



**Volume 28: Issue 11**

**November 2015**

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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

**TIME:** 11.30 a.m. - Middle Group/ 10:30 a.m. - Children's group.

**DATE:** November 8, 2015

**Children's Session:** Sunday School will be held at 10:30 a.m. Topic will be Ahura Mazda's 101 names. Gujarati will also be covered

**Middle Group:** This group starts at 11:30 a.m. and is for the children in the middle school.

**Youth Group:** Sarosh Collector conducts this session. Age group – Senior school

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Saturday, November 7, 2015, 2.30 pm onwards - Seminar on 'Applying for College'. See attached flyer for details**

**Sunday, November 8, 2015, 2 pm – ZAH Annual General Meeting. Lunch from 1 pm to 2 pm. See attached AGM Agenda**

**Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 6 pm to 9 pm – IRAs and 401(K)s – Perils, Pitfalls and Solutions - An Educational Workshop by Farokh Billimoria**

### **MEETINGS**

<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 Rustumji at 281-493-1275 or e-mail her at <a href="mailto:aban@coatingindustries.com">aban@coatingindustries.com</a>

### **REPORTS**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**“Love is in the Air”**, ZAH's Annual Fundraiser and Play was a hilarious success. The evening started with rolling thunder and torrential rain, but that did not stop the adventuring Z's to come to the ZAH and spend the evening enjoying the show, and finishing with a gourmet Chinese fusion dinner by Ailings.

Not only did everyone have fun, but the community pitched in and helped us achieve our target of raising \$20,000. The proceeds of this fundraiser all went to our Vision 2020 plan for Atash Kadeh, Phase 3A, Facilities upgrade and renovation and the Building maintenance fund.

Houston, we are a dynamic community, the envy of other North American associations. Humongous thanks to Kamalrukh Gandhi and her talented cast and crew (Shernaz Boomla, Yasmin Medhora, Farzana Sidhwa, Percy Katrak, Percy Master, Sarosh Collector and Ronnie Sarkari, with a cameo appearance by Darius Dastur) for an entertaining and hilarious natak. Big thanks also, to all the crew (Arnavaz Sethna, Lyla Daroga, Khursheed Dastur, Aspi Colah and Khushrav Nariman), box office Cyra Kanga, Playbill Homi Davier, Raffle ticket sales Nargis Cooper and Farzana Sidhwa. A big thanks to Yasmin Medhora for arranging and managing the entire evening.

A huge Thank You to our Gold Sponsor Kershaw K Khumbatta PLLC, Silver Sponsor The Mehta Fund, as well as all our donors to the silent auction, live auction and the raffle prizes. Kudos to our receptive audience for braving the weather. None of this would be possible if we did not have this wonder participation. We are proud to be part of this wonderful community.

For the ZAH Executive Committee  
Aderbad Tamboli

## **LIBRARY REPORT**

*By Jangoo Mistry*

### ***ZAH Library's Annual Event Tackles Significant Issue***

The ZAH Library (Home of FIRES) hosted its 3-day annual event in Houston starting on Friday, October 9. The theme, ***"Survival of Zoroastrians in North America: Potential for a Positive Outlook"***, addressed the burning issue of how the diaspora in North America can thrive and remain a vibrant force in the coming decades.

Two outstanding experts were featured – Dr. Rashna Writer from France, and Roshan Rivetna from Chicago.

Friday evening, which was a meet-and-greet opportunity for the community, was dedicated mainly for the speakers to introduce themselves.

The next morning (Saturday, October 10) began with the first speaker Roshan Rivetna, who presented fascinating, but alarming, statistics on worldwide Zoroastrian population trends, births, deaths, fertility rates, conversions and immigration patterns. Roshan's demographic study has been presented in detail in the Fall 2013 issue of *The FEZANA Journal*.

The second speaker, Dr. Rashna Writer, widely recognized for her books and lectures around the world, noted that the challenge before the community was daunting, and that Zoroastrianism could lose its identity in the multi-religious, multi-cultural society of North America. Widespread dispersal of Zoroastrians in a dynamic and mobile North American society will lead to atomization that will enfeeble the diaspora.

Both speakers suggested several approaches that could be implemented at the local and global level to reverse the disturbing trends.

After lunch, the group gathered again to hear from a panel of three younger members of our community who shared their perspective of the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. The panelists, Zia Anklesaria, Nozer Dungor, and Tannaz Macchi, shared with us their perspective of the future of Zoroastrianism in North America. The audience was fascinated and impressed with their varying viewpoints and the suggestions made to enhance the community experience of people in their age group.

The third day of the event (Sunday, October 11) was a 2-hour informal discussion with the speakers in a smaller group. Rashna Writer stressed that for Zoroastrianism to thrive in North America, it is vital to keep the second-generation immigrants (grown children of first-generation immigrants) involved in the community.

The three-day event was an unqualified success. Those who filled the main hall of the Zarathushti Center of Houston recognized this event as the first serious attempt to address the issue. To build on this momentum, it was felt that the ZAH Library Committee members for now should identify the first steps needed to sustain and strengthen Zoroastrianism in North America for the next generation and beyond.

## **ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

*By the ZAH Entertainment Committee*

The Fasli Mehrgan and Maediozarem Gahambar was celebrated at the ZAH on Sunday, 10/04/15. This event was attended by nearly 300 attendees. An estimated sum of \$3K (includes 22% on expenses) was given to the ZAH towards this event. The ZAH EC and the Entertainment Committee thanks Bob and Carolyn Yazdani family who sponsored the Gahambar. Their generosity is very much appreciated.

The morning started with the beautiful prayers performed by our very own Ervad Barjor Dastur, Ervad Noshir Khumbatta, Ervad Khushrav Nariman, Ervad Shapur Pavri, Ervad Maneck Sidhwa, Ervad Yazad Sidhwa and Ervad Bomanshah Sanjana. ZAH thanks all our Ervads for their continuous support to our community. Our young Ervad Yazad Sidhwa gave an excellent explanation of the meaning of this gahambar.

The prayers were followed by acknowledgments and thanks by the ZAH EC member Aderbad Tamboli. Of course the highly enjoyable chaasni was served next. The delicious nuts and the fruits hand cut by our volunteers were very refreshing. The yummy malido was prepared and donated by Maharukh Deputy, Yasmin Medhora and Kamal Unwalla.

Lunch comprised of the mouthwatering Persian food from Kaasra restaurant – kubideh kabobs, chicken chenjeh, gheymeh, veggies, salad, roti, rice and the delicious dhansak dal ordered from Naushad Mehta. The tasty cake and ice cream was enjoyed by all for dessert.

The Yazdani family has expressed their appreciation of the heartfelt & sincere jashan prayers conducted by our Ervads. They have also thanked the Entertainment Committee, the EC and all the volunteers who helped to make the function flow smoothly.

Gahambars are not only to celebrate with food abundantly offered to the attendees, but also occasion for Zoroastrians to express their thanks to Ahura Mazda through charity. Other than the Yazdani family, donations were also received from Rohinton & Nazanin Sarkari \$150/- and Noshir Sidhwa \$50/-. Finally thanks to the Master family (Gul, Zubin and Percy) for the hall and atrium set up; Nozer Dungor for sodas and line coordination during lunch; Zia Sagar for ZAH RSVPs & registration desk; Farrokh Firozgari for mikes & music and miscellaneous; Tenaz Sunavala for buying tons of fruits, chaasni prep with volunteers; Arzin Italia for dessert, volunteers and miscellaneous; Yasmin Medhora for tea, paper products, flowers, table cloths and stage. Thanks to the ZAH Web Team for the RSVP setup and reply lists; Percy Behramsha for the excellent pictures of this event (on zah website) and a very special thank you to our ZAH Treasurer, Kayo Sidhwa for working the detailed accounting for the event the very next day.

May God Bless our wonderful community.

## **YOUTH REPORT**

*By Tanaya Behramsha  
Treasurer, ZAH Youth Group*

In the month of October the youth group held a blood drive through the Gulf Coast Regional Blood center on the day of the Ghambar (10/4). We had a great turnout of people willing to donate, so a big thank you to all those who donated! The next week on Oct. 11 we had our Sunday School session with Sarosh uncle in which we decided upon interesting topics that the youth would like to learn about in class for the next few years.

As for upcoming events, this coming weekend Nov. 7 & 8 the youth group will be having a combined lock-in with the middle group. For the lock-in, we have arranged to have an informative session by Farrokh Mistry on the subject of preparing for college. In addition we will be having a food drive on Nov. 8 as our service project for the month. Please bring any nonperishable items that you may have to the center on Nov 8. All donations will be given to the Houston Food Bank! Following our lock-in, we will have our normal Sunday School session from 10:00am-12:00pm. Additionally the youth has planned to attend the AGM.

The youth group will also be having a lock-in in Dallas on Nov. 27 & 28. In the past we have always enjoyed our lock-ins with the Dallas kids, so we would really like to continue this important bond between these two groups.

We want to thank the entire ZAH community for their ongoing support of our Youth Group, we greatly appreciate it!

## MISCELLANEOUS

### GAHAMBAR:

*Our young Ervad - Yazad Sidhwa, shared the below information about Gahambars, with the ZAH community at the Fasli Mehrgan and Maediozarem Gahambar celebration at ZAH, on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2015.*

Hi Everyone,

For those who don't know me I am Yazad Sidhwa. I will try my best to talk about what I thought was important about the Gahambar.

Zoroastrians from India & Pakistan call it Gahambar which is derived from "gah" and "ambar" meaning time-gathering, the time for gathering food and people. Iranian Zoroastrians call it Gaahanbaar. In Persian, the word Gaahanbaar is derived from "gah" and "anbar" meaning time-for-storage. It signifies the period for storing or accessing stored food in winter.

Gahambars are six seasonal festivals in a year of special significance for Zoroastrians when we assemble to eat and share food. The six Gahambars are: Maidyozarem, Maidyoshahem, Paitishahem, Ayathrem, Maidyarem and Hamaspathmaidyem Gahambar.

The Afringhan of Gahambar that we prayed today mentions that it is the duty of every Zoroastrian to celebrate and participate in a Gahambar. The four words we used in the Afrin today were Yazad, sazad, khurad, dehad meaning Pray, perform, eat, give. These words recommend the different ways every Zoroastrian can participate in celebrating the Gahambars. I just prayed so I am done ☺.

They are joyous occasions at which rich and poor meet together, new friendships are formed and old disputes resolved. While each Gahambar traditionally used to span five days, nowadays it is the last day that is usually observed. The Gahambars are the only festivals mentioned in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the [Avesta](#) and we believe they were instituted by Lord [Zarathustra](#) himself.

In earlier days, food was contributed according to a person or family's situation. Many community members volunteered to prepare the food and serve the meals without regard to whether they were rich or poor. During the meal, everyone sat together and ate the same food. Universal Brotherhood was one of the principal objects of Gahambars, where the King and common person, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak would share a common meal together. The free and equal sharing of food with everyone and being together always helped build and strengthen the community.

Ok now let's talk about food (of course ☺). In the Indian tradition, one of the dishes commonly prepared for a gahambar is called '**papeta ma gosht**' meaning meat-in-potatoes whereas in the Iranian tradition, one of the food dishes prepared for a gahanbar is a soup called **aus**. The soup is accompanied with a fried bread called **sirug**.

With this I would like to end by thanking Bob Yazdani Uncle and his family for sponsoring this Gahambar and allowing us to meet, greet and eat together. Thank you.

### **IRAS & 401(K)s – PERILS, PITFALLS AND SOLUTIONS**

**An Educational Workshop by Farokh Billimoria, MBA, CPA/PFS, CFP. RICP**

All of us contribute to our retirement plans during our working lives. No wonder then that, by the end of 2014, the estimated total value of IRAs and 401(k)'s represented \$12 trillion of the US retirement market! But here's the problem: the market is as tricky as it is vast - *a minefield of rules, regulations and tax complexities*. One false move can blow holes in your portfolio and shatter your retirement security. And, it doesn't matter if you are young or old, self-employed or a regular employee - the rules are lurking in the background, just waiting to ambush the unsuspecting or the ill-informed.

Plan to attend the workshop to become better-informed and more aware of the intricacies involved. You just might wind up saving yourself thousands of dollars in penalties and taxes.

**Where:** The Madras Pavilion, 16260 Kensington Drive, Sugar Land, TX

**When:** Tuesday, November 17, 2015

**Schedule:** 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM Registration, Appetizers and Social  
7:00 PM – 7:45 PM Dinner  
7:45 PM – 8:45 PM Workshop  
8:45 PM – 9:00 PM Q & A

**Fee:** There is no cost for the workshop. However, the Madras Pavilion will be charging \$15 per person for appetizers, dinner and soft drinks.

**RSVP:** Call [\(832\) 945-5490](tel:8329455490) or e-mail [FarBill@gmail.com](mailto:FarBill@gmail.com) by Friday, November 13, 2015

**About the Speaker:** Farokh Billimoria is President of WealthCare Advisors, LLC a wealth management firm located in Schaumburg, IL and Richmond, TX. He has over 30 years of experience in personal finance and specializes in retirement planning and portfolio management. He has an MBA in finance from the University of Chicago, and has certifications in public accounting (CPA), personal finance (PFS), financial planning (CFP) and retirement income planning (RICP). He is the author of “On Golden Pond...or Up the Creek? *Making the Right Choices for Your Retirement Security*” and has been a frequent guest on radio shows in the Chicago area on matters related to personal finance.

### **NAVSARI ATASHBEHRAM CELEBRATED THE 250TH SALGREH (ANNIVERSARY) OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT**

Navsari was all decked up to celebrate 250th anniversary of one of the oldest religious places of Parsi community in the country.

The Navsari Atash Behram – fire temple –completed its 250 years on Saturday (3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2015, Roj Sarosh, Mah Ardebehest, Y.Z 1385. Parsis in large number from all over India gathered in the city. All organizations in the city, which were run by the Parsi community, were decorated with flowers and lights.

“Navsari played an important role in Zoroastrian history of India. The Iranshah – The Holy Fire – currently at Udwada was in Navsari for over 200 years. Later, it was shifted to Udwada. During those 200 years, Parsi community flourished in Navsari.” explained Kersi Deboo, director, Gujarat Minorities Development Corporation.

The Atash Behram currently located at Tarota Bazaar, a peaceful Parsi locality, was bursting with activity over the Salgreh weekend. Over 2,000 Parsis from across India joined the local population of nearly 500 Parsis to celebrate the 250 years of Atash Behram.

The fire temple – Agiyari – was developed after the Iranshah was shifted to Udwada. Navsari also played an important role in contributing legends like Jamshedji Tata. The ancestral home of the Tata family is few metres away from the Atash Behram. A slew of events including cultural and religious were held there. After ‘jashan’ in the morning, Parsis gathered at Atash Behram to offer sandalwood to the holy fire.

A series of cultural events showcased the Parsi culture. Known cultural artist Rumi Bariya had planned the events and people from the community joined in.

Prayers were performed in the presence of high priest Kaikhushroo Meherji Rana and some other high priests from across India.





**"Applying for College"** a seminar which provides valuable insights

- What will I need to apply for college?
- How do I prepare for College?
- When do I start applying?

- When do I take the SAT?
- What if I do not know what I want to do?
- What should I do when I visit colleges?



- ✓ How much money will I need?
- ✓ How do I prepare the scholarship application?
- ✓ How important are extracurricular activities in a college application?

Also....*Essay writing tips*

**Presented by Dr Farrokh Mistree**

***Don't miss this opportunity***

What: **'Applying for College' seminar**

When: Sat 7th Nov, 2015 starting at 2.30pm

Where: ZHCC, 8787 W airport Blvd., Houston 77071

Who: 8-12<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents

Questions: Email [percymb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:percymb@sbcglobal.net) or call 281 818 0663





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**ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON**  
**Agenda for the 2015 ZAH Annual General Body Meeting**

Meeting Date: *November 8, 2015*

Meeting Time: *2:00PM.*

Meeting Chair: *Aderbad Tamboli*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
1.	Invocation	
2.	Establish quorum	Percy Master
3.	Adoption of the Agenda	Aderbad Tamboli
4.	Approval of the Minutes of the 2014 AGM	Aderbad Tamboli
5.	Chairperson's Report	Aderbad Tamboli
6.	Treasurer's Report	Kayomarz Sidhwa
7.	Approval of the Treasurer's Report	Aderbad Tamboli
8.	Youth Report	Freya Daroga
9.	Investment Management Team Report	Jamshed Elavia
10.	Library Committee Report	Aban Rustomji
11.	Building Management Subcommittee Report	Pervin Sagar
12.	Sports Committee Report	Percy Behramsha
13.	Legacy Scholarship Report	Homi Davier
14.	ZAHCares	Homi Davier
15.	New EC members' election	Aderbad Tamboli
16.	Benediction and meeting close	