

FEZANA *bulletin*

February 28, 2013 / VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 2



UPCOMING DATES

March 1-3, 2013

ZYNA, *Young Professionals Group Retreat*, New York City. www.fezana.org/zyna

March 4-15, 2013

Commission on the Status of Women 57; United Nations Headquarters, New York City. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm>

March 30, 2013

NowRuz Celebration. Metropolitan Washington D.C. area; Silverspring, MD For info or registration contact srateshtari@gmail.com or www.zamwi.org.

May 3-5, 2013

FEZANA's 26th Annual General Meeting; Dallas, TX. Hosted by Zoroastrian Association of North Texas. Contact Zenobia Damania admin@fezana.org

May 18-19, 2013

North American Mobed Council (NAMC) 2013 AGM, Montreal, hosted by ZAQ. kobadzarolia@gmail.com

June 30, 2013

Application Deadline for FEZANA Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship

August 1, 2013

Application Deadline for FEZANA Excellence in Sports Scholarship

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Cyrus Cylinder U.S. Tour Begins March 9

© Trustees of the British Museum



The "Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia" exhibit starts its tour of 5 U.S. cities on March 9th. The exhibit of the cylinder, alongside sixteen objects, will showcase the Persian ruler's innovations and how the proclamation of the Cylinder shaped the ethics of the ancient world.

In anticipation of this exciting event FEZANA's coordinating team led by Homi Gandhi and local representatives

encourage FEZANA association members to offer programs, tours, resources, and materials that would teach and engage adults, children, educators, and neighbors the modern relevance of both Cyrus and the Cyrus cylinder. We are currently working on a list of resource materials (books, websites, and images), and it will soon be shared with member associations.

In addition, the *FEZANA Journal* is planning a special edition to commemorate Cyrus Cylinder exhibit. Look for this special issue this summer.

For those of you who are attending the FEZANA AGM in May you may want to plan a trip to Houston to catch the exhibit that starts May 3.

EXHIBIT SCHEDULE:

- **Washington D.C.; 9th March – 28th April 2013**
Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art
ZAMWI representative: Armita Soroosh (armita@us.ibm.com)
- **Houston; 3rd May – 14th June 2013**
Museum of Fine Arts
ZAH representative: Aban Rustomji (aban@coatingindustries.com)
- **New York City; 20th June – 4th August 2013**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
ZAGNY representative: Khursheed Navder (knavder@hunter.cuny.edu)
- **San Francisco; 9th August – 22nd September 2013**
Asian Art Museum
ZANC representative: Nazneen Spliedt (nazehler@aol.com)
- **Los Angeles; 2nd October – 2nd December 2013**
J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa
ZAC representative: Parmis Khatibi (parmis99@aol.com)

The FEZANA Coordinating Committee Chair is Homi D Gandhi (homidgandhi@gmail.com). ZAKOI representative, Bakhtavar Desai (bkdesai@aol.com) and ZAC representative, Behroze Taraporewala (behroset@gmail.com) will be helping associations develop events about the exhibit.

COMING EVENTS

We will be updating you with the various events surrounding the exhibition. Lectures are also being planned at Houston, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Dates and timings will be sent to associations as soon as they are confirmed.



**Federation of
Zoroastrian
Associations of
North America
(FEZANA)**

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NGO in consultative status
(Roster) with the Economic
and Social Council of the
United Nations



SCAN HERE
FOR MORE
FEZANA INFO

Below are a few early events to mark on your calendar:

FREE LECTURES

A series of fabulous (free) lectures are lined up at the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington D.C. Plan your visit. Call for updates (202) 633.1000. <http://www.asia.si.edu/events/lectures.asp>

Thursday, March 7; 6 pm

The Many Meanings of the Cyrus Cylinder

British Museum director, Neil MacGregor, looks at the modern relevance of both Cyrus and the Cyrus Cylinder, asking what their significance might be today both in the Middle East and in the wider world. The lecture is followed by a brief Q&A.

Saturdays, March 9 & 23; Sundays, March 10 & 24; 2 pm

Cuneiform Tweets: Inscribe a Short Message in Cuneiform!



The inscription on the iconic Cyrus Cylinder is written in Babylonian cuneiform. From around 3000 BCE to the late second century CE, cuneiform was used to write everything from letters and poetry to information on agricultural production. Clay tablets were used in scribal schools and in daily communications.

Tuesdays, March 12 & April 23; 12:15 pm

From Babylon to Persepolis: Cyrus the Great & the Legacy of Ancient Iran

The Cyrus Cylinder represents the worldview of the Achaemenid Empire that ruled over vast territories in the ancient Near East. Curators of the Sackler's exhibition of the Cylinder discuss its archaeological and historical context and its lasting legacy.

Thursday, April 18, 7:00 pm

The Historical King Cyrus and Handel's Belshazzar.

Scholars compare current understanding of King Cyrus with information that was available to Handel, which influenced how he portrayed the ruler in his 1744 oratorio Belshazzar.

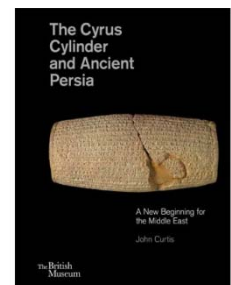
Friday, April 26; 6:30 pm

The Cyrus Cylinder: The Discovery and Creation of an Icon



The Cyrus Cylinder was discovered at Babylon in 1879. Scholars soon realized its inscription corroborated with the biblical account of how the Jews brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar were repatriated by Cyrus and allowed to start building the Second Temple.

CATALOG AVAILABLE: For collectors, an accompanying catalog of the exhibition will be available at tour museum bookshops: *The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning for the Middle East* by Irving Finkel, John Curtis and Neil MacGregor (\$30.00). □



Sunday, March 10; 11am (EST)

NA/FLORIDA ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS TELE-CLASS ON THE CYLINDER OF CYRUS

Soli P. Dastur in his popular monthly North American/Florida Zoroastrian Religious Tele-Class will feature a special presentation on the *Cylinder of Cyrus and its Universal Appeal*. Contact Erv. Dastur to obtain instructions on how to join in the broadcast and to obtain presentation materials. dastur@comcast.net



UPCOMING DATES

(continued from page 1)

Oct 10 - Dec 14, 2013

The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination. Exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, London, U.K.
www.theeverlastingflame.com

December 27-31, 2013

10th World Zoroastrian Congress; Mumbai, India.
<http://www.wzcmumbai.com/>

FEZANA JOURNAL SPECIAL SUMMER 2013 ISSUE ON CYRUS CYLINDER

To commemorate the historic occasion of the iconic Cyrus Cylinder touring five North American Museums, the *FEZANA JOURNAL*, will be publishing a Special Issue for Summer 2013.

In this special issue, scholars will look at Cyrus, the most iconic figure of religious respect and multiculturalism from both a historical and religious perspective. What was it about him that made him particularly “great”? What moved him to act and react in a way that he is said to have done? Was he only a military warrior or did he have a vision for pluralism and building alliances? What is his legacy for Humanity? What was his world vision? Are the ideas he propounded thousands of years ago still relevant in our conflict ridden world today? And, was he motivated and inspired by a divine and supreme creator, Ahura Mazda?

We hope the exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder at North American Museums and the promotion of the same by the Zoroastrian and the Iranian communities of North America will sensitize the public to the genesis of Human Rights first promoted by Cyrus, the Archemenian.

Dolly Dastoor Ph.D
 Editor-in-chief, FEZANA JOURNAL

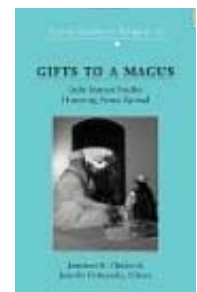
News from FEZANA Information Research Education Service (FIRES)



Diana Katgara joins the FIRES committee as lead person for outreach strategy. Diana’s background is in philosophy and social work although she has recently been interested in health policy. As a member of the ZSO and chair of Helping Hands she has been working in Toronto for eight years. Diana is excited to contribute to the foundation of FIRES; a committee she feels is “an incredibly valuable resource as a centralized collection of materials on Zarathushti faith, culture and history”. We look forward to Diana’s effective strategies to raise awareness and connect with member associations.

NEW BOOKS

Our sincere thanks to Daraius Bharucha and the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) for gifting the book: *Gifts to a Magus; Indo-Iranian Studies; Honoring Firoze Kotwal*, edited by *Jamsheed K. Choksy & Jennifer Dubeansky*. This fascinating volume consists of articles by world-renowned scholars of Zoroastrian, Iranian, Parsi, and Jewish studies. The topics covered range from the prophet Zarathushtra and the ancient Indo-Iranians to the modern Zoroastrians and Jews of Iran and India.



And thanks to Toxy Cowasjee of Karachi, Pakistan for gifting: *Vintage Cowasjee: A Selection of Writings from Dawn: 1984-2011*. This is a selection of some 200 columns from the writings of Ardeshir Cowasjee that have appeared over the past twenty-plus years. Focusing on diverse issues, these articles are as pertinent today as they were when they were first written. The book will remain a source of reference for all interested in Pakistan and a reminder of the work done by a tireless and indefatigable campaigner working towards what he believed to





MORE TO KNOW

Parsis: From Persia to India

<http://vimeo.com/58846820>
(9:28 minutes)

Navsari: Home of the Indian Zoroastrianism and Hub of the China Trade

<http://amitavghosh.com/blog/?p=5350>

Blog from Amitav Ghosh, author of "River of Smoke" (see book review by Dinyar Patel in the *Fezana Journal* 2012)

be right. For other new titles visit our website www.fires-fezana.org

ZANT LIBRARY

In the information age, digital preservation is critical for research and education and this data needs to be accessible when and where we want it. The Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT) is excited to start their library collection. March 8-10, Aban Rustomji and Yasmin Pavri will be working with Anahita Sidhwa (ZANT) to catalog and integrate their collection to the online FIRES catalog.

OTHER FEZANA ASSOCIATION LIBRARIES

Our goal is to have the catalogs of libraries in all FEZANA Associations online in a unified catalog that will allow interested readers, scholars and researchers to know what materials are available in North America and where they are located. We aim to have at least three other libraries online in the next two years. □

FEZANA Strategic Plan Update

The second ten-year FEZANA Strategic Plan (2011-2021) is being developed with each Committee chair responsible for completing their individual plan for the next ten years.

Earlier this year, a new time-line was established.

- 1- 2 years (2012-2013); list action items completed and to be completed
- 3-5 years (2014-2016)
- 6-10 years (2017-2021)

A worksheet was provided to each committee that includes the 5 goals; and, within each goal, action items pertaining to that specific committee, a time-line, ways of communication, and resources needed. The plan needs to be flexible enough to accommodate changes over the next ten years.

The committee chairs were contacted and most of them have begun working diligently on this process. The goal for the Strategic Planning (SP) team is to have all the worksheets distributed to the respective committee chairs by the end of February. Once the sheets are completed the committees can revise the "Terms of Reference" and start implementing the plan.

This project will be discussed on Friday, May 3 2013 at the Strategic Planning Session prior to the AGM in Dallas and the plan will then be presented to the AGM for approval.

INSIDE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: **Mahrukh Motafram** is the Committee Chair for the FEZANA Strategic Planning Committee. She resides in Sammamish, WA with her husband Feroze and son Jamsheed. Her daughter Freya resides in New York City. Mahrukh has a MS degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an Associate degree in Business and Marketing from the Waukesha County technical College, WI.

Mahrukh has been active with FEZANA since 1990 starting as a Committee Chairperson for the Small Groups in North America for a couple of years. In 1992, she became an elected member of the FEZANA executive committee as an Assistant Secretary serving two terms. In 1998, she got involved with the *FEZANA Journal* compiling information for the Milestones section which she still actively pursues; and consequently in 2001 as a Business Manager for the *FEZANA Journal*. In 2002-2005, she got elected to serve as the Vice President for FEZANA. In addition, in 2001, she was the Public Relations Chairperson for the 12th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago; and was invited to be the guest editor for the Spring 2006 *FEZANA Journal*, **Generation Why**, that showcased young Zarathushti adults growing up in North America. Mahrukh Motafram (425) 961-0298 or Cell (262) 327-0700; mahrukhm83@gmail.com □



Committee of Zarathushti Treasures for Exhibits and Museums (Z-TEM)

This year, FEZANA announces a new committee: The *FEZANA Committee of Treasures for Exhibits and Museums*.

Our heritage is our compass. Knowing where we come from “roots” us firmly in the present, shows us our function in society and maps out more clearly the path we need to take as we move towards our future. Ties to our past keep our heritage alive and strengthen the roots for future generations.

The Z-Tem committee has been created by FEZANA to exhibit our community’s artistic talents and to preserve Zarathushti “treasures” in its various forms. The Committee will work in tandem with other FEZANA committees to promote and showcase these talents, artifacts and items that represent our traditions and culture across North America and beyond.



INSIDE THE Z-TEM COMMITTEE: Behroze Daruwalla, of Houston, Texas, will Chair the Z-TEM committee. She was born and educated in Mumbai, India and came to USA in 1987 and studied law. Since then she has worked in numerous law firms in Houston. In 2002 she broadened her realm of management experience to include the Healthcare and Education fields and held among other senior positions, the position of Chief Operating Officer Babbage Net School,

Houston, Texas.

Behroze has been very active with all the activities of Zoroastrian Association of Houston and has been a member of the ZAH Executive Committee for multiple terms. She was also the Chapter Chair of World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) – Houston Chapter - for two terms. She is currently the Director and Corp Secretary on the International Board of Directors of WZCC. She is an active member of Houston Library Committee and FIRES, and also assists and mentors the Youth Group of Houston.

Behroze’s particular expertise is in the art of curating exhibitions. She was instrumental in organizing an exhibition of Zarathushti Treasures in Houston where Zarathushti *garas*, *kors*, silver, and other artifacts belonging to ZAH members were skillfully exhibited for the first time in North America. This led to an exhibition of Treasures for the first time at the North American Congress in Houston. It was this initiative that set the trend for exhibitions which is now followed at all NA Congresses. Her passion is for Zoroastrian textiles, arts and crafts and she has built up an impressive collection of her own. Behroze Daruwalla Mumbai MB 9619201951; behrozefezana@yahoo.com □

Zoroastrian Return to Roots Program Launched

The Idea

Over the last two generations, Zoroastrians have spread across the globe to a degree that is unparalleled in our 3,500 year history. This presents a pressing challenge for our tiny community: how do we pass along a strong, cohesive identity to future generations when we are so diffuse?

The Zoroastrian Return to Roots (RTR) Program is designed to address this challenge. Through this program, our community’s youth will travel together in small groups for ten days to Zoroastrian landmarks in India, and eventually Iran. Modeled after similar programs in other communities—the Jewish, the Taiwanese, the Georgians, and the Armenians all have analogous programs—we aim to make these RTR trips affordable for any young Zoroastrian from any part of the world. We specifically plan to bring together Zoroastrian youth from all over the world in order to help them recognize the commonalities amongst themselves, from their



ACROSS FAITH TRADITIONS

The Golden Rule

https://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/texts.php

Designed by - Dr. Harry Gensler S.J., Courtesy: Paul McKenna and Sam Vesuna

shared ancestries to the similarities in their everyday lives back home. Activities will be educational and community-service oriented, along with time for participants to get to know one another. The idea is that once Zoroastrian youth recognize what unites them, they will come together.

The Group

The RTR Program is a youth-led initiative with volunteers currently spanning three continents across five countries. Its institutional home is the UNESCO-PARZOR Foundation, an apolitical non-profit organization with over ten years of experience in promoting Zoroastrian identity and culture in India and abroad. Furthermore, the RTR Program is engaged in discussions with the BPP, ZTFE, as well as FEZANA, all of whom have informally expressed interest in getting the program off of the ground.

Next Steps

We are currently seeking to institutionalize this Program so it will perpetuate: it is simply not envisioned as a one-time affair. Subsequent trips will be arranged in the summers and winters of every year. The first RTR trip will take place in January 2014 to coincide with the December 2013 Zoroastrian World Congress being held in Mumbai, India.

We have prepared an itinerary and we have calculated flight costs from various parts of the world. Costs of touring Zoroastrian India for two weeks are about \$1,000 USD a person, and we expect flight/visa costs to be about \$2,000 USD, depending on where the participant is traveling from as well as what time of year the trip is taking place. This means that it costs \$3,000 USD per participant. Initially we will be requesting participants to bear a part of the costs, but the long term goal is to make this an inclusive project to the extent that we want all Zoroastrian youth to be able to participate regardless of their financial situations. To this end, we are setting up a Foundation under the UNESCO-PARZOR umbrella so that all Zoroastrians can return to their roots.

How to Get Involved

We are currently searching for individual sponsors. In addition to helping support deserving participants, higher levels of sponsorship come with the ability to influence the steering of the Program as well as community-wide visibility. Support from local associations is also welcomed. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a sponsor, please contact the North American representative, Dinsha Mistree (dmistree@gmail.com). □

Zoroastrians Participate in Historic United Nations Interfaith Event

By NINA MISTRY

World Interfaith Harmony Week is an annual event observed during the first week of February since 2011. World Interfaith Harmony Week was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and adopted on October 20, 2010, on the premise that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.

To mark the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2013, an historic event, *United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith*



Nina Mistry represents Zarathushtis in the United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony Event at the United Nations



Also attending the event, seen here with Nina Mistry are (from left to right) Ervad Pervez Patel, Virasp Davar, Mahrukh Cama, Rohinton Cama, Maya Mistry and Adil Mistry.

Harmony, was organized on February 14, 2013, at the United Nations General Assembly Hall, by the Office of the President of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations.

Nina Mistry had the honor to represent FEZANA. The event was comprised of three parts: The Role of Interfaith Harmony Symphony of Peace Prayers; and, World Peace Flag Ceremony. Several world faiths were represented -- Indigenous, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and

Zarathushti. The Symphony of Peace Prayers in the General Assembly Hall was of historic relevance, as prayers are not usually offered in the General Assembly Hall. However, to highlight different religious and spiritual traditions sharing a message of peace, representatives from each of the diverse religious, indigenous or faith traditions were invited to offer prayers, readings and invocations with a message of peace.

At this truly unique opportunity that Zoroastrian prayers were recited in the General Assembly Hall, Nina recited, in Avestan, Yasna Verse 60.5 and from the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Yasna Verse 29.10, followed by an English translation of the prayers. The prayers call for the triumph of peace over discord, generosity over greed, devotion over arrogance, and that with the Good Mind, we may bring the world peace and happiness. □

FEZANA Excellence in Sports Scholarship Call For Entries

The FEZANA Excellence In Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund is now accepting applications for 2013.

The objective of the Excellence in Sports Scholarship (EXISS) Fund is to provide financial support to young Zarathushtis (between the ages of 10-30, living in North America) who are performing exceptionally and at highly recognized levels in any sport. The purpose of the scholarship is to enable the recipients to get world-class training and/or study with experts in their field and thus fine tune and enhance their talent and capabilities. The deadline for applications is Thursday, August 1, 2013.

If you or someone you know may benefit from this scholarship, we encourage you to apply. For more details, please visit <http://www.fezana.org/exiss-fund> or contact Shiroy Dadachanji at exissfund@fezana.org. □

26th FEZANA AGM To Be Held in Dallas

Hosted by ZANT, FEZANA is pleased to announce that the 2013 FEZANA Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in Grapevine, Texas on **May3-5, 2013**. Details and agenda will be circulated to FEZANA representatives.

AGM Location: Hyatt Place Dallas/Grapevine (2220 Grapevine Mills Circle, Grapevine TX 76051; 972-691-1199). To ensure the special group rate (\$109+taxes per night) at the hotel, please book before April 18, 2013.

For more information, contact Sherazade Mehta (sherazadem@yahoo.com) or Zenobia Damania (admin@fezana.org) □