

# FEZANA *bulletin*

November 30, 2012 / VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 17



## UPCOMING DATES

Oct 25 - Dec 20, 2012

*EXHIBITION: Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India;*  
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge MA.  
<http://www.ves.fas.harvard.edu/parsis.html>

December 2, 2012

*North American Tele-Religious Class: Zoroastrian Core Beliefs;* contact Erv Soli Dastur [dastur@comcast.net](mailto:dastur@comcast.net)

Jan 4-5, 2013

*World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce Annual General Body Meeting.* Singapore.  
[www.wzcc.net](http://www.wzcc.net)

Jan 7-9, 2013

*Pravasi Bharatiya Divas;* Cochin, Kerala, India.  
<http://www.oifc.in/Resources/News/11th-Pravasi-Bharatiya-Divas-to-be-held-in-Cochin>

January 13-15, 2013

*Celebrating a Treasure: 140 Years at the First Dastoor Meherjirana Library, Navsari.* A UNESCO Parzor-Meherjirana Initiative.  
<http://www.meherjiranalibrary.com/conference/>

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](mailto:admin@fezana.org)

Oct 9 - Dec 14, 2013

*The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination.* Exhibition at the Brunei Gallery, London, U.K.  
[www.theeverlastingflame.com](http://www.theeverlastingflame.com)

## Houston Celebrates FEZANA's 25th



On Saturday, October 27, 2012, the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) celebrated FEZANA's 25th anniversary in a memorable way. It was an occasion for ZAH to reminisce about its role as a founding member of FEZANA and to look forward to our continued partnership. FEZANA President Katayun Kapadia and husband Kersi were the honored invitees.

Since its inception in 2003 the ZAH library has held lecture series where scholars are invited to present topics of interest to members. The lecture series has included events that run in conjunction with other FEZANA committees such as FIRES and NAMC and WZCC. Our celebration this year started with talks by two reputed scholars from California.

Dr. Touraj Daryaei, Professor at the University of California, Irvine, spoke on "*The Sasanian Empire and the Creation of a Persianate Identity*". Dr. Darayee covered the history of the Sasanian Empire, from its beginning with Ardashir to its fall during Yazdgerd III. The emphasis was on the cultural and intellectual achievement of the Sasanians and their contribution to world civilization. Their promotion of learning, specifically in body and mind, was the main focus of the discussion.

Dr. Yuhan Vevaina, with a doctorate from Harvard University, teaches a number of courses on ancient Iran and Zoroastrianism at Stanford University. His talk was titled "*Knowledge from the Teachers of old Zoroastrian Theology and Religious Practices in late Antiquity*". Dr. Vevaina fascinated the audience with an understanding of Classical Zoroastrianism as laid out in "The Book of Advice of Zarathushtra". It was evident from the extended question-and-answer session that followed each talk that the audience was engaged and interested.

Later that evening the Gala started out with an entertainment program by ZAH's local talent who put on a *natak* that incorporated FEZANA's 25th anniversary. Orchestrated by Kamalrukh Gandhi and her multi-generational troupe the event was filled with humor, music and dance and was a sheer delight to watch. The evening continued with FEZANA representative Sarosh Collector reflecting upon the major role ZAH has played in FEZANA over the years. Aban Rustomji, chair of FIRES, talked about the future of FIRES as the premier informational resource for Zoroastrian Studies in North America. FEZANA's President Katayun Kapadia presented the organization's history, activities and her vision for the future. She also presented two FEZANA academic scholarship awards won by Houstonians to Firoozeh Roointon and Nikita Engineer. A scrumptious dinner catered by ZAH's very own Naushad Mehta & Rustom Setna was a fitting end to the day's events.

The next day, Sunday October 28, featured an informal roundtable discussion with the two scholars in the morning. It was heartening to see our youth turn up and participate in the discussion that covered a wide range of topics – from



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

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NGO in consultative status  
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and Social Council of the  
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FEZANA INFO

translations of the Gathas, to Evolution / Creationism, and the study of Zoroastrianism in high schools.

**NEW BOOK added to FIRES at ZAH Library**

The ZAH Library has acquired a truly remarkable book. An oversized book, suitable for any coffee table, is the just published: "*ASHAVANS: A Legacy of Leadership*", by Meher Bhesania. The book profiles 101 outstanding Zoroastrians worldwide who have excelled and left their mark on society in so many different fields. The rich diversity of their talents is truly awe-inspiring and inspirational. Each person is given a 2-page spread with a color photograph, a short paragraph at the start, a description of their accomplishments, and a Career Trajectory at the end. Within its covers are to be found such luminaries as Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, Adi and Nadir Godrej, Chief Justice Sarosh Kapadia, singer Penaz Masani, Dr. Roda Patel, Ratan Tata, Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw, and ZAH's own Bapsi Sidhwa. You will recognize many familiar names and faces – some you will be delighted to find, others you may not quite agree with. But regardless, these are the people in our community who have "left their footprints on the sands of time", and touched our lives in one way or another. □

**A Gift from FEZANA UN-NGO Committee to  
ZAKOI**

[Presented on November 11, 2012]

Dear Bakhtavar and all ZAKOI members,

A Zoroastrian is given freedom of choice; a responsibility of choosing between Good and Evil. By tolerating evil, one does not make good decisions. On the contrary, it permits indirectly evil to spread by not fighting it.

The original Cylinder of Cyrus the Great is housed in the British Museum and a replica of that is housed at the UN, evidencing a symbol of the Achaemenian dynasty of a people who were respectful of the rights of the other, even those vanquished in the battle, to practice their own religion without hindrance.

Advocating for human rights and religious freedom is thus celebrated in our ancient heritage and culture, which is echoed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This replica I am presenting to you today, on behalf of the FEZANA UN-NGO Committee (Afreed Mistry, Behram Pastakia, and myself) is a reflection of our faith in your small but vibrant association that when you have your own center, you will install this replica in your new home with pride. You will carry this to your children's schools, local libraries and public events to share the story of who we are and what we stand for. This will further the vision and mission of the UN.



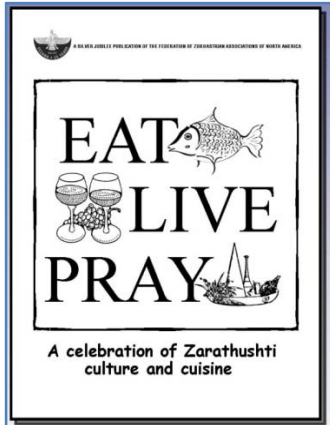
**A replica of the Cylinder of Cyrus  
presented to representatives of  
ZAKOI**

Good Luck and God Bless,  
Homi Gandhi  
United Nations NGO Committee

**Lecture on Cyrus the Great:**

***Kaveh Farrokh's Lecture on Cyrus the Great in Washington DC, Nov 3 2012***  
[http://www.kavehfarrokh.com/achaemenids/farrokh-lecture-of-cyrus-in-  
washington-dc-nov-3-2012/](http://www.kavehfarrokh.com/achaemenids/farrokh-lecture-of-cyrus-in-washington-dc-nov-3-2012/)

Kaveh Farrokh is a member of the University of British Columbia's Continuing Studies Division where he has been noted by the university as being "a leading authority in the history of Persia". He is also the Head of Department of Traditions & Cultural History.



### **Eat, Live, Pray: A Celebration of Zarathushti Culture and Cuisine**

**A Silver Jubilee  
Publication of FEZANA  
Compiled by Farishta  
Dinshaw**

This fall, FEZANA will launch a commemorative publication to mark its Silver Jubilee. This publication will be available for downloading, free of cost, on the FEZANA website, [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).

This cookbook will include time-honoured Parsi and Persian recipes contributed by FEZANA Journal readers and cultural aspects of Zarathushti cuisine dating back 3000 years.

## **Co-Chair Appointed for Zoroastrian Youth Without Borders (ZYWB)**



**Tanya Bharda** from Mississauga, Ontario has been appointed as Co-Chairperson for the FEZANA Zoroastrian Youth Without Borders (ZYWB) Committee.

Currently, Tanya is pursuing an undergraduate degree in Social Sciences at the University of Toronto in Mississauga. In 2011, Tanya pursued a 4 month assignment to travel to India to work with various Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and in 2012, she returned to India to continue her work in social service with various NGOs.

In March 2012, Tanya participated on a panel for UN Women and shared her experiences in India at the United Nations Head Quarters in New York City.

We welcome Tanya to the FEZANA family and look forward to her contributions on the ZYWB committee. □

## **Zarathushtis Step Up to Help the Homeless**

UPDATE BY BEHNAZ MISTRY

On November 4, 2012 the ZAMWI Avesta class kids were all excited. This was our very first fund raiser involving the kids and their families. We were participating in the annual Help the Homeless Program to benefit *Bethesda Cares*. We decided to do Yoga for the Homeless. Shahrzad Ratestari was kind enough to lead the class for this great cause.



All of us got together in the cafeteria of Tilden Middle School. After a talk from a Board member from *Bethesda Cares*, the yoga class started. Shahrzad Ratesari got both kids and adults involved and made yoga fun for everyone. The event collected \$810 for the homeless.

Great job, Zarathushtis! You came through to help others who are less fortunate than yourselves. We are proud of our community that is generous even at a time when we are working so hard to collect funds for our own Center in Maryland. □

## **Young Zarathushti Professionals Meet**

BEHROSE TARAPOREWALLA, CHAIR, ZYNA



From left to right-- Khush Italia, Tina Kermani, Kurush Italia, Dr. Parmis Khatibi, Dr. Mark Sethna, Dr. Aimee Taraporewalla

On October 21, 2012 Zarathushtis between the ages of 25-42 gathered together for a mixer in Laguna Niguel hosted by Parmis Khatibi, Nikan Khatibi, and Behrose Taraporewalla. With so many young Zoroastrians living in Southern California, the hosts felt it would be lovely to bring everyone together to see old friends and make new ones. The get together was open to all, but the majority of professionals represented California Zoroastrian Center and Zoroastrian Association of California. The casual get together attracted approximately 45 individuals where Parsi and Irani youth were able to mingle, network, and exchange dialogue about their culture and religion openly. The event was enjoyed by all and we all hope to gather together in the near future. □





## Let Yourself Be Counted

*Dear Friends of FEZANA,*

As we approach the end of 2012, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your unstinting support of FEZANA.

We Zarathushtis are small in number, but we are not afraid to think big. We had our big day when our forefathers were the movers and shakers in Bombay and Karachi. Even today, individual Parsis are at the forefront of the legal and business arenas in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Prominent Parsis are recognized every year for their achievements in medicine, arts and business. And Zarathushtis are holding their own in Iran under unprecedented odds. Those who know us respect us and admire our openness and forward-thinking. Not bad.

But still, even in India, too few know about the Zoroastrian religion and Zarathushtis. News articles lament our imminent extinction. The government of India has offered free fertility treatments to keep Parsis from dying out!

The path we have chosen in North America: social and communal gatherings open to all, religious education for adults and children, continued encouragement of higher education, frequent and open interchange of ideas on the Internet, and Youth and Adult Congresses and sports meets, is serving us well and preparing our next generations to proudly hoist our banner even higher. We have a huge cadre of volunteers who are working hard to ensure that our religious community continues to thrive and prosper. We thank Ahura Mazda for our many blessings.

But whenever there is any discussion about major religions in North America, Zoroastrians are hardly ever mentioned. We participate in interfaith gatherings and UN conferences. We write letters to newspapers and publications to correct misstatements and to remind them that we do exist.

We have a dilemma; we want to be an integral part of the multi-cultural environment in which we live. But we do not want to be invisible. Most of all, we *want to be counted*.

How can we do that? By doing what we do best.

We believe in good deeds. We practice charity. We are always ready to help our fellow-men. We do this very well individually and through the FEZANA funds and fundraising for hospitals and poor co-religionists in India. We have gone beyond just helping Zarathushtis. We sent funds for earthquake relief in Pakistan and Bam, Iran, and for tsunami victims in Chennai. We donate to charities at our workplaces. Our youth and adults participate in Habitat for Humanity, food drives, walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons and marathons and collect eyeglasses and shoes for the needy. We get the benefit of a tax deduction as a bonus.

But the reality is that when an individual makes a donation, it usually does not make Zarathushtis more visible.

Maybe that is as it should be.

Zarathushtis do get more visibility and recognition when we pool our resources and let FEZANA make the donations, because FEZANA is known and registered as a Zoroastrian organization. The individual still gets a charitable deduction due to the donation to FEZANA.

The message is quite clear. When you donate to any FEZANA fund before the end of the year, you will achieve three objectives:



1. Do a good deed,
2. Help Zarathushtis become more visible, and
3. Get a tax deduction.

Donations can be made using a credit card on the FEZANA website [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org), or by sending a check to: **Ratan Mistry, FEZANA Treasurer, 1258 Water Lily Way, San Jose, CA 95129**. FEZANA also accepts donations of stocks, which will allow the donor to claim a deduction based on their full appreciated values.

*Help Zarathushtis be counted. Help FEZANA grow!*

Best thoughts, words and deeds,  
And Best Wishes for the Holiday Season and 2013.

*Katayun Kapadia*  
FEZANA President

*Rustom Kerala, Jerry Kheradi and Zubin Bagwadia*  
FEZANA Funds & Finance Committee

#### ZARATHUSHTIS CONNECTING:

#### Zoroastrian Avesta Performers

<http://ifcmw.blogspot.com/2012/11/ifc-concert-preview-meet-zoroastrian.html>

## Appeal for Hurricane Sandy Victims

On Monday, October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy came ashore and upended lives on the Eastern seaboard. The entire east coast from North Carolina to Maine, has suffered a major blow. Thousands of homes, schools, hospitals, public libraries and businesses have suffered significant damages due to the raging waters. This is tragedy with losses estimated at above \$25 billion.

FEZANA would like to help Zarathushti families affected by this storm. Our relief efforts are being channeled through the local Anjumans in the New York/New Jersey area.

Previously, with your generous support, the FEZANA Critical Assistance team has been able to viably assist many families and individuals out of difficult circumstances.

If you would like to help, please donate:

1. Online at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) to FEZANA Disaster Relief Fund;
2. By check, made out to FEZANA, with the memo: HURRICANE SANDY.

Checks to be mailed to:

Ratan Mistry, FEZANA Treasurer  
1258 Water Lily Way  
San Jose, CA 95129

Your donation will go towards this noble cause.

For further information, contact:

Hosi Mehta Tel: +1-630-833-6923 [hosimehta@aol.com](mailto:hosimehta@aol.com)

Houtoxi Contractor Tel: +1-412-445-1533 [huty.contractor@gmail.com](mailto:huty.contractor@gmail.com)

Freyaz Shroff: [freycz@kurniv.com](mailto:freycz@kurniv.com)

Thank You for your continued support and generosity! ☐