

FEZANA *bulletin*

October 2014 / VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 10



UPCOMING DATES

Oct 29 to Dec 24, 2014

Wednesdays. 7:15pm. "The Zoroastrian Way of Life" An Introductory Audio-visual course. Dadar Athornan Institute, Dadar, India.

[click here for details](#)

November 1-2, 2014

11th Annual ZAH Library Event. Sarah Stewart, Guest Speaker (SAOS; Curator, The Everlasting Flame Exhibition) Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center, Houston. [Click here.](#)

November 8, 2014

Farhang Foundation's 4th Annual Fundraising Gala. Beverly Hills. 6pm. Tickets www.farhang.org

November 16, 2014

Zoroastrian Association of Florida (ZAF) Maidhyoshem Gahambar. zafboard (@) gmail.com

November 20, 2014

35th Annual Interfaith Concert. 7:30pm. Washington, DC. [Tickets](#)

November 22-25, 2014

Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. San Diego. www.aarweb.org

(DATES CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

ZAMWI Celebrates Opening of Kamran Dar-e-Mehr



FEZANA, its executive and its member associations congratulate ZAMWI (the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington) on the momentous occasion of the opening of the Kamran Dar-e-Mehr in Boyds, Maryland on September 20, 2014.

It is indeed the culmination of a long journey for the Zarathustis in the Washington area. The amazing building built by late Mr. Khodaramod Kamran with his family, was gifted to ZAMWI and the local Zarathustis as their home. With additional donations of over 200 individuals, the Dar-e-Mehr was finally brought to fruition. It was truly a cause for celebration. For more details of the opening and photos [click here.](#) □

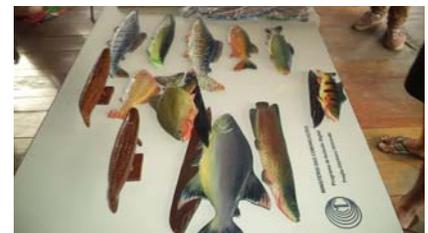
Sustainability in the Amazon Rainforest

By Meher Sidhwa



[Partly supported by FEZANA's Zoroastrian Youth Without Borders (ZYWB), Meher Sidhwa recently journeyed to the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Below is her account of this experience.]

Being an engineer and having worked on renewable energy projects that apply to the UNFCCC, the word 'sustainability' is very close to my heart. It has multiple definitions and my version of it is to live in a way wherein whatever you utilize goes back into the system. I feel fortunate to be one of the 15 participants from across the world selected to attend a sustainability program at the Amazon rainforest. Apart from learning about the ecology and the politics in the Amazon, we closely interacted with its communities and tribes. We lived with the riverine community of Tumbira who have indigenous roots. Two other communities--Saraca and Ingle—also lived on the banks of the Rio Negro. Unlike the tribes, they are midway between keeping pace with development and preserving their culture. The men were once illegal loggers and are now diverting into fisheries, agriculture and allied businesses due to the ban on illegal logging in the Amazon. Having said that, the forest cover in the Amazon still needs a great deal of revival. We undertook the Oasis methodology—a community mobilization tool—to fulfill their dream of unity. We started periodic inter-community football matches for the adults and cinema night for the kids. We also



Wooden handicrafts at the talent show



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NGO in consultative status
(Roster) with the Economic
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United Nations



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organized a talent show for the communities for which we visited each household and encouraged them to come forward and show their talent. The talents comprised kids performing dances and adults showcasing wooden showpieces, and handicrafts made by them.

We also learned the concepts of Dragon Dreaming and Design Thinking. The philosophy of Dragon Dreaming draws upon indigenous wisdom of the Western Australia Aborigines and is based on three equally important objectives: Service to the Earth, Community Building and Personal Growth. Design thinking is a concept born at Stanford to build an idea through collective brainstorming. It made decision making smooth, disciplined and less chaotic. It also made each of us a better listener, which I believe is a rare trait in today's fast paced life. We also had interactive sessions with some great speakers who were also stakeholders of the Amazon—corporate like EDP and Coca Cola, NGOs, scientists, foresters, businessmen, community leaders, politicians and TV channels like Amazon SAT and TV Cultura.

Whilst we went for various rainforest trails, we also met the Kambeba Indians who centuries ago originated in Peru but had lost their tribe to an epidemic. Today, they are much less in number and live on the banks of the Solimoes River in the Brazilian Amazonas trying to revive their culture. It is interesting to know that the Kambebas wear clothes weaved and painted by themselves and have a peculiar head band. They were historically known to eat human meat saving skulls as trophies; however, that is (thankfully for us) no longer the case. When a baby was born to a Kambeba, its forehead was flattened so that it could later be identified as one of them. This practice continued for centuries until the Christian missionaries explained them the hazards of skull deformation. The Kambeba leader is concerned about losing their tribe to the missionaries. The Kambebas are good at archery so much so that a young boy got selected to participate at the Olympic Games. For him this is less of a sport and more of a household skill to find food.

My experience at the Amazon is beyond words. On one hand, I feel good that the tribes that once strived though slavery are now openly living with dignity. On the other hand, I am concerned about the way the Amazon is catering to human demand. The Amazon is known as the lungs of the Earth and I hope that we don't lose it to a point of no return. Not only the forest but also the population rise is leading to power companies planning large hydro projects across the Amazonian rivers. Only small hydro power projects qualify as renewable power. The large ones will eventually displace the communities, habitat and the forest areas. There is no solution to it even with EDP, the well-known utility in Brazil. It eventually boils down to us as consumers to save electricity and use it wisely. So let us do our bit to gift a better world to our future generations because 'charity begins at home'. □

MINI-GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR ZARATHUSHTI YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS. Projects that foster good health, education, and economic self-sufficiency in developing countries are eligible. <http://bit.ly/19OAEa2>

ZYWB OPPORTUNITIES. Spring Break in Barbados with a purpose! March 10-16, 2015. Explore this fun, fascinating cultural exchange that fosters and advocates social development, featuring leaders in the field of Social Action Art. friendlyam@faf.org / 1-800-526-2908 / www.faf.org



The Kambeba Indians



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

The Zoroastrian Identity

A valuable educational resource from CZC-CPC [California Zoroastrian Center-Council on Persian Culture] provided in seven languages. [Farsi](#) - [English](#) - [German](#) - [French](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Russian](#) - [Italian](#)

CPC Academic Advisory Committee contributors include:

Dr. John Curtis; Keeper, Department of the Ancient Near East - British Museum

Professor Richard Frye; Harvard University

Professor Stanley Insler; Yale University

Professor Keikhosrow Irani; New York University

Professor Farhang Mehr; Boston University

Professor Jennifer Rose; Stanford University

Professor Hanns-Peter Schmidh; University of California, Los Angeles

Professor Martin Schwartz; University of California, Berkeley

Professor Oktor Skjaervo, Harvard University

World Alliance of Religions Peace Summit in Seoul, S. Korea

By Homi D. Gandhi



Homi Gandhi enters the Olympic Stadium for the Opening Ceremony

A group of Korean journalists interviewed me at the last year's Religions for Peace International World Assembly in Vienna, Austria. They were fascinated by the contribution of Zoroastrian faith and community to world peace and invited me to share it with the Korean peace efforts in future.

The above exchange and further communication led to my invitation, representing FEZANA, to the World Alliance of Religions Peace Summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in September 2014. Invitees to the Summit included former Presidents of Albania,

Argentina, Croatia, Kosovo, Ecuador, Mauritius, Romania, South Africa and former Vice Presidents and Prime Ministers of many other countries, and other Religious and Faith leaders.

The event was preceded by a reception for Global Dignitaries at Aston House, a beautiful location overlooking the city across Han River. A VIP Welcoming Banquet on the lawns of the terrace garden of Aston House followed this. The sumptuous dinner of traditional Korean and international dishes was enjoyed by all participants. In the background, 10+-piece orchestra from the famous music school of Seoul performed a repertoire of beautiful classical tunes. The event ended with welcoming and congratulatory speeches.

The following day (17th September), there was the Welcoming Reception and the Opening Ceremony at the main Olympic Stadium, the venue of 1988 Olympics. A whole motorcade of almost 50-60 cars with the Global Dignitaries under police escort

went through the 10 miles route from the hotel to the Stadium. The stadium was full to its capacity, over 50,000 people. Besides the welcoming speeches and congratulatory messages with videos and electronic presentations, there were Card Section performances. The ceremony ended after Dances of Peace and Festival of Lights was celebrated with fireworks.

The Summit hosting organization, Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) is establishing a Museum of Peace, which will celebrate the noble effort of peace by collecting artifacts, works, and symbols from around the world. They requested a gift for this museum, symbolizing Peace. ("This gift will be displayed in the museum for all to



At the Olympic Stadium. [L-R]: Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, American Orthodox Rabbi from New Jersey, Prof. Malkhaz Songulashvili, Metropolitan Bishop of Tablisi, Georgia, Homi Gandhi, and Archbishop Ilarion of Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kiev, Ukraine.



Presentation of the Cyrus Cylinder Replica and publications to Man Hee Lee, Chairman, HWPL and Nam Hee Kim, Chairwoman, International Women's Peace Group.



BOOK AWARENESS



This month we highlight two entertaining additions to FIRES collection.



The Stories of Shahnameh, The Persian Book of Kings is an audio book in English and Persian. Created by Afshin Sepehri and his ten-year old daughter Nusha Sepehri, the collection of stories introduces the Shahnameh through simple words so children and adults can follow the stories and enjoy them. The same stories are recited in the Persian language and interpreted by Afshin Sepehri.



Qissa-e Parsi: The Parsi Story is a delightful new documentary that explores the history of the Parsi community and strives to understand the Zoroastrian faith. The focus on the Parsis yields an endearing portrait of the small community who lives large through its philosophy to life, laugh, and love.

<http://www.fires-fezana.org/>

see and so we hope that you would contribute something that will inspire and motivate individuals to work together and pick up the mantle of peace.")

On behalf of FEZANA, I presented a replica of Cyrus Cylinder for the Museum of Peace at the dinner celebrating the opening day. This was accompanied with two publications: the special "Cyrus issue" of *FEZANA Journal* (Summer, 2013) and "The Legacy of Zarathushtra". These items will be displayed at the new Museum of Peace in Seoul, Republic of Korea. □

AROUND FEZANA: News from FEZANA Committees

FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee Announces New Co-Chairs

Maneck Bhujwala and Shernaz Minwalla have accepted appointments as Co-Chairs of the FEZANA Interfaith Activities Committee.

We gratefully thank the outgoing Co-Chairs, Homi Gandhi and Rohinton Rivetna, for their tireless efforts in the past years. Under their leadership this committee has made great progress and increased its activities tremendously. Due to their efforts, FEZANA's standing in the Interfaith world has increased considerably both domestically and globally. Rohinton and Homi will continue as advisors for the committee.



MANECK BHUJWALA

Born and raised in Bombay, India, Maneck and his wife, Mahrukh, have a daughter Shehnaz. He received Engineering and MBA degrees from Universities in India and USA. He co-founded Zoroastrian Association of California in 1974 and Zarthushti Anjuman of Northern California in 1980. He represented the Zarthushti community at interfaith events in Northern California, on Stanford University Associated Religions board, and currently serves on the Boards of Greater Huntington Beach Interfaith Council, the South Coast Interfaith Council, and as FEZANA representative on the Board of the North American Interfaith Network. He also gives talks on Zarthushti religious beliefs at schools, colleges, Congresses, radio and TV, Dar e Mehrs, and interfaith conferences. In addition, he serves the community as an on-call priest for Jashans, funerals, and other rituals.



SHERNAZ MINWALLA

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

FEZANA welcomes Maneck and Shernaz to the FEZANA family. □



ONLINE EXHIBITION

Parsi Zoroastrians: From Persia to Akbar's Court



The first exhibition of Parzor Foundation on Google Cultural Institute. [Click here.](#)

CONNECTIONS

HeForShe Campaign

24 Year Old, Emma Watson speaks for gender equality and the HeforShe campaign at the United Nations Headquarters on September 21, 2014.

[Approx 14:00 mins]

[Click here](#)

ORIGINS

Ashem Vohu Prayer on Sogdian Manuscript

Explore the online collections of Sacred Texts from the British Library. See images of a 9th/10th century Sogdian manuscript from Dunhuang, China.

[Click here.](#)

FEZANA UN-NGO Committee Announces New Main Representative

Afreed Mistry has accepted an appointment as the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee Main Representative.

FEZANA is grateful of the hard work, dedication and service that outgoing Co-chair and Main Representative, Homi Gandhi has provided for the UN-NGO Committee. This Committee has seen much progress in that past 12 years in which Homi has been involved, initially with the help and cooperation of Behram Pastakia and for the last 10 years with that of Afreed Mistry. There has been a lot of participation of Zoroastrian youth and others in this committee's activities and many Zoroastrian adults (including past President Bomi Patel) from North America and around the world. The number of Zarathushtis connected with the work of this committee over this period would be 70+, more than any other committee in FEZANA's history. FEZANA's standing in the UN NGO world has increased considerably over this period.

AFREED MISTRY



Afreed has been a FEZANA volunteer since 2001 and is currently one of the Co-Chairs of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee. She **has participated as an organizer and speaker at numerous FEZANA Workshops at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Conferences since 2004.**

Afreed has been working in the financial industry for the past 15 years. She currently works at Bank of Montreal (BMO) as a Network Design Engineer. and also conducts training on "How to be an Effective Negotiator" at meetings and conferences. □

NGO Participation in Upcoming Events at United Nations



The Fifty-Third Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD53) will take place from 4 to 13 February 2015 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Priority Theme of the session is "**Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world.**"

Also, the 59th Commission on the Status of Women Conference (CSW59) at the United Nations Headquarters will take place from 9 to 20 March 2015. This year's theme is "**The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.**" Details [here](#).

The FEZANA NGO committee is looking for participants to attend these events. Zarathushtis interested in participating are requested to contact both, Afreed Mistry [afreed.mistry\(@\)gmail.com](mailto:afreed.mistry@gmail.com), and Behram Pastakia [bpastakia \(@\) aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com) **by November 30, 2014** with a letter of intent and a copy of their curriculum vitae.

While FEZANA, as an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] and the Department of Public Information (DPI), will facilitate registration to these Conferences, costs for travel, visa and stay in New York City will be responsibility of the selected participant. □



UPCOMING DATES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

November 30, 2014

Application deadline to attend CSW59 and CSocD53 with FEZANA See details page 5.

December 29-31, 2014

17th North American Zoroastrian Congress, Los Angeles, California
www.nazc2014.org

February 5-6, 2015

Youth Assembly at the United Nations. New York City. [click here](#)

March 9-25, 2015

59th Commission on the Status of Women Conference. United Nations Headquarters. Details here.

March 10-22, 2015

Return to Roots Track B Tour. [Apply here](#). More [details here](#).

October 15-19, 2015

2015 Parliament of the World's Religions. Salt Lake City. [Click here](#).

INSPIRATION

"I did not clip her wings"

A TED Talk from Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of recent Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Malala Yousafzai who relates a simple truth.

[Approx 16:30 mins]

[Click here](#)

2015 Parliament of World Religions Update

CALL FOR PROGRAMS

The Parliament of the World's Religions to be held on October 15-19, 2015 in Salt Lake City has announced a Call for Programs. Deadline for proposal submissions is January 15, 2015. Most of the 2015 Parliament programming will be around three critical issues: Climate Change and Care for Creation; War, Violence and Hate Speech; The Widening Wealth Gap and Wasteful Consumption. In addition, programming will focus on three constituencies: Women; Indigenous Communities; Youth.



FEZANA encourages all interested Zarathushtis to participate in the momentous 2015 Parliament. This is a great opportunity for the Zarathushtis of North America as well as around the world to participate in this world class event.

FEZANA will be participating and presenting several programs and invites you to participate and contribute together with FEZANA. We would like to get your input and suggestions on the selection of topics that we should focus on. [Click here to review detailed information including Call for Program information.](#)

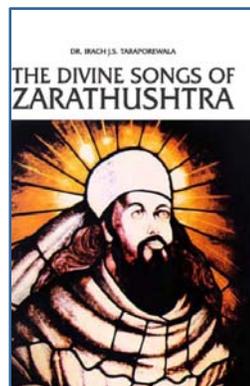
FEZANA Interfaith Committee will be the primary FEZANA contact for this Event.

Please contact: Shernaz Minwalla at [sjminwalla \(@\) gmail.com](mailto:sjminwalla@gmail.com); Maneck Bhujwala at [mbhujwala \(@\) socal.rr.com](mailto:mbhujwala@socal.rr.com); Rohinton Rivetna at [Rivetna \(@\) aol.com](mailto:Rivetna@aol.com); Homi Gandhi at [homidgandhi \(@\) gmail.com](mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com)

Special Discounted Group Super Saver Registration Rate still available through November. Contact [rivetna \(@\) aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com) for Zoroastrian group information.

For more information on The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) visit <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/> □

Reprint of Valuable Educational Resource Needs Your Support!



FEZANA has obtained permission from the Hukhta Foundation to reprint the *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra — Translations of the Gathas into English* by Irach JS Taraporewala.

At the FEZANA AGM in Seattle, Washington State, held on 18 May 2014, seed money for the reprint of this book was sanctioned. **Donations are now sought from individuals, from member associations and small groups to cover the costs of publishing this very valuable religious education resource to benefit our Zarathushti community.**

Checks can be made out to FEZANA (marked for "Taraporewala Publication" in the memo section) and mailed to: **Nilufer K. Shroff, FEZANA Treasurer, Cherry Hill Post Office Box 3873, 1175 Marlkrass Road, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08034.** Nilufer can be reached at [fezanatreasurer \(@\) gmail.com](mailto:fezanatreasurer@gmail.com). [click here](#) to donate online. □