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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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

**TIME:** Different timings for each group

**DATE:** January 11, 2026

**Children's Session:** The Sunday School session starts at **10:30 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 11:00 a.m. **In person**



**Calendar of Events for 2026:**

- 7<sup>th</sup> February, Saturday - Jashan Sadeh Prayers for solidarity and support - Boye Ceremony at 4.30 pm and Atash Nyaesh Prayers at 5.15 pm
- 20<sup>th</sup> February, Friday – Family Friendly Movie Night. See flyer at the end of Manashni for details. Questions? Contact Zubin Mistry at [Zubin.T.Mistry@gmail.com](mailto:Zubin.T.Mistry@gmail.com)
- 21<sup>st</sup> March, Saturday - Navroze Humbandagi and Function
- 12<sup>th</sup> April, Sunday - ZAH Carnival
- 31<sup>st</sup> May, Sunday - Gahambar
- 15<sup>th</sup> August, Saturday - Navroze Humbandagi and Function
- 4<sup>th</sup> October, Sunday - Gahambar

**REPORTS**

**LIBRARY REPORT**

By: Aban Rustomji

**Tiny Treasures, Timeless Devotion: Miniature Avestas at Our Library**

The Meherjibhoy Hormusji Rana (MHR) Library in Navsari, Gujarat, is widely recognized as a remarkable repository of rare books, manuscripts, and historical texts central to Zoroastrian studies. While miniature books are not always highlighted in general descriptions of such institutions, seasoned scholars know that libraries of this stature often safeguard exquisitely produced small-format devotional works—objects where faith, artistry, and craftsmanship converge.

Our own library is fortunate to be home to such treasures.

Over the years, we have received two miniature Avestas, cherished donations from the late Nergish Sethna and, more recently, Kati Tamboli. These remarkable pieces were proudly displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, where they drew admiration for both their delicacy and spiritual significance.

## MINIATURE AVESTAS IN OUR LIBRARY



## AMARDAD PARAB JASHAN



## BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN



We are delighted to share that our collection has grown once again. Recent donations from Pervin Sagar include an identical miniature Avesta to one already in our holdings, as well as an extraordinary and finely detailed reproduction of Jam-e-Jamshed—a truly captivating addition. We are currently in the process of selecting the perfect display case so these items can be properly show-cased and enjoyed by all.

Adding to the joy, library member Yezdi Engineer beautifully captured these treasures through his expert photography, allowing us to share their charm with an even wider audience.

Our heartfelt thanks to all who help keep our library vibrant—one treasured gift at a time.

## ATASH KADEH NEWS

By: Atash Kadeh Committee

HAPPY NEW YEAR to everyone. May this year bring lots of happiness and good health to our entire community. Thank you to the 'Friends of ZAH' group for kicking off the New Year with the Behram Roj Jashan – very well attended and celebrated !

As we begin this wonderful New Year, we are thankful for all the support and goodwill showered on our Atash Kadeh. We especially acknowledge Tanaaz & Edul Chikhlwala for their diligence in thoroughly cleaning our Atash Kadeh, every single month. What a special dedication they demonstrate! We are also thankful to Shernaz Bhandara and Mahrukh Deputy who regularly check and replenish the Divas, Oil, Coal, and various other supplies that are utilized constantly.

We appreciate all the donations that have been received from the 2 Million Dollar Fundraiser that was initiated on January 1, 2025. Please consider donating to the Mobed Fund, or the General Maintenance Fund, so we can continue to support our dedicated Mobeds and continue the upkeep of our Atash Kadeh.

The monthly Behram Roj Jashan for December was sponsored by the families of *Ruby & Bejun Anklesaria, Roshan & Percy Behramsha, Yasmin & Sheroy Haveliwala, Kamalrukh Gandhi, Jasmin & Percy Katrak and Manek & Khushrav Nariman.*

The Amardad Mahino, Amardad Roj Parab Jashan was sponsored by *Mitra, Zubin and Jahan Mistry.*

Thank you to all the sponsor families for your enthusiasm in supporting this tradition throughout the years. It is wonderful to see the turnout and the lively chitter-chatter after these Jashan, not to mention the scrumptious spread of food.

We are delighted that we continue to perform Navjotes, Jashans, Machis, Tandarostis and various other prayers on a regular basis throughout the year.

The Houston Zoroastrian Study Group met on Sunday December 14, 2025 at 12:30 p.m..

*This session continued with an account of the Sasanians using myth as history to legitimize their rule, thereby creating a national identity. The presentation covered the Sasanian use of the Peshdadian and Kayanian legends to bolster four chief aspects of their reign: (i) religious, (ii) socio-political, (iii) didactic (moralistic), and (iv) recreational.*



The session also touched upon elements from Ferdowsi's masterful epic the Shah Nameh highlighting Zoroastrian principles in those stories.

Please feel free to email [AtashKadeh.ZAH@Gmail.com](mailto:AtashKadeh.ZAH@Gmail.com) or call any of our committee members if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Committee Members: Khushrav Nariman, Feroze Bhandara, Shernaz Bhandara, Mitra Khumbatta, Persis Behramsha



## ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

By: Arzin Italia

### Celebrating New Year's Eve 2025 at ZAH

We Wish you, and your families a Very Happy New Year. We had an amazing, successful and a fun New Years Eve Celebration.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA



We began preparations and planning in September. Every little detail was discussed and meticulously planned from lights, decorations, food, dessert, and all the way down to the balloon drop. We all had our duties assigned and met on the 29<sup>th</sup> and worked very hard to get the job done.

New Years Eve was celebrated at ZAH on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. 172 people attended the celebration. The Main Hall and Atrium was decorated beautifully with a Gold and Black colors. At around 7:30 PM, many guests who were dressed to impress, trickled in. We had three different photo booths organized for families to take beautiful, memorable pictures.



There was also a rental 360 photo booth Organized by Fiona Setna. This booth was donated by the friends and Entertainment Committee Members. People got to take Printed Pictures home.

The evening started with our MC Natasha Dungor. We had music by DJ Rey Hernandez. Natasha Dungor welcomed everyone and then introduced the main Entertainment of the Evening. We had salsa dancing performers from LD Entertainment. People enjoyed the dances and performances while enjoying the appetizers from Alings Restaurant.

After the Performance was done Natasha Dungor and Shireen Anklesaria got many attendees from the crowd to play two games. After, the attendees enjoyed a delicious 5 course menu from the popular Alings Restaurant.

The Entertainment Committee had laid out a charcuterie board of assorted desserts that everyone enjoyed. We also had yummy chocolate cake from our Very Own Naushad Mehta's Cillies Bakery. The Dance Floor was buzzing with kids and adults. We rang in the New Year with some bubbly Champagne.

All of ZAH was decorated beautifully and it took us many hours to preplan everything.

We would like to thank Lyla Daroga, Farzana Sidhwa and Dilnaz Mory who helped with decorating the photo booth. The Centerpieces at each



**THE GAMES ORGANIZED BY SHIREEN & NATASHA AT THE NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA**



table was decorated by Banafsheh Mondegarian. A big thank you to Aderbad Tamboli, Rustom Anklesaria, Ronnie Sarkari who helped with the Balloon drop, uplighting, etc.

A big thank you to Yasmin Medhora who donated the assorted chocolate party favors.

A Personal Thank you to the each and every member of the Entertainment Committee. Some of our Committee Members were out of town and could not attend but still helped. We made an operating Profit of approximately \$1700.00

We wish a Very Happy and Joyous 2026 to all our Community Members.

**YOUTH GROUP REPORT**

By: Shireen Anklesaria

The ZAH Youth Group would like to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year! December was a very successful month for our ZAH Youth Group. We hosted our annual Kids Christmas Party along with our own Food Drive this winter. A detailed report on the Christmas Party is shared below.

We are thrilled to share the success of the Youth Food Drive, and we want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for your generosity. From November 27th through December 14, we collected non-perishable food items to support local food pantries in Fort Bend County and the Houston Food Bank. The outpouring of donations was nothing short of heartwarming. Over the course of the 17-day drive, we received donations beyond what we envisioned—an incredible demonstration of our community's spirit of giving. We would also like to say thank you to the generous monetary donations we received. They have gone to the food banks to purchase food and help with their mission of feeding the greater Houston area. Thanks to your kindness, all donations were delivered to food pantries across Fort Bend County, providing much-needed resources to families in need during the holiday season. Your contributions will help ensure that those facing food insecurity have access to nutritious meals and can experience a brighter, more hopeful holiday season. We are truly grateful to everyone who donated, whether it was a single can or a full bag of goods. Your support made a real difference, and together, we've helped spread an attitude of gratitude throughout our community. Thank you again for your generosity and for being a part of this wonderful initiative. We look forward to hosting this drive again next year to make a positive impact on the lives of those who need it most.

Although the weather that day was not chilly, feelings and spirit of the holiday were in the air. As the Christmas tree filled with presents galore, kids dressed up in holiday clothes, and cheer shone for the excitement of what was to come. We are happy to share that the 2025 ZAH Youth Group's Christmas Party was a huge success! With over 80 people in attendance, the ZHCC hall was filled with chatter and joy. Of course, we had lots of food, as it would not have been a Zoro party without it. Guests enjoyed delicious pizza, chicken nuggets (spicy and regular), fries, and a sweet treat of brownie bites. After eating until their tummies were stuffed, the kids' activities started. They divided into four groups to compete in the gingerbread house-building competition, played an engaging game of musical chairs (which had a very exciting ending), and decorated cookies with creativity and imagination. Lastly, the

## YOUTH GROUP ORGANIZED CHRISTMAS PARTY

The beautiful Christmas tree put up by the Youth Group and then adorned with the Yalda garland (made by the Elementary Group kids)



Youth posing with one of their Sunday School Teachers (Kaemerz Dotivala)



Photos with Santa



moment everyone has been waiting for... presents with Santa! Seated on stage next to the tree, Santa called each kid, one by one, to receive their gifts. The kids got to talk to Santa about what they wanted for Christmas, take pictures, and share their gifts with their parents and friends. Sadly, Santa had to leave early to deliver more presents, but he left leaving joy on the kids' faces. Thank you to all our donors and volunteers; this event wouldn't have been possible without your contributions and continued support! Thank you to the following families for their contributions:

- Nali & Danesh Desai for Chicken Nuggets
- Khursheed & Barjor Dastur for Fries
- Zia & Rustom Anklesaria for Pizzas
- Serena & Kaiwan Bharucha for Cookies
- Vehishta & Sarosh Kaikobad for Gingerbread Houses
- All Kids, Middle Group, and Youth Group Parents - thank you for donating all the drinks, paper products, utensils, and other necessary items and for volunteering your time to help! Santa Claus is coming to Town Gingerbread Houses. We also received generous monetary donations from our community members. We can't thank them enough for their continued support and contributions.

## MNE SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND APPLICATION

By: MNE Scholarship Committee

The MNE Scholarship is awarded to students enrolled at any accredited University, College, Community College, or accredited vocational or IT or advanced technology related institute with credible certifications. Two scholarship will be awarded in March 2026 - one scholarship of \$3,000 and one of \$2,000. The scholarship criteria and application form are on the ZAH website at below links:

[Click here for Application Form](#)

[Click here for Criteria for Eligibility](#)

Please note that applications are due by February 28, 2026.

## The Zoroastrian Religion & The U.S. Constitution

By: Meheryar N. Rivetna

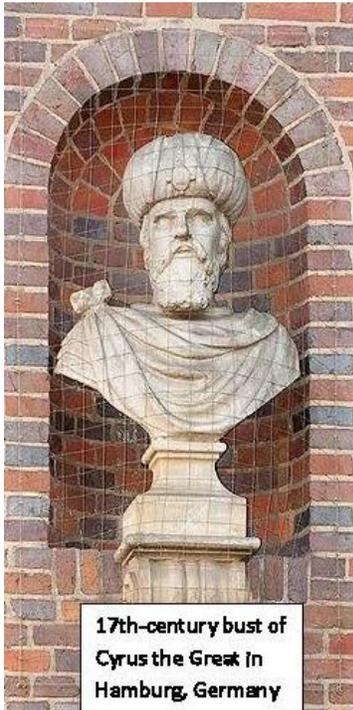
**W**hether Cyrus the Great was a Zoroastrian or not is debated among some scholarly circles. However, it is well established that his regnal policies were in line with Zoroastrian principles which affirms that he was a Zoroastrian.

With Zarathustra's coming and founding a religion, his tenets were established across Iran. The Zoroastrian religion was the state religion of the Achaemenid Empire, established by Cyrus, and the Persian dynasties that followed.

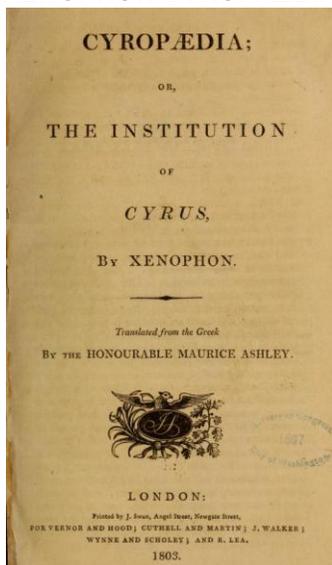
Cyrus's governing policies available from his cylindrical and other inscriptions are known to some extent. His life and achievements are recorded in *Cyropaedia*, a *magnum opus* by the Greek historian Xenophon. Written in Greek in 370 B.C.E., it is said to have limitations, but captures Cyrus's leadership, character and what made him an exemplary ruler.

## THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION & THE US CONSTITUTION

### CYRUS THE GREAT



### XENOPHON CYROPAEDIA



At the dawn of American Independence, the founding fathers were in a predicament how to establish religious freedom, human rights, and a stable society. Thomas Jefferson was an avid collector of Greek literature and had procured a copy of *Cyropaedia*. Instantly, Cyrus's ethics and leadership appealed to and inspired Jefferson. John Adams and James Madison soon obtained copies of the book. In determining the best form of government for the newly born country, Madison wrote a treatise showing the failure of all prior forms of government exempting that of Cyrus and the Persians.

Benjamin Franklin while in London (1757-1775), representing the colonies, came across the *Avesta* brought to Paris in 1771 by the Frenchman Anquetil-Duperron. Franklin, enamored of the *Avesta*, wrote to the president of Yale University, Ezra Stiles: "There is lately published in Paris a work entitled *Zend-Avesta*...I have cast my eye over the religious part; it seems to contain a nice morality, mixed with an abundance of prayers..." Franklin offered to obtain it for Stiles.

In the Gathic Ha 31.10, Zarathustra calls for an agricultural/pastoral lifestyle for social stability. Reviewing the *Avesta*, Franklin read the Persian ideology of agrarianism; it affirmed his and fellow founding fathers' belief in an agricultural economy as the basis of prosperity and economic justice which strengthens society—very much Zarathustra's reasoning!

Jefferson took it upon himself to edit the Bible (the New Testament) making it free of mythology and miracles that were unquestioned over the ages. The Jefferson Bible ethically corresponds to Zarathustra's teachings which he came to know indirectly via Cyrus's character.

It is from Cyrus the Great's decrees of tolerance of other religions, separation of church and state, checks and balances on government institutions, the right of religious freedom, free will that America's founding fathers made these policies part of the constitution.

Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, remarked during the display of the Cyrus Cylinder in Washington, D.C.: "...The ideas and ideals of the Persian Empire are very close to the ideals and ideas of the modern United States".

Charles Poston, called the Father of Arizona, on visiting the Parsis in India in 1860 and learning about their religion converted to their faith. He wrote: "*the great Zoroaster had promulgated the sublime laws announced to him by the 'Bright shining essence of light' for the government of mankind*". [Italics added].

America's founding fathers were tentative about their experiment of American democracy. They looked for a model that came close to their ideas of success. The model that met their ideals was the paradigm of Cyrus the Great's Persia—patterned on his Zoroastrian principles.

a. This article is adapted from "Jefferson and Cyrus: How the Founding Fathers of America, in Their Own words, Were Inspired by Cyrus the Great" by Afshin Zand and Richard Frye; Harvard University. (2013).

**PEARL AND XERXES GAGRAT AT  
THEIR NAVJOTE WITH THEIR  
BROTHER ETHAN**



**WE HAVE MOVED**

**Arnavaz & Hoshang Sethna** have moved. Their new address is:  
Arista Riverstone  
18401 University Blvd., Apt. 1103  
Sugar Land, TX 77479

**NAVJOTE**

Navjote ceremony for **Pearl and Xerxes Gagrat** was held at the Atash Kadeh on Dec 28th, 2025. Proud parents are Eric Gagrat & Nikita Billimoria, and proud brother Ethan.

*Heartiest Congratulations to Pearl and Xerxes on their Navjote ceremony.*

**OBITUARY**

**Ms. Perviz M Daboo**, sister of Rohinton Daboo and late Willie Daboo, and Aunt (Masi) of Gayve Anklesaria, passed away peacefully on the morning of 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2026.

*Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved Daboo and Anklesaria families.*

**FAMILY FRIENDLY MOVIE NIGHT PYJAMA PARTY**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY MOVIE NIGHT  
PAJAMA PARTY**

- ZAH Center - Friday 2/20/2026 - 6 pm onwards
- \$5 Ages 6 and up - Ages 5 and under Free
- RSVP by 2/15/2026 -Walk-Ins at the Door \$20pp
- Please come casual or in PJ's!
- Bring blankets to watch the movie!!

**PLEASE NO BYOB**

Questions: Contact Zubin Mistry  
Email: [Zubin.t.Mistry@gmail.com](mailto:Zubin.t.Mistry@gmail.com)

*A fun, family-friendly movie for all ages!*