

ZAH Presence at the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress in New York City (July 1-4, 2022)



Contributed by the ZAH Team

What more can we ask for than to spend our Independence Day weekend in the Big Apple with 1,200+ Zoroastrians from all over the world! ZAH had one of the largest contingents of 65+ adults and youth attend the WZC 2022 in New York City from 1st July to 4th July 2022.

The 4-day event was a memorable experience filled with deep conversations, lots of laughter, and of course meeting old friends while making new connections with Zarathushtis across the Globe. This Congress was a partnership and collaboration between ZAGNY and FEZANA, and kudos to them for giving all a well-organized World Zoroastrian Congress Experience! As always ZAH made its presence felt by contributing to the success of this World Zoroastrian Congress 2022 (WZC 2022) in various aspects.



Aban Rustomji – WZC2022 Co-Chair and Speaker at various sessions notably “Zoroastrian Digital Humanities: From Ancient texts to Digital Data”; “We, the Zoroastrian Women – Voices of Today, Leaders of Tomorrow”

Our very own **Aban Rustomji** served on the Program Committee as one of the Co-Chairs and played a significantly instrumental role in designing the Program of Events as well as related logistics. She also facilitated multiple sessions at the Congress.

the A/V Tech and Fundraising Committees. Throughout the duration of the Congress, he could be seen busy, coordinating all the breakout room activities and AV needs as well as other assistance as needed by the coordinators.

Kayo Sidhwa served on the WZC 2022 Executive Steering Committee as one of the FEZANA representatives for the past 2+ years besides participating as a member on



Kayo Sidhwa – WZC 2022 Executive Steering Committee

In the opening day ceremony, our priests **Khushroo Vimadalal**, **Freyaan Vimadalal**, **Kayo Sidhwa** and **Noshir Khumbatta** walked in the procession with other Mobeds to inaugurate the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress 2022.



One of the highlights of the 12th World Congress was the Zarathushti Community Awards ceremony. Our ZAH Luminary **Bapsi Sidhwa** was featured on two different counts.

The Inaugural **Bapsi Sidhwa Literary Prize** was announced. This award is the first of its kind for Zoroastrian writers and is under the sponsorship of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston Library and the FEZANA Information Research Education System.

The next was **Bapsi Sidhwa's** announcement as the winner in the category of the Creative Art/ Design/ Literature Culture Award. Accepting the award on her behalf, **Feroze Bhandara** read **Bapsi's** message, "no matter what direction your life takes, I pray that you carry compassion and a sense of justice within you".



None other than our Vehishta Kaikobad planned and directed the very successful Kids and the Tween/teen track for the Congress. She was supported by Khursheed B. Dastur and our team of youth volunteers from ZAH - **Farzad Sarkari**, **Freyaan Vimadalal**, **Mahtab B. Dastur**, **Natasha N. Dungor**, **Sabrina Warden**, **Sanaea Warden** – and also our Youth Volunteers from California, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia – **Zane Commissariat**, **Farhaan Shroff**, **Kaizeen Medhora** .

Our ZAH volunteers **Edul Chikhlwala** and **Yezdi Engineer** did a phenomenal job with building the Architecture models and presentations for the Teen/Tween Congress as well as for the Living Zoroastrianism – Immersive Experience, which was appreciated by all who attended. These Agiary models were the talk of the town for all 3 days of the congress. They were beautifully crafted.



A Glimpse at WZC 2022 Tweens & Kids Congress

Our very own **Farzana Sidhwa** performed as one of the judges for the various Shahnameh skits presented by the 4 teams at the Tween/teen Congress.



There were approximately 100 kids and Youth registered for the Kids and Teen/Tween tracks, and it was a great enriching and bonding experience for our teens/tweens from across the globe (Iran, India, Australia and many others)

Youth Volunteers and Mentors from across North America –**Farhaan Shroff, Zane Commissariat, Kaizeen Medhora, Tanaz and Khushroo Medhora, Nevil Cursedji, and Nina Driver** - who were instrumental in the planning and the running of the Kids and Tween/Teen track of the Congress. All this was, of course, supported by our ZAGNY logistics committee Co-chairs – **Piroja Press** and **Pam Shroff**. Thank you to our Moderators - **Farrokh Mistree, Janet Allen, Karishma Koka** and **Ervad Vispi Karkaria** - for the Tween/Teen Roundtable session on Bridging the Global Existence and to **Tashan Mistree** for a phenomenal session on Zoroastrian 101 session for the Tween/Teen Congress.

Our ZAH Youth made their presence felt by participating and presenting at the WZC 2022.

Mahtab B. Dastur was the youngest moderator at the Congress, moderating the “Zoroastrians at the United Nations – Opportunities to Engage” session.



Mahtab B. Dastur Moderating the “Zoroastrians at the UN”



Natasha Dungor Presenting the Ava project at the Tween/Teen session

Natasha N. Dungor presented two interactive sessions on the Importance of Water (from the Ava Project) at the kids and Tween/Teen sessions which were enjoyed by all!

Farzad Sarkari enthralled us by playing the violin at the Zarathushti Orchestra during Orchestra Night.



Farzad Sarkari playing the violin at the Z-Orchestra

Ashdeen Lilaowala’s Gara Fashion Show at the Congress was graced by the beautiful and charming presence of our lovely **Parynaz Vimadalal, Natasha N. Dungor and Mahtab B. Dastur.**



Parynaz, Natasha, Mahtab modeling Garas at the Ashdeen Fashion show



Yasmin Medhora –
managing the
FEZANA Booth

ZAH made other forays into the Congress with **Yasmin Pavri** serving on the Brochure and Program Committee and **Yasmin Medhora** assisting with activities at the FEZANA booth.

On the last day, during the Future Congresses session, **Kayo Sidhwa** together with our Youth - **Mahtab B. Dastur, Natasha N. Dungor and Sabrina Warden** announced our upcoming North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) 2024 as a one-of-a-kind experience and formally invited and encouraged all the attendees to visit Houston in December 2024. The presentation, which was accompanied by a beautiful and riveting video presentation prepared by **Aderbad Tamboli** was very well received.

As all good things come to an end, alas, it was time to bid farewell to all the new friends and the ZAH contingent returned to Houston bringing back with them wonderful memories and lasting connections.

Here is what some of our ZAH and Beyond, Youth and Volunteers at the Tween/Teen and Kids Congress had to say about the WZC 2022 experience

Contributed by Zane Commissariat; Orange County, California

The WZC 2022 was indeed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It enabled me to connect with different Zoroastrians across the globe, meet new life-long friends, and most importantly, have fun! The fun-filled days of the Congress included hanging out with friends, touring the great New York City, and being a little mischievous :) That is the definition of fun. Not only did I go to the Congress to have the time of my life, but to also connect with Zoroastrians (especially youth) from all over the world. Not to forget, learning how to plan, develop, and execute multiple tasks while working as a team was also an important tool that I learned at the Congress.



While being a youth volunteer, it was truly a joy to establish bonds with my fellow peers and

other youth that will last forever. The Congress was definitely a blast, but if I were to change something, I would increase the duration of the Congress. Many other attendees and I would want to spend more time with our new Zoroastrian acquaintances and get to know many more in the Zoroastrian community! I look forward to meeting many more people, have engaging programs for everyone, and to have fun at the future Congresses!



Contributed by Mahtab B. Dastur; ZAH

Flashing lights, construction poles, architecture with character and history; falafels, cigarettes, and gas; yelling pedestrians, honking cars, encouraging salesmen, music, and cheers; brushing shoulders, knocking elbows, and holding hands; homemade Greek yogurt with honey, thinly sliced pizza, curry, and pasta. These are the things I

saw, smelled, heard, felt, and tasted in “The Big Apple”. The World Zoroastrian Congress in New York City on July 1-4 of 2022 was an experience unparalleled to any other I have ever had before.

Let’s start at the beginning, the very beginning. 3 am on Thursday, July 30th in Houston, and my house is (sort of) awake. We had a family friend sleepover the night, as our house was closer to the airport. As we sat and ate breakfast at the airport, several Parsi families passed us – all on the way to board the same flight as us! We were the greeting group to the Parsi’s on that flight! Fast forward a few hours – we were in NYC, collecting our bags, and being as touristy as possible (we took a group picture in front of the “I ❤️ NYC” sign). A cab ride later, and now we were in the Hilton hotel, with 6 bags, no hotel room, and what seemed to be a few hundred Zarathusti’s from *everywhere*! But this number was not considered big. The 1200+ Zarathusti attendees at the Congress was an experience by itself. I have never seen so many Zarathusti bawas in one place!

Something that continued throughout the Congress was the meeting of new people, old friends, and people I had met online but never in-person. Let me tell you – Zoom does not do justice! I met countless ZYNA members, that I had only seen and talked to through Zoom. I met people who had mutual friends. I met people I hadn’t met in nearly a decade (which is saying something because I’m only 16)! I even met a few people I had connected with on LinkedIn!

Moving on to the sessions of the Congress – incredible! The most valuable thing that I feel I received from the Congress was perspective. No two people had the exact same values, beliefs, or traditions. And although I may not agree with everything everyone said, I most definitely respect the

diversity of thought in our global community. Perspective is a hell of a drug and being able to see things through other people's eyes is something I highly value.

I was one of the volunteers at the Teens/Tweens Congress, and I spent a majority of my time there. There were countless activities and fun games! Together, with all the volunteers (kids and



Teen/Tween participants with Volunteers and Adult Mentors

adults!), we had loads of fun with all those participating in the Teen/Tween track. We played old and classical music, icebreaker games, and random attention-getting games. We told stories about the Shahnameh and had several interactive presentations (by our youth and adults!). The Teen/Tween participants even put on skits and made architectural models of Agiaries and Atash Behrams, that were later displayed in the Immersion Experience put on by Tashan Mistree!

Finally, but certainly not least, the entertainment - *chefs kiss*. Fabulous! We have boundless talent in our Zoroastrian community worldwide! There were opera singers, dancers, fashion designers, and an entire orchestra! As a participant in the Fashion Show by Ashdeen Lilaowala, I wore exquisite pieces which were hand-embroidered, had my hair and make-up done professionally (which was bizarre – I felt like a celebrity!), and wore beautiful pieces of semi-precious jewelry. Although rehearsals for the fashion show went well into the night (up to 3 am!), I wouldn't change a single second of it! Thanks Ashdeen!

There was one more thing I felt in the World Zoroastrian Congress in NYC. Energy. Excited energy, happy energy, anxious energy, nervous energy, calm energy, but most of all – buzzing energy. It was infectious! I saw one random person squeal and hug someone they were meeting after years, and I felt like doing the same thing – and I didn't even know them!

The goodbyes were bittersweet. When presenting the upcoming NAZC in Houston in December 2024, I said "I cannot believe that I arrived 4 days ago, it feels like yesterday". And I meant 1000% of it. It was fast. Too fast. Even now, when writing about my experience, I type fast hoping to not forget anything, to not leave anything out. I could write pages on my experience, yet there is a limit to what I am allowed to type, and so there are many details that I have had to leave out. But these details will forever remain with me, in the form of cherished memories, and tightly held feelings. I will never forget these few days, the impact, the difference on my life, the unsurmountable feeling of joy, the countless people, the incredible adventure I went on. The World Zoroastrian Congress of 2022 in New York City, my first ever Congress, was, is, and I believe forever will be unrivaled (except by the NAZC in Houston in 2024 😊). A **BIG** *thank you* to all the organizers, chairs, co-chairs, the entire ZAGNY team, and all the volunteers who made this Congress possible and so incredible!!

Contributed by Natasha Dungor; ZAH

Walking into the Hilton Midtown lobby during the afternoon hours of June 30th, all one could see were Zarathushtis. Some from the United States and some from around the world; WZC participants came from 16 different countries around the globe. Zoros clogged the lobby of the hotel with the check- in line snaking around multiple times. It was loud and full of conversation in many languages: English, Gujarati, Farsi, and more. At first, it was a scary sight, but then I saw familiar faces smiling in my direction.



The registration room opened around 2:00 PM on June 30th and there was a constant flow of people walking into and out of the room. Each family received a bag filled with important information such as name tags and tickets to the Gala Night along with a few goodies. The evening was spent in multiple ways. While some went to the Dar-e-Mehr to a dinner organized by ZAGNY, others went to

Broadway shows (Aladdin, Lion King, Tina Turner) and the youth found themselves at the ZYNA Youth Mixer.

Doors to the Opening Day Celebration welcomed attendees at 8:00 AM on July 1, 2022, and the ceremony began around 30 minutes afterward. Around 1200 registrants gathered in the Grand Ballroom to witness the first moments of the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress. The rest of the day was filled with multiple interesting sessions. There were special sessions for the kids and teens led by our own Vehishta Kaikobad along with her youth volunteers (Zane Commissariat, Mahtab B. Dastur, Natasha N. Dungor, Kaizeen Medhora, Farzad Sarkari, Farhaan Shroff, Sabrina Warden, and Freyaan Vimadala) and adult mentors (Nevil Cursedji, Khursheed Dastur, Nina Driver, and Tanaz & Khushru Medhora), and special sessions for the youth/young adults which were organized by ZYNA. Lunch was full of socializing and making plans with old and new friends. Sessions continued after lunch and ended around 6 in the evening. Friday evening was a gift to do whatever one wanted; many explored New York City while others stayed back in the hotel to spend time with family and friends.

Saturday morning started early with continuous sessions throughout the day with a wide variety to choose from. Everyone was constantly shifting from room to room as sessions started and ended. Lunch was accompanied by the World Zarathushti Community Awards; Multiple awards were presented and awarded to the recipients. The day continued after the Awards Luncheon and a highlight of the day was Tashan Mistree-Byramji's 'Living Zoroastrianism, an Immersive Experience' exhibition. The busiest station at the exhibition was the station in which we got our names written in Avesta on bookmarks. The day's sessions ended again around 6 in the evening, but the activities of the day were not complete yet.

Around 2 hours later, hundreds of Zoros crowded the lobby outside the Grand Ballroom waiting for the doors to open. Everyone was excited to witness the World Zoroastrian Philharmonic Orchestra along with the individual instrumentalists, singers, and other performers. People flooded into the Grand Ballroom as the doors opened and rushed to find the best seats to see the stage. Once the musical night began, the applause never stopped. The night retired around 10:30 PM, and everyone began preparing for the next day.

Activities and talks started at around 8:45 on Sunday morning (July 3, 2022). Just before lunch, we were treated to a multi-media presentation: 'STORY OF CREATION – as told in the Bundahishn'. The play was put together by the members of the ZAGNY Community. This was followed by lunch and more

sessions afterward. The informational sessions of the day concluded at around 5:30 PM to give everyone enough time to get ready for the Gala Night Celebration.

Once again, the lobby of the Grand Ballroom was filled with Zoros of all ages waiting for the doors to open. Eventually, everyone was welcomed into the Grand Ballroom and took their seats at their assigned tables. The entertainment of the evening was a fashion show presented by Ashdeen Lilaowala. All the models wearing Ashdeen's work were Zoros and even 3 of our Houstonians got the opportunity to participate; The lucky participants were Mahtab B. Dastur, Natasha N. Dungor, and Parynaz Vimadalal. The fashion show was followed by dinner. Many gathered outside the Ballroom after dinner to view the sarees, salwar suits, lehengas, and more, made by Ashdeen, that were on sale from the fashion show. After more sales and socializing in the final hours with friends old and new, music began to flow out of the Grand Ballroom with Singer Nauzad Sadry and DJ Zubin Chichgar, from Los Angeles, California on stage. The dance floor was officially open and became packed with energized dancers in the first few seconds. Eventually the dance floor overflowed, and we decided to make our way to the stage. The dancing ended around 1 in the morning, but it was hard to separate from the discussions taking place in the lobby outside of the Grand Ballroom. As time passed, the number of people decreased, and the last conversations ended at around 3:45/4 in the morning.

The events of Monday morning, July 4, 2022, were scheduled to begin at 9:00 but started slightly later than scheduled due to the wake-up delay caused as a result of all the fun experienced in the Gala Night the evening before. The day began with a recap of the Congress followed by a quick presentation about the Zoroastrian Footprint. The Closing Ceremony began next along with the Passing of the Torch. Representatives of the next North American Zoroastrian Congress, Kayo Sidhwa, Mahtab B Dastur, Natasha N Dungor, and Sabrina Warden, gave a brief presentation and formally invited the audience to join them in Houston in December of 2024. Followed by this, representatives of the next World Zoroastrian Youth Congress took the stage and invited all the youth to London next summer. Finally, the Closing Ceremony concluded with the Passing of the Torch from the United States (ZAGNY and FEZANA) to Singapore, where the next World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in 2026.

Many new connections had been made over the past few days, but the time had come for everyone to say goodbye. As expected, it was hard to part ways after all the great memories created over the past weekend, but many had already begun making plans to meet again soon. The youth began making plans for London while others wait for Houston and Singapore; It's hard to keep the Congress Junkies waiting for too long.

Ending on a successful note, the 12 the World Zoroastrian Congress fulfilled its promise by truly bridging the global Zarathushti existence. With participants of all ages and backgrounds all coming together under the same roof, everyone walked in with the expectation of an amazing experience and walked out with the feeling that the Congress should've never ended. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH) for subsidizing my registration fee towards attending the Congress. It was truly an amazing experience, and I can't wait to give back to both the associations through my service and community involvement.

Contributed by Kaizeen Medhora; ZAPANJ

I attended the World Zoroastrian Congress 2022 in New York in July this year. I really liked going to the Congress. It was my first time at a Zoroastrian Congress and I had a great time there!



I went there as a youth volunteer and was helping out with the younger kids and they were so sweet. I helped them with their crafts that were organized by Vehishta Aunty and Khursheed Aunty. We did some crafts about being a Zoroastrian. Some crafts we we made included Cyrus cylinders out of modelling clay, which a lot of kids enjoyed. And then we made Sudras and learned about the Kusti and the various prayers. We also colored masks and we took lots of pictures of the kids in the masks and all dressed up with crowns and robes.

We also did some crafts from different cultures and religions as per the ancient Silk Route. All the kids had a great time and so did I.

Some of the other youth volunteers also did some presentations for our class. One of my favorites was with the Ava water bottles. We were taught about saving water and making sure that we used water correctly.

I made a lot of new friends with other people at the Congress as well. I am so happy I went there and am looking forward to meeting my new friends soon and attending other Congresses.

Contributed by Farzad Sarkari; ZAH and ZAMWI

Going into the Congress, I wasn't sure what to expect. I attended the 2019 Youth Congress in LA, but knowing that this was a World Congress, I felt it was going to be a lot different. To my surprise, it was different and in the most amazing way. I got to meet people from all around the world who had similar interests to me and even other youths who were into athletic activities. The best part of the Congress to me was the networking that I was exposed to. I attended two sessions on the third day about Zoroastrian Genomes and they were the most fascinating sessions (I felt in my opinion) because I could relate to them. I knew exactly what they were talking about during the sessions because I just finished my Master's degree in that area. After the first session, I got in contact with the moderator and she is currently helping me look for a job. I also got to meet other Zoroastrian mentors that are currently helping me in other aspects of my career path. Besides all the great networking opportunities there were at the Congress, I made some great friends. A decent amount of these I am still talking to after the Congress and hope to continue talking to them years coming. It was interesting to see and hear how each individual youth viewed Zoroastrianism and how they practice the religion. Growing up, I thought there was only one way of practicing and viewing our religion, but boy I was completely wrong about that.



Overall the congress was amazing and I can't wait to attend more World Congresses. I hope the London and Houston Congress' are as great or even better than this Congress in NYC. Finally, I want to thank ZAH for helping out with the cost of attending the congress. Being held in NYC, the price was expensive but their contribution made the price on my side more affordable to attend.

Contributed by Farhaan Shroff; ZAGNY

The 2022 World Zoroastrian Congress in New York City was my first congress and I absolutely loved it. I thoroughly enjoyed volunteering and mentoring the Tweens and Kids Congress. During the congress, I met new people and built friendships with them. The congress truly was the highlight of my summer.





Contributed By Yazad Sidhwa; ZAH

I am very fortunate to be a part of the ZAH community as we have always been exposed to and get encouraged to attend Zarathushti congresses and events. This was my 3rd Congress although my 1st World Congress and I had a great time in NYC with one of the best parts being the Hotel location as we could do a lot of things post Congress as well.

Due to work, I arrived at the Congress on the first day around 3 pm. My registration packet was already picked up, so I went straight to the main ballroom, and I was stunned as I had not seen that many Zoros in one place in a long time. As I could not get in the previous day, I missed the Youth Mixer the night before and the opening prayer ceremony that other Mobeds attended, so disappointing. Anyway, I saw my friends in the lobby, so it was great to catch up with all and had a few laughs as the sessions were almost over for the day. I got a glimpse of the We, the Zoroastrian Women.... session and no sooner the session ended, most kids were thinking about plans for the evening / night.

The second day sessions had quite a good variety to choose from and I liked the Living Zoroastrianism one facilitated by Tashan Mistree-Byramji the best as that had some interesting exhibits and the stamp of ZAH, as I heard some of the models were created by our ZAH members. Vehishta Aunty as usual together with Khursheed Aunty conducted the teen and tween sessions for the kids and I heard the kids had a great time. We had a sit-down Awards lunch that day and I liked the curry rice that they served although we were already all planning for the evening by then. The Youth session, in the evening, "We've got the power" was a good one and I enjoyed meeting different Youth from around the world. Once the sessions ended, the performers and the orchestra gave us some good entertainment for the night and then we dispersed for some dinner. That evening was another fun one for us, and after dinner we hung out at the Times Square and/or at a coffee shop.

Some of the Youth led sessions like Leaders asking Leaders and the one moderated by Farrokh Mistree were quite intriguing and interesting to hear different perspectives. One of the highlights that day was the "Bundahishn" show that involved audio visual, and the performers did an awesome job. The Mobed session by NAMC was also a good one where they highlighted that Mobeds too deserve respect from the entire community and we should compensate them better. Once the sessions ended, it was time for the Gala night, and all were dressed in suits and tuxedos with all the ladies in dresses and sarees although before that, we had our 60+ group photo of the Houston contingent. The fashion show

was pretty good with all in Ashdeen’s creations. Once the fashion show ended all of us went on the dance floor for some time and then left for our final night out in NYC.

The fourth day started with a bit of sadness as I had to say my goodbyes and catch my bus but before that we witnessed some exciting presentations from the London Youth Congress in 2023, our own North American Congress in 2024 and the World Congress in Singapore in 2026.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank ZAH Executive Committee and FEZANA for subsidizing my Congress registration fees, for allowing me to make many new friends and the amazing 3+ days I had at the Congress. I am already excited and discussing with my friends about going to London next year.

Contributed by Farzan Umrigar; ZAH

After registering for my second congress, I was excited and eager. I was excited to see my friends from all over the world again, and I would be able to meet new lifelong friends. I was eager to see what this congress and New York offered. Every day I would plan a little bit of my trip. I planned to arrive a few days before the congress to stay with my cousins in New Jersey and explore New York with them before attending the congress. I was glad I did. It was an eye-opening experience to see that New York never sleeps. After the congress, I explored other cities on the east coast, such as Philadelphia.



My top three reasons I wanted to attend the congress were to gain irreplaceable information about Zoroastrianism, to meet and network with others, and to explore New York. I found all the sessions informative, engaging, and unique. My top two favorite sessions were Youth for Youth and the Custodians of Zamyad- The Spirit of the Earth. I enjoyed the hands-on activity in the Youth for Youth session, where we had to build a tower using pasta, marshmallows, and our creativity with those sitting at our table. I loved learning about sustainability and combating climate change in the Custodians of Zamyad- The Spirit of the Earth session. Seeing my Houston friends in the orchestra and as moderators in some of the sessions was special. The most memorable moment was the 4th of July cruise on the Hudson River. Seeing the fireworks with the city in the background was spectacular.

Contributed by Sabrina Warden; ZAH



The WZC 2022 in NYC was an absolute grand success!

From watching flags being raised representing an array of Zarathushtis and their home countries in the opening ceremony to listening to sessions from Zoroastrian leaders and their walks of life to creating new friendships and ever-long-lasting memories; the 12th World Zoroastrian Congress was an unforgettable experience!

Leading up to the Congress, I was interested in meeting people just like myself, from different countries and understanding how they as Zarathushtis adapted to their countries' culture, yet stayed true to the Zarathushti faith. During the Congress, I met people from the United Kingdom, Iran, Dubai, India, Singapore, Pakistan, Australia, etc., and am still in contact with all of them. There were times when I even met other WZC attendees outside of the Hilton Midtown Hotel, for example on the streets of NYC or in a Starbucks coffee shop.

Another thing I was interested in listening to, were the different solutions and perspectives from an excellent group of Zarathustis moderators and speakers all around the world and their advice on 'Bridging The Global Zarathusti Existence', which was also the ultimate intent of the WZC this year. There were fascinating topics such as mental aging; hidden biases in good people; Zarathusti leadership; and ways to confront environmental issues. In fact, my most memorable session was 'Zoroastrians at UN' which was moderated by Mahtab B. Dastur and incorporated a video I created about the Ava Project, a FEZANA initiative that contributes toward taking care of the environment and preserving water for future generations. In addition, I enjoyed helping out during the Tweens and Kids Congress under the guidance of Vehishta Aunty and Khursheed Aunty; they both enabled to make the Tweens & Kids Congress a memorable experience because they had activities and events for the youth to grow closer as a community and create long-lasting friendships. My favorite experience was watching the kids recreating the Shahnameh stories with their own twists of thoughts and expressions; we all had loads of laughter and excitement.

Also, I thoroughly enjoyed the Aladdin Broadway Show, live orchestra, and an excellent group of performers. They all played amazing pieces and I loved watching them in action, especially because I was right in front.

Lastly, heartfelt gratitude to FEZANA and ZAGNY for making the 12th WZC in NY a wonderful and excellent Congress; the event was star-stunning!

Contributed by Sanaea Warden; ZAH

What is WZC (World Zoroastrian Congress)? It's a place where we Zoroastrians can learn more about our religion, and our responsibilities that we have as Zarathushtis. The WZC was a monumental triumph for everyone who attended it.



The First Day

On the first day, I met a zillion new people who were so interesting and fascinating that it made me feel as if I had known them my entire life. That day in the morning the first thing that we did were icebreakers. (a chance to know who and where everyone was from) I had found out that there was even a girl that had the same name as me, but spelled differently. The more information I got to learn from the volunteers, the more interested I was in our religion.

The Second Day

The second day felt like it had gone away in a breeze. The most interesting part of this day was how we got to make an Atash Kadeh. It was an amazing experience that I wish could happen again. At the end of the night there was a beautiful, amazing orchestra. The part that I had truly loved was the songs that had come out from the most fantastic voices I had ever heard.

The Third Day

The second to last day, I didn't even want that night to end. I wished that it would last forever. The best part of that day was when they made us choose a Shahnameh story and we had to act it out as a play. In the evening, it was a gala night, so we had the time of our lives. This gave me an opportunity to learn more about who my new friends are.

The Last Day

As it ended, I still wished it could have been longer. This day was all about thanking the people who hosted it and participated. This is how the WZC 2022 was an amazing success.

Links to photos from the World Zoroastrian Congress 2022

[ZAH Presence at WZC 2022](#)

[Official WZC 2022 Photo Gallery](#)

[Link and QR Code for the Tween/Teen Congress Video](#) – By Zane

Commissariat

