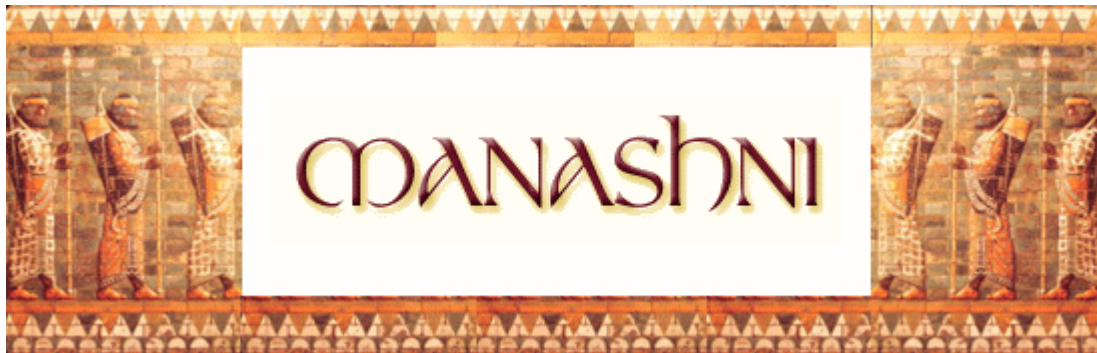




Zoroastrian Association of Houston  
8787 W. Airport Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77071



Volume 23: Issue 1

January 2010

**MANASHNI WISHES ITS READERS  
HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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

**TIME:** 11:15 AM.

**DATE:** January 10, 2010

Children's Session: Vehishta conducts this session. This is for children up to 8 or 9 years old. If you haven't seen Vehishta in action, you should attend this session. Interaction from parents is welcomed by Vehishta. With her creativity, she has got the children to sew little sudreh's to give them the concept of what is required in a sudreh. She has also taken them on a virtual tour of Iran with stories connected to the religion. Bring your children and let them have the camaraderie of other Zoroastrian kids.

Middle Group: Arnavaz Sethna and Pearline Collector conduct this session. At the request of the students, for the past year they have learnt about the ceremonies – religious and social. From the religious aspect they learnt how the three types of atashes are consecrated, the Navjote and wedding ceremony and from the social aspect what is "achhoo michhoo" and how that is performed. This group is for kids from 9/10 to high school age.

Senior Group: Sarosh Collector conducts this session. This group is for the high school age children. They now have a new youth, Zal Sethna, to conduct the discussion with the students. Zal graduated from Texas Tech, Lubbock and is now back with us in Houston. He just couldn't stay away from the Center and Sarosh promptly recruited him to help him with the Youth Group discussion session. Isn't it great? Now the Youth Group has Sarosh, Behroze and Zal for their sessions and Tenaz Sunavala as their "home-room mom" .

Adult Sunday School Classes – If you are interested in joining Adult Sunday School classes, please contact Nazneen Khumbatta, preferably at [nazneekhumbatta@yahoo.com](mailto:nazneekhumbatta@yahoo.com)

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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Saturday, January 30, 2010 – Jashn-e-Sadeh – See attached flyer  
Friday, February 5 - Library event – See attached flyer  
Sunday, February 14 – Car Rally  
Saturday, March 13 - Dar-ni-Pori Bake-a-thon  
Saturday, March 20 - Fasli Norouz Function  
Sunday, March 21 - Fasli Norouz Hambandagi

## MEETINGS

<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	Second Sunday of each month at 2:p.m.
<b>ZARATHUSHTI INVESTMENT GROUP</b>	Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. Interested? Please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.
<b>BUILDING CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE MEETING</b>	Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Interested? Please call Yazdi Sidhwa 281-265-0589.
<b>GOLDEN GROUP</b>	Fourth Sunday of each month. Interested? Please call Zarine Balsara at (281) 304-6611
<b>LIBRARY COMMITTEE</b>	First Sunday of each month at 11:00 AM. Interested in helping? Or would like more information, please call Aban Rustomji at 281-493-1275 or e-mail her at <a href="mailto:aban@coatingengineers.com">aban@coatingengineers.com</a>

## REPORTS

### YOUR EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORTS

The EC welcomes the new members of the Building Management Subcommittee (BMSC), and thanks Persis Behramsha, who single-handedly managed the multitude of building management tasks with dedication, grace and charm for many years. Pervin Sagar is the new chair of the BMSC, and any questions related to reservations of the ZHCC or building management should henceforth be directed to her. The EC is very pleased that our center continues to be used frequently by the community, and has put together a set of guidelines for use of the center - members are requested to abide by these guidelines to help ensure that our center continues its sterling service to our community for many years to come.

The ZAH Library Committee is requesting members to send in ancestral family photographs to display permanently on a wall in the ZHCC. If you would like your old photos to be considered for display, please bring them to the ZHCC on 1/10/10 or 1/31/10, between 11am and 1pm to hand to Darayus Kolah for review and selection by the Library Committee. Please bring them in an envelope with your name and telephone number on it so that they can be tracked easily. Members giving their photographs are requested to [identify as many ancestors as possible in the photos so the Library Committee can list them below the relevant photo if selected for display](#). The committee prefers actual photos, black and white, but will also consider digital prints. The last date for pictures to be submitted for selection is January 31, 2010. If you want your original photo to be returned, the library will make a copy. [A final format \(framed and wall mounted or bound in a photo album\) for display will be decided upon by the committee after final selection of photos is made](#). All pictures not displayed will be returned to their owners by mid-February.

ZAH will again be donating to the Houston Meals on Wheels program. Last year, ZAH and our members donated a total of \$2000 to this project. This year, the EC has kick-started the donations with a contribution of \$500, and again requests members to contribute what they wish to this worthy program. Please contact Nazanin Sarkari if you would like to make a contribution.

ZAH is looking for volunteers to form an Outreach Committee. Please see the separate email (re-written below) on this request, and let Percy Master know via email if you are interested in being on this committee.

Our ZHCC roof repair project is getting off the ground now. Our ever-busy Building Construction Committee is working out the final few details with the roofer. The EC has sanctioned up to \$65K for the complete repair of the roof, and has also authorized a one-time expenditure of up to \$2000 to purchase a bond from an insurance company, to cover the cost of damage should the constructor/roofer renege on their warranty – more details will be provided shortly via a separate email update.

Remember to visit the *JUST NEWS* link on the ZAH website for the latest news on ZAH. Until next month, we, your EC, wish you the very best and look forward to seeing you at the Center. If there is anything you would like to discuss with the EC, please be sure to contact Percy Master (the ZAH secretary) by email at [percy.master@hp.com](mailto:percy.master@hp.com), so that your issue can be added to the agenda for the next EC meeting.

The ZAH EC - Sarosh Collector, Kershaw Khumbatta, Kamalrukh Gandhi, Jehanbux Mehta, Jasmine Mistry, Nazanin Sarkari, Rustom Setna and Percy Master.

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE – Executive committee**

The Executive Committee has created a new subcommittee, called the **Outreach Committee**. This committee will work with interfaith organizations and represent Zoroastrianism in multiple interfaith fora and at various functions such as the International Festival. This committee will be the venue through which ZAH and its' members will represent the Zarathushti community by getting involved in and helping (physically and monetarily) the many local and national charitable and service organizations that exist in and around Houston. It will also be responsible for promoting education about Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian issues. If you are interested in joining this committee, please let the ZAH Secretary, Percy Master, know via email at [percy.master@hp.com](mailto:percy.master@hp.com)

## **LIBRARY REPORT – by Jangoo Mistry**

**Movie Screening:** The ZAH Library Committee is planning to screen Tenaz Dubash's film: "*Crisis in Faith: Zoroastrians Today*" on Friday, February 5, 2010. Please refer to the attached flyer for more details on the event.

Tenaz Dubash was born in Calcutta, and grew up in Delhi and Bombay. She moved to America in 1982 and received a Bachelors degree from Cornell University and a Masters degree in Television, Radio & Film from the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University. In 2000, Tenaz traveled to Iran with 34 Zoroastrians, where she shot and produced her first documentary, entitled "In the Footsteps of our Forefathers". The film follows Zoroastrian youth as they search for the roots of their religion in Iran. Tenaz's eight years of television production experience include positions at ABC, MSNBC and CNBC. She is currently developing two independent documentaries on human trafficking.

Her latest movie, which we are screening in February, is an observance of the current challenges facing the Zoroastrian community. The hour-long documentary focuses on the assimilation of the Zoroastrian community into North America by documenting the personal stories of individual Zoroastrians. In Tenaz's own words, "What beliefs have the Zoroastrians doggedly held on to? What have they been forced to discard? Will the followers of the world's oldest monotheistic religion be able to hold on to this claim 50 years from now - as their numbers rapidly decline? These are some of the central questions that this film will attempt to answer." Ms. Dubash has conducted companion lecture series during the launch of this new film in Harvard and Washington, D.C., and is planning to fly down to Houston and Dallas for the screenings that weekend. We are planning to screen the first 40 minutes of the film, followed by a Q&A session that promises to be lively and controversial this time. The DVD of the entire documentary film will be available for purchase at the event.

More details about the movie and Tenaz Dubash are available on [www.tenazdubash.com](http://www.tenazdubash.com)

## **ZAH YOUTH GROUP COLUMN - by Bahrom Firozgary**

As the decade comes to an end, the Youth Group begins their new service projects for the upcoming year. The youth group already hosted a food drive and collected canned goods for a local food drive. As well, they have started planning to participate in the upcoming Summer Youth Zarthushti Games in California; with basketball being their best shot, they hope to win some trophies to show off once they get back home.

And just recently, youth group president Bahrom Firozgary was admitted into Rice University. Following is his essay that helped him get selected.

### **Culturally Confused** An Essay by Bahrom Firozgary

I am ethnically, culturally, racially, and physically different from everyone in the entire world. There is no other 6' 8" person on the face of this Earth that can say he or she is a Zoroastrian, valedictorian, varsity basketball captain, homecoming king, Eagle Scout, National Honor Society Vice President, and church youth group president all at the SAME time. However, I am no fluke either; thanks to my unique personality,

I seek to improve my character every chance I get. Coming from a very diverse Persian/Indian/British/American cultural background, I am always open to trying new foods, activities, and customs that require me to go beyond the normal cultural boundaries here in the United States.

With a name like Bahrom, stating that I am American always seems to fail people's expectations when they ask me, "Where are you from?" So I go on and explain: I was born and raised in Houston, my parents are from Pune, India, and my grandparents are from Tehran, Iran. Having foreign parents, I have learned how to perform various rituals that are rarely seen in typical American households. For example, every morning before I have a school dance or important event to attend, I light a tea lamp and place it next to my deceased sister's picture; in India, my parents were accustomed to lighting candles before festive occasions in order to pay homage to departed family members. The candle symbolizes the boundless presence of my sister in our lives, whether it be good times or bad times. In addition to lighting a candle on certain days, I pray to God everyday; the Zoroastrian prayers that my family and I recite on our way to school or work were written in an ancient Persian language called Avesta. Our prayers are simply "words of gratitude" that thank our God (called Ahura Mazda in Avesta) and ask for his protection throughout the day. Although I pray in a different language and to a different God, I am similar to most people in the sense that I also ask for forgiveness and thank a "superior being" for all that I have been blessed with. However, whenever I pray, I wear a cloth hat called a "topi" which serves as an imaginary "landing site" for angels. The topi is common in most South and Southwest Asian countries and similar to the Jews, Zoroastrians also wear a "sudreh" and "kusti." The sudreh is a very thin undershirt made out of cotton that symbolically stores all of our good thoughts and deeds that we commit during the day; the kusti is a thick, woolen "string" that is tied around the waste while prayers are recited. Both the sudreh and kusti are worn after Zoroastrian youths have their Navjots, or confirmations. My sister and I had our confirmation ten years ago on February 13th, 1999; since then, I have worn my sudreh and kusti everyday, only taking it off when I shower, swim, or indulge in physical activities. My commitment to my faith has allowed me to learn my friends' religious rituals without feeling embarrassed or insulted because I have matured and accepted that I AM unique.

When I'm changing clothes in the school locker room, I feel proud to show off my unique, Zoroastrian apparel. No matter how many times I am asked to go into details about my cultural habits, I am enthused to inform others about my religious and cultural habits. Thanks to my distinct, unbiased attitude towards different peoples' ethnicities and religions, I can comprehend the plethora of cultural traditions practiced all over the world and in my community.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### 12<sup>TH</sup> ZOROASTRIAN GAMES

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) cordially invites you to join us for the 12th Zoroastrian Games, to be held in Long Beach, CA from July 1 - July 5, 2010. Applications and registration info will be available soon at <http://www.zathletics.com/>.

Save the date and plan to register early because we fully expect to get at least 2000 attendees, and events sell out very quickly.

**What:** The 12th Zoroastrian Games  
**When:** July 1 - 5, 2010  
**Where:** The Beautiful California State University, Long Beach

Please tell your friends and help spread the word.

If you are on facebook, join the ZSC page

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43558193195&ref=search&sid=728218174.1989029443..1>)

If you have any questions, contact us at: [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org)

### UPDATE ON GENETIC STUDY FOR TEXAS PARSIS

A number of you have registered for the Genetic Study that Dr. Saroja Voruganti is conducting. Dr. Saroja has prepared a questionnaire that will be emailed to registrants next week. Dr Saroja and her team will be

here at ZAH to conduct the personal interview that will take 20 minutes of your time. Interviews will be scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday and Aban Rustomji will check with you for a suitable date and time.

However, we need a lot more of *YOU* to respond to this study. The study aims to identify the genetic and environmental influence on the prevalent health problems in the Parsi community in Texas. In this pilot study, information related to family structure, basic demographics, dietary patterns, health habits and medical histories, along with simple anthropometrics and blood pressure measures will be collected from members of Parsi families. All individuals 18 years or older can participate; there is no upper age limit for participation. Studies like this are valuable to create a comprehensive database of the Parsi community in Texas. And a report of this study will be presented at the NAZC 2010 in December.

Call Saroja Voruganti @ 210.258.9795 or email her @ [svorugan@sfbgenetics.org](mailto:svorugan@sfbgenetics.org) or email Aban Rustomji at [aban@coatingindustries.com](mailto:aban@coatingindustries.com) and *JOIN TODAY!*

## **IDEAS/ARTICLES FOR MANASHNI**

If you have any articles for Manashni e.g. community news, news about our members or anything interesting/fun, please send those to [ZAHMANASHNI@yahoo.com](mailto:ZAHMANASHNI@yahoo.com). We will try to feature your articles in the upcoming Manashni editions. Please remember to put your first and last name in the email as well.

## **MATRIMONIAL SERVICE**

Aban Vazir of Toronto, Canada has spearheaded Matrimonial Service. Please contact her for yourself, or for your children, nephews and nieces. Complete confidentiality will be maintained. Aban can be contact at:

Aban Vazir - Toronto, Canada.  
Tel: 416-622-6552  
Email: [aban\\_vazir@yahoo.ca](mailto:aban_vazir@yahoo.ca)

She will help in finding the most suitable life partner who will match the personality and compatibility based on the information given.

## **NAVJOTE**

**Cyrus Mistry**, son of **Jasmine and Yazdi Mistry**, was initiated into the Zoroastrian Religion on Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at Saher Agiary, Cumballa Hill, Mumbai. Ervad Jal Katrak, Panthak at Saher Agiary along with three other priests performed Cyrus' Navjote Ceremony. Grandparents Tehmi & Bhikhu Mistry and Aloo Italia along with their extended families and friends attended and witnessed this heartwarming and emotional moment. Jasmine and Yazdi would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, prayers, and blessings.

**Narius and Natalya Mehta**, children of **Natasha and Naushad Mehta**, had their navjote ceremony on December 26, 2009. Happy grandparents are Sillie & Jehanbux Mehta and Sanobar & Minoo Baria.

**Aliya Byramji**, daughter of **Rubina and Feroze Byramji**, had her Navjote ceremony on December 27, 2009. Happy grandmother is Khorshed Khan.

***Congratulations to Cyrus Mistry, Narius and Natalya Mehta, and Aliya Byramji.***

## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**

Farida and Neville Divecha have moved. Their address is:

20359 FieldTree Drive  
Humble TX 77338  
Home Phone -281-973-0088  
E-mail - [fdivecha@gmail.com](mailto:fdivecha@gmail.com)



ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON  
2010 MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL (h): \_\_\_\_\_ TEL (other): \_\_\_\_\_

E.Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORY OF MEMBERS (PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY)**

PATRON MEMBER. – FAMILY.....	\$500.00
PATRON MEMBER – SINGLE .....	\$250.00
FAMILY MEMBER .....	\$275.00
FAMILY ASSOCIATE MEMBER .....	\$275.00
SINGLE MEMBER HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD .....	\$135.00
SINGLE MEMBER.....	\$135.00
FAMILY SENIOR MEMBER.....	\$ 65.00
SINGLE SENIOR MEMBER .....	\$ 40.00
STUDENT MEMBER .....	\$ 25.00
MANASHNI SURCHARGE - FOR PRINTED/MAILED COPIES	\$ 15.00
DONATION	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

**FAMILY MEMBER:** PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18

**FAMILY SENIOR MEMBER:** WHERE ONE SPOUSE IS OVER THE AGE OF 65

**SINGLE SENIOR MEMBER:** AN INDIVIDUAL OVER THE AGE OF 65

**SINGLE MEMBER:** AN UNMARRIED INDIVIDUAL OVER THE AGE OF 18

**MEMBERSHIP YEAR:** CALENDAR YEAR – JANUARY TO DECEMBER

**MAIL TO:** ZAH Treasurer, 8787 W. Airport Blvd., Houston, TX 77071

**DIRECTORY INFORMATION** – Please complete the following if you wish your name to be included in our next directory:

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_ S/O or D/O: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILDREN:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

DEPENDENTS: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ TEL: (W) \_\_\_\_\_ CEL: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE: TEL (W) : \_\_\_\_\_ CEL: \_\_\_\_\_

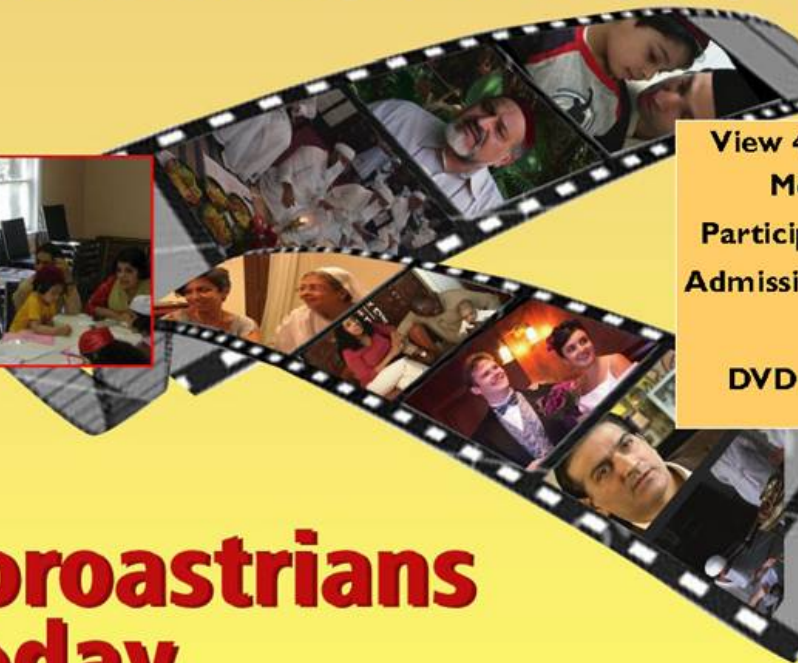
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROFESSION: \_\_\_\_\_ PROFESSION: (SPOUSE): \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WORLD'S OLDEST AND SMALLEST FAITH SEALS ITSELF OFF FROM CHANGE?



Join a Zoroastrian filmmaker as she confronts the controversial issues facing her community today.



## Zoroastrians Today

Writer/Director – Tenaz Dubash

One hour, Color, Filmed in Vancouver, Chicago, Boston, Bombay and Iran

Printed by [www.printaspects.com](http://www.printaspects.com)

**6:30 pm, Friday February 5, 2010**

**Zarathushti Heritage & Cultural Center**



View 40 minutes of the film

Meet Tenaz Dubash

Participate in a Q&A session

Admission FREE—All welcome

**DVD ON SALE — \$25.00**





For centuries, Sadeh has been celebrated to mark the beginning of the preparation for farming in Spring and to say goodbye to winter.

We are now at that time of the year, and to keep the tradition alive, we are having the festival of Jashn-e-Sadeh on:

**Date: January 30, 2010**

**Place: Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center**

**Time: 6:30 - Reciting Atash Niyayesh**

A d u l t m e m b e r : \$ 12.00 per person

K i d s u p t o 10 y e a r s : \$ 8.00 per person

M e m b e r s d e f i n e d f o r t h i s e v e n t : T h o s e p a i d  
u p a s a t d e c 31, 2009

**N o n - M e m b e r s**

**A d u l t : \$ 20.00 per person**

**Please RSVP no later than 1/23/2010**

**to**

**Cyra Kanga @ 281-969-8057 after 6:00 p.m. or  
e-mail her at [crkanga@gmail.com](mailto:crkanga@gmail.com)**