heard in the house of song.”

Zarathushtra promised the devout followers [Ys. 51.15]:

“In the house of song, Ahura Mazda, the Primal One, comes to the faithful offerers with the prize that Zarathushtra promised them.”

Here the prize is everlasting life in the house of song. Zarathushtra’s commitment to the truthful is clearly seen when he promises them that he will be with them always with love [Ys. 51.22]:

“Those who have existed and exist, I will be with them in their worship by calling their name, and I shall approach them with affection.”

The Prophet gives graphic accounts of how souls of the deceitful fare at the ‘*cahinvato-peretu*,’ or the ‘account-keeper’s bridge’ [Ys. 46.11]: [Continued on page 51]

**Pallan R. Ichaporia.** PhD, has a BA in Avesta-Pahlavi from Bombay University, did post-graduate work in Iranian Studies at Columbia University, and has a doctorate in Business Administration. Author of “The Gathas of Asho Zarathushtra,” and co-author, with Helmut Humbach of “The Heritage of Zarathushtra, A New Translation of His Gathas” (1994) and “Zamyad Yasht” (1998), he is founder president of the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society, and chaired the Second North American Gatha Conference and the First International Avesta conference.

established, and all this will come to pass through the work of man, the hero of this cosmic drama. All men now become of one will, giving voice in song, to the glory of Ahura Mazda. They will live as one, in perfection (*haurvatat*) and immortality (*amertat*) as *frashokereti* has been achieved.

**Dastur Dr. Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla**, was High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi, now in Pakistan. Renowned Avestan scholar, philosopher and author, Dastur Dhalla was a most outstanding product of the renaissance of the religion of Zarathushtra in India, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Doctrine of Afterlife [Cont'd from page 48]

"When the evil souls reach the account-keeper's bridge their souls ... will make them tremble and they will be guests in the house of deceit."

On the other hand the Prophet further commits himself to cross the account-keeper's bridge with the truthful by declaring [Ys. 46.10]:

"With all those [the truthful] I will cross over the account-keeper's bridge."

Such joy-giving account of living life truthfully and the Prophet's commitment to the finest rewards after death in the house of song is exhilarating – truly the best teaching coming from Zarathushtra for his devout followers.

## Saoshyant and eschatology

In the religion of Zarathushtra, history comprises a cosmic conflict between a just God, Ahura Mazda, and Angra Mainyu, the force of evil. Humans are destined to choose sides and to participate in the conflict.

This is the first religion which articulated the notion of the end of the world, *eschaton*, and the doctrine of the end or *eschatology*: at the end of the cosmic cycle of 12,000 years (as recounted in the Bundahishn) when the savior and judge, Saoshyant, born miraculously of a maiden and the seed of Zarathushtra, will appear and rehabilitate creation, casting Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) into hell and purging the human race from the stain of sin. Then the whole human race will enter into paradise to enjoy eternal bliss and happiness.

The idea of a single Saoshyant to be a final savior of the world is post-Gathic. A victorious Saoshyant Verethrajan called Astwat.aretā, as the messenger of Ahura Mazda will rise from Kansaoya Sea. This is an eschatological myth [see Humbach-Ichaporā, Zamyad Yasht, 1998, p.163, also see Yt. 13.128ff]. However the Gathic notion of several Saoshyants is reflected in Zamyad Yasht, when it says that Saoshyant Astwat.aretā together with his companions will 'make existence brilliant' (*frashem ahum* = *frashokereti*). The dead will rise again and imperishability will be bestowed on the living [op.cit, p. 163-164].

## Prayerful Thoughts for a Funeral

Ahura Mazda, Creator of this world and the innumerable worlds beyond, the Lord of all human beings – past, present or future, we bow before Thee in reverence and worship.

May the Law of Asha prevail over the universe and may Thy love permeate everyone and everything, everywhere.

Thou, Ahura Mazda, have ordained in Thy wisdom that human beings cannot live forever, nor can they die at their will.

Peremptory is the summons of death, none can resist it. When the hour sounds and death knocks at the door, nothing in the world can keep it out. Not priest nor prince nor peasant can delay the fateful hour of death.

When Spenta and Angra Mainyu, the twin principal spirits of Ahura Mazda first met together, they created life and non-life.

Life and death are twins. Life and death are inseparable and indivisible. Death is life's inevitable accompaniment and culmination. Apart from death, life is inconceivable.

Death conquers, but to be conquered in turn by life spiritual. Life dies in body; it does not die in spirit.

Death ends life of the flesh, but the life of the spirit lives for ever.

Death confers life's liberty. Death in this world is but the beginning of Life in the next world. It is the life anew in the other and greater existence.

From one gate, man enters and it is life for him. From another he departs to start a greater existence. Death's door is but an entrance to another and higher life.

Death, which leaves the body lifeless, liberates the soul which embarks upon its journey heavenward, to make up its accounts with the heavenly Judge.

Death has freed (name of departed) from his material bondage. He has shed his frail earthly mansion and departed this life to live hereafter in the realm of the spirit.

His earthly work is done and he has laid down his burden from the din and dust of life's struggle.

Our beloved has gone to the deathless world of peace and rest, where light fades not and happiness fails not.

He has died in body to live in spirit, a life higher and nobler than our thoughts can measure and our minds can conceive.

May he rest in everlasting peace and joy with Thee, Ahura Mazda.

[Excerpted by Dr. Kersey Antia from Dastur Dhalla's "Homage Unto Ahura Mazda."]



### BIRTHS

**Krish Sevak**, a boy, to Tinaz and Deepak Sevak, brother to Raj and Neal, grandson to Freya and Farokh Dhunjisha (Wheaton, IL) and Daksha and Sharad Sevak (Dallas, TX) on October 19, 2019. (ZA-CHI)

**Cyrus Nagarwalla**, a boy, to Diana Nagarwalla (Vania) and Shavir, Nagarwalla in London, UK on January 27, 2020. (ZSO)

**Ryan Vajifdar**, a boy, to Rashna and Kayzad Vajifdar, grandson to Dhun and Jimmy Vajifdar (Valsad, India) and Vera and Adil Kaikobad (Vancouver, BC), Vehishta and Sarosh Kaikobad (Houston, TX) on February 14, 2020. (ZAH – Manashni)

### NAVJOTES



**Arianna Cooper**, daughter of Neville and Farrah Cooper, granddaughter to Dara and Farida Bhesania, Kersi and Aniheeta Cooper, sister to Julian and Sebastian in Toronto, ONT on October 19, 2019. (ZSO) Photo above.



**Cyrus and Kaya**, children of Percy and Mitali Kapadia in Houston TX on November 23, 2019, at the Bhandara Atash Kadeh followed by lunch at the Center. (Manashni) Photo above

**Farzan and Rayaana Bardoliwalla**, children of Farish and Havovi Bardoliwalla (Mississauga, ONT) in Mumbai, India on December 27, 2019. (OCZF)



**Ethan**, son of Eric & Nikita Gagra, in Houston, TX, on December 28, 2019, at the Bhandara Atash Kadeh followed by reception/dinner at the Center. (Manashni) photo family above

### DEATHS

**Nargis Shavak Kasad**, 89, wife of late Shavak Jamshedji Kasad, mother of Dinaz, Pervin, Sherna, mother-in-law of Jamshed Ravji, Aspi Konkrawala, Mehernosh Kasad, grandmother of Mahazarin, Jennifer (Shahrukh), Nusli (Arnavaz), Zenobia, Rayomand, Farzad, Nazneen, great grandmother of Sanea, Kaden, Reyan, Erik in Richmond, BC on September 15, 2019.

**Hormozd Farsi Khadivi**, 95, husband of Parivash Hakhamaneshi-Khadivi, father of Kashayar and Fariba Farsi Khadivi, father-in-law of Mahnaz Jamshidi and late Ardeshtir Edalat Parsi, grandfather of Bahram Edalat Parsi, Kourosh and Arash Khadivi in North Vancouver, BC on October 19, 2019.

**Katty Russi Mistry**, wife of Russi Mistry, sister of Coomi Bhiwandiwalla and Rusi Bhiwandiwalla, aunt of Farokh, Noshir, Rayomand, Dinyar, Bina,

Persis in Mississauga, ONT on December 22, 2019.

**Dadabhoy Jehangirji Amalsad**, 83, husband of (late) Nancy Amalsad, son of (late) Gaimai and Jehangirji Amalsad, brother of (late) Freny Navroze and Jeejeebhoy Amalsad, father of Meher Amalsad, Ava Amalsad, Sarosh Amalsad, and (late) Yazdi Amalsad, father-in-law of Katayoon Amalsad, Gus Sagar, and Maria Amalsad, brother-in-law of Keki Navroze and (late) Bapsy Amalsad, uncle of Spenta Unwalla, Darius Navroze, grandfather of Anahita Amalsad, Warren Amalsad, Netanya Amalsad in Southern California on December 28, 2019.

**Freiny Nalavala**, wife of Kaikobad Rustomji Nalavala (Navsari, India), mother of Maharoukh (late Naval) Mody (Houston, TX), Naosherwan (Mahrukh Hataria) Nalavala, grandmother of Sanobar Bharucha, Havovi Dotiwala, Meherab Nalawala in Bangalore, India on January 2, 2020. (ZAGNY)

**Hoshang Darabsha Behrana**, husband of (late) Alice Behrana, father of Shahrukh Behrana, Naomi Sarfaraz Trombaywalla, brother of Mehli Behrana (Houston, TX) in Karachi, Pakistan on January 12, 2020, (Karachi Obituary)

**Minoo Pithawalla**, husband of Arnavaz Pithawalla, father of Arzan Pithawalla, father-in-law of Delnaz Pithawalla, grandfather of Shayaz and Chermeen in Bothell, WA on January 15, 2020.

**Marzban Marzbani**, husband of Delbar Khosraviani, father of Parvin Abadi, Gohar Marzbani, late Nahid Jamzadeh in Schaumburg, IL on January 16, 2020.

**Freney Enayati**, 93, mother of Farida (Yezdiar) Kalyanivala, grandmother of Areez and Zahir in San Diego, CA on January 19, 2020. (ZA-CHI)

**Sohrab Rustom Barshan**, 84, husband of Gover Barshan, father of Afshan (Arnavaz) Barshan, grandfather of Azita and Arya on January 29, 2020. (ZA-CHI)

**Ervad Darius Kotwal**, 84, husband of late Jeroo Darius Kotwal, father

of Late Ervad Parvez Kotwal , Nawaz (Shane) Patrick and Shernaz (Phillip) Degagne, grandfather of Adam, James, Zoe and Kieran, brother of Ervad Nozer (Nergish) Kotwal, (Mississauga), Pervin (Jangoo) Irani, (Montreal) ,and late Homai Tata (Mumbai) on February 2nd 2020, in Montreal.

**Shahriar Ardeshir Toranji**, father of Shahrokh Toranji, Shadfar Toranji, Sima Toranji on February 3, 2020. (PZO- Bob Mehr)

**Jasmine Daroga**, wife of Pervez Sorabji Daroga, mother of Rayomand Daroga, Binaifer Khushrooshi, sister of Hoshang (Beheroze) Rustom Karkaria, Marzban Rustom Karkaria, aunt of Hormuzd Hoshang Karkaria in Toronto, ONT on February 6, 2020.

**Katy Behram Patel**, wife of (late) Behram Dhunjishaw Patel, mother of (late) Dhunjishaw Patel, Armaity Elavia, Farida Panthaky, mother-in-law of Khushro Sam Elavia, Viraf Jamshedji Panthaky in Baltimore, MD on February 6, 2020. (ZAMWI)

**Nadir Rabadi**, son of Shirin and Nariman Rabadi (Mumbai, India), husband of Roshan Rabadi, father of Yazzad, Shazneen, father-in-law of Hanoz, grandfather of Shayaan, Jedd in Oakville, ONT on February 8, 2020.

**Furrokh Nariman Dastur**, husband of Naju Dastur, father of Jehangir and Rashna on February 13, 2020. (CZC)

**Sorab Rustomji Italia**, husband of Asish Italia, father of Farzeen Italia in Mumbai, India on February 13, 2020. (ZSO)

**Noshir Siganporia**, father of Farokh and Yazdi Siganporia on February 15, 2020. (ZA-CHI)

**Khodayar Bahrami**, 88, husband of Katayun Namiranian, father of Mitra (Hushang) Namiranian (Montreal, QUE), Monick (Jamshid) Amanat (Vancouver, BC), Jamshed (Janice) (Toronto, ONT), grandfather of Ariane (Bardia) Moosavi, Dina, Neeku, Arya, great grandfather of Ryan and Kaia in Vancouver, BC on February 21, 2020.

**Pallan Rustomji Ichaporia**, husband of late Hutoxi Ichaporia, father of Burjor Ichaporia, Farida Ichaporia, Mani Hagood (Oklahoma City, OK), Aban Boman (Phoenix, AZ), Rashna Ichaporia (Reading, PA), grandfather of Chase Ward, James Ingram (Oklahoma City) and Neil Boman of Phoenix, AZ, in Oklahoma City, OK on February 22, 2020.

**Beji Lentin**, husband of (late) Siloo Lentin, father of Mehernaz Lentin in Toronto, ONT on February 27, 2020.

**Phiroze Master**, husband of Hufri Master, father of Mehernosh, Jimmy, Persis, father-in-law of Jasmine, Kashmira, grandfather of Zahaan, Xarah, Xerxes in Oakville, ONT. (ZSO/OZCF)

**Shahryar Varjavand**, husband of Parvin Keykhanzadeh, father of Hooman and Firoozeh Varjavand. (CZC)

**Simindokht Khorramshahi**, mother of Azarmidokht, Khodamorad, Homa, Sima Azarmehr. (CZC)

**Katayoon Abadian Verahrami**, 84, mother of Shirin ( Fereydoon) Keshavarz and Farhad (Shehernaz) Verahrami, grandmother of Nicku and Shawdi Keshavarz, Anahita and Roksana Verahrami, in Maryland, on February 29, 2020 (ZAMWI).

**Perin Shroff Bhappu**, beloved wife of (late) Farrokh Shroff and (Late) Roshan Bhappu, mother of Homee Shroff and Arbez Hoshang Patel, grand mother of Zara and Zayne Patel, in Tucson, Arizona. on March 4, 2020.

**Russi Dinshaw Balsara**, 86, husband of late Moti Balsara, father of Khorshed (Khor, Darrin Tooth) Navroze (Andrea Balsara), grandfather of Zara (Ryan Bottrielli), Emma, Aidan and Justine Tooth, and Mehra Balsara, brother of late Homai Janmohammed and Sabar Balsara, in Toronto , on April 7, 2020.

**Nergish Mehta**, wife of Kayomarsh Mehta, mother of Roxanna (Nevin) Dubash, Zenobia (Ethan) Sribnick, Farhad (Brandi) Mehta, late Rashni, grandmother of Morgan,

Kaylee, Kaizad, Auden, Aliza, Zarina, Zachary, Zayna, sister of Yazdi Billimoria, sister-in-law of Hoshi (Kim) Mehta, aunt of Shawn (Sam) Sheroy (Sarah), Shazad, daughter of Tehmina and Rustomji Billimoria and daughter in law of Freny Pervez Mehta, in Chicago on April 12, 2020



**Silloo Parakh**, 80, wife of Khurshed Parakh, mother of Zal (Dechen Behlen) Parakh, Khursheed (Joel Kruse) Parakh (Minneapolis, MN), Nawaz (Hoshi) Merchant (NY), grandmother of Darayus, Zarine, Zara, Sam, Cyrus in Minneapolis, MN on February 26, 2020. Photo above.

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# Between the Covers

## METAL HORSE AND SHADOWS BY DEENAZ PAYMASTER COACHBUILDER

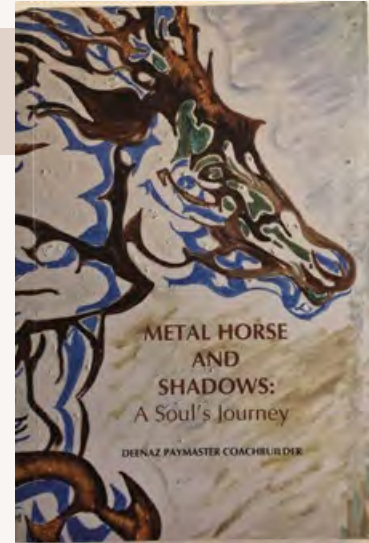
Pages 149 ISBN 978-0-9913085-1-4

Publisher : Deenaz Paymaster Coachbuilder 2019 Cost \$20  
Order Direct from the author : [dcoachbuilder@gmail.com](mailto:dcoachbuilder@gmail.com)

Reviewed by Nawaz Merchant

Named for the original painting on the cover, Metal Horse and Shadows evokes moments in a life lived with all its light and darkness, joys and deep sorrows of love and loss. This is no book to read in one sitting or even a week, but a cup to sip from over weeks or months, to keep by your bedside to ponder and delve into Deenaz's exquisite images. Sketched with the mastery of a few well-chosen strokes these poems are food for our souls. Whether you read from start to finish, or as I did, break open the

pages where they will, you will find something enchanting. Here the love of a grandchild bubbles with delight, there the memory of parents and beloved spouse, nostalgia for the sound of rain on wide glossy leaves, the wound of loss still aching after fifty years. Yes, this book muses on our shared Zarathushti heritage, the deeply personal spiritual journey that transcends any specific religion, and portrays an intensely felt empathy for nature's smallest creatures so forlorn in today's urban wastelands. But there's more—a manual to significant moments, precious and fleeting, the light and the shadows as we age through life--and how to do it well, living each of them to the full. I suspect this is a book that will present new insights on each reading.



A fragment from one of my favorites: Sitting beside me/he listens, intently,/to Goodnight Moon/for the third time today/as we lift the book cover/and enter a green room./His foot rests against my knee/his toes/wriggling in anticipation/to rhyming words/bears and chairs/kittens and mittens/mush and hush/while that eternally enigmatic moon/peeks through the window.

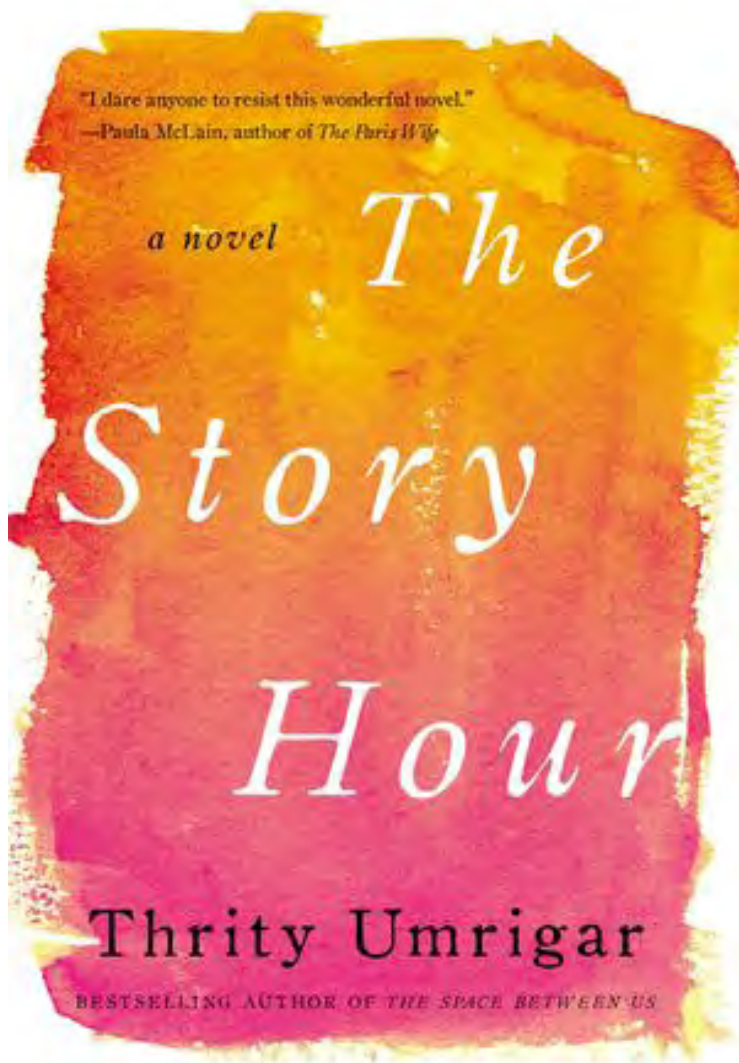
◆ *Nawaz Merchant is the author of Award Winning novel Murder in Old Bombay which will be published in November 2020. Her book won Mystery Writers of America's award for First Crime Novel under the title The Rajabai Tower Mystery. She lives in New Jersey with husband Hoshi and two sons.*

## The Story Hour by Thrity Umrigar (2014). Harper

The Story Hour by Thrity Umrigar (2014). Harper  
Pages 352, List Price US\$16.99  
Publisher Harper Collins  
ISBN 10: 0062259318  
Reviewed by Farah M Shroff

The Story Hour, (<http://umrigar.com/the-story-hour/>) not surprisingly, is full of stories, mainly told by Lakshmi, one of the principal characters, to Maggie, the other main character. Lakshmi, a village woman from India, tells Dr Maggie, an experienced psychologist, about her life of sacrifice and service to those she loves. Maggie, in turn, offers many kindnesses to friendless

Lakshmi in her new home—a small US city. Lakshmi's stories revolve around her family life before and after the death of her mother. Lakshmi quit school, despite the fact that she was a top student, and her school fees were being paid by the head man in the village whose son's life she saved. She works in the fields alongside her father to help earn survival wages for the family. She cares for the village elephant, having decided that making others need her was a source of happiness. Her younger sister, Shilpa, is the centre of her life and Lakshmi makes many sacrifices for her. After about a year of supporting Lakshmi in therapy without cost, Maggie hears about the extent of Lakshmi's sacrifices.



Dr Maggie's life, while based in the US, bears some parallels to that of Lakshmi. Dr Maggie's mother also died when she was young. Her father began sexually abusing her at age ten. When her older brother found out about the abuse, he threatened the father. While her dad discontinued the physical abuse, he then begins to ignore her. Like Lakshmi, she has suffered as a result of her mother's death and lives with the pain for most of her life. Dr Maggie, an African heritage woman, is deeply lonely by the time she graduates from high school. When she meets her Indian husband Sudhir, a whole new world of warmth, hospitality, socializing and fun becomes accessible to her for the first time. Their marriage is solid for many years. Peter changes this. Lakshmi, through an unpredictable twist, ends up contributing to the marital crisis.

A year after the schism, Lakshmi realizes that her life has improved immeasurably because of Dr Maggie's support, encouragement, training, networks and more.

◆ *Dr Farah M Shroff, PhD, teaches at the University of British Columbia in the field of public health. A passionate Parsi, she initiated an oral herstory study of Parsi women's lives. Literature by Parsi authors forms part of her regular diet, when she has time to read for the pure pleasure of it!*

She also realizes that she caused part of the deep crisis between Sudhir and Maggie. As the book draws to a close, we see Lakshmi trying to right her wrongs, with a great deal of courage and integrity.

From page 126:

"Sudhir was laughing softly at something Lakshmi was saying, and the sound of it filled Maggie with pleasure. She knew enough from her visits to Calcutta that in India, Sudhir would not talk to someone from Lakshmi's station in life as easily as he was doing right now. So much would divide them in India: language, region, class, caste, education. Here in America, all the differences paled under the imperative of their brown skin. And the tenuous links they shared—a love for Hindi film music, a passion for Indian cooking—carried so much more weight here than they would back home."

Brown solidarity is real, here in Canada too. As we find our way in the South Asian diaspora, we often bond on the basis of such commonalities as music and food. Supporting each other, many of us try and carve a place for ourselves in this land of Indigenous peoples who continue their struggles for freedom on their own land. Connecting with other racialized communities, like those from the African diaspora, we find strength. Umrigar illustrates this power of connection in *The Story Hour*.

The book raises many other important themes—women's rights, immigrant challenges, racism, sexual abuse, arranged marriage vs love marriage, Indian/African Heritage relations, ethics in psychoanalysis, suicide, love, sacrifice, relationships and more. Umrigar offers insights into life in the US and India which are clearly based on a lifetime of reflecting on her own passage between these worlds. She is a very talent writer who offers no easy solutions to complex social problems such as violence against women but she does point towards potentialities and a better world. Her books rarely end with all the pieces put together and all the questions addressed.

In the echoes of this book, I am left with emotions of hope for social change and for human relationships and a bittersweet sadness about the way in which the story flows. Thrity Umrigar's stories are compelling, hard to put down and raise many issues that diasporic South Asians face. *The Story Hour* is one of her finest works.

# THE FOREIGN SUBSIDIARY WORKING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIRM

Author: Yezdi H. Godiwalla  
1<sup>st</sup> edition New York, Peter Lang  
2020.  
Available: in print (hard cover),  
and, electronic forms  
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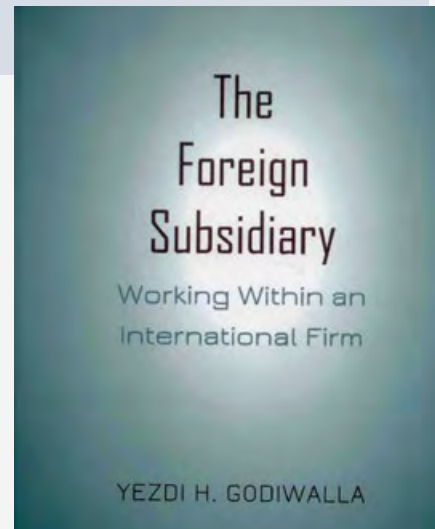
The book explains the role of a foreign subsidiary in international management as it helps a multinational corporation (MNC) to geographically expand and grow its business volume. Growth of an MNC would come from increases in its: (1) domestic operations, and, more so, (2) international operations. The effective management of the foreign subsidiary is vital to an MNC's long term survival, competitiveness and growth. The book is conceptual and practical in that it provides both, theories, and, implications and recommendations for practice. It is a good testament to the tenet that the practicing manager should be as conceptually sound as the theorist should be pragmatically astute.

The MNC and its foreign subsidiaries, to quote the book, "will hold true to their purpose of enlarging the scope of business around the world and transferring

from one country to another country: people, values, ideas and views and perspectives, knowledge, arts and know-how and skills, lifestyles and standards of living, goods and services, equipment, finance, and (engineering and organizational) technologies." MNCs and their foreign subsidiaries are the agents of global change in that they usher in newer ways of life and uplift the plight of the lesser fortunate societies in countries across the world.

The foreign subsidiary is a vital link between: (1) the fountain source of the MNC's headquarters (HQ) and its home country operations, and, (2) their chosen global markets and environments which they would enact as they geographically expand. Future growth in revenues and profits would come from there. They would provide a stable base for the MNC's financial vitality.

Managing a foreign subsidiary is complex. It operates in diverse cultural and operating environments. The MNC HQ's management of its foreign subsidiaries would have to cope with the complexities of the differences in its multiple country environments of cultures and operating conditions. Managing a foreign subsidiary, from an MNC's HQ point of view, is complex, interesting and challenging. To quote the book about the role of the



MNC's expatriate who goes to and manages a foreign subsidiary: "The expatriate who manages the foreign subsidiary is vital for managing the foreign performance of the MNCs. The expatriate will face a lot of challenges in his (or her) foreign subsidiary assignments. The MNC should train and mentor him, collaborate with him, and reward him better because he is the key to improved foreign subsidiary's performance."

The book has 21 chapters in these five sections:

1. Global Organizational and Foreign Subsidiary Strategies
2. HQ-Foreign Subsidiary Relationship: Constructs for Strategy, Structure, Culture, and Organizational Technologies
3. Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Competitiveness
4. Training Expatriate Executives
5. Ethical and Social Responsibility Issues for the Foreign Subsidiary.

◆ *Yezdi H. Godiwalla is Emeritus Professor of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, USA, where he was professor for 41 years. He has published/presented: four scholarly books, numerous articles and papers/seminars. He has been most fortunate to receive awards for his teaching and research, including the 2013 "WP Roseman Excellence in Teaching Award" (the university's highest teaching award). He received his BA (Honours) in English Literature and Economics from Ranchi University, India; his MBA from Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad; and his PhD in Business Administration (Management) from Oklahoma State University, USA. He worked as an executive with Tata Steel, and, Godrej and Boyce companies in India.*

# FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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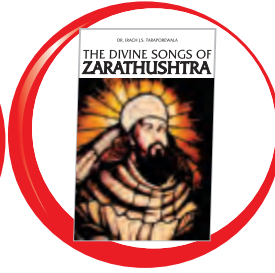
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