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SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

TIME: Different timings for each group

DATE: September 13, 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**



UPCOMING EVENTS

4th October, Sunday – Gahambar
9th & 10th October, Friday & Saturday – Library Event
7th November, Saturday – Play by Shahnaz Sidhwa

REPORTS

LIBRARY REPORT

By: Jangoo Mistry

Get ready for the Annual Gala coming next month

Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10

This time, we have broken tradition and planned an event around a theme that will delight your culinary senses. Yes, the theme is **FOOD!** And it is brought to you by famous celebrities recognized for their talents and success. *For centuries and across continents, the act of sharing a meal has provided a powerful bond, weaving together the diverse threads of a common cultural heritage.*

Friday will feature our usual meet-and-greet with speakers and a recognition of our local chefs and caterers. Intended to raise and recognize the culinary talent among us, it will provide a unique opportunity for better visibility and awareness in our community.

In addition, we will also feature a cookbook exhibit that will show you the vast collection available in your Library.

Our speaker, Jehangir Mehta, who is one of the two featured speakers on Saturday, will give a short informal talk that will set the background for the next day's event.

Dinner catered by two of our local chefs will complete the enjoyable evening.

ZAH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Aderbad Tamboli – Chairman
Percy Master – Secretary
Neville Divecha – Treasurer
Zia Anklesaria – Member
Nozer Dungor – Member
Zubin Mistry – Member
Fiona Setna – Member

OUR ERVADS (PRIESTS)

Boomla, Noozar
Buchia, Kyrus
Dastur, Barjor M
Dastur, Darius B
Desai, Farrokh
Gonda, Pervez
Kanga, Neville
Katrak, Rayomand
Katrak, Vispi
Khumbatta, Noshir
Kotwal, Zubin
Masani, Dara
Masani, Cyrus
Masani, Neville
Nariman, Khushrav
Nariman, Viraf
Pavri, Shapur
Sanjana, Bahmanshah
Sanjana, Kurush
Sidhwa, Kayomarz
Sidhwa, Yazad
Unwalla, Peshotan
Vimadalal, Freyaan
Vimadalal, Khushroo

PRESENTERS FOR THE LIBRARY EVENT – OCTOBER 9 & 10

(Left to right)

Zal Talyarkhan, Jehangir Mehta, Mariano



Jehangir Mehta's Mushroom Dish



Saturday is a packed program

Our morning session features two compelling talks that promise to captivate your curiosity.

First, Jehangir Mehta, the award-winning, nationally famous chef, will speak on *The Transcendent Graffiti*.

Chef Jehangir Mehta is an acclaimed New York-based chef, restaurateur, author, and culinary innovator. A Food Network personality and finalist on The Next Iron Chef, he is known for his inventive, vegetable-forward cuisine that blends his Indian heritage with global flavors. He is the author of *Mantra: The Rules of Indulgence* and founder of acclaimed New York restaurants including Graffiti and Graffiti Earth.

Deeply influenced by his Zoroastrian heritage, Jehangir sees food as a powerful way to connect culture, community, health, and sustainability. His work champions creativity, mindful cooking, and reducing food waste.

After that Zal Taleyarkhan will speak on, *A Living Heritage – From Persepolis Rations to Dhansak: Zoroastrian Foodways Across 2,500 Years*.

Zal Taleyarkhan is a culinologist, culinary innovator, and food industry consultant with extensive experience in research and development, commercialization, manufacturing, and restaurant innovation. His work spans development of consumer-packaged goods, food service and large-scale food manufacturing, with a particular focus on translating culinary heritage into modern applications while preserving authenticity. He is a passionate student of Zoroastrian history and culture and is the current President of the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism – a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting academic and theological study of Zoroastrianism. It brings together international academics, priests, and educators, to share research and host annual academic conferences

Zal has spent some time researching the evolution of Persian and Parsi cuisine, tracing its journey from the ancient Achaemenid Empire through the Sasanian period, into India, and across the global diaspora. His presentations combine historical research, food science, and storytelling to explore how cuisine preserves identity across generations.

And we are delighted to welcome Mariano Erchileli, Co-Chair of the Shapoorji Pallonji Trust, who will share his perspective on Zoroastrian Studies Today: From Research to Community

After lunch we have an informative and interesting quiz program planned for the afternoon. This will stimulate your intellect and spark lively engagement. The quiz aligns with the event theme, "The Flavors of Faith, Food & Community," with questions ranging from Zoroastrian practices to food and history. It will enrich the participants' knowledge of the rich history and traditions of the Zoroastrian faith. It promises to be an exciting and challenging program with prizes awarded to the quiz winners.

Please see the attached flyer for timings and other details. Library will subsidize part of the cost, but please remember to call Arnavaz Sethna ((281) 468-4988 and register for the event

BOMAN DESAI



SOME ATTENDEES At Boman Desai's Event



COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND HELPERS AT BOMAN DESAI EVENT



An Evening with Boman Desai Friday, August 21

Boman's third and final visit with us before permanently moving to Mumbai made for a truly memorable and fascinating evening.

Jangoo Mistry introduced Boman Desai as an author, a music composer, songwriter, and professor.

Before reading the first chapter from his book, *Brahms Comes to Dinner*, Boman gave us a glimpse into his life struggles and how he came to be excited about writing about these three great musicians.

Boman is a living role model of struggling writers who sacrifice everything and put their lives on hold to follow their dream. Unlike aspiring writers who poke and prod only sporadically in their spare time, Boman fully committed himself to his craft, resigning from his corporate position at Sears and investing his life savings to dedicate three years to writing full-time. From his one-bedroom apartment, Boman stared out of his window at a brick wall, living a frugal life and eating canned food. When funds ran dangerously low, he went to teaching part-time to cover some living expenses.

He engaged in intensive research, relying on hundreds of books and letters covering biographies of Brahms and Schubert. The book took 20 years to write. His earlier work, *Trio*, and his new book, *Brahms Comes to Dinner* are pieced together through this intensive study and paint true-life pictures of the three proteges.

Trio was as complete a biography of the Schumanns and Brahms as Boman wished to write, related in the form of a novel (dialogue and scenes filched, for instance from the correspondences and diaries), but when Boman first approached agents and editors with his mammoth manuscript of 1800 pages, he was told there was no appetite in the US for so large a book about classical music. It did no good to say it was about so much more, a narrative of love, insanity, suicide, history, revolution, politics, and war. The gatekeepers refused even to look at the manuscript unless Boman cut it to the more conventional 300 pages, but he had come too far to crawl back. He chose to publish it himself to a hugely gratifying response. The book won the Nicholas Schaffner Award for Music in Literature and was published by the Schaffner Press. His new book is a sort of sequel to *Trio*.

Reading from the first chapter of *Brahms Comes to Dinner*, Boman, using realistic dialogue and details, transported us into the Schumanns' living room. The listeners listened with rapt attention and asked questions after the reading.

Boman graciously autographed copies of his book for the ardent fans who lined up eagerly.

MUKTAD – 2026



ATASH KADEH REPORT

By: Mitra Khumbatta Mistry – Atash Kadeh Committee

August marked the time of our holy Muktaad Prayers. Hosted at the Bhandara Atash Kadeh from August 5, 2026, Ashtad Roj through August 14, 2026, Vahishtoisht Gatha, our community paid their respects for our dearly departed ancestors, the *fravashis*.

Following Muktaad, August 15th morning was the Pachhli Rat prayers around 4:30am and the first Havan Geh of Hormuzd Roj, Farvardin Mahino. Followed by Hambandagi (communal) prayers later in the evening and the Shehenshahi Navroze function.

The Houston Zoroastrian Study Group held its monthly meeting on August 23rd where they discussed Yasna 32. In this passage, Zarathushtra focuses on condemning false religions, leaders and practices and actively rejects false gods, or *daevas*. He warns that those who choose the path of evil and lead humanity away from *Asha* will face the ultimate judgment. He urges those individuals to adopt the ways of *Asha* and embrace devotion and the guidance of Ahura Mazda.

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 Mistry.

YOUTH BLOOD DRIVE



YOUTH REPORT

On Sunday, October 4, 2026, the day of the Gahambar, the ZAH Youth Group will host a blood drive at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center (ZHCC) from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is a non-profit organization accredited, licensed, and recognized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and numerous local and state officials and authorities.

Please sign up using the link below. Additionally, view the flyer below for more information. Thank you.

Sign Up: [Click Here to Sign Up](#)

GOLDEN GROUP CELEBRATING LABOR DAY

Golden Group – During a Game



Listening to instructions for the Game



GOLDEN GROUP Group Picture



GOLDEN GROUP ACTIVITIES

COMMEMORATING LABOR DAY

by Jehanbux Mehta

American workers endured back-breaking work for endless years. Twelve grueling hours every day of every week, with the bossman, seated on the porch in his rocking chair with a whip in one hand and a glass of cool lemonade, no doubt laced with moonshine, in the other, lording over the exhausted field workers. Coffee breaks? Ha! No restroom breaks either. Pampers were unheard of. Likewise, in factories the floor manager kept his flock in line with a threatening, commanding voice. Enough was enough! There had to be respite. Egged on by union leaders and bold workers, they demanded reasonable working hours, weekly holidays, restroom breaks, fair wages, end of forced child labour and safer working conditions. Parading up and down the streets to the city halls with placards and fiery speeches, threatening to strike come what may, they succeeded. The law makers listened, many horrified at the state of affairs, and passed legislations handing down rights which John and Jane Doe had never enjoyed.

The labor movement is definitely one not to be forgotten. It was on September 5, 1882, in New York City that the first unofficial labor day parade was held. It turned out into an unofficial holiday. The bossman and floor manager be blown. To commemorate this day, the first Monday in September was declared a federal holiday in 1894. Parades, bands and cook-outs became the norm. It was a day to remember the struggle for rights as well as to celebrate having succeeded.

Helping Hands decided to recognize the importance of the occasion and decided to commemorate Labor Day by organizing an event for Golden Group at our ZAH Centre on August 29. Parading up and down the atrium could have been an ordeal, what with having to handle walkers and walking canes and doing it outside in the driveway was out of question on account of it being dreadfully hot. As an afterthought, we should have done that. It would have given passersby something to talk about back home. Absence of a band was compensated by rousing marches by American composers: Glenn Miller, Souza, et al, played over the PA system.

Hey, hey, what about the traditional cook-out? Not to be left out on this very important item on the agenda, we over-did it with a long awaited Texas BBQ catered by Brook Street. How could anyone say no to sliced brisket with a tangy-sweet sauce draping it, jalapeno sausage, grilled chicken, cheesy potato casserole and tempting mac-n-cheese, complete with bread, condiments and iced tea. As is with most lunches at the Centre, self-serve was not to be. Diana Balsara and Anita Kavina, assisted as always by member Parveen Irani and a hired maid, did a fantastic job of serving. They are available for private parties gratis provided they, their spouses and all other Helping Hands are also invited with a "no gifts, please" request (just kidding). The bar, well stocked with beers and wine, remained open throughout. Our many thanks to Mani Surkari for bringing two bottles of a lovely wine. Dessert after a BBQ lunch: what more appropriate than apple pie and dollops of vanilla ice-cream. Blue Bell of Texas, of course.

GOLDEN GROUP Labor Day Celebration Members Enjoying



NAVROZE FUNCTION Children having Fun



Adults Enjoying Themselves



ZAH Youth Group Donating Check to Cyrus Desai Charitable Foundation



Before lunch all present joined in a silent prayer in memory of our member, Ruby Italia, who had passed away the previous month. With her no longer among us, total number of members dropped to 117 of whom 46 participated in the Labor Day event. But for a clash of events, I am sure the attendance would have been much larger. After lunch, after I had welcomed all and thanked our Helping Hands for their help with the day's planning and chores, the afternoon belonged to Anita who delighted us with a few rounds of BBQ bingo – yes, you got it right, BBQ bingo. Instead of numbers, the squares had pictures of food. And scratch cards, also food related. Several prizes for the lucky 'uns.

Befitting it would have been to hear Dolly Parton singing "Nine to Five" as we reluctantly made our way home. But have heart. I am told that she will be around entertaining Golden Group members at the Centre with Kenny Rogers in tow. Something to look forward to.

ZAH SHEHENSHAH NAVROZE CELEBRATION

By: Farzana Sidhwa on behalf of the Entertainment Committee

The ZAH community celebrated the Shehenshahi Navroze function at the ZHCC on August 15, 2026. It was a ZAH member appreciation event and was well attended by around 300 people. We would like to thank the ZAH Executive Committee for hosting this year's Navroze function free for all the members of ZAH.

As soon as the humbandagi at the Bhandara Atash Kadeh ended, the guests started arriving at the ZHCC and were immediately drawn to the Rustomji Media room as the delicious appetizers, the chicken chaska botis and chilli paneer catered from Aga's Restaurant were being served. The hall and the atrium was tastefully decorated with beautiful floral centerpieces. Farrokh Firozgary aka our houstonian DJ Gary was the MC for the evening. It was lovely to see everyone in their traditional outfits and some in colorful modern outfits wishing each other Navroze Mubarak.

The ZAH Youth Group then presented a \$1,500 check to the Cyrus Desai Charitable Foundation which is a Texas-based nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness, supporting families, and funding research for osteosarcoma, a rare pediatric bone cancer. Later, the guests enjoyed the traditional Parsi dinner of dhan dar, kolmi no patiyao and sali-marghi along with rotlis. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the scrumptious food catered by our very own Cillie's. The kids were treated to yummy pizzas as well. There was mithai chaat from Aga's and ice cream for dessert which everyone relished.

Soon after dinner we had full on entertainment & live music by our very own DJ Gary's "The Z Band". They kept the dance floor packed with the enthused crowd continuously until the wee hours. We would like to immensely thank "The Z Band" for volunteering their time, service and talent always gratis for our ZAH events.

Finally, a big thank you to the Entertainment Committee members, ZAH Web Team, eBlast Team, all volunteers, generous donors and well-wishers in making the function a grand success! We wish our community joy, peace, happiness and prosperity in the New Year and we look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming ZAH Ghambar on 4th October. Ushta-te!!!

**Donation Check Presented
To
Cyrus Desai Foundation**



WEDDING ASHIRVAD



THANK YOU LETTER FROM THRITY & ROHINTON DESAI

On behalf of everyone at CDCF we extend our deepest gratitude for your generous donation in support of cancer research, prevention and patient programs.

Your kindness and commitment to make a difference, bring hope to countless individuals and families affected by this dreaded disease.

We are truly honored and proud to see young leaders like you driving positive change in our world.

Your contribution is more than just funds-it's a powerful statement of compassion, unity, and believe in a future free from cancer.

Thank you for standing with us in this important mission. Together, we are fueling progress, advancing research, and bringing Hope to those who needed most.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Rohinton, Thrity & Anahita Desai

ASHIRVAD AT THE WEDDING

From HOMAGE UNTO AHURA MAZDA – Dr. Dastur M.N. Dhalla
Aashirvad sanctifies the union of two hearts

We invoke thy blessings, Ahura Mazda, upon the bridegroom and the bride on this the auspicious day of their wedding. May the Aashirvad ceremony sanctify the union of their hearts. Inspire them to lay the wise counsel of Zarathushtra to heart and live the life of Vohu Manah's (Good Mind) good thoughts, of Aarmaiti (Holy Spirit)'s devotion, and to strive to lovingly excel each other in the practice of Asha's righteousness, that their wedded life may be blessed with domestic happiness to the end of their lives.

The twain in one are joined today. May their right hands be tied by the bond of love in lasting union. May the mind of one blend with the mind of the other and heart be in tune with the heart. May the twin spirits be a composite spirit in joy and sorrow, success and failure, prosperity, and adversity. May the two come nearer to each other in good thoughts and good words and good deeds from day unto day.

May each transmit something good of each to the other. May each take the best that is in the other and give something better than the best. May each give of one's goodness what the other lacks and give mutual completion to each other in life.

Locked up in the embrace of the wedded love, may they live for each other, may they share each other's feelings, may they lighten each other's load of life, and may they live in the loving fellowship of minds and hearts. May each elevate and embellish what nature has endowed the other. With the hearts knitted together, may the two be whole world to each other. May each one be the life of the other. May he be hers and she be his wholly for all the days of their lives. May each cleave faithfully unto each in body and mind and spirit as the creeper that twines its tendrils round the tall tree. May better than the good come unto them. May it be so even as we pray, Ahura Mazda.

Guardian of the Seed of the Primal Bull: The Role of *Māh* (Moon) in Zoroastrian Cosmogony

By: Meheryar N. Rivetna

Cosmogony is the study of the origin of the universe. While the Gathas do not offer a systematic account of the origin of the universe, these exceptional verses provide foundational concepts of cosmogony. In the Gathic Ha 44, Zarathustra inquires of Ahura Mazda of His architectural design of the cosmos. Zarathustra posing questions to Ahura Mazda, in Ha 44, is a unique thematic approach for humans to grasp Ahura Mazda's astral creations and their functions for humankind's benefit.

Over time, with the Gathas being memorized and orally transmitted, the verses were losing the meanings behind their brilliant philosophical concepts. Later clerical savants fabricated myths as grand narratives to preserve Zoroastrian theology and knowledge of its cosmology.

One such myth was the creation of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. In the Pahlavi books, vis-à-vis the *Bundahishn*, Ahura Mazda created the primal bull Gavaevodata meaning "sole created bull" (*gēuscha aēvō-dātayāō* in the Mah Bokhtar Niyaesh). Gavaevodata represents fertility and perpetuation of the animal species from a single entity. In this mythical cosmological narrative, Ahriman, being Ahura Mazda's adversary and agent of death and destruction, kills Gavaevodata. But before the bull's death, the divine agent Tishtar seized the bull's seed (*gao-chithrahe*) and transported it to the moon for purification, generating a male and female oxen from which pair emanated the animal kingdom. Upon death, the bull's marrow and body gave rise to vegetation symbolizing its role as a cosmic provider of human sustenance and agricultural fertility. The *Bundahishn*, by mythologizing the origin of grains and vegetation in a sacred, primordial animal, symbolizes the link between the animal and plant kingdom. This is to highlight the importance of care for animals and profound respect for agriculture.

The epithet of the moon being a repository of the bull's seed occurs in Ys 1.11, Ys 3.13, Yt 7.1, 3, 5 (Mah Yasht), Yt 12.33 (Rashne Yasht) among a few other post-Gathic verses. Thus, the moon having the seed of the bull is symbolic for the moon being addressed as a deity of fertility.

Humans have water systems to fertilize the vegetation under their control. Who waters the foliage in the wilderness, for instance? Nature does. The seed of the bull in the moon is a metaphor for the dew that abundantly fertilizes the supine female earth on cloudless nights, particularly during the full moon night. Dew formation is abundant during a full moon, cloudless, night. This fact is evident from Mah Yt 7.4: "When the light of the moon shines, the green colored plants grow on the earth through the mist..." The mist being the dew. The moonless night (*Amas*) is not venerated as there is no dew formation. An old Indo-Iranian belief of the moonless night being inauspicious, still in vogue in the Vedic culture, was brought back into the Zoroastrian belief as a result of cross-cultural assimilation. It is not an Avesta tenet.

The animal associated with the moon is a bull because of its intense virility and because the shape of the crescent moon suggests the horns of the bull.



It is for this reason that in the Yasna ritual the stands (Barsom-dan) holding the Barsom are shaped like the crescent moon.

During the Yasna ritual, the priest sprinkles water on the Barsom (vegetation) signifying the moon fertilizing the vegetation. [Note: Originally, in Iran, the barsom was the twigs of the chini or tamarisk tree. These trees not growing in India, the switch

was made to silver or brass wires. Silver being cost prohibitive, the use of brass continues. The Yasna ritual is symbolic of venerating, not worshipping, nature; metal also being a creation of nature, the *Rivayats* validated its use.]

The Gathas do not call for deification of natural elements. Zarathustra calls for respecting nature and for humans to be its guardians, where feasible, consistent with nature's principles. Later Sasanian and post-Sasanian Zoroastrian clerics concretized Zarathustra's philosophy, by deification of cosmic entities, into language simplifying an understanding of the cosmos as mentioned in the Gathas.

The Zoroastrian religion is a powerful religion with insightful meanings in its symbolisms. The religion is weakened when the symbolisms, myths and allegories are literally taken, distorted out of context; thus, missing their significance. My friends at the ZAH are familiar with my outcry: "The Zoroastrian religion is not a fairy tale"!

Reference:

Gray, Louis; The Spiegel Memorial Volume (ed. Sir Jivanji J. Modi). (1908).

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON

ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE 2026



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026
11:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

Scan the QR code or click the link to
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FIRES 26TH ANNUAL SPEAKER SERIES

THE FLAVORS OF FAITH, FOOD, & COMMUNITY



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9 & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2026



ZAH, THE ZARATHUSHTI HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER

FEATURING



CHEF ZAL TALEYARKHAN

CULINARY INNOVATOR,
FOOD INDUSTRY CONSULTANT



CHEF JEHANGIR MEHTA

IRON CHEF,
RESTAURATEUR, AUTHOR



INTRODUCING
VISTING SCHOLAR

**Dr. Mariano
Errichiello**

SOAS, London

Executive Director of
the Shapoorji Pallonji
Institute of
Zoroastrian Studies

Join FIRES and ZAH Library for a special two-day program exploring the rich connections between faith, food, community, and tradition in Zoroastrian life and culture.



Dinner: \$25.00
(Friday, October 9)
Lunch: \$10.00
(Saturday, October 10)



Contact Arnavaz Sethna to Register
Tel: 281-468-4988
Email: ahsethna@yahoo.com



Meet & Greet
Friday, October 9 @ 6pm
Speaker presentations, quiz, & prizes!
Saturday, October 10 @ 10am

