

# FEZANA *bulletin*

January 2015 / VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 1



## UPCOMING DATES

February 5-6, 2015

*Youth Assembly at the United Nations. New York City.* <http://www.faf.org/main/>

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.](#)

March 16, 2015

*Education: a powerful tool for gender equality.* A panel event at CSW59. Contact [afreed.mistry \(@\) gmail.com](mailto:afreed.mistry@gmail.com)

May 1-3, 2015

*28th FEZANA Pre-AGM and AGM.* Hosted by ZAPANJ. Details on page 3.

May 16-17, 2015

*North American Mobed Council (NAMC) Annual General Meeting.* Washington D.C.

October 15-19, 2015

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

Dec 28, 2015-Jan 2, 2016

*6th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress.* Auckland, NZ <http://www.6wzyc.co.nz/>

## XVII North American Zoroastrian Congress: Recap

Excerpted from article by Arzan Sam Wadia

*Faith and Unity* proved to be a fitting theme for the XVII North American Zoroastrian Congress which was held last month at the Hilton LAX in Los Angeles from December 29 through December 31, 2014. Organized on behalf of FEZANA by the Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC-LA) in conjunction with the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC), the Congress brought together 760 Zarathushtis from throughout North America and beyond....India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom.



### DAY 1

The first day's events continued the energy and spirit that the successful pre-Congress tracks sparked. The morning started with a beautiful *Khushali nu Jashan* followed by the Opening ceremony which included: a flag march by Zarathushti Eagle Scouts; the USA and Canadian National Anthems sung by young Zarathushti Sopranos; welcomes by Katayun Kapadia, President FEZANA; Bomi Patel NAZC Committee Chair FEZANA; Tehmi Damania; President ZAC-LA and Shida Anoshiravani; President CZC; and dynamic performances by CZC Choir and the ZAC-LA Children's Choir, who earned the largest applause.



***Khushali nu Jashan opening the XVII NAZC.***

After the opening ceremony, the first Keynote Speaker, Nadir Godrej, took the stage. In his unique and customary style, he recited a poem that he had written for the occasion. He acknowledged the strides that Zoroastrians in North America had made. [The entire text of his speech is available on FEZANA's website.](#)



**Nadir Godrej, Keynote Speaker**

The second Keynote Speaker was Senior Journalist, Parisa Khosravi of CNN. She spoke about her path professionally and how her faith, religion and family played important roles through the journey. She urged young Zarathushtis to make experiences and learn, and to not just pursue the first high paying opportunity that comes their way.

Ensuring a good experience for all ages, a well planned Children's program, led by Vahishta Kaikobad, ran throughout the Congress. It supplied a series of events to keep the very young occupied and challenged.

Also, a completely new Teen Track was organized for those attendees between the ages of 13 and 18 -- the first such program at any North American Zoroastrian Congress to date. The brainchild of the Congress Secretary Shazneen Gandhi, the Teen track included various program items over the course of the Congress including a workshop by Shirin Kumaana-Wadia on Zarathushti Creativity, in which she elaborated about the power of images to tell



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stories and set out a series of exercises for the teens to do. On other days, the Teen track continued to inspire youth with a workshop on Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds which included panelists speaking about their projects and passions in service to the community and society.

The First Day's afternoon sessions included: a panel discussing Generational Perspectives on the Issues of the Day; a presentation of the activities and works of PARZOR Foundation by Dinsha Mistree; a talk by Mobed Pervez Bajan titled "Across the Arabian Seas....But for Faith and Unity"; a presentation by Arzan Sam Wadia which explored the Zoroastrian presence on the web and invoked the audience to embrace the positives in the virtual world; and a presentation by Zane Dalal which urged the audience to introspect and understand the *Gathas* and older texts to find the real meaning.

The social entertainment for the evening was a Persian themed night, which showcased local talent in a variety entertainment program.

## DAY TWO

The second day of the Congress was a blur of activity with a full schedule and many presentations including: a journey looking at Zoroastrian footprints along the fabled Silk Road, in which Jenny Rose spoke of her research and travels in that part of the world, and the connections to Zoroastrianism she found there; the Khorshed F. Jungalwala Memorial Lecture by Dan Sheffield, Ph.D in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University; a session entitled "Yin and Yang of Zoroastrian Thought" moderated by Khushroo Lakdawala; a presentation by Maneck Bhujwala who spoke about the Zoroastrian presence on the Interfaith World Stage; a panel on Navigating Zoroastrian Parenthood – Raising Children in North America; and a panel on The Achievements and Challenges of Young Mobeds in North America moderated by Houtoxi F. Contractor and Ervad Soli Dastur.

Also on Day Two, the 2014 FEZANA North American Zarathushti Community Awards were presented to the winners at a glittering ceremony. Awards were presented to: **Sam Vesuna** (Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award); **Arzan Gonda** (Dinshaw Framroze Joshi Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature Award); **Dinshaw J. Patel** (Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Excellence in Business or Profession Award); **Nazneen Spliedt** (Jamshed K. Pavri Humanitarian Service Award); **Persis Bhadha** (Shirin Nariman Dastoor Outstanding Young Zarathushti Student Award); **Ervad Poruz Khambatta** (Shirin Nariman Dastoor Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award); **Ervad Rayomand Ravji** (North American Mobeds Council Community Services Award). [Details of the winners are available on the FEZANA website.](#)

The main evening social event on Day Two was a well received performance by the World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra included soloists Neville Bharucha, Sarosh Mistry, and others including Meher Pavri. The evening reception was Parsi themed with songs, dances and natak. Local members of the community were felicitated for their contributions to the community.



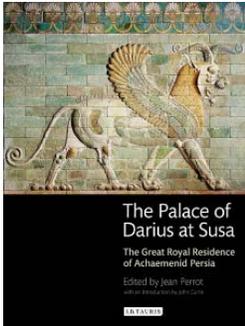
**FEZANA North American  
Zarathushti Community Awardees  
honored on Day Two of XVII NAZC**



**Evening reception with Parsi  
themed songs, dances and natak**



## BOOK AWARENESS



***The Palace of Darius at Susa: the great royal residence of the Achaemenis Persia***  
by Jean Perot

This lavishly illustrated volume is a work of seminal importance for the understanding of ancient Persia. The palace complex of the Persian King Darius I, the Great (522-486 BCE), provides unique evidence of the sophistication of Achaemenid architecture and construction. This palace, built 2500 years was rediscovered in 1851. But it was only field research between 1969 and 1979 by the noted French archaeologist Jean Perrot which revealed the site's full dimension and complexity. The discovery and excavation of the palace, which this book records, edited by John Curtis, casts a new light on the beginnings of the Achaemenid period.

Visit our new and improved website at <http://www.fires-fezana.org/>

Congresses bring about unique, opportune moments and this congress was no exception. One such opportunity transformed into an impromptu session that was not on the agenda, but which turned out to be undeniably impactful to those who took part. Seizing the opportunity of having two young scholars of Zoroastrianism in one place, Yuhan S-D Vevaina and Dan Sheffield were requested to field questions from a group of dozens of young Zarathushtis which lasted 2.5 hours.

**DAY THREE**

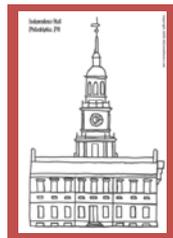
The third and last day of the Congress started with a lecture by Fariborz Rahnamoon on his interpretation of the *Gathas*. Later, Yuhan S-D Vevaina presented "Wisdom of the Ancients in the Age of the Moderns." Yazdi Tantra spoke about global connectivity in the Zarathushti Diaspora and the availability of various tools and websites that enable the same. Afshin Sepheri and his daughter Nusha had a session and read out stories from the *Shahnameh*. Other sessions on the last day included: a presentation on Holistic Health moderated by Dr. Parmis Khatibi and a talk by Pilsun Master about using Archeology and Linguistics to determine the time and location of Prophet Zarathushtra.

Later, during the FEZANA Session, President Katayun Kapadia began by briefing everyone on the status of FEZANA and its activities. She invited various committee chairs to give a status update of what each committee does. The session concluded with an invitation to the audience to participate in FEZANA activities both as participants and in positions of organizing and volunteering.

During the closing comments, Congress Co-Chair Khushroo Lakdawala thanked all the participants and sponsors and introduced his entire organizing committee. In a fitting gesture, he invited the entire volunteer task force up on to the stage. The largest standing applause was reserved for them and it was a great validation for all the countless hours of hard work put in over the last few years. ZAC-LA and CZC were wonderful hosts for the 17th North American Zoroastrian Congress. FEZANA acknowledges the organizers for doing a fantastic job and congratulates the organizing team's tireless efforts.

With the Closing Ceremony, the Torch was passed in a symbolic ceremony to the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia who will host the 18th North American Zoroastrian Congress during the summer of 2017. □

## FEZANA Annual General Meeting Notice



Hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ), FEZANA is pleased to announce that the 2015 FEZANA Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Details have been circulated to FEZANA representatives. Please contact the FEZANA Administrative office if you have not received the full announcement.

**Pre-AGM Session:** May 1, 2015 (2:00-6:00 pm)

**AGM Meetings:** May 2-3, 2015 (SAT: 8:00am-6:00pm / SUN 8:00am-1:00pm)

**AGM Venue and Hotel Accommodation:**

Crowne Plaza Philadelphia

260 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA 19406; 610-265-7500

**Reservation link:** [CrownePlazaHotel FEZANA AGM@Philadelphia May1 2015](mailto:CrownePlazaHotel_FEZANA_AGM@Philadelphia_May1_2015)

**Important:** Please book your hotel soon. The group rate (mention "ZAPANJ") is only available for reservations that are made by April 1, 2015.

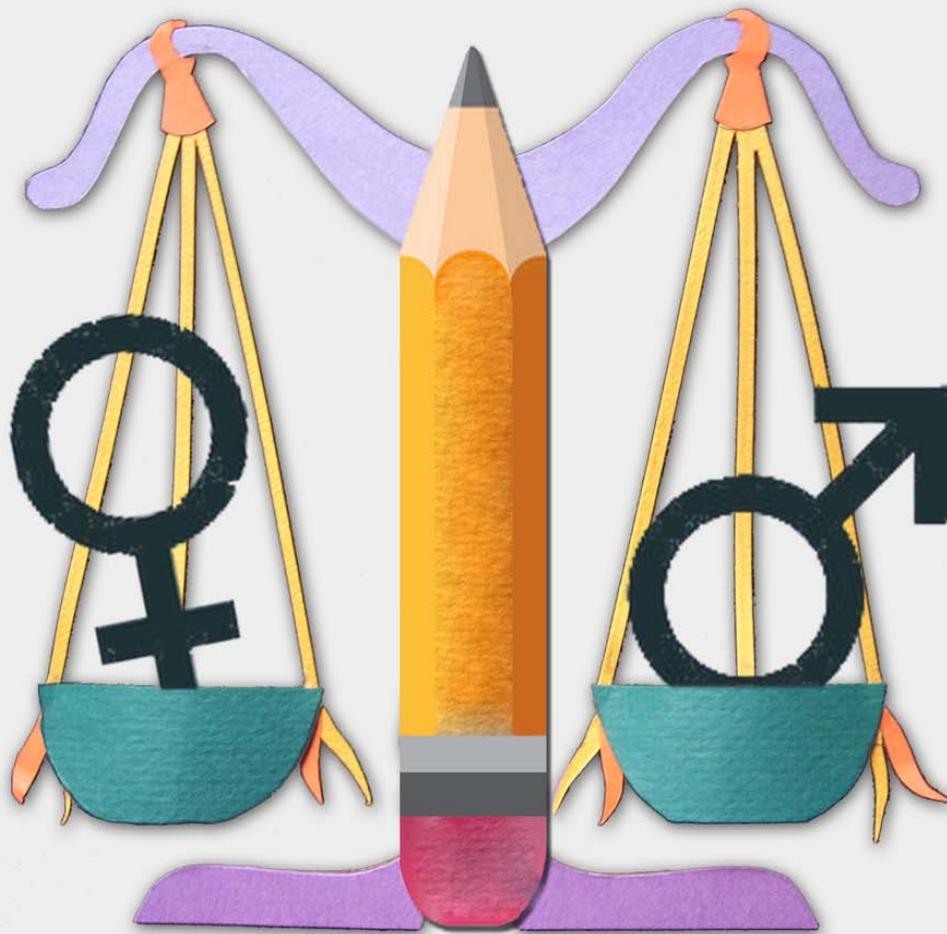
**Please RSVP with the number of people attending in your party to:** Saghar Javanshir ([sjbehroozi@verizon.net](mailto:sjbehroozi@verizon.net)) and Zenobia Damania ([admin@fezana.org](mailto:admin@fezana.org)) □

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America  
presents

# EDUCATION:

## A powerful tool for gender equality

A panel event at the Commission on the Status of  
Women Conference at the United Nations



**Monday, March 16th, 2015 6:15 pm to 7:45 pm**  
**Church Centre, 10th Floor, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY**



Contact: Afreed Mistry    [afreed.mistry@gmail.com](mailto:afreed.mistry@gmail.com)    +1-416-302-9754

WELCOME TO ENTERPRISE DUBAI



Mr. Nadir Godrej



The Business contest session chaired by Yazdi Tantra, carrying total prize money of Rs. 7,00,000 was won by Darius Aga in first position and Dr. Rashneh Pardiwala and Kitayun Rustom in second position.

to newer heights was launched by Mr. Nadir Godrej, Enterprise Dubai 2014, safely said, delivered on its promise...and more

On the final day the coffee table book 'Fathers and Sons Mothers and Daughters' written by Meher Bhesania as a tribute to the distinguished families in the community who have taken their family legacies



## ENTERPISE DUBAI MAJOR SUCCESS

It took months of planning but the effort paid off and Enterprise Dubai, one of the most awaited events of 2014 was a resounding success. Over 600 delegates poured in from around the globe to meet, talk and reaffirm their togetherness as the spearheads of the Zoroastrian community while also underscoring the wide ranging potential in Dubai to explore business and career opportunities as the city state moves towards being the host for the World Expo 2020.

Brought together under the banner of World Zoroastrian Congress 2009 these three days marked a new chapter in the relationship between the community and the Gulf region.

Along with Speakers and moderators, all of them success stories in themselves, were members from the Royal family, senior government officials, diplomats and leading businessmen from the UAE. The event was supported by the Indian Consulate in Dubai and was listed in the Calendar of Events by the Department of Dubai Tourism and Marketing.

Highly successful men and women, among them decision and policy makers, corporate leaders, academicians, financial experts; media and opinion makers; entrepreneurs and Emiratis used the stage effectively to make their points and internationally famous experts spoke on issues of great importance. The subjects tackled with in-depth knowledge, covered trade, communication, new technologies, education and youth initiatives as well as offered a great opportunity to share and build on international business ideas which encouraged networking and career opportunities; offered start up guidance to individuals who were interested in setting up new businesses.

The event began with the lighting of the lamp by H.E. Mr. Mirza Al Sayegh, Director, Office of HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai accompanied by Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE DL, Byram Jeejeebhoy, Former Air Chief Marshal Fali Major and Colm McLoughlin of Dubai Duty Free.

Participating in the event and its various stages were luminaries who included Nadir Godrej, Managing Director, Godrej Industries Limited; Freddy Sidhwa, Chairman Severn Seas Services; Neville Shroff, Chairman and CEO of Shroff and Company Ltd, and President Parsee Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau. McLoughlin, Exe.Vice Chairman, Dubai Duty Free, and Issam Kazim, CEO Dubai Corp. for Tourism & Commerce Marketing.

Among those seen taking part and contributing to the exchange of views were well known Fali Nariman, Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE DL, Homa Petit, Minoo Shroff, Dinshaw Tamboly, Byram Jeejeebhoy, Ronnie Screwvala, Dr. Rustom Soonawala; Dr. Keki Turel, Dr. Sabrena Noria, Dr. Cyres Mehta, Dr. Zubin Nalladaru, editor Bachia Karkaria, Bikram Vohra; Zarina Screwvala Meenal Baghel, and top banker Meera Sanyal.

A Member from the Ruling Family HH Sheikh Saeed Bin Hasher Al Maktoum, Chairman Al Fajer Group of Companies, graced the occasion and gave away the 4 Zoroastrian awards (Godrej Family, Jeejeebhoy family, Jokhi Family and Sidhwa family) and 9 Legendary Service Awards:

<b>Minoo Shroff</b>	– Public and Community Service
<b>Burjor Antia</b>	– Legal Legend
<b>Dr. Keki Turel</b>	– Excellence and Innovation in the Medical Field
<b>Homa Petit</b>	– Humanity and Philanthropy
<b>Dadi Mistry</b>	– Communal Responsibility
<b>Neville Shroff</b>	– Public and Community service
<b>Fali Major</b>	– Highest Civilian Service
<b>Katayun Kapadia</b>	– Community Service
<b>Roshan Rivetna</b>	– Preserving the Zoroastrian Culture and Editorial work

Whether at the seminar or in a conversation during breaks and enjoying Dubai's legendary hospitality members renewed old friendships and made new ones and there was sense of achievement and satisfaction running through the three days. The event was successfully compered by Nozer Buchia and Cyrus Debara.