**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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

**TIME:** Different timings for each group

**DATE:** October 11, 2020

**Children’s Session:** The Sunday School session starts at 11.00 a.m. Join in by Zoom

**Middle Group:** The Sunday School session at 10.30 a.m. by Zoom

**Youth Group:**

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**MANASHNI SPECIAL EDITION CORRECTED – HONORING OUR MEDICAL & HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.**

PLEASE CLICK ON THIS LINK: [https://vimeo.com/448163896](https://vimeo.com/448163896)

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**UPCOMING EVENT**

Sunday, October 18, 2020 – Carnival. Drive by pick-up pre-ordered food and Parking lot snacks – See flyer

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**SUBCOMMITTEE NEWS**

**LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

By: Jangoo Mistry

**Update on Oral Histories and Another Appeal**

In the March issue of the Library Report in Manashni, we had explained in detail the origins and intentions of recording oral histories of our fellow Zoroastrians. At that time, we had issued an appeal for volunteers who have not yet recorded their life story to come forward and be recognized.

We received responses from six members and have begun the process of including their oral histories in our collection. They have availed themselves of the opportunity to share their unique experiences of early lives before and after they migrated to the U.S. Every interview has been recorded and cataloged into the new digital Zoroastrian Archive at Rice University in Houston. This means that anyone, anywhere in the world, can now access these Zoroastrian oral histories either as an audio recording or as a written transcript.

**We are fervently asking for those of you who have not yet recorded their oral histories to volunteer for a recording.** It will not be a big demand on your time, and we will try our best to make it as convenient as possible for you. *Everyone who has recorded their life story has enjoyed the experience and felt relieved that their life and legacy have been recognized and preserved.*
We are now recording oral histories on Zoom. Whereas the previous 36 oral histories were available in audio and text mode only, all oral history recordings from now on (including yours) will be video, audio, and text, using Zoom. The details of conducting oral histories on Zoom and the video recordings and storage issues have been worked out with the help of Debra Kolah of Rice University and Co-Chair of the Library Committee.

Recording your oral history on Zoom, preserves the social distancing required these days, keeps you in the comfort in your own home, and gives us a convenient and automatic way to record and transcribe your oral history.

Rest assured that before we do your actual recording, an interviewer will discuss with you the whole process and give you enough time to prepare for it. All you need to do is spend some time thinking about the events in your past that you would like to mention. All you need to do is spend some time thinking about the events in your past that you would like to mention.

- Early childhood, school, and family memories of your native country.
- Events and circumstances that made you migrate to the U.S.
- Financial, social, and other struggles you faced in adjusting to a different lifestyle here.
- Daily life experiences and career milestones; successes and accolades.
- How you would like to be remembered by generations to come.

The interviewer will help you along during the interview and prompt you with questions when needed. It is good to remember that your “oral history” is the story of your life told in an interesting narrative fashion. Listeners will be interested in knowing what your emotions were, your thoughts and feelings, what life lessons you have learned, and any regrets you have.

We are also looking for volunteers to conduct and record the interviews. Please contact me, Jangoo Mistry (jbmistry@gmail.com) or Arnavaz Sethna (ahsethna@yahoo.com) if you are ready to record your story in the coming months, or if you are available to interview one or more of our members.

**Book Chat With Zoroastrian Authors**

On the morning of Saturday, October 10, over a hundred people joined the tenth FEZANA Talk presented virtually in collaboration with FIRES. The event was hosted by Aban Rustomji, Co-Chair of FIRES (FEZANA Information Research and Education System).

Acclaimed Parsi authors Thrity Umrigar and Nawaz Merchant were interviewed, with a discussion of their latest novels.

Thrity Umrigar centered her talk around her latest publication, a Children’s Book titled: *Sugar in Milk*. While explaining the rationale for presenting the age-old anecdote, Thrity laid out the justification for this narration and the relevance of that story in today’s cultural climate. The book has gorgeous colorful drawings that bring the story to life in a way that youngsters will enjoy. Ms. Umrigar, who has written several novels based on Parsi characters in our native
Nawaz Merchant’s new book, *Murder in Old Bombay* has just been published and has won the Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Award. Based in Bombay in 1892, the murder mystery introduces an Anglo-Indian protagonist who is hired to investigate the deaths of two Parsi sisters that were made to look like suicides.

Based on a true story, and set against the vibrant backdrop of colonial India, Nawaz’s book brings this tumultuous historical age to life. In answering questions, Nawaz also touched on her writing habits, how a work-in-progress takes over the life of an author, and words of advice to aspiring authors.

The whole event featuring both authors is now on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPEgwM3gPH8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPEgwM3gPH8)

If you take the time to listen, you will be mesmerized by two doyens of the publishing world. Both books have a nostalgic feel about them and are available on Amazon. Copies will also be available in our ZAH Library shortly. Keep reading.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**ATASH KADEH NEWS**

By: Persis Behramsha

As we entered September after an active month of August, we started off preparing for Farvardin Mahino, Farvardin Roj, a special day for our Asho Farohars.

This year, Tannaz Machi & Debashish Chakraborty and family along with Pervin & Vispi Sagar and family sponsored the Jashan to honor and remember all the Fravashis of our departed ones.

This was followed the next day, by the monthly Behram Roj Jashan, which was sponsored this time by Perzen/Neville Akolawala & family, Nina/Adil Eduljee & family, Francie/Phiroz Engineer & family, and Cashmira/Adil Irani & family.

We are grateful for all the sponsors for both these Jashans.

Though we are all still practicing safe Social Distancing, we are so happy that our community members feel the connection to our Atash Kadeh and continue visiting individually and continuing with the Machis, Tandarostis, Jashans, etc.. We know our Mobeds Maneck Sidhwa and Pervez Gonda are always very happy to see all of you, so please continue visiting.

Our Atash Kadeh is open to everyone and we encourage you all to visit whenever you would like. Though we are still not gathering in large numbers, we can however, accommodate about 35 to 40 individuals considering we have two large rooms and the Kebla area. We do still require everyone to wear their masks while inside the premises. Thank you everyone, for conforming to all the guidelines.
As always, we are grateful to our Mobeds Pervez Gonda and Maneck Sidhwa for taking such good care of our Atash Kadeh and being present daily to cater to the needs of our community members and keeping up with our traditions. We would also like to thank our often-visiting Mobed Soli Dastur for participating in our Hambandagi prayers during our weekend Boye and keeping us enlightened.

Our wonderful youth Darius Aga, Roshni Chikhliwala, Cyrus Desai, Natasha Dungor, Anosh Irani, Kaya Kapdia, Emma Kolah and Freyaan Vimadalal were really great at translating the Hambadagi prayers during the weekend Boyes, in September.

Special thanks also go to Tanaaz, Edul and Roshni Chikhliwala for volunteering on their own to clean the Atash Kadeh often. We thank you for your thoughtfulness and appreciate your gesture.

All community Prayers are Live Streamed including the weekend Boyes at 5 p.m.CST, on Saturday and Sunday to allow everyone to join in remotely and feel connected.

**A POEM – Boo to the Flu**

By: Natasha Dungor – 8th Grade

Fall is starting, so be aware.
You never know who has it and where.
It starts with a cold and a cough,
Then takes you over without a thought.
Just as precautions, masks and sanitizer are advised,
The reward of using them will be prized.
Stay safe and healthy!
It’s the most important kind of wealthy!
Fall is starting, so be aware.
You never know who has it and where

**ORIGIN OF PARSI CUISINE**

Contributed by Jehanbux Mehta

When enjoying *papeta-ma-gosht* at dinner, have you wondered how this popular Parsi dish evolved? Sure, there are several similar dishes in the sub-continent, but the Parsi version is unique in taste. The same can be said of the many dishes that we Parsis call our own. Thanks to the innovative ideas of our community on settling in India.

Persians love their food: delectable dishes that use a good sprinkling of herbs and nuts intermingling with meat and rice. This is what they brought with them when they emigrated to India nearly 1,400 years ago. Of curious mind and innovative nature, they found delight in the foods that they came across as they spread over the new country. Not to abandon their beloved dishes, they crossed the two different styles into what is now Parsi cuisine.

The Parsis, as the Zoroastrians are known since immigration, are a hard working race, having built industrial and commercial empires which have benefitted the country no end. Food was way up on their to-do list, but for selfish reasons: to appease their own palate. There is a strong culinary link between Persian food and Parsi cuisine. Spreading all over India, the Parsis “discovered” spices. Borrowing
from local cuisine, they experimented, mingling the herbs that they loved with the new-found flavors of spices. Voilá! The gastronomy of Persian cooking took a magical turn. The vegetables of Maharashtra, the lentils of Tamil Nadu, the chicken and meat of the Punjab and the curries of Kerala and Bengal underwent metamorphosis under the hands of the creative Parsi housewives and professional cooks.

Parsis love food. It is rightly said that Parsis are forever feasting, rarely fasting. Our passion is food. Finish a meal and we are still talking of food. With their newly acquired taste of spices, Parsis transformed khoresh and bozbesh into tasty vegetable stews and by adding meat to them, be it goat or lamb which the Persians could not do without, what did we create? The countless ma-gosht dishes. Lentils with spice became masala ni dar, which with the infusion of other spices and addition of generous portions of meat heaped over another favorite of the Persians, rice, became dhansak. From a culinary perspective, this is significant as it helps to explain the historic links between Persian recipes and Parsi cooking. Our food is now embraced by the national repertoire of Indian delights.

We did not copy their ubiquitous version of kababs, another Persian staple, but we did full justice with ground meat by introducing “cutlace” with tomato gravy, spiced-up meat balls to go with dhansak and the incomparable khatto-mittho-kheemo. And, let’s not forget: it was we Parsis who invented the numerous per-eedu dishes which the Persians had missed out on. To my regret, we have not come up with fesenjan, their delicious pomegranate & walnut stew. However, we have given full justice to nuts and berries that the Persians could not do without by conjuring up doodh-pak, Parsi custar (note the spelling, please) and pawwa. The Persians will have noted with pride our use of their famous saffron in our qoomas.

I would be remiss if I were to conclude this write-up without mention of Vividha Vaani, the book which Aban Rustomji reviewed for readers of FIRES and Manashni last month. It was written over a hundred years ago, ostensibly for the young bride who had not stepped into a kitchen before marriage. The author was prompted to compile it on being shocked to hear bridegrooms complaining of having brought home a person who had no idea of how to prepare even the simple habbel eedu. Realizing the plight of the awe struck maiden, she included in her book recipes for boiling and frying eggs. Sillie and I laughed no end when reading in the book a recipe for making toast. On a hot charcoal chula, place a chipia and on that two square slices of white bread. After x minutes flip the bread over. Remove after a few more minutes, scrape the burnt parts and immediately apply butter and orange jaam if you must. I think there was a recipe even for boiling milk, but I may be exaggerating. After all, it has been so many score years ago. I wish we had preserved the book, a bible of our cuisine. Alas! These days, the bride has very little to worry about. The supermarket takes care of most, even hard boiled and scrambled eggs. But Parsi food? No way! Only we Parsis know how to.

On that ending, chalo, khavo, peevo ney moj maja karō.
In summer of this year, Artemis Javanshir, Co-Chair of FEZANA Religious Education Committee, organized a Drawing Contest for children between the ages of 5 to 20. And the winners are:

**Age Group 8-12**
Winner: **Zeyus Spenta**
Honorable Mention: **Delna Surveyor** (ZAH)

**Age Group 15-18**
Winner: **Arnaz S. Irani** (ZAH)

The contestants had to read the story provided and draw a picture visualizing the story which was the winning entry of a story writing contest submitted by 15 year old Azadeh Hormozdiari.

Briefly, the story was about a successful trial attorney, Jamshid, who was defending a well-respected client and a friend on a murder charge. When he met his client for lunch, he jokingly asked whether he had really killed his wife. His client laughed and said of course, he had killed her but no one would believe it. The next day at the court, the prosecutor presented a case very much lacking in evidence. Jamshid could have won the case, but instead he played the recording of his client saying that he had killed his wife. Because of this he lost the case, his firm fired him and he lost all his wealth but he felt he had gained something priceless that made it all more than worth it, genuine happiness. He was with his friends with whom he had not bothered to keep in touch and he was happy that he did the right thing.

Arnaz’ visualization of the story:
Jamshid’s wealth and status have done little to make him happy. With a guiding hand from Zarathustra, he realizes his riches meant nothing, and the value of his happiness when he was with his friends was everything.

Delna’s visualization of the story:
After reading the story, I realized that the lawyer even though he had a big house and fancy cars was missing something in life. He had achieved a lot in his career but he was still connected to his faith and I was glad that he used his Vohu Mana and chose to do the right thing in spite of knowing that all his riches will be taken away. He was now free from stress, satisfied with his decision and happy with himself.

Manashni and its readers congratulate the winners. **ZAH’s got talent** – two winners from ZAH is a record!!!
CONTACT DETAILS OF CAREGIVERS

Davier, Homi 832-428-4285
Balsara, Diana 281-794-2080
Behramsha, Persis 713-294-7747
Chhor, Aban 832-794-0820
Collector, Sarosh 713-882-8465
Dungor, Nozer 832-758-8331
Engineer, Yasmin 832-276-0502
Italia, Arzin 713-679-4998
Katram, Jasmin 713-320-5075
Khumbatta, Nazneen 832-867-8006
Rustom, Shaheen 713-301-1356
Sagar, Pervin 832-532-2100
Sarkari, Shirin 281-844-1284

ZAH CARES

LOOKING AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COVID PANDEMIC:

A community that bonds together is one that is so productive that teams like ZAH CARES cannot have an easier job to do. The fun part is calling someone to ask how they are doing and you get an answer “We are doing splendid and how about you? We heard you were under the weather, let us know if we can be of any help to you!”

CHHAYE HAMEH ZARATHUSTHI!

Then on another occasion, we got an email asking the whereabouts and condition of one of our seniors who is single and as soon as we sent the initial message we located him and sent a reply back to his niece that he was being cared for by two ladies and gave her the contact numbers.

Then comes an amusing incident when TWO of our members were in Methodist just two floors apart and their families were not allowed to be there as a precautionary measure due to the Covid, the resourceful wives got together, got them in touch with each other, so they could chat on the phone and not be left alone staring at the roof. However, knowing these two, they sure must have been discussing the nurses because they delayed coming back home.

DIABETES AND NERVE DAMAGE:

High blood sugar can lead to nerve damage called diabetic neuropathy. You can prevent it or slow its progress by keeping your blood sugar as close to your target range as possible and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Nerve damage can affect your hands, feet, legs, and arms.

Managing your blood sugar is an essential part of your diabetes care plan. Not only does it help you with day-to-day wellness, it can help prevent serious health problems down the road.

Nerve damage is one possible complication from having high blood sugar levels for a long time. High blood sugar damages your nerves, and these nerves may stop sending messages to different parts of your body. Nerve damage can cause health problems ranging from mild numbness to pain that makes it hard to do normal activities.

Half of all people with diabetes have nerve damage. The good news is that you can help prevent or delay it by keeping your blood sugar as close to your target levels as possible. When you do this, you’ll also have more energy, and you’ll feel better!

Symptoms of nerve damage usually develop slowly, so it’s important to notice your symptoms early so you can take action to prevent it from getting more serious.
It’s time for your flu shot.

This year, it's more important than ever to get a flu shot. The symptoms for coronavirus and the flu are similar. While there's no shot for coronavirus yet, there is one for the flu. So don't wait. Call your doctor to schedule your shot or find a pharmacy near you.

Questions? We are always here for you.

Prayers During the Pandemic
Shehen Baaj performed by Udvada 9 Sanjana Family

The following is from the Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract (WZSE) #385 by Ervad Soli Dastur from Florida, that was brought to our attention by Sarosh Collector. We have edited it for conciseness and clarity.

In March, 2020, Arnavaz Sethna, daughter-in-law of famous Avesta scholar T. R. Sethna of Karachi, wrote to Ervad Dastur: “Hello Solibhai: When I was growing up in Karachi, there was a very pious lady Jerbai Kandawalla. At the time of partition when the country was ravaged by riots, she had requested a few Mobeds to do Shehen Baaj, saying that in the old Iranian times, during the “aafat” on the country, the Mobeds would do Shehen Baaj on a hill (taikri). Have you ever heard of that? Apparently, it was very expensive, but Jerbai was a very wealthy lady so she bore all the cost. I must have been around 9 or 10 years old so don't remember much except the name and that it was held. I don't even know what the expense was for - may be sukhad loban? Any insight into this would be very much appreciated. I wonder if we can do something like that here.”

Ervad Dastur confirmed that a Shehen Baj was indeed performed by Udvada Mobeds in 1949-1950 on the grounds of the M.F. Cama Institute, which was on a hill. He was a student there at the time. He remembered that they cleared some ground under the mango groves and performed the Baaj, but since the students were not allowed to attend, he did not know what prayers were recited and what items were used. He also heard from other members of his family that a similar Baaj was also performed on a hill near the Udvada Dakhmaa.

Unwalla’s book on Pavmahel (higher liturgical rituals) for the Udvada Sanjana Mobeds, describes the Shehen Baaj. It requires 132 Daroons, to perform a single Baaj which includes Khshnuman of Sirojaa, Sarosh and Ardaarfavash prayers “. It requires 7 Taai Barsam, 2 Karasyaas and 5 new Khumchaas which are filled with fruits and nuts. One Mobed with Bareshnum is required to perform it. After he is done, his Bareshnum is vitiated and he has to take a 9-night Bareshnum again to perform higher liturgies. After the Baaj is performed, the attending Humdins can partake the “Chaashni”. The Unwalla book states that it was called “Shehenshahi Baaj” in Sassanian times and was performed when the empire was faced with major catastrophe and performing it removed the catastrophe. It can also be preformed when a family faces a major problem. The basic prayer is similar to a Baaj ceremony performed at the inauguration of our Bhandara Atash Kadeh including the final “Chaashni” by Mobeds at the end of the prayer.
Eravd Dastur could not find any reference to this Baaj in Navsari Bhagaria or Kadmi Paavmehel books. However, he talked to the Udvada Vadaa Dasturji Khurshed about it and was told that they had thought about performing this Baaj but due to some problems and availability of Bareshnum Mobeds, they had had to postpone it. It was finally performed together with a Jashan in Udvada Saghdi on Saturday September 26th.

The community thanks Dasturji Khurshed and the Udvada 9 Family Sanjana Mobeds who performed the Shehen Baaj for the good of our community and for the whole world. With the Blessings of Iranshah we all hope that the calamity wrought by the COVID pandemic will end soon.

Eravd Dastur writes WZSEs regularly and all his posts can be found on Avesta.org. If you would like to get on his publication list, please contact him at Dastur@comcast.net.

**Weekend Prayers in Houston**

In these trying times, it is soothing to listen to and participate in prayers.

As mentioned in each Manashni, the boye ceremony at the Atash Kadeh can be viewed on Zoom every weekend. All community members and friends from around the world are encouraged to witness the boye ceremony and participate in the humbandagi and translation that follows.

Peshotan Unwalla also conducts prayers each weekend from his house. They generally consist of various Nirangs with translations. Zoom links to both sets of prayers are published in each Manashni. We are grateful to our mobeds for performing these services and to our younger members for reading the translations.

The following is an example of a Nirang.

**Ardibehesht Yasht Nirang**


**Translation**

The Creator, the keeper of the world, (is) omnipotent and omniscient, and the Nourisher of all, and the producer, and the Doer of meritorious deeds and overseer. Ahriman is nothing whatsoever (and is) ignorant, and cannot do anything. Hormazd (is) the Creator (and) Ahriman the destroyer. The Creator (is) Holy and Ahriman (is) wicked. May Ahriman be perished, may Ahriman be far away, may Ahriman be vanished, may Ahriman be defeated, may Ahriman be overcome. The foremost Religion (is the) pure Zoroastrian (Religion); Hormazd (is) Exalted, Powerful, Good (and) the Increaser.
Family Story
By Persis Behramsha

GRANDPA & MAMAIJI

It all began when Zarin was born into Naozer & Persis Behramsha's family. Persis' parents were visiting and excited for the arrival of their first grandchild.

The conversation went like this.....

Persis' Dad (Soly Sethna): Maaroo mitthoo bakkalyoo mane tu soo bolavse? Mane toh jara Grandpa Grandpa karinej bolavje.


Thus began 'Grandpa' & 'Mamaiji' for Zarin, Jasmine and Kashmira. To distinguish Naozer's parents (Mehroo and Minoo Daroowalla), they decided Granny and Pappa would work great, and so, it stuck.

Of course, when our first grandchild, Jorge Darius, was born to our Zarin and Jorge Rodriguez, on October 18, 2017, guess what! Same conversation from this Persis mamaiji now. It took a little while for Darius to get it right. It rolled through Mimi, Mimiji, Mamaji, Memaw, and finally Mamaiji!!! Absolutely delightful to hear. Naozer was totally content with Grandpa. Darius calls him Grandpaw. Our second grandchild, Zara Aila was born on January 23, 2020, also to Zarin and Jorge and we cannot wait to hear the same music from her.

Our newest blessing, Jolene Makenna, was born on October 1, 2020 to our Jasmine and Justin Trainor, first time parents, who are just truly overjoyed to love her and watch her grow.

In Kashoo's words - "Kashoo is Masi to three, Jasoo is Masi to two, and Zazoo is Masi to one".

And so the saga of Grandpa and Mamaiji continues. Stay tuned for more updates ..........

NEED SADRAS?

For all your sadra and other stitching needs, please call Geeti Dhatigara at 929-402-8777. Her mother stitches the Sadras and other miscellaneous items. They live in Houston.