

FEZANA *bulletin*

August 2016 / VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 8



UPCOMING DATES

Through September 2016

Persepolis: Images of an Empire.
[Oriental Institute – Univ of Chicago](#)

September 3, 2016

SSZ Conference; Zoroastrian Association of Chicago; (see page 6) [rayomand.ravji \(@\) gmail.com](mailto:rayomand.ravji@gmail.com)

October 7-11, 2016

Dubai Pravasi Yatra.
wzcc2016@gmail.com

October 28-30, 2016

ZAH Library Event – Home of FIRES -- featuring Dan Sheffield.
www.zah.org

December 2016

WZCC AGM. Hong Kong

April 28-30, 2017

FEZANA Annual General Meeting. Hosted by Zoroastrian Association of Houston. admin@fezana.org

April 29, 2017

FEZANA's 30th Anniversary Gala Celebration. Houston. Details to be circulated.

June 2018

11th World Zoroastrian Congress, Perth, Australia
<http://11wzccperth.com.au/>

The FEZANA Executive Wishes You and Your families Shahenshahi New Year and Khordad Saal Mubarak



May the New Year be filled with new hope, new joy and new beginnings. May each day of the coming year be vibrant and bring many reasons to rejoice. Let us all begin this Shahenshahi New Year 1386 Y.Z. with love and understanding towards mankind. May Ahura Mazda shower us all with Blessings of Peace during this season so that we bring a New Year of sustained hope and fulfilled dreams.

Wishing you and your families Good Health, Peace, Love, Joy, Happiness, and Prosperity.

Best wishes,
Homi, Arzan, Nilufer, Percy, and Afreed

First Tirgan Celebration for ZAOM (Michigan)



The Zoroastrian Association of Michigan celebrated its first Jashan E Tirgan on Sunday July 24 at Lake Shore Park in Novi. The days festivities started at 11 AM with a Jashan by our Mobed Er Noshir Sidhwa. At the end of the Jashan everyone joined hands and recited the Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayers. Everyone then took turns to offer their prayers and put loban on the fire.

This was followed by appetizers which was fruit, ravo and a special fried bread called seerog which is traditionally Iranian. Lunch soon arrived, catered by the Persian restaurant Pars and everyone was treated to delicious Kashk E Bademjoon, Chicken Koobideh, Ghormeh Sabzi, and hot steaming soup called Aash. The food was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

After lunch we had a presentation by Anahita Kavarana on the importance of Tirgan in the Persian and Zoroastrian traditions. Tirgan is the celebration of the Water Angel and how interestingly it rained all day when we celebrated it and the rain was most welcome !! There was also a presentation by Rustom Bahlorie an Iranian Zarthosty from Ann Arbor where he talked about how they celebrated Tirgan when he was growing up in Kerman and Tehran.

Then it was game time and what better than water games also organized by Anahita. where all the kids and some adults too had a blast. The afternoon ended with a falooda and ice cream session that was very welcome. We are all very grateful to Noshir and Khushnam for organizing the Jashan. Also many thanks to Anahita Kavarana, Shekufa Irani, Despina Mehta and the social subcommittee and all the volunteers and parents for making our first Tirgan celebration a resounding success. □



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



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FEZANA INFO

A Call to Action

Homi D. Gandhi, FEZANA President



My dear fellow Zarathushtis,

It has been over 2 months since a new FEZANA Executive was elected and I am privileged to be elected as the VIIIth FEZANA President.

FEZANA has achieved a great deal in its 29-year history and we, FEZANA's new executive team, cherish the opportunity to carry on this work for the greater good of our community. FEZANA's objectives are summed up in the goals of its current 10-year

Strategic Plan (STP), which are to:

1. Showcase FEZANA globally;
2. Increase awareness of FEZANA domestically;
3. Foster *hamazori* (Harmony) by building strong relationships between various Zarathushti entities/groups;
4. Advance religious education, cultural awareness and interfaith dialogue; and
5. Ensure economic stability through fundraising and prudent investments.

We will work to strengthen and build upon FEZANA's current initiatives to realize these goals.

We will work to raise awareness of FEZANA because this translates into creating awareness of the Zoroastrian community and its tremendous contributions to our world. This awareness comes about when we participate, within our Zoroastrian communities and across a greater, more diverse North American community in which we live. I appreciate that participating takes a lot of effort and juggling of the responsibilities of daily living. So to those who step up to do the work of our community, I say: thank you for volunteering! To those who have yet to do so, I say: Welcome! Please come and work with us! It may be hard, but it is so very worth it!

Let us continue to participate across North America and across the globe, to the full extent of our abilities, to increase awareness of our communities so we can shape our world! Let us work together with each other - across ages, genders, cultures, cities and countries - to foster greater *hamazori* among each other. Let this be a way of life, rather than a means to an end!

We want our community members, especially our children and grandchildren, to be proud of their Zarathushti identity. It shouldn't be a novelty or something you hide, so your friends are not puzzled. Building a proud and comfortable identity is vital in giving our children strong roots. It motivates them to adhere to our heritage and energizes them to participate and lead our communities into the future.

Let us equip our children with knowledge of their heritage and opportunities for social interaction so that the Zarathushti part of their identity is an integral part of who they are. We would like our children to marry within the community, but when they marry outside the faith, let us welcome their spouses as new members of our community and create all kinds of interfaith dialogue – one on one. In a world where so much is said and done that is unnecessary and unkind, let us lead the way in building bonds that last across religions, for generations!

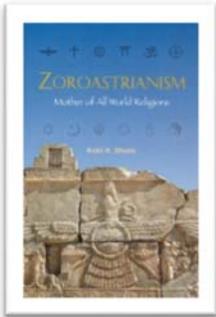
FEZANA's last goal is essential, if the first four are to be pursued. We need funds. Today, we do not have funds to sustain the budget for 2016 or support most of the activities proposed by various committees. The co-chairs of the Funds and Finance Committee have outlined where funds are needed in their detailed Appeal (see page 4). Please donate generously for these activities.



BOOK AWARENESS



This month FIRES is featuring a beautiful book
ZOROASTRIANISM: MOTHER OF ALL WORLD RELIGIONS by Keki R. Bhote, a modest and gentle man who brought recognition to the Zoroastrian community of the Chicago area, the Zoroastrians of North America, and the world in general.



ZOROASTRIANISM: Mother of All World Religions
 by Keki R. Bhote. 461p,
 Bhote Press, 2105

This splendid book is a testament to the scholarship, dedication and passion of Keki Bhote, the evolution of our amazing religion, its seminal influence on the thought of other religions, and its relevance in the 21st century. It is an informative read for those who are learning of Zoroastrianism for the first time and an inspiring read to those who want to probe deeper into its history and tenets.

FIRES is honored by the generous donation of Bhote Press and the Bhote Family.

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

Let us put our money where our mouth is! Let us not stop at *humata* and *hukhata*, but also engage in *huvarashta*! If you believe in what FEZANA does, lend it your financial support!

I know that we can achieve all this and more with Ahura Mazda's blessings. I have faith in our community! Many years ago, I had the opportunity to read the response of a Zoroastrian child to the question: "What is your view about the survival of our Zarathushti faith?" The response has stuck with me after so many years because I find it inspiring.

She replied, "I agree that the faith of Zarathustra will survive, because even young Zoroastrians believe strongly in its tenets and teachings, and we will be able to pass our beliefs and traditions on to our children and grandchildren. I, too, will do this, and try my best to protect my faith by being righteous and following the commandments of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. I will also be kind and generous to others."

This answer is a common sentiment expressed by today's Zarathushti youth. This *is* the wealth of our community. Young people like this leave me with no fear for the future of our community; I know it rests in good hands.

Let us show them the Zarathushti way by our own example.
 What will be your *huvarashta* today?

Sincerely,
 Homi D. Gandhi
 FEZANA President

ZYNA Committee Co-Chairs Appointed

FEZANA is pleased to announce the following Co-chairs have been appointed for Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) committee of FEZANA:



Diana Vania is actively involved in the Zoroastrian community. She has volunteered for the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, represented FEZANA at the United Nations, spoken at various congresses around the world, and took part in the Return to Roots program. She currently works in healthcare consulting in Austin, Texas.



Fareeza Doctor currently lives in Northern California. She previously lived in New Jersey and Pakistan. Prior to moving to the US, Fareeza practiced law in Pakistan. Fareeza is a 2016 LL.M. graduate of University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. Fareeza is married to Dinsha Mistree. They met through Zoroastrian Return To Roots, a FEZANA sponsored program. She looks forward to becoming involved in FEZANA.



Vahbiz Karanjia is an attorney in Somerset, New Jersey and New York, litigating Consumer Fraud Act and Title Insurance claims. Throughout her education and professional career, Ms. Karanjia has served as a mentor and advisor for youth, and, has been a constant presence in the ZAPANJ community.

FEZANA welcomes this new group of co-chairs who have been actively involved with their respective member associations and/or with FEZANA's youth programs. □



CONNECTIONS

“The Multimedia Yasna” Research Project awarded from the European Research Council (REC)

Professor Almut Hintze, SOAS University of London, has been awarded a ERC grant for a project on the *Yasna* set to begin this October.

<http://s610315157.websiteho.me.co.uk/wordpress/the-multimedia-yasna-research-project-awarded-european-research-council-grant/>

OPPORTUNITIES

Disney Summer of Service Grants for Youth (5-18)

Deadline: September 30

Young change makers who have ideas or projects that could make their neighborhoods healthier, greener, and stronger can receive \$500 to gather their friends and bring their creative visions to life. Youth, ages 5-18, in the U.S. are eligible to apply for Disney Summer of Service grants by submitting service project ideas. Hundreds of youth-led service projects will be selected and \$500 grants will be awarded to each winner's sponsoring organization to assist with the implementation of the project. Select grantees will have a chance to be recognized by Disney|ABC Television Group or their local ABC affiliate.
www.YSA.org/Belnspired

Appeal for Donations to FEZANA's General Fund

Ratan Mistry and Nawaz Merchant, Co-Chairs – FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee



Dear Fellow Zarathushtis and Friends,

Many people do not know what FEZANA's General Fund is used for. As co-chairs of the FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee, we would like to shed light on some of the activities of the General Fund, and invite you to donate, and support its activities. You can donate securely online to the category of your choice at <https://fezana.org/funds/generalfunds/>.



FEZANA's General Fund supports:

- **Academic Scholarships** – Scholarships are given to deserving candidates based on merit and need. In addition to scholarships granted through FEZANA's endowment funds, FEZANA also distributes scholarships from its General Fund.
- **The FEZANA Journal** – The official publication of FEZANA is published four times a year to disseminate news and views as well as educational and inspirational articles about the Zarathushti religion, culture and practices as they pertain to Zarathushtis in North America.
- **Youth Oriented Programs** – FEZANA supports youth oriented activities such as sponsoring our youth to attend World Zoroastrian Youth Congresses, The Zoroastrian Games and The Return to Roots program, etc.
- **FIRES (FEZANA Information Research Education System)** – FIRES plays a vital role in preserving our heritage in North America by collecting and preserving books and rare manuscripts, maintaining an on-line catalog of books of FEZANA member Associations, serving the needs of researchers and scholars and working with interfaith and non-Zoroastrian educational groups.
- **Religious Education** – FEZANA supports building the curriculum for Zarathushti Religious education by bringing together teachers of religious classes in different associations, formalizing the curriculum, and producing educational materials. This curriculum is available free of cost on the FEZANA website. We plan to hold teacher training courses to ensure our children get maximum benefit of the best practices that our teachers have honed over the years.
- **Sports** – The General Fund supports sports events for Zarathushti youth in North America. Your donation to the General Fund helps support the Z Games and Soccer every other year. The General Fund also allows FEZANA to provide sports scholarships to Zarathushti youth.
- **Publications** - FEZANA publishes books on topics of interest to the Zarathushti community in North America. These books are reasonably priced in order to be accessible to all who are interested, and to the community at large. Please support the General Fund to help us broaden our reach and publish more valuable and unique books.
- **FEZANA's Administration** – FEZANA General Fund pays for the administration of FEZANA. Although primarily a volunteer driven organization, we still have printing and mailing costs, office supplies, website maintenance and other required organization expenses.



- **Others:** The General Fund also supports other noteworthy FEZANA activities, like membership at the Parliament of World Religions, FEZANA's prestigious NGO in consultative status with the United Nations.

The list can go on and on, but friends, you can see that the "General Fund" is a misnomer! It encompasses education, scholarships, sports, youth oriented programs, publications, the *FEZANA Journal*, FIRES, and many other causes.

Please support whichever category resonates with you, and actively further the cause or causes you are passionate about (Education (religious or academic), Sports, Performing Arts, The *FEZANA Journal*, publications, or others). If you would like to be personally involved to drive any cause forward, we welcome your interest as well. Our community's future is built by your willing and collective action.

Your tax deductible donation can be made at <https://fezana.org/funds/generalfunds/> or you can mail your check to the FEZANA Treasurer, at Cherry Hill Post Office Box 3873, 1175 Markress Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034.

Ushta Te (May Happiness Be Unto You)

Mrs Nawaz Merchant and Ratan Mistry

Co-Chairs - FEZANA Funds and Finance Committee

Building Bridges in Houston

Arnavaz Sethna, FIRES/ZAH Library Committee



The Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH), home of FIRES, hosted a continuing education lecture for a group of 30 high school teachers and three interns from the World Affairs Council of Houston. After a quick tour of the Center, the group assembled in the prayer room where Noshir Khumbatta, one of our young mobeds, recited the Atash Niyayesh and performed the boi ceremony. One of the teachers was so impressed with Noshir that he asked him to come talk to the students at his school.

After grabbing some tea and snacks they settled down in the library for a power point presentation by Meheryar Rivetna. Since most of the group already knew about basic Zoroastrian principles, they had asked that the presentation be focused on funeral practices and on the migration of the Parsis from Iran to India. The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session. The event, which was slated to last for 90 minutes, ran to two and a half hours. As they left we handed out a flyer with information on the ZAH, the FEZANA pamphlet on Zoroastrians and FIRES magnets with its website. [PHOTO BY YASMIN PAVRI] □

Learn and Teach

Zoroastrian Liturgical ceremonies

**Books are now available on Understanding and Practice of
Jashan, Navjote and Wedding, Obsequies,
and Concise Naavar Ceremonies**

For more information

In USA: Ervad Adi Unwalla <nergisadi2 [at] aol.com>

In Canada: Ervad Jehan Bagli <jbagli [at] rogers.com>



SSZ
Society of Scholars of
ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago
proudly hosts

2016 Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) Conference

(Supported by Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, FEZANA)

at

Arbab Rustom Guiv Dar-e-Mehr, 8615 Meadowbrook Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Saturday September 3, 2016

9:00 am Registration and Breakfast

9:30 to 12:30 **Morning Session -- Pre-Nihavand History. Chair Eric Elavia**

Pre-Achaemenian, Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Empires by our next generation speakers: *Sarosh Irani, Khursheed Ichaporia, Persis Driver, Kamal Saher, and Er. Rayomand Ravji*

“Zoroastrianism and Empire in Late Antiquity”

– *Prof. Richard Payne (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)*

12:30 to 1:30 **Luncheon**

“Ancient Sogdiana, a ‘Zoroastrian Stronghold:’ a Modern Overview” – *Kersi Shroff*

1:30 to 5:00 **Afternoon Session -- Post-Nihavand History. Chair Dastoor Kersey Antia**

“Zoroastrian History after the Arab Invasion” – *Dr. Daryoush Jahanian*

“History of the Parsees in the Sub-continent” (via Skype)

– *Dr. Dinyar Patel, University of South Carolina*

“Concept of Friendship in Ancient Iran”

– Keynote address by *Prof. Jamsheed Choksy, Indiana University*

5:00 to 5:30 Arbab Rustom Guiv Dar-e-Mehr 33rd Anniversary Benediction -- *Dastoor Kersey Antia*

5:30 pm Networking with hors-d’oeuvres and drinks.

Sunday September 4, 2016

9:00 to 12:00 Visit to Oriental Institute, Chicago

12:30 pm Farvardian Jashan followed by lunch at the Dar-e-Mehr hosted by Katy and Kersi Bhathena and Dinaz and Ken Weber.

The *Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ)* is an initiative to promote study and scholarship of the religion of Zarathushtra. The mission of the Society is to revive the tradition of scholarship within our community and to promote interaction among academicians, theologians (priests), educationists, lay scholars and practitioners of Zoroastrianism, especially our Next-Generation.

All community members are invited and encouraged to participate.

Registration. Suggested donation is \$10. Breakfast, lunch and tea will be provided. **Please RSVP by August 25, 2016** to Dinaz Weber (kenanddina@yahoo.com) or Roshan Rivetna (RRRivetna@aol.com). For program information contact Rohinton Rivetna (Rivetna@aol.com) or Rayomand Ravji (rayomand.ravji@gmail.com). Visit www.s-s-z.org.