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OFFICE 713-963-4229

MANASHNI WISHES IT'S READERS A VERY HAPPY NOROUZ

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

TIME: Different timings for each group

DATE: March 10, 2024

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

- Thursday, March 21, 2024 – Nowruz Hambandagi
- Saturday, March 23, 2024 – Nowruz Function
- Sunday, March 31, 2024 – ZAH AGM
- Sunday, April 14, 2024 – Carnival after Sunday School
- Sunday, April 28, 2024 – Curry Cookoff Contest
- Sunday, June 2, 2024 - Maidhyoarem Gahambar

REPORTS

LIBRARY REPORT

By: Jangoo Mistry

The Bapsi Sidhwa Literary Prize

It's that time again! You will recall that two years ago, the Bapsi Sidhwa Literary Prize was established. It was awarded for the first time at the 2022 Zoroastrian World Congress. The award honors Bapsi Sidhwa, recognized worldwide for her contributions to fictional literature. This unique award meets the need to showcase and recognize the wide swath of Zoroastrian talent all over the world that has emerged in fiction and non-fiction books.



For the first inaugural award, the response was very heartening. Writers work in a very competitive environment and even though there are numerous writing awards, they mostly cover a much wider range of writers all over North America. This award is recognized for its exclusive Zoroastrian writers all over the world. Consequently, we received

ZAH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Aderbad Tamboli – Chairman
Percy Master – Secretary
Farokh Billimoria – Treasurer
Zia Anklesaria – Member
Nikita Gagrath – Members
Kershaw Khumbatta – Member
Fiona Setna – Member
Nazanin Sarkari – 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

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TANAZ BHATHENA
WINNER OF THE 2022
BAPSI SIDHWA LITERARY PRIZE

The Inaugural
BAPSI SIDHWA
LITERARY PRIZE
Awarded To
TANAZ BHATHENA
For
HUNTED BY THE SKY



entries from India, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the US. Entries were judged by an independent panel of three recognized judges. The prize was awarded at a glittering Award Ceremony at the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress 2022 in New York on Saturday, July 2, 2022. Tanaz Bhatena won the prize for her work: "Hunted by the Sky."

We are now thrilled to announce the call for submission for the 2nd Bapsi Sidhwa Literary Prize. This biennial award is open to any Zoroastrian writer over the age of 18. A preliminary announcement has garnered a lot of attention and book entries have already started pouring in. Works must be published between January 2022 and April 2024.

The winner will receive \$2000, a trophy, and the opportunity to showcase his or her work at the 18th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, Texas, in December 2024. An added bonus for this award is that the winner will be able to receive the award given out by Bapsi Sidhwa herself. Bapsi is very supportive of this effort on our part and is looking forward to participating in the award ceremony. For more information on eligibility and requirements, you can visit the FIRES Website: <https://fires-fezana.org/bapsi-sidhwa-literary-prize2024/>

The genesis for the Bapsi Sidhwa Literary Prize is under the sponsorship of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) and FEZANA Information Research Education System (FIRES).

An Exciting Library/FIRES Event Coming in July

On July 12, the ZAH Library has planned a very interesting event, in a different setting. The event will be in the restaurant "Indian Summer" in Sugar Land and include dinner followed by a talk from Sarah Stewart. Sarah is no stranger to ZAH having given us many talks over the years that have been enlightening and interesting.

In her talk titled ***The Path to Modernity: Zoroastrians in Iran speak about their Religious Lives***, she will draw upon the research she carried out in many cities in Iran. Comparing their ways to the ways of the Parsi community in India, Sarah will explore how people have managed to change from traditional to modern customs and, in particular, their death ceremonies. She will look at the dismantling of the dakhmeh system in Iran, against the preservation of the Towers of Silence in India.

Sarah Stewart is Reader Emeritus in Zoroastrianism at SOAS and former Shapoorji Pallonji Reader in Zoroastrianism and co-chair of the SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrianism. As lead curator of the acclaimed exhibition ***The Everlasting Flame***, with her short introductory course on Zoroastrianism, and her numerous publications, she has proved herself to be an eminent scholar and an invaluable asset to our community. It will be a privilege to listen to her thoughts.

BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN'



BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN SPONSORS COLLECTOR FAMILY



BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN ATTENDEES



Atash Kadeh News

By Persis Behramsha

We are close to Spring Season and it is almost time to celebrate Navroze !!!

The month of February began with the usual, but always generous, sponsoring of the monthly Behram Roj Jashan. We thank the families of Bakhtawar & Kershaw Byramji, Rubina and Feroze Byramji and the entire Collector family for willingly sponsoring the Jashan after noticing that it was awaiting sponsors. That's indeed very heartening and so very much appreciated.

Our Atash Kadeh will be soon be celebrating 5 years this March. Each year has brought in more attendees, many visits from out-of-towners, more curiosity for knowledge, appreciation for the dedication of our Mobeds, and above all many thanks for the existence of this wonderful facility.

We take this opportunity to thank each of you for your integrity in following all the rules of the Atash Kadeh, by keeping your heads covered at all times while inside the building, Keeping your cell phones on silent, consuming foods only outside in the Foyer, and respecting our Mobeds as well as each other at all times.

Very often folks have asked how and what type of help is needed at the Atash Kadeh. If you happen to be at the Atash Kadeh, check with our Mobeds to see if you can help load some of the Kathi wood into the Cabinets. As you know Sukhar, Loban, Candles, and Water are always appreciated. Above all, your visits to the Atash Kadeh are the most valued.

During the last Gatha Study session, Meheryar Rivetna, discussed Yasna 31.

Zarathustra stresses the importance of virtue. Zarathustra experiences God (Ahura Mazda) by reason and observation. He acquires his knowledge not by idle, wild imaginations, but by an astute examination of the consequences of human behavior with fellow humans and with nature. The importance of incorporating the attributes of Ahura Mazda (represented as Amesha Spentas) in one's life is repeatedly stressed in the Gathic verses. Humans have a free will. A free will to choose the path of righteousness or impiety and then bear the consequences of that choice. No one can escape justice.

Please remember to check the Atash Kadeh menu on the ZAH.org website for information on the Behram Roj/Parab Calendars, Rates, and the perpetual Zoom link for all the prayers.

If you have any questions please feel free to connect with one of the Atash Kadeh Committee members (Khushrav Nariman, Feroze Bhandara, Shernaz Bhandara, Rohintan Deputy, Persis Behramsha) at any time.

**GOLDEN GROUP
HIBACHI RESTAURANT**



GOLDEN GROUP



A FEAST EXTRAVAGANZA

by Jehanbux Mehta

Incredulously, and completely out of sync, my otherwise pleasing wife, called out over the kitchen counter “no breakfast today, dear”. I learnt later that this scene was repeated at many Parsi homes that Saturday morning. Not believing what I had heard, hard of hearing that I am, I rather rudely shot back “What?”. The convincing reply “We are going with the Golden Group to Hibachi Grill and Buffet” settled the issue.

Just as well that I was pre-warned – though I did sneak in a small buttered toast – ‘cause the display of the food laid out on eleven serving tables was mind boggling. Two piping hot soups and also congees (rice porridge) to begin the feast.

My next round was at the Japanese section for sushi, sashimi and sushi rolls to be had with a dash of wasabi – no more, or else – and thinly sliced pickled ginger. This was followed by a round at the dim sum table followed by a tour of the other tables for pickings of fried crabs, spicy shrimps in the shell, boiled shrimps with the irresistible Chinese sauce, baked salmon, steamed fish, fried calamari & squid, sweet & sour pork, oodles of noodles and fried rice of course. Even a self-serve roast beef carving station. And, oh, a *mélange* of many more tempting delicacies. Finally, the *piece de resistance*, the restaurant famous for it and named after it. Hibachi (hot grill), to be had by selecting raw shrimps, beef steak, chicken, eggs, noodles, choice of cooking oils and sauces, which the eagerly awaiting *ryoursinin* tossed them altogether on the grill and then served to the salivating patron in a large bowl. The desserts were simple: mini pastries, jello, coconut puffs and, no kidding, chunks of peanut chikkies a la Lonavla.

Enticed by what was stated in the circular announcing the event, and equally lured by the lunch being with the compliments of a generous person who wishes to remain anonymous, 55 persons turned up, all seated together, and comfortably, in the Ruby Room, thanks to the arrangements made earlier by our Helping Hand, Jamshed Dudha. The three other Hands – Diana Balsara, Lyla Daroga and Anita Kavina were of great help to the more senior in our Group, escorting them to the buffet tables, carrying their plates to their seats and even running around getting seconds for some. Our many thanks to them all for making the guests comfortable.

As is the tradition, I welcomed the guests and introduced the 15 new members. With this addition, Golden Group boasts having 83 members.

No event is complete without Anita Kavina coming up with some game. This time, it was a quiz centering round Hibachi and Japanese eateries. Nina Sethna secured the first prize of a beautiful baking dish. Asked by this reporter how she knew as many as nine out of ten answers, she confessed that she did not. She randomly ticked the answers, and, voila! Other contenders were not disappointed. They too received equally lovely kitchen items, many of which were donated by Anita herself. Thank you, Anita, for the pains taken in preparing the appropriate quiz and the gifts.

And, as we left for home, fully sated, there was my wife again in the car saying “no dinner tonight, dear”. This time, I pleaded no contest.

ZAH GROUP AT NOROUZ FESTIVAL



HAFT SEEN DANCE



FEZANA DELEGATES AT UN NGO CONFERENCE



WE HAVE MOVED



Before concluding, many thanks to our anonymous sponsor on behalf of all members of Golden Group. You treated us to a feast extravaganza which everyone enjoyed to the utmost.

ZAH PRESENCE AT NAVROZ FESTIVAL BY ISMAILI COUNCIL

By: Dilnaz Mory

ZAH had a strong representation at the Navroz Festival organized by the Ismaili Council for the Southwestern USA at The Water Works in Buffalo Bayou Park where 2000 attendees came throughout the day. ZAH had two booths at the festival: Colors in Bloom with a creation of spring flowers by Tanaaz Chikhliwala and Kermeen Kanga and Shahnameh the Persian Epic, a painting activity organized by Edul Chikhliwala and Shahrukh Kanga.

We also had a **HAFT SEEN** dance performance by Jidina Mory and Mahtab Dastur and the Shahnameh Story telling of Rustom and Sohrab by Kaermez Dotiwala. The entire ZAH representation was orchestrated by Vehishta Kaikobad. It is great to see the Zoroastrian community represented in the citywide Navroze celebrations!

FEZANA SENDS DELEGATES TO THE UN NGO CONFERENCE. ZAH'S NATASHA DUNGOR IN NEW YORK.

At the UN NGO's 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), FEZANA had an exhibit booth and hosted a parallel event which was held at the UN Headquarters in New York. This parallel event focused on **"Strengthening Women's Independence: Investing in Financial, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) and Health Education"**. It was slated to cover how early education of women/girls in areas of finance, technology and health help women get a leg up in their later years. The panel will also provide actionable ideas for wider implementation. One of the speakers was ZAH's Natasha Dungor, who has been involved with the FEZANA UN NGO Committee's special projects.

MANASHNI will get a detailed report from Natasha upon her return and publish it in the April issue.

WE HAVE MOVED

Sam & Gooloo Polad have moved, their new address is:

6336 Woodway Dr.
Houston, TX 77057
Tel: 713-412-0721 Sam Cell. E-mail: sampolad@yahoo.com
Tel: 713-412-0719 Gooloo Cell. E-mail: gspolad@yahoo.com

CHANGE OF E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please note the change in Gool Masani's e-mail address:
gmasani13@gmail.com

EARLY PARSIS OF INDIA



ONE OF THE FORTS IN MUMBAI



BHIKHA BEHRAM WELL



SOME EARLY PARSIS OF MUMBAI, INDIA

(Excerpted from Kisse-I-Gulistanbanu - Rustam B Paymaster, B.A.L.L.B – Editor, Parsi Prakash – 1940)

A Zarathushti Banu by the name of Gulestanbanu came to Mumbai from Iran and was married into the family of Panday.

In 1640 AD the first Parsi family that came to live in a place called Sumari near Surat was that of Dorabji Nanabhai whose son Rustom General was, for the first time in history, awarded the Patelship of the island of Mumbai by the British Government.

After 23 years, in 1663, another Parsi family came to live in Mumbai. This was the Zarathushti family of Sorabji Kadvaji. An eminent gentleman of this family learnt watch making art in 1728 AD from a French Watchmaker named “Chika” and that’s why they were known as Chika Ghadiali.

After this family, a third family came to Mumbai in 1665 – Khurshedji Ponchaji from Bharuch. This family later became famous by the name Panday. It is said that when Khurshedji Ponchaji came by foot from Bharuch, there was a fight between Muslims and Marathas. Thinking Mr. Khurshedji to be a spy, he was arrested and kept in a fort near Valsad called “Pandera Gadh”. In a few short months, he was released and came by foot to Mumbai. His last name became “Pandayra” and later the ‘ra’ was dropped and it became Panday. (Parsi Prakash Vol. 1 Page 62).

Construction of Fort in Mumbai

When Khurshedji Panday came to Mumbai after being released from the prison, the island of Mumbai which was under the Portuguese rule was just being transferred to English Regime. The English regime was trying to build a fort. Khurshedji was given the contract to supply labor and construction supplies for this project. He then sent for his family to come from Bharuch.

The said Khurshedji had a son named Behramji, who, like his father, was getting various types of contracts from the United East India Company. Behramji Panday had three sons – Bhikhaji, Khurshedji and Karabhai.

Behramji Panday’s eldest son Bhikhaji, was known as “Bhikha Behram” in the merchant community. From 1725 he started his business of importing liquor, and other miscellaneous items from the U.K. and for that he had a store on Meadows Street. He was very well respected as an honest trader in the English community. Bhikhaji built a well now known as Bhikha-Behram, which became a prayer place for Parsis. Bhikhaji was also on the Trust of Mumbai Parsi Panchayat. He passed away on 23rd August, 1783 at the age of 80.

ZAH CONGRESS2000 LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

We are thrilled to announce the outstanding students who have been selected as this year's ZAH Congress2000 Legacy Scholarship recipients! Each year, we're continually impressed by the caliber of applicants, and this year is no exception. These deserving individuals have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, a strong commitment to community involvement, and a passion for their chosen fields of study.

Please join us in congratulating our scholarship winners as they embark on the next chapter of their educational journeys!

We look forward to presenting their awards at the Norouz function on March 23rd



Natasha Kanga will be graduating Suma Cum Laude from William B. Travis High School and will be studying **Biochemistry** at **University of Texas at Austin** this fall. She has been awarded the Fort Bend ISD Academic Award all throughout her middle and high school and is an AP scholar with Distinction Award. She has been a member and session moderator for the City of Sugar Land Mayor Youth Advisory Council (MYAC), co-founder of Center of Giving which is a non-profit organization, and an active member of several ZAH, school clubs and community events. After graduating, Natasha would love to work in the healthcare industry or for a research organization like the CDC, FDA or USEPA, where she can apply her knowledge to find cures for some of the emerging and rare diseases that impact many families. *(Winner of the **ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award** for academic excellence)*



Neville Kanga will graduate from William B. Travis High School and will be attending the **University of Texas at Austin** in Fall 2024 to study **Aerospace Engineering**. He earned the Fort Bend ISD Academic Excellence Awards and a spot in the TMEA All-Region Band for all four years of high school, earned the AP Scholar with Distinction Award, has participated in, and led numerous school and community organizations. He is an ordained Ervad and Maratab and is an active member of the Houston Zarathushti community. After college, Neville hopes to join NASA, SpaceX, or Lockheed Martin to find innovative technologies to support space exploration, national security, and the aviation industry. *(Winner of the **ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award** for academic excellence)*



Mahtab B. Dastur graduated from Klein High School as Salutatorian (2nd Rank in School - Summa Cum Laude). She has still not decided which college she will be going to, but it will be in Texas. Through high school, her extracurricular activities have included active participation in Speech & Debate and HOSA - Future Health Professionals Organization, where she has held leadership positions and won multiple competitions and awards at District and State levels. She has also been an elected leader in multiple National Honor Societies. Mahtab intends to pursue a **Public Policy major** in conjunction with a pre-med track. She hopes to join the medical field and eventually enter politics, utilizing her knowledge gained from research and experience in the medical field to implement science-backed policies. *(Winner of the **Cyrus Rohinton Desai Scholarship Award** for academic excellence and community service)*

ZAH Congress2000 Legacy Scholarship Team:

Vispi Sagar
Darius Tamboli
Nerius Mehta

NOROUZ EVENT - MARCH 23, 2024

ZAH NoRouz Celebration

SATURDAY MARCH 23, 2024 at ZAH CENTER

Join Us for a Fun Filled Evening!!

Appetizers & Mixer: 7:30 – 8 p.m.

Entertainment Starts: 8 p.m.

Dinner: 9 p.m. followed by dancing!!

Click on RSVP link provided separately

Elaborate Menu Catered From Aga's Restaurant

BYOB

RATES: RSVP Deadline 3/9/24

ZAH Member: 12 years and up - \$50 / \$70**

ZAH Non-Member: 12 years and up - \$70

Member Children (5 – 11 years): \$33 / \$45**

Non-Member Children (5 – 11 years): \$45

(Under 5 years Gratis)

**Rates After RSVP Deadline

RSVP DEADLINE: 3/9/24

AFTER RSVP DEADLINE AND AT THE DOOR:

\$70 (12 years and up) \$45 (5 years and up)

If paying by check, your check must be received by 3/9/24, at:

ZAH

Attn: ZAH NoRouz 2024

8787 West Airport Blvd

Houston, Texas 77071

PLEASE WRITE (IN THE MEMO FIELD):

- No. of ZAH members/non-members (12 yrs and up)
- No. of ZAH member/non-member children (5 – 11 years)
- Please write "ZAH NoRouz 2024" on the envelope

** Membership rate applies if 2024 membership has been paid. Individuals over 18 years must have separate membership from their parents
- Member rates apply to out-of-town house-guests of members (if online RSVP, online payment, and check (if applicable) is received by 3/9/24)
- Our goal remains to keep these functions as affordable as possible so you as a ZAH member can attend and enjoy. However if you feel that you are unable to attend solely due to the cost please let us know. We have donations in place to subsidize your cost and we will guarantee confidentiality. Financial ups and downs are a part of most families life cycles. In a way, they are a blessing because they allow innovation, dedication and hard work to take root in oneself. Please use this facility and in better economic times, there will be plenty of opportunities to remember and help your own community members and your own association a thousand times over. Please note this is only available to current ZAH Members in good standing.

Organized by: ZAH Entertainment Committee

POST 18th NAZC2024 CRUISE FROM GALVESTON

JANUARY 2nd to JANUARY 6TH, 2025



"Mariner of the Seas"

Come join us on a wonderful, relaxing cruise sailing out from the Port of Galveston to Cozumel!

No better way to spend some quality time doing MAJHA MASTI together with our fellow Zarathushtis!



Cruise sails to Cozumel with great rates starting at \$869.00 per cabin including port taxes and fees for a standard inside stateroom for two people.

Very limited spaces available – ONLY 15 cabins available at this rate so please hurry and avoid disappointment as prices will go up once sold out.

Please call Farida Divecha at (281) 492-3772 or e-mail at Divecha.farida@aaa-texas.com to book your spots/cabins or if you have any questions or clarifications regarding the cruise.