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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:** May 10, 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:**

- 15th May, Friday – WZCC Event
- 31st May, Sunday - Gahambar
- 18th July, Saturday – Youth Fund Raiser
- 24th – 26th July 2026 – Z Camp 2026
- 15th August, Saturday - Navroze Humbandagi and Function
- 21st August, Friday – Library Event – Book Reading Boman Desai
- 4th October, Sunday – Gahambar
- 9th & 10th October, Friday & Saturday – Library Event
- 7th November, Saturday – Play by Shahnaz Sidhwa

**REPORTS**

**LIBRARY REPORT**

By: Jango Mistry

LIBRARY EVENT – October 9 & 10, 2026

Faith, Farcha, and Fun!

Why We Put an Egg on Everything

For the past 25 years, your Library Committee has proudly organized an annual program featuring distinguished speakers exploring aspects of our faith and heritage. This year, we are excited to present a vibrant and engaging celebration that brings together food, culture, and community in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

Spanning thousands of years of culinary tradition, the program will highlight the rich cultural and religious significance of Zoroastrian cuisine. From everyday favorites to foods deeply rooted in ritual and tradition—such as malido prepared for Jashan ceremonies and the shared meals of Ghambars—we will explore how food connects us to our history, faith, and one another. More exciting details will be shared in upcoming issues of Manashni.

For now, please save the dates: Friday, October 9 (evening) and Saturday, October 10 (until mid-afternoon).

## ZOROASTRIAN MUSEUM



## AVAN MAHINO BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN SPONSORS



## ADARIAN PARABH JASHAN SPONSORS



## Update on the Zoroastrian Museum

You will recall that a proposal to build a Zoroastrian Museum on our property was presented to our members at the ZAH Annual General Meeting and approved by a significant majority. (Please refer to April's Manashni for more details.)

The Museum project was subsequently presented at the recent FEZANA Annual General Meeting, attended by representatives from Zoroastrian Associations across North America. Aderbad Tamboli, Kayo Sidhwa, and Aban Rustomji shared the vision and key elements of the project with the broader community. Renderings and preliminary plans were also displayed, providing a valuable opportunity for engagement and dialogue. The response was highly encouraging, with attendees expressing strong interest and enthusiasm for the initiative.

Looking ahead, FEZANA will begin exploring funding pathways, while work gets underway to establish a 501(c)(3) entity. The formation of a Board of Directors—with equal representation from FEZANA and ZAH—is envisioned as the **project continues to take shape**.

## ATASH KADEH REPORT

The proverb “April showers bring May flowers” begins in a similar manner as our month here at the ZAH Atash Kadeh - rainy and wet. We continue our celebration of Avam mahino with the Behram Roj Jashan, sponsored by Zarmina & Tejas Katharani and Faredun, Kashmiri & Zarah Bhader, on April 1st. Avam Yazad presides over water and health of the body. Generally depicted as a feminine deity, she is associated with flowing water, purity, health, and fertility.

On April 19th the Houston Zoroastrian Study Group (HZSG) continued their analysis of the Gathas, with Gathic Ha 29. Occasionally known as ‘The Cry of the Soul of the Earth,’ this section starts with a cow (a metaphor for the world) expressing sorrow for the violence, suffering and lack of order in the universe. Zarathustra is the one tasked to deliver Ahura Mazda’s teachings to bring wisdom and guidance to humanity and eventually restore harmony.

April 20th rounded out our month with the Adar Mahino, Adar Roj Parab Jashan sponsored by the following families: Behramshas, Iranis and Patels: (Naozer, Persis, Percy, Roshan, Jehangir & Sharmeen Cyrus, Farida, Kersi). Adar is the divinity that presides over the Fire and Light. This day holds extra significance as it is also the birthday of our Iranshah Atash Behram.

Our AK Team is constantly working in the background to keep our beautiful hall running in full force. Machis and Tandarosti prayers continue each month as always. We also continue to zoom these prayers for the benefit of those who wish to attend remotely.

A special note of thanks as always to our Mobed, Ervad Pervez Gonda, who tirelessly keeps our Atash Kadeh flourishing with the help of Ervad Khushrav Nariman.

You can reach us at 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, Persis Behramsha, Mitra Khumbatta

## MISCELLANEOUS

### GOLDEN GROUP OUTING Lunch at Brenham



### Another Lunch Table



### Yet Another Lunch Table



### Group Picture at Brenham Restaurant



### GOLDEN GROUP THE 'B' THAT WAS NOT TO BE

By: Jehanbux Mehta

Thirty-five members and two guests signed up for the drive on Saturday, April 18, to Brenham to pay homage to nature's beauty: the display of vibrant colors that only bluebonnets, Indian Paintbrush and other wild flowers offer for just a few weeks each year. That is how it was three years ago when a much smaller group then was treated to colors as far as one could see throughout the excursion. But this time, 'B' representing the state flower of Texas was not to be. Defying the forecast of the weather pundits, and Google too, they came and departed several days earlier, leaving the fields bare of the flora. Disappointing it may appear to be, but it was not so to the 29 persons who attended the event in spite of being forewarned of the absence of flowers. Eight members had opted out due to possibility of inclement weather.

Twenty of us, in five cars, met as planned in the Walmart parking lot in Brenham and from there proceeded in convoy along the charted route. It was a most pleasant drive through the backyard of Brenham, breathing fresh unpolluted air. Bright green fields throughout to sooth the eyes. Yellow flowers by the road side and in patches in the fields. Beautiful! I dared to ask a hillbilly what they are called. With an incredulous look at me, he replied "yeller flowers, at's whut". He was darn right! Cool weather, as the clouds had taken over and with the exception of one short downpour, we were spared getting our hair wet. The brollys remained in the cars.

The lunch on conclusion of the drive at the popular Lone Star Southern Grill on the outskirts of Brenham lived up to it's reputation for large servings of wholesome Texan food. The salads looked appetizing, the batter fried prawns – it would be an insult to call the oversized crustaceans "shrimps" – outstanding as was my chicken fried steak with Texan fries and crispy onion rings, half of which went home for next day's dinner. But, it was the blackened catfish which deservedly took top honours. Nine members had driven directly to the restaurant for an early start to lunch but graciously left the choice selections for us. The constant loud chatter and laughter made the outing worth the while.

I am not sure who all stopped at Buc-cee's on the way home for freshly prepared brisket high-piled on brioche buns or some other equally tempting wraps or rolls. A "teacher, please" stop is mandatory at this place as it claims to have the cleanest restrooms in Texas. What a superb outing it was even if marred by drenching rain on the way back and a traffic jam to boot.

## 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ZAH CARNIVAL

### Bhel Puri Stand



### Children Playing



### Home Made Chocolates



## 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ZAH CARNIVAL

By: Yasmin Medhora

The 27th Annual ZAH Carnival was held on Sunday, April 12, 2026. A total of \$10,400/- plus was donated to the ZAH. Thanks to each and every one of you who attended the Carnival, cooked delicious food for the stalls, purchased food and volunteered your time and effort. The hall and the atrium were bustling with people shopping, eating and enjoying the wonderful music played by Khushrav Nariman. Your enthusiasm, hard work and support made the carnival a memorable and successful event for everyone involved.

All food items were cooked and/or donated by various families mentioned below:

Tanaaz & Edul Chikhliwala Turkey Pattice & Parsi tomato gravy, Turkey Cutlets with gravy, Paatra Fish with chutney and Beef Kofta Kormo with Naan; Jasmin & Percy Katrak Bhel, Sev Pooori and Dahi Batata Pooori, chutnies, dry items, etc.; Shernaz Boomla chopped onions, Farida Merchant and Farida Divecha Boiled & chopped Potatoes; Minaz & Nozer Dungor Chicken Dhansak & Rice; Dilnaz & Zubin Mory Lamb Kheema; Shirin & Bahadur Sarkari Jerdaloo Chicken and Parsi Sev; Persis & Naozer Behramsha and Farida Divecha Chicken Liver (made by Natasha Thunthi); Roshan N. Sethna Shrimp Biryani (made by Gulmohar Bharucha); Khursheed & Barjor Dastur Turkey Kabobs (made by Naushad Mehta); Farzana & Kayo Sidhwa Sali Margi; Becky & Kershaw Byramji Tandoori Chicken (NT) AND Fish Sahas & Rice (GB); Parveen Irani Masoor with Goat meat; Nargis & Homi Cooper, Viloo & Purvez Gonda and Yasmin Engineer contributed for Scotch Eggs (GB); Arni & Piloo Ilavia Pora Sandwich and Akoori Sandwich; Kamal & Peshotan Unwalla Rai Potato & Pooori; Chicken Curry Diana & Al Balsara; Katie Tamboli Mukhwas; Arnaz & Jehangir Mistry, Zarina & Jamshed Elavia and Tehmi Dastoor Parsi Custard; Ava & Faroakh Rajkot Ravo; Roshan & Percy Behramsha Falooda with Icecream; Maharukh & Rohinton Deputy Dahi for sev; Avan and Noshir Bhathena Vindaloo; Yasmin Medhora Bhakhras (made by Arnoo Vakharia), Paneer (GB), Mango and Pistachio Kulfi, rice; balloons, tea products, table cloths, décor, signs, to go boxes, paper products, etc.

Youth group: Arzin & Sorab Italia Goat Chops; Pervin & Vispi Sagar Goat Biryani (Aga's); Beef Cutlets and Chicken & Beef Samosa ordered by Youth and brought by Khursheed & Yezdi Hormuzdi. Thanks to Shireen Anklesaria and her team, all Youth students, teachers and parents for helping out in various ways.

Middle group: Sharmeen & Jehangir Irani Chicken Rolls and Pizzas; Hufarish & Dinshaw Vania Chicken Rolls; Nurell Vania Cake Pops; Water, Cookies and Sodas Middle group parents; Thanks to Behram Irani, Cyrus & Neville Masani, Aanya Kharas, Cyrene Nariman and all Middle group students, teachers and Arnavaz Kharas, Simin Masani and all parents for their help.

Many thanks also to Rashna Oak for making delicious and beautiful candy treats for the elementary Sunday School kids.

**CARNIVAL**

**Another Food Table**



**Ummm Delicious**



**The Collector Table**



Vehishta Kaikobad and Khursheed Dastur's Sunday school kids had the highly popular Fish Pond stall managed by Eloisa Bhandara, Serena Bharucha and Farzeen Khosravian. All parents and teachers brought gifts for this stall. The kids were delighted with Egg Hunt and the eggs were brought by Farzeen Khosravian, Zeenia Mehta, Sarah Collector, Perzen Akolawalla, Morvarid Behziz, Eloisa Bhandara and Diana Engineer-Desai. Thanks to all students, parents and teachers of this group for making the games enjoyable.

Gift Card Walk was a lot of fun managed by Zia Anklesaria, Fiona Setna and Khursheed Hormuzdi. The Gift Cards were donated by Zia & Rustom Anklesaria. The Piñata filled with yummy candies was a big hit and it was donated by Meher & Zubin Vakil. As usual Bingo was played and the winners were given gift cards donated by Naushad Mehta, Thrity & Kersi Engineer and Arzin Italia. The Bingo tickets were sold by Binaifer & Rutton Kavasmaneck; the bingo numbers were called by Nargis and Firoze Cooper. The Cake for the "Guess the Weight of the Cake" was donated by Naushad Mehta. Firdaus & Tehmi Dastoor made the beautiful motorized wooden cars and toys and donated the proceeds to ZAH.

Stalls were rented by Yezdi Engineer (paatla, chutney, plants); Delna Minwalla (jellies, masalas, various food items); Rashna Oak (handmade Cards, Bags, Envelopes, etc.); Nikita Engineer (jewelry) and Danielle Dubash (Dubai chocolates); Avan & Noshir Bhathena (silk scarves and ties); Sheroy Haveliwala & Yazdi (Traditional, made modern items); Mitra & Zubin Mistry (MCBC chocolates); Natasha & Burjis Thunthi (ghaaries, rolls, wood work); Ray & Sarah Collector (aloe vera plants, crochet caps, etc.); Hufrih Irani (oracle guidance deck, energy activation coasters).

All proceeds collected by each stall (except rental stalls) on the day of the Carnival were directly given to our Accountants for the day Neville Divecha (ZAH Treasurer) and Farida Divecha. Thanks to the Web Team, BMC team and Arnavaz Sethna & Khursheed Dastur for sending the eblasts. Also thanks to all of you who took pictures during the Carnival.

Thanks also to volunteers not mentioned above – Meher Maxa, Aban Chhor, Yasmin Haveliwala, Nergish Davier, Pervin Sidhwa, Ruby Aga, Sharukh and Kermeen Kanga, Mahtab and Darius Dastur. Also thanks to everyone who helped at the Carnival in some way or the other.

Last but not the least ZAH appreciates the generosity of the following families for their cash donations: Jehanbux & Shireen Mehta, Maharukh & Rohinton Deputy, Arnavas Sethna, Yezdi & Roshan Engineer, Avan & Noshir Bhathena, Abby & Homi Erani, Nataha & Burjis Thunthi, Cyra Kanga and Mondira Tangri.

We truly appreciate your support and participation, and we look forward to coming together again next year.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

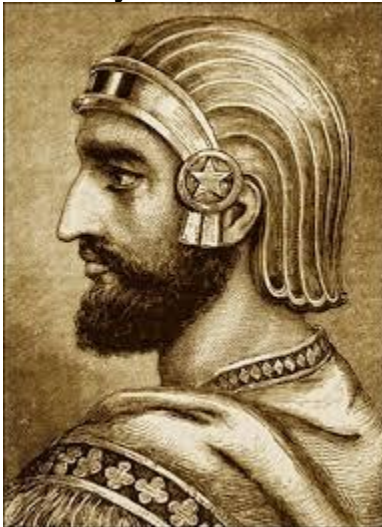
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**YOUTH EVENT – SAVE THE DATE – JULY 18, 2026  
SEE FLYER BELOW**

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**Cyrus the Great**



## ZOROASTRIAN CULTS AND HERESIES: A JAUNT THROUGH HISTORY

By: Meheryar N. Rivetna

Cults and heresies are born when the founding principles of a religion get drowned in a sea of misinformation brought about by waves of declining knowledge. Cultists and heretics weaken a great religion by introducing beliefs and practices that violate the religion's founding principles. Religious cults undermine a religion by subjecting the cult followers to psychological manipulation, control, and giving false hopes of salvation and emancipation from sin. The Zoroastrian religion, unfortunately, is not spared from this tribulation.

Prominent among the heterodoxies to which historically the Zoroastrian religion was exposed, with their remnants having seeped into modern times, are Zurvanism, Manichaeism and Mazdakism. To reject history or re-write history with the intent to promote ill-conceived adherence to cults and heresies is a travesty every true Zarathushti should condemn.

### Zurvanism

Zurvan was a pre-Zarathustra Indo-Iranian deity called "Father of Infinite Time". Zurvan was a personification of time and fate. A section of the Indo-Iranians migrated to Media establishing the priestly class/tribe, the Magi. They continued their Indo-Iranian beliefs and practices. With the conquest of Media by Cyrus the Great, the Magi became part of the Achaemenid Empire which predominantly was Zoroastrian at the time. The Magi had originally rebuffed Zarathustra's teachings, but in their new dominion they self-converted to the Zoroastrian faith for political expediency. The Magi incorporated Zurvanism into the Zoroastrian religion.

In the Gathic Ha 30.3-6, Zarathustra speaks of twin spirits, Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu. (See also Ha 44.12 and Ha 45.2). Spenta Mainyu (the creative arm of the one and only creative force Ahura Mazda) is the polar opposite of and not equal to Angra Mainyu. The Magi, in an effort to promote their ideology, twisted this to imply that if the two Mainyus were twins, they must have a father and that was Zurvan: "father of infinite time". They wanted to diminish Zarathustra's teachings in favor of their cult. The belief got entrenched and flourished under the Sasanians. All the Sasanians, monarchs and clergy, subscribed to the Zurvanite heresy that Zurvan and not Ahura Mazda was the creator, but still maintained Ahura Mazda as a force to venerate. While Zarathustra emphasized that one's fate depended on the proper exercise of one's free will and moral choices, Zurvanism accentuated fatalism in that time (Zurvan) and not humankind is responsible for its destiny.

### Manichaeism

Mani, a self-proclaimed prophet, rose to prominence during the reign of the second Sasanian monarch, Shapur I. Mani created a religion mainly borrowed from Christianity, Buddhism and a modicum of the Zoroastrian religion. Mani claimed that these religions existed as long as their founders were alive, but later these religions "fell into disorder and became negligent in commandments and works..." He declared, "my wisdom and knowledge are above and better than those of the previous religions". The decline in religious knowledge and misinformation engendering cults, mentioned earlier, rings loud and clear.

**Naqš-e Rostam, Relief of Shapur I**



### **Mazdakism**



Shapur I was an avowed Zurvanite in Zoroastrian clothing. Although he could not openly convert to Manichaeism for political reasons, the cult appealed to him as it had Zurvanism views embedded in it. Mani did not view God as being omnipotent. He maintained that the existence of evil was a flaw in creation with Ahura Mazda playing no part in creation.

Manichaeism promoted staunch ascetism. The cult enforced celibacy, vegetarianism, abstaining from wealth, not cultivating land; all beliefs anathema to Zarathustra's teachings. While the cult did not survive, elements of some of its ideas are still advocated by a few Zoroastrians.

### **Mazdakism**

During the reign of the Sasanian monarch Kavad I, the clergy and the nobility exploited the labor class escalating economic instability. The gap between the haves and have-nots exponentially widened. Mazdak-i-Bamdad, an Iranian priest, rose to prominence promising social reform by instituting a religious movement "Mazdakism" derived from the Old Iranian word "Mazda" meaning wise. Mazdak's religion borrowed from Manichaeism ideas of vegetarianism among others.

Mazdak's dictum was that God created the earth's resources to be equally shared by all humans. He advocated that wealth and property, including women, be held in common. Scholars have dubbed him the first communist. Mazdak challenged the Zoroastrian clergy and their norms who revolted to end his movement. Remnants of his influence, nevertheless, trickled into the Zoroastrian faith over centuries.

### **Author's Note:**

This is a very concise account of the issues presented. Hopefully, all Zoroastrians are committed to be unified on the religious front to preserve, protect and perpetuate the powerful religion Zarathustra gave humankind. Factions of cults in the guise of the Zoroastrian religion will not sustain the great religion. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

### **SEA BURIAL OF ASHES**



### **AFTER THE FUNERAL**

On many occasions the family of the deceased is scrambling for means to scatter ashes of the loved ones. Here are some tips that may be considered.

### **Biodegradable Urn:**

Rather than open the urn and scatter the ashes, please consider havng a biodegradable urn. For those who have pre-paid funeral costs, please consider pre-paying for a biodegradable urn with the Funeral Home. Dillon, at the Funeral Home can be contacted at 281-497-2330 and he will help you to get one ordered when needed.

### **Sea Burial**

Please consider the safest and the legal way of throwing the urn at sea. One such service is provided by Captain Jim – Tel: 713-829-2164. He has a very safe and stable yacht which is anchored at Keema. Upon receipt of the Urn a day can be scheduled with Capt. Jim who will give detailed instructions of payment etc. He will also provide a certificate from the Coast Guard.

**WZCC Event**  
**Celebrating Our Zarathushti Industrial Leaders**  
**Friday, May 15, 2026**  
**Location: Zoroastrian Association of Houston**  
**8787 W. Airport Blvd, Houston, TX**  
**Dinner 7 pm to 8 pm**  
**Presentation 8 pm onwards**  
**RSVP - Yasmin at 713-301-1521**  
**WZCC Members - Free**  
**Non Members \$10**



**WZCC Houston Chapter Event**  
**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm**  
**Celebrating Our Zarathusti Industrial Leaders**

A Movie Night, celebrating Zarathusti Industrial leaders : Poonawalla's, Godrej's , Avari's, Bhandara's and others.

**Location: Zoroastrian Association of Houston - ZAH**

**8787 W.Airport Blvd, Houston, Tx.**

**Dinner 7p.m. to 8 p.m. ; Presentation 8 p.m. Onwards**

**RSVP - Yasmin @ 713-301-1521**

**WZCC Annual Membership \$50 per couple**

**This Event is Free For Members**

**\$10 non members.**

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

Save the date July 18th, 2026 for the Youth Event. We are excited to host Casino night and Games at the Center. We want to say thank you for all the support you have given us the past 10 years with our fundraiser and we would like to host an event for you. We hope to see you there!

