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OFFICE 713-963-4229

SUNDAY SCHOOL

PLACE: ZHCC
8787 W. Airport Blvd.
Houston, TX 77071
Tel: 713-270-9339

TIME: Different timings for each group

DATE: April 9, 2023

Children's Session: The Sunday School session starts at **11:00 a.m. in-person and by Zoom**

Middle Group: The Sunday School session at **11:00 a.m. – in-person & by Zoom**



Youth Group: The Sunday School session at 10:00 a.m. **In person**



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sunday, April 9, 2023 – Carnival after Sunday School**
- Friday, April 21, 2023 – WZCC**
- Friday, May 12, 2023 – WZCC/Library Event**
- Sunday, June 4, 2023 - Maidhyarem Ghambar**
- Friday, Saturday & Sunday – Z-Camp and NAMC AGM - June 23-25, 2023**
- Saturday, July 22, 2023 – Youth Group Fund Raiser**

REPORT

LIBRARY REPORT

By: Jangoo Mistry

Another Successful Library Event - “Memories We Carry”

On Friday evening, March 24, Sharmeen Mehri, a Zoroastrian from Karachi, Pakistan, gave her talk to an eager standing-room-only crowd packed in the Purvez Rustomji Room.

Sharmeen Mehri is currently working on her Ph.D. in the English department at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Sharmeen was an Archival Creators Fellow for the South Asian American Digital Archive in 2021-2022. (SAADA, as it’s commonly known, is collecting and digitally archiving life stories of South Asian Americans in the U.S.). She talked about her project "Memories We Carry," an oral history exhibit, which is now part of the SAADA collection of about 500 life stories. (South Asia encompasses about 2 billion people in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka). Sharmeen continues to collect interviews and add to the collection. She shared with us insights from the project and the value of preserving the experiences of Zoroastrian migrants to the United States like us.

As part of her project, Sharmeen has so far interviewed twelve people: four from New York, three from California, two from Texas, two from Virginia, and one from New Jersey. The people she interviewed migrated from Karachi, Mumbai, New Delhi, and Chennai.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tamboli, Aderbad – Chairman
Master, Percy – Secretary
Billimoria, Farokh – Treasurer

Anklesaria, Zia – Member
Gagrat, Nikita – Member
Khumbatta, Kershaw – Member
Sethna, Fiona – Member

Sarkari, Nazanin – FEZANA Rep

OUR ERVADS (PRIESTS)

Boomla, Noozar
Buchia, Kyrus
Dastur, Barjor M
Dastur, Darius B
Desai, Farrokh
Firozgary, Bahrom
Gonda, Pervez
Kanga, Neville
Katrak, Rayomand
Katrak, Vispi
Khumbatta, Noshir
Kotwal, Zubin
Masani, Dara
Nariman, Khushrav
Pavri, Shapur
Sanjana, Bahmanshah
Sanjana, Kurush
Sidhwa, Kayomarz
Sidhwa, Maneck
Sidhwa, Yazad
Unwalla, Peshotan
Vimadalal, Freyaan
Vimadalal, Khushroo

=====

SHARMEEN MEHRI



Michael Frisch, in his “A Shared Authority”, provides a very comprehensive definition of Oral History:

“Oral History emerges as a powerful tool for discovering ... historical memory - how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience how the past becomes part of the present”

One of the persons she interviewed, Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, was a Karachi resident before moving to America and recorded vivid memories of her childhood days in Pakistan and the impact political events like partition made on her. Sharmeen also sat down and took the opportunity to ask questions of her mother when she was with her. Questions like, what and whom did you leave behind and what do you miss? How do you describe your assimilation into the American culture? What does it mean for you to be a Zoroastrian in the U.S.?

Whereas the ZAH Library’s Oral History Project has mainly focused on recorded interviews, Sharmeen has also included in her archive photographs of family ancestors, recipes handed down through generations to the interviewee, and some pictures of personal possessions that were handed down to the person. She urged the listeners to sit down and have chats with people who matter in their lives.

Sharmeen talked about the importance to first-generation immigrants of having Zoroastrian Associations with their ceremonies and rituals, and sometimes a physical space to mingle with other Zoroastrians. Sadly, this opportunity is not readily available to those outside of the big cities, or states like California, New York, and Texas.

That Sharmeen struck a chord with the audience was obvious. The attendees listened with interest and, at the end of her talk, asked many questions that continued further discussions. For example, Persis Behramsha, related how her daughter had called her up and asked her parents to record their childhood days and their immigration experience. She poignantly remarked, “Our kids *want* to know!”.

Coinciding with the launch of the second phase of our Oral History project, this talk complemented very nicely the ongoing Oral History project that the ZAH Library started several years ago. Our effort has been very successful with over 50 oral histories of first-generation Zoroastrians in our community, recorded and preserved for posterity. Every interview has been recorded and cataloged into the new digital Zoroastrian Archive at Rice University in Houston that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere in the world. After the presentation, some members were enthused to volunteer their life stories for our collection. If you still haven’t recorded your life story but would like to do so, feel free to contact Aban Rustomji (aban@coatingindustries.com) or Jangoo Mistry (jbmistry@gmail.com).

ATASH KADEH NEWS

By: Persis Behramsha

Daylight Saving time is here.....

Navroze was celebrated.....

4th Anniversary of the Atash Kadeh was celebrated.....

What a month it has been !!!!!

ATASH KADEH CLEANING



DIVA LIT KEBLA



ATASH KADEH FOURTH ANNIVERSARY JASHAN



AVA YAZAD PARABH



Navroze welcomes Spring and renewal of nature. Preparations for Navroze began weeks earlier. The entire Kebla was thoroughly detailed by our very own Mobeds Khushrav Nariman, Zubin Kotwal, Freyaan Vimadalal, Neville Kanga, Bahrom Firozgary and Rayomand Katrak, with special care from our Mobed Pervez Gonda.

Navroze was celebrated with a Grand Jashan at the Atash Kadeh which was brimming with joyous folks. The building was adorned with flowers and garlands, the Afarganyu looked beautiful with its own Rose Garland, and Divas lit the ledge of the Kebla area. What a gorgeous sight. It was wonderful to have Mobeds Bahrom Firozgary, Neville Kanga, Khushrav Nariman, Bahmanshah Sanjana, and Khushroo Vimadalal join our Atash Kadeh Mobeds Pervez Gonda and Maneck Sidhwa.

The Jashan was followed by a traditional Humbandagi conducted by Arnavaz Sethna. Young Jidina Mory spoke about what Navroze meant to her. We had plenty of Sev, Dahi, Ravo, and Savory Snacks to share after the Jashan, thanks to our generous donors - Nargis Cooper, Mahrukh Deputy, Farida Divecha, Nazneen Khumbatta, Yasmin Medhora, Dilnaz Mory and Manek Nariman. Thanks to all our hardworking volunteers who helped serve food and clean up after the Jashan - Naozer Behramsha, Roshan & Percy Behramsha, Faredun Bhader, Huty Billimoria, Nargis Cooper, Mahrukh Deputy, Neville Divecha, Zarina Elavia, Dilnaz Mory, Manek Nariman, Nazanin Sarkari, Pervin Sidhwa, Hoshang Subawalla, and many more.

To our dedicated Tanaaz and Edul Chikhliwala, we are always grateful for your diligence in keeping our Atash Kadeh spotless; Mahrukh Deputy you do so much quietly - it does not go unnoticed ! Thank you.

Two days after Navroze we celebrated the Avan Yazad Parabh, once again very generously sponsored by several families - Ruby & Bejun Anklesaria, Sam Bhadha, Nargis & Homi Cooper, Tehmi & Firdaus Dastoor, Mahrukh & Rohintan Deputy, Roshan & Yezdi Engineer, Yasmin & Rustom Engineer, Aban & Homi Erani, Zenobia & Jal Guzder, Dilshad & Bomi Hormazdi, Shireen & Jehanbux Mehta, Arnaz & Jehangir Mistry, and Shirin & Bahadur Sarkari. There were enough Daar Ni Poris and snacks to go around - suffice it to say, the Parabh was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We will be hosting the NAMC AGM this summer and plan to have a series of lectures. Please be on the lookout for more details.

Enjoy the Spring time.

Khushrav Nariman (Chairperson)
Feroze Bhandara
Shernaz Bhandara
Rohintan Deputy
Persis Behramsha

**ZAH YOUTH MANNED TABLE
AT ASIA SOCIETY**



**ZAH AGM
Khursheed Dastur – Secretary**



**ZAH AGM
Percy Katak – Giving Report**



YOUTH GROUP REPORT

By: Roshni Chikhliwala

In March, the youth group sent members to support Vehishta Auntie at Asia Society. We had a couple youth members every day at the event with an exceptionally good turn out on Friday, March 17th. We had members of the youth group manning various tables during the event! Thank you to Vehishta Auntie for leading such an amazing celebration of Nowruz at Asia Society!

In the following months we will be participating in the carnival and more information will be shared in the next Manashni regarding carnival!

The youth group will also be hosting another fundraiser on July 22nd, 2023! Hope to see you there!

MISCELLANEOUS

ZAH AGM 2023

Reported By – Past ZAH EC (2022-23)

The ZAH Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 19th March 2023.

The ZAH Executive Committee – EC (past and present) sincerely thanks all the volunteers for their help with organizing the ZAH AGM 2023 - Percy Behramsha for setting up and updating the AGM webpage; Aban Chhor, Dilnaz Mory, Jasmin Katak, Yasmin Medhora, Tanaaz Chikhliwala, Arzin Italia, Jasmine Mistry, Zia Anklesaria, Natalya Katak, Rayomand Katak, Jidina Mory, Darius B Dastur for helping with the food arrangements, Hall set-up and coordination; Election Officers – Raymie Daroga, Yasmin Medhora, Zubin Mory for managing the election for the EC Chairperson open position and the ballots for the 2 proposals (all in all 800+ ballot responses!) – thank you for a very seamless and well-organized voting process; Nozer Buchia for moderating the AGM, keeping us all on track and entertained; Sheroy Haveliwala for managing the Audio/visuals; Raymie Daroga for helping design the ballot; Natalya and Rayomand Katak for being the AGM ‘mic runners’, thereby ensuring that everyone’s voice was heard; Arnavaz Sethna for supporting the EC with their numerous process and bylaws related questions and for helping us follow the right process for the AGM; our finance and accounting team - Jasmin Katak, Arnavaz Sethna, Lyla Daroga for helping our treasurer keep the financials up to date and for ensuring that all the financials are in order prior to AGM; Kayo Sidhwa for generating the membership list reports; Noshir Bhatena, Khursheed Hormuzdi, Nazanin Sarkari, Jasmin Katak for helping with the AGM Front Desk Registrations.

The EC Chair Percy Katak kicked off the AGM. He thanked all the volunteers who have helped with the AGM as well as those who have volunteered and supported our community through the year, be that as individuals or through their Sub Committee affiliations. You can read the Chairperson report on the AGM website (refer link at the end of this article).

**ZAH AGM
Kershaw Khumbatta
Presenting Treasurer's Report**



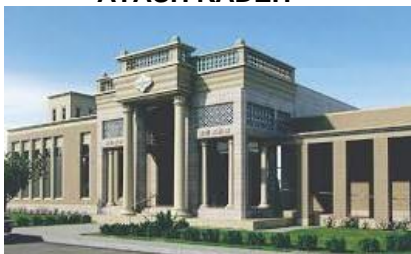
**ZAH AGM
Members**



ZHCC



ATASH KADEH



The Treasurer's report was presented by Kershaw Khumbatta, after which the proposals for Membership Rate increase was presented by Percy Katrak and the proposal for ZAH Bylaws updates were presented by Jasmine Mistry.

The 2 candidates (Jasmine Mistry and Aderbad Tamboli) gave their speeches explaining why they are interested in serving the community as EC Chairperson.

The unopposed candidates for - ZAH EC: Zia Anklesaria, Fiona Setna, Percy Master and for Atash Kadeh Committee: Rohintan Deputy – said a few words to introduce themselves to the community.

All the subcommittees presented their highlights for the year and answered questions from the audience.

The election and Proposal results were announced by the ZAH EC Chair (2022-23) Percy Katrak:

- The community voted in favor of the Membership rate increase proposal and the Bylaws update proposal by over 80% majority
- The community elected the new EC Chairperson as Aderbad Tamboli

On behalf of the EC, the outgoing ZAH EC Chairperson Percy Katrak was thanked by Khursheed B Dastur for his service and leadership to the community as EC chair for the past year.

Percy Katrak concluded the meeting by thanking the outgoing EC members and welcoming the new EC and AK Committee members for 2023.

Your new ZAH Executive Committee (EC) consists of:

- Aderbad Tamboli (Chair),
- Farokh Billimoria (Treasurer),
- Percy Master (Secretary),
- Kershaw Khumbatta, (Member)
- Nikita Gagrat (Member)
- Zia Anklesaria (Member)
- Fiona Setna (Member)
- Nazanin Sarkari (FEZANA representative).

Your new Atash Kadeh Committee (AK) consists of:

- Khushrav Nariman (Chair)
- Feroze Bhandara
- Shernaz Bhandara
- Persis Behramsha
- Rohintan Deputy.

Click on this link <https://zah.org/events/zah-annual-general-meeting-2023/> to browse through all the great work that our committees have done in the past year as well as the proposals that were approved by the ZAH Community at the ZAH AGM 2023.

TEHEMTON MIRZA – NAMC



**YOUTH
AT DALLAS**



**ZAH Z-CAMP AND NAMC
JOIN HANDS**



PAST NAMC AGM IN NEW YORK



OUR ERVADS WITH VADA DASTURJI



ZAH ATASH KADEH/NAMC

By: Khushrav Nariman

ZAH/Atash Kadeh will be hosting the NAMC (North American Mobed Council) for their AGM on Saturday, June 24 at the Atash Kadeh. In conjunction with the Z-Camp, there will also be a lunch and dinner on that day. To take advantage of the assembled Mobeds, we have also planned a series of lectures (4-5 45 min sessions) on Sunday, June 25, with light lunch. Please save the dates.

11TH ANNUAL ZAH Z-CAMP

By: ZAH Z-Camp 2023 Team

We are very excited to announce the dates for our 11th annual ZAH Z-Camp. We will be hosting the camp from June 23rd to 25th, 2023 so please mark your calendars and save the dates.

The camp will start on Friday, June 23rd at 7pm, for all our out-of-town attendees, ZAH mentors, Youth Group members and all 18+ participants. On Saturday, June 24th at 10am, we will welcome all the Middle group and Kiddie group campers.

Please stay tuned for further details and we are so excited for y'all to join us for this much awaited annual event!

ZAH Z-CAMP 2023 TEAM AND ATASH KADEH COMMITTEE JOIN HANDS FOR AN EXCITING DOUBLE HEADER WEEKEND AT ZAH – JUNE 23RD TO 25TH

The ZAH Atash Kadeh Committee (assisted by FEZANA) has been in discussions with North American Mobed Council (NAMC) since last year and for the first time made it possible for NAMC to conduct their Annual General meeting at the ZAH Atash Kadeh during the same weekend as our annual Z-Camp 2023. We believe, this will give our young adults (including Mobeds) some exposure and they will also be able to participate in some lectures that NAMC envision holding the next day.

The Z-Camp organizers will work together with the Atash Kadeh Committee and provide logistical assistance particularly with meals and hold a combined Gala dinner on Saturday June 24th at 7:30 pm so please add this to your calendars. The summary of the TENTATIVE program including dates are as follows:

June 23rd

- Z-Camp will begin around 7 pm for over 14 (Youth Group, Mentors and out of towners) and will include a sleepover
AK Committee will welcome the NAMC attendees

June 24th

- NAMC AGM 2023 will begin in the Atash Kadeh (timings will be announced later) as an all-day affair until 5 pm or until finished for the day
Z-Camp will begin for all participants at 9 am with breakfast with a sharp 10 am start.

**ATASH KADEH
BOYE**



**ATASH KADEH
FLOWERS IN BLOOM**



WETAKE WATER FOR GRANTED!!!



DON'T LET WATER DRIP



- Z-Camp team and AK Committee will host a Gala Dinner for the NAMC AGM attendees along with the ZAH Community starting at 7.30 pm
- NAMC will hold a session on Boye for all present (adults and kids) after dinner, once the Z-Camp presentations finish as a precursor to our Midnight Boye at 12 am at the AK
- A midnight Ushahin Gah Boye to be performed by our Young Ervads together with NAMC attendees

June 25th

- Z-Camp will begin as usual per the program at around 8 am with breakfast
- NAMC will conduct some lectures in the Purvez Rustomji room beginning around 10 am to 1 pm (timings, topics and duration will be confirmed later by the AK Committee)
- NAMC Lecture Attendees will be provided Lunch (RSVP will be required)
- Plan to finish both events by 3 pm on Sunday, June 25th

The Z-Camp Team will send out the registration details soon. If anyone, between the ages of 22–28 yrs. wish to volunteer for the Z-camp please get in touch with Kayo Sidhwa as soon as possible.

We would request all to please keep this weekend free and encourage others to do the same to show our support in large numbers as this is the first time ZAH is hosting the NAMC along with a Gala Dinner on Saturday, June 24th and some interesting lectures on Sunday, June 25th. The AK Committee will keep all abreast of the NAMC Lectures and RSVP details as they materialize.

MOMENTUM GROWS AS THE WORLD UNITES

FEZANA sent a team to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City for the UN 2023 Water Conference from March 22-24, 2023.

Cyrus Irani Ph. D. from Houston, Texas was on this team. Some 10,000 participants gathered at UN Headquarters and online from 22 to 24 March 2023, to urgently scale up action to address the water crisis and ensure equitable access to water for all.

Perhaps the simplest solution is to use less water. Los Angeles has grown by a million people since the 1970s, but water usage is still the same. Water meters and careful pricing help discourage waste, while fixing aging infrastructure will keep more water in the system—a water mains break in the U.S. approximately every two minutes. In the agriculture sector, reducing irrigation by as little as two percent could avert shortages in one-third of the affected basins; farmers could save water by using drip irrigation, soil moisture sensors, and planting more drought-resistant crops. And every American can save more water at home in multiple ways, from taking shorter showers to not rinsing dishes under a running faucet before loading them into a dishwasher, a practice that wastes around 20 gallons of water for each load. These are such small actions, but taken by many, they could amount to the biggest water savings—and we're going to need every drop.

Zoroastrians Interested in participation with the FEZANA team at the UN can contact Co-Chairs: Afreed Mistry (Afreed@fezana.org) and Behram Pastakia (Behram@fezana.org)

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS
Roshni Chikhliwala



Zal Italia



Diana Sabawala



THE 2022 ZAH LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SET UP BY THE ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON

The congress2000legacy Award was established as a result of the funds that ensued from the success of ZAH's World Zoroastrian Congress 2000. By supporting the next generation of our community's young minds we pay tribute to the success of ZAH and the 2000 Congress!

Each year, the congress 2000 legacy Award will recognize young Zoroastrian students who are studying at or about to enter the University at all levels and who have achieved excellence in their scholastic studies, in extra-curricular activities and who have made substantial contribution to Zarathushti community affairs.

In November 2007 ZAH lost one of their talented youth members Cyrus Rohinton Desai to cancer. The Desai family generously contributes to one award every year SINCE 2007 and that Legacy Award is named the CYRUS ROHINTON DESAI AWARD and is given to a youth going to college for the FIRST YEAR, because all that Cyrus, a brilliant student, wanted was to attend a college, even if it was for a day. Unfortunately, he did not make it.

THE 2023 WINNERS FOR THE ZAH CONGRESS2000LEGACY AWARDS ARE

ROSHNI CHIKHLIWALA
THE ZAH LEGACY AWARD

ZAL ITALIA
THE ZAH LEGACY AWARD

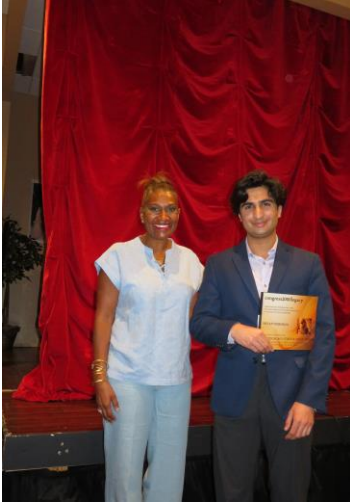
DIANA SABAWALLA
THE ZAH LEGACY AWARD

FREYAAN VIMADALAL
THE ZAH CYRUS R. DESAI AWARD

The awards & a cash grant were presented at our ZAH Navroz function by Houston's Council Member Letitia Plummer. Ms. Plummer's lineage is of Zoroastrian origins beginning with her maternal grandfather, Framroze Behramji Karai, who was from Mumbai, India. He was an avid traveler and reader. He spent some time in Zanzibar, started a family and then moved with his family to Houston.

The congress2000legacy committee:
Homi Davier
Vispi Sagar
Farzad Sunavala
Darius Tamboli
Nerius Mehta

Cyrus Desai Scholarship Winner



MNE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS Roshni Chikhliwala



FEZANA SCHOLARSHIP



**TWO NEW
ADDITIONS TO
TEAM LEGACY
DARIUS TAMBOLI
NERIUS MEHTA**

MNE SCHOLARSHIP

By: Yasmin Pavri

The MNE Scholarship was set up by Mike Engineer in memory of his beloved parents, Nadirshaw and Homai Engineer, and his grandparents. The Scholarship aims to encourage and identify achievers in the Zoroastrian community. The scholarship was approved by the ZAH Executive Committee in 2016 and the first scholarships were given out in 2017.

In 2023, the MNE Scholarship was awarded to two outstanding students and members of the community:

- Roshni Chikhliwala received a scholarship of \$3,500
- Rhea Engineer was awarded \$2,000

We congratulate the winners and wish them the very best in all their future endeavors.

FEZANA Scholarships Announced Call for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JULY 15, 2023

Did you know that FEZANA gives out more than \$80,000 in scholarships every year? FEZANA has scholarships for undergraduates, graduates, performing / creative arts, culinary arts, and fine arts. The 2023 scholarship application window is now open. Applications for all scholarships and awards must be received by **July 15, 2023**. To find more information and to apply: <https://fezana.org/scholarships/>

FEZANA's Scholarship Program is funded by generous contributions from our members. If you would like to make a donation, please go here: <https://fezana.org/scholarships/donate/>

ASIA SOCIETY – NOWRUZ FESTIVITY



CHILDREN LISTENING TO STORY



CHILDREN DOING ARTWORK



SENIORS – LETS GO TO ASIA SOCIETY



DANCE FROM SHANG DONG PROV OF CHINA



Global Unity through Nowruz

Festivities Sponsored by

Zoroastrian Association of Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

by: Yasmin Medhora & Vehishta Kaikobad

Spring was heralded at Asia Society Texas Center (ASTC) with a week-long celebration of Nowruz organized by Vehishta Kaikobad and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH). This memorable event came to fruition after a yearlong negotiation with ASTC who graciously allotted the entire spring break week of March 14-17 to ZAH. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, the former ZAH Executive Committee and the devoted support of our volunteers, this free event with its all-encompassing theme, "Global Unity through Nowruz" was a phenomenal success drawing a citywide crowd of almost 1800 attendees. With ZAH as the Presenting Sponsor, other communities who also celebrate Nowruz were invited to collaborate. Participating cultural organizations included the Iranian Cultural foundation (ICF), Baha'i and Ismaili Council for Southwestern USA.

The morning activities for young children and families included puppet stories from the Shahnameh, creating Simurgh bird collage, clay butterflies, egg decorating, floral bouquets and haft seen table activities for young children. Interactive Persian dances led by Mahtab Dastur, Shireen Anklesaria & Jidina Mory were greatly enjoyed by all.

The grand finale event commenced on Friday evening. Highlights of the program included an extravagant Haft Seen table by Geety Hormazdiaran, rare Shahnameh display from the ZAH and FIRES library and our onsite artist Edul Chikhiwala who enthralled the audience with his beautiful Shahnameh paintings. The program was officially opened by Aban Rustomji. The entire evening was filled with live Persian music thanks to Behzad Kaighobadi and family.

The program began with a rendition from the gathas followed by stories from the Shahnameh by Kaermerz Dotiwala of ZAH. This was followed by Persian dance from the ICF, scarf/handkerchief dance from the Shan Dong province of China by Dance of Asian American Academy, Afghani dance by the Ismaili Council and spring song sung to the accompaniment of the Ehru by Ms. Teng and the students from the Ed White School. Acknowledgments were also made by the Baha'i community. And last but not the least the Parsis of India represented by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston group led by Yasmin Medhora depicted the many Indian customs and traditions that were adopted by them following their migration from Iran to India between the 7th and 9th century. Finally Natalya H. Katrak and Jidina Mory of ZAH brought the house down with their interactive Bollywood dance choreographed by Arzan Gonda, Director of Rhythm India Company. Additionally the presence of 'Haji Pirooz' of ICF and emcee Zubin Mistry from ZAH made the event very lively. The entire performance proceeded very smoothly thanks to Yasmin Medhora's efficient organizing effort.

Zoroastrian Association of Houston was presented with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition in honor of our service to the community and dedication to promote Persian Heritage and Culture as we observe Nowruz celebration. Additionally an award of recognition was presented by ASTC to Vehishta Kaikobad.

EMCEE – ZUBIN MISTRY



DR. DASTUR M N DHALLA



Houston will proudly be looking forward to more such exceptionally well-organized events in the future. We gratefully acknowledge Asia Society Texas Center and our official photographers Percy Behramsha, Yezdi Engineer, Judy Ann Carlson and Percy Katrak. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the youth and middle group for their enthusiastic participation.

We hereby acknowledge our volunteers: Ariana, Shireen and Zia Anklesaria; Natasha Atashband; Persis and Naozer Behramsha; Roshan & Percy Behramsha; Feroze Bhandara; Ava and Noshir Bhathena; Judy Ann Carlsson; Edul, Tanaaz and Roshni Chikhliwala; Cyrus Desai; Khursheed, Mahtab and Darius Dastur; Lyla Daroga; Farida Divecha; Jamshed Dudha; Kaermerz and Nasha Dotiwala; Yezdi Engineer; Aparna Gupta; Geety Hormazdiaran & family; Behzad Kaighobadi and family; Vehishta Kaikobad; Shahrukh, Kermeen, Natasha and Neville Kanga; Anita Kavina; Natalya H. Katrak; Percy Katrak; Nazneen Khumbatta; Zubin and Mitra Mistry; Yasmin Medhora; Kaizeen Mody; Dilnaz and Jidina Mory; Rashna and Niraj Oak; Darius and Zara Rodriguez; Aban Rustomji; Mani Surkari; Rukshana Sarkari; Firozi Sabawala and family; Arnavaz Sethna; Farzana Sidhwa; Tenaz Sunavala; Delna Surveyor; and Nazneen, Sabrina and Sanaea Warden.

SCIENCE CONFRONTS RELIGION

From: *Our Perfecting World*

By: Dr. Dastur Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla (1930)

Science is as old as man. It is man's attempt to understand and interpret the phenomena of the outer world and, in its wider aspect, life and its problems. Primitive man's study of the phenomena of nature was not much aided by reason, now his chief apparatus for research. He depended, consequently, on imagination, and propounded naïve solutions for the problems confronting him. In common with the scientist of modern times, he aimed at subjugating natural forces to his own will, and controlling them for his service. However, he had no conception of the law of causation, and peopled the entire domain of nature with invisible personal beings. His mode of dealing with them was to win them over by persuasion or by force. The medium which served this dual function was magic, and with this supposed power, he endeavored to understand and control the phenomena in the midst of which he found himself upon earth.

As reason developed into maturity, the same matters continued to be subjects for thought and the same problems were cogitated. But the procedure became rational and logical rather than after the manner of the primitive medicine-men and magicians. The exponents of rational methods, known as thinkers, sages, seers or philosophers, sought to obtain wisdom and the understanding of life, and to explain natural phenomena by means of metaphysical speculation, which became their chief medium of interpretation.

Science and philosophy, then, aim at obtaining an insight into the laws of nature and life with the aid of reason. They form the secular basis of knowledge, as contrasted with the religious, by which the great teachers of the ancient world undertook to instruct mankind.

SES



SES PROCESSION



SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS FELICITATED



25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ZHCC

By: Yasmin Medhora

The Zarathushti Heritage Cultural Center (ZHCC) celebrated its 25th anniversary and Nowruz on Saturday, March 25, 2023. The function was a grand success attended by estimated 375 persons that included members of the community and some government officials. Out of towners included former FEZANA President Firdosh Mehta, Vancouver, B.C., with family; current FEZANA Treasurer Xerxes Commissariat, Irvine, CA with family and former FEZANA Executive Farrokh Mistree Purcell, OK with his wife Yashfara. The current FEZANA VP is a the ZAH Member Kayomarz Sidhwa.

ZAH was given the net profit of estimated \$7K (after deducting 22% for maintenance) towards this function.

On arrival guests mingled in the Atrium which was adorned with a beautiful balloon décor. The doors to the Hall opened and the guests noticed the elegant center pieces made by our talented member Rashna Oak. The beautiful torans on the main hall doors & the haar for the prayer room Zarathustra frame were made by Aban Chhor. Our front and side entrance torans were replaced by Yezdi & Roshan Engineer with donations from well-wishers. The lovely Haft Seen table in the Atrium was set up by Natasha Tirandazian.

With a little nudge from Roshan, most attendees wore gorgeous garas in a myriad of colors and dainty gara work kurtis and the gentlemen stood out in their dazzling duglies. After the guests settled in the hall, caught up with their friends and admired each other's attire, appetizers were served in the Rustomji Room, samosas galore, hummus with pita, chips and more!

Our charismatic co-host emcees for the evening, Zubin Mistry and Mahtab Dastur grabbed the attention of the audience informing them about the house rules and quick announcements.

In walked Roshan Engineer and Yasmin Medhora carrying a beautiful silver ses loaned by our Farida & Neville Divecha, followed by a procession of our pretty ladies to the strains of 'Mubarak, Mubarak, Mubarak' after which everyone stood to join in to sing 'Chhaiye Hame Zarathoshti'.

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston Chair Aderbad Tamboli welcomed the attendees and wished them Navroze Mubarak. He then called upon the Sunday school teachers, Vehishta Kaikobad, Khursheed Dastur, Nazanin Sarkari, Nazneen Khumbatta, Nozer Dungor and Kaermerz Dotiwala and acknowledged the time and attention given by them to the Sunday school students. In recognition of their dedication towards the students, a flower bouquet and a gift card was presented to each of the teachers.

The Congress 2000 Legacy Scholarship Team representatives Darius Tamboli and Nerius Mehta gave a short talk on how the scholarships started. Later they called on Council Woman Letitia Plummer (her grandfather was a Zoroastrian, Framroze Behramji Karai, to present the scholarships to Roshni Chikhliwala, Zal Italia, Diana Sabawala and Freyaan Vimadalal. Yasmin Pavri talked about the Mike Engineer scholarship which was then presented to Roshni Chikhliwala and Rhea

NATAK



DINNER SERVERS



BAND



Engineer by Mike Engineer himself. Feroze Bhandara had invited various dignitaries to our event. In attendance were Council Member Edward Pollard, Council Member Letitia Plummer (her grandfather was a Zoroastrian), Texas State Representative Dr. Suleman Lalani, HPD Assistant Chief Yasar Bashir who is the only South Asian Police Chief for the City of Houston and Congressman Al Green's representative Sam Merchant who read the Proclamation recognizing Nowruz in the State of Texas.

Then came the long awaited entertainment of the evening, the hilarious natak 'Baava Mane Pannaavo'. This one hour hysterical Parsi/Farsi/English comedy was written, directed and produced by our talented Jasmine Mistry. The one thing unique was that everyone at ZAH who wanted to act in the play got an opportunity to do so. The script was written to match the personalities and the talents of these 17 actors. Thanks to the precious nine backstage volunteers, the play ran smoothly.

Farrokh and Yashfara Mistree honored Arnavaz and Hoshang Sethna and gave a little history of how the Sunday school started at the Sethna residence in 1981 and then moved to the ZHCC, 25 years ago.

Before dinner it was time to draw the lucky winner of the raffle of a beautiful saree donated anonymously. Yasmin Medhora requested Yashfara Mistree to pull the lucky name. The raffle winner was Scheherazade Aresh. Thanks to Dilnaz Mory for working hard in putting together the raffle fundraiser which collected \$1,605/-.

The guests welcomed the traditional Parsi Bhoonoo starting with mango drink, saarya, aachaar, rotli; delicious chutney fish, marghi and masala dal prepared by Naushad Mehta and the yummy goat biryani by Faridabeheh. The kids enjoyed pizza, macaroni & cheese and pasta. The vegetarian food was prepared by the Mathurias of Bhojan restaurant. Thanks to our dear volunteers who prepared the yummy parsi lagan nu custard with the recipe provided by Tehmi Dastoor. Warm Jalebies and cold Ice Cream were welcome too. Thanks to all our volunteers who helped serve the appetizers and dinner. Thanks to the anonymous donor who shipped the saarya and aachaar from Mumbai.

The Z Band and DJ Gary made us dance the night away playing popular songs to a packed dance floor. They played hit songs covering the different music genres that was enjoyed by all age groups. The dynamic members of the band include Navaz Kayani Irani on vocals, Ashdin Medhora on vocals and guitar, Sunny Shah on vocals and our hero Gary on keyboard. After the band had played their song set Gary continued the dancing providing a good mix of DJ music.

Thanks to our photographers and videographers Percy Behramsha, Yezdi Engineer and Percy Kattrak for always helping out at our events.

A big thank you goes to Arzin Italia for coordinating this event with various ZAH committees. Thanks to all Entertainment committee members, ZAH web team, eblast team, all volunteers, our generous donors and well-wishers, in making this function a grand success. Ushtate

ZOROASTRIAN HERITAGE & CULTURAL CENTER (ZHCC) CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY



SO LETS GO DOWN THE MEMORY LANE – HOW WE CAME TO THIS DAY

**Snippets from First Manashni on File, Compiled by Maneck G. Chichgar
And Published from Godrich Executive & Secretarial Services.**

- a. 1985 - Dr. Oxby, Professor of Religious Studies at University of Toronto was a guest of Asia Society and spoke on *Zoroastrianism: A Continuing Religion*. A point of interest from his talk – If Zoroastrianism is to survive it will be through the preservation of books ... and places of worship.
- b. 1985 – Dr. Dastoor Kotwal visited in September 1985. He delivered a talk on Traditional Zoroastrianism at Rice University. He also performed a Jashan at Rothko Chapel.
- c. Various events – picnic, table tennis tournament, First Navjote in Houston – Samara Kerawalla, graduations - Adil Ilavia (High School), Darayus Sethna (High School), Kashmira Patel (High School), Roshan (Patel) Sethna (Undergrad), Jal Sethna (Civil Engineering), Adil Irani (Undergrad, Engineering Science), and birth – Anahita Mama to Kelly & Shernaz Mama.

And So We Continued

Pre-ZHCC days Sunday School sessions were held at Hoshang & Arnavaz Sethna's house where Farrokh Mistree taught the pre-Navjote kids and Sarosh Collector taught the Middle and High School level kids. At one such session, some of the parents started talking about having a Center of our own. I can still remember what Purvez Rustomji said as if it happened yesterday – he said "Put your money where your Mouth is". Within a few minutes, seven families pledged \$1000 each, AND THE SEED WAS SOWN. Pretty soon the initiative of \$20 per month per family took off and ZAH members started donating towards the "Building Fund".

To make Building Fund a formal endeavor, the trio of Late Purvez Rustomji, Sarosh Collector and Farrokh Mistree drafted an article to be inserted in the ZAH Bylaws. At the General Body Meeting of November 22, 1987, Article 20 was added to the Bylaws creating The Zoroastrian Building Fund. The critical clause was "ZBF shall be comprised of members of the ZAH who have pooled their resources to collect funds for the construction of a permanent facility in the Greater Houston area". A fundraising frenzy started.

Fast forward to April 1995, pledges to the tune of \$342,801 were made of which \$156,789 were received, thereby leaving a balance of \$186,010. Purvez Rustomji said for his Committee Members and to the Community in general "serving each day is a pleasure for me as it is, but being able to work and associate with people like you multiplies that pleasure".

Onward march – Architects contacted, bids were called and pre-fabricated metal building was ordered.

An Emergency General Body Meeting was called for July 14, 1996 and the main item on the Agenda was to accept the construction bid presented by *Mazda Construction, Inc.* and signing of the contract for the *Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center*.

Following is an excerpt from *MANASHNI* of August 1996.

“... The meeting convened with two Yatha and one Ashem led by Bahmansha Sanjana. The Chairperson of ZAH, Roshan Sethna commenced by thanking Feroze Bhandara for his generous cash donation and building the Center at cost. This was received with enthusiastic applause from the members. Next, she recognized Purvez Rustomji for his efforts for the last 10 years as the Chairperson of Zoroastrian Building Fund in raising funds and making this day possible...” “... Purvez Rustomji, gave an overview of the plan”. **“JULY 14, 1996 WILL GO DOWN IN THE HISTORY OF THE ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON – A TRULY MEMORABLE DAY FOR THE PROUD ZOROASTRIANS OF HOUSTON.”**

Monthly updates of the construction kept the community informed of the progress, another large donor Mehraban Zartoshty which brought the construction completion closer. By mid 1997 an Ad Hoc Committee was established to plan for an historic inauguration of the ZHCC. *ZARATHUSHTI HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER* was opened with a Jashan in December 1997 – a “soft opening”. A formal three-day inauguration was planned for April 10, 11 & 12, 1998.

The Center was buzzing with activity. Donations came pouring in for furniture, kitchen appliances, bathroom accessories etc. The proudest moment was when the *AFARGANYU* came from Sukkur, Pakistan. Here’s the story of the Afarganyu.

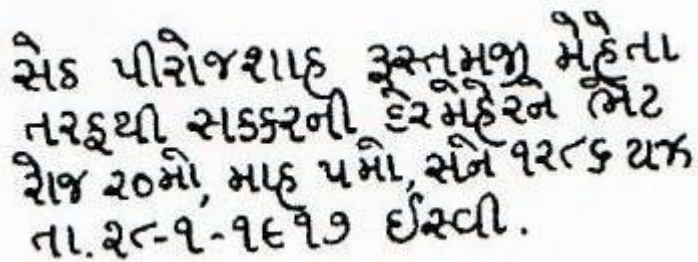
SILVERN JOURNEY: THE STORY OF THE AFARGANYU OF THE SUKKUR AGIARY BY: NERINA RUSTOMJI

I am the Afarganyu in the prayer room of the Zarathushti Heritage and Culture Center in Houston, Texas. If you haven’t seen me before, you should drop by. Once you glance at me and my impressive height, you will probably want to know where I came from and how I got to Houston.

My journey was not an easy one. Before I reached Houston, I was living a lonely life in an abandoned agiary in Sukkur, Pakistan. Little did I know that a couple from Houston asked their Pakistani friends if there were any spare afarganyus for the Center. The Dasturji of Quetta suggested that I volunteer, since all the Zoroastrians left Sukkur in 1950’s and I just sitting in an unused agiary. After obtaining permission from my legal guardian – the Parsi Anjuman of Quetta – someone sent two men from Karachi to drive to Sukkur, pick me up, and deliver me safely to Karachi. And so these men drove the dusty road, opened the dilapidated agiary and packed me up.

But I was not telling you the embarrassing part. I was not as beautiful as I am today. In fact, I was jet black and those in Karachi and Houston worried that I was made of copper. But they had faith in me and didn’t abandon me. Instead someone polished me – and then my beautiful shine emerged. (A silver afarganyu needs a bath too!) And so I was ready for my new home in Houston. The problem was that we needed the permission of the Pakistani government who considered me valuable; in fact, an antique. So the officials initially refused to allow my passage. And after some persuasion, everyone agreed that I could stay in Houston only if work in a religious institution. I was overjoyed to be able to live in a thriving community again. The next day, someone freighted me to Houston.

So there you have it. I first served the Sukkur community from the mid nineteenth century to the 1940’s Owned by Pakistan, I was brought to Houston by the kindness of my friends in Houston and Pakistan. But how did I get to Sukkur? I was donated by a railway engineer named Seth Phirojshaw Rustomji Mehta. This kind man inscribed the following words in Gujarati on to my torso.



સેઠ પીરોજશાહ રુસ્તમજી મેહતા
તરકૂથી સક્કરની દર મેહરન મેટ
રોજ ૨૦મો, માહ પમો, સને ૧૨૮૬ યઠ
તા. ૨૮-૧-૧૯૧૭ ઈસ્વી.

Seth Phirojshaw Rustomji Mehta’s gift to Sukkur Pakistan Dar-e-Meher on Roj 20 month 5 year 1286 y.z date 28 January 1917.

Whoever thought that seventy-nine years later I would be at the gala opening of Houston's Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center? Thank you for inviting me into such a thriving and dynamic community in the New World. May our friendship bring peace and joy to the Zarathushtis of Houston.

My journey was possible due to the efforts of:

Abadan Abadan, Minoo Bharucha, Khurshid Kaikobad Marker, Dasturji Sohrabji Makujina and Purves Rana of Quetta; Sarfaraz and Feroze Golwalla, Rana Thakur, and Adarbad Wadia of Karachi. Baki and Mike Minwalla of Dubai; and Aban and Purvez Rustomji of Houston; and of course Seth Phirojshaw Rustomji Mehta and the former residents of Sukkur, Pakistan.

I look forward to serving the Houston community and the Zarathushtis of North America. Be sure to visit me during the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress December 28-2000, January 1, 2001.



The first phase of our Center was complete. By the time the construction started, Farrokh Mistree, had left Houston but he specially traveled from Atlanta, GA for this momentous occasion. A symbolic Atash was brought from Sethna residence to transfer the *Atash* to the Prayer Room at the Center.

Excerpted from an article by Aban Rustomji in Manashni of March 2017: "...A few will remember the *afarganyu* was jet black when it arrived and we were worried it was made of copper and not silver. And while Phase I of ZHCC was being constructed, the *afarganyu* sat in a home garage for a long time. Community members took turns in cleaning it and finally a silver shine emerged. So there you have it — a 100 years later we treasure this gift donated by a railway engineer named Seth Phirojshaw Rustomji Mehta and thank all those who were responsible for bringing it Houston.

As we celebrate 25 years of ZHCC's existence, we remember with gratitude:

- Late Purvez Rustomji and Aban Rustomji for their efforts in getting the Phase 1 off the ground. Purvez, knew each and every nut & bolt of the Center as he dedicated his time whole heartedly to ZHCC and spent more time at the construction site than at his own business. They were also instrumental for getting the precious Afarganyu.
- Kersi Engineer who found us this property through his real estate company. Purvez and Kersi established a Zarathushti Group, purchased the 20 acre property and **donated** 7 acres from it to ZAH. Today ZAH is the only Association in North America that owns 7 acres of land – free and clear.
- Feroze & Shernaz Bhandara for their cash donation and building the Center at cost.
- Dr. Katie and Late Dr. Dinshaw Irani for their specific donation for the Prayer Room where the 100+ years Afarganyu resides.
- Late Mehraban Zartoshty for his generous cash donation.
- And, the entire ZAH community who gave their time and money in making this Center possible.



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May 6 th , 2023	Zoroastrian Cosmology	Meheryar Rivetna
May 13 th , 2023	Asha – Righteousness	Khushroo Mirza
May 20 th , 2023	Monotheism Vs Dualism	Meheryar Rivetna
June 3 rd , 2023	Responsibility & Fravashi	Kayomarsh Mehta
June 10 th , 2023	Life after Death	Meheryar Rivetna

On-line registration at <https://forms.office.com/r/c3vyA0B1Xz>

For Registration form or more information, please email: registrar.izs@namcmobeds.org



ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, BINGO, GAMES
AT THE NEXT....

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

When: Saturday, July 22nd, 2023 at
7:00 PM

Where: Zarathushthi Heritage and
Cultural Center

Admission fee: \$35

SEE YOU THERE!