



### Issue 27 – January 2006 Newsletter

#### ARTICLES:

New Year Eve Celebration	2
Announcements	3
ZYNA Miami Youth Congress	3
Donations	4
ZAGNY Religion Classes	5-6
Navroze Registration Form	7
Calendar of Events	8

### JAMSHEDI NAVROZE CELEBRATION

March 18, 2006

Navroze means "New (Year's) Day" and Jamshed-i means "of Jamshed". The Jamshed referred to here is the fourth Peshdadian king of ancient Iran, according to the Shah-Nameh of Firdousi. The present festival of Jasmshedi Navroze is celebrated to commemorate this event.

Today, we connect the seasonal Navroze to King Jamshed and celebrate this historical festival. For Zoroastrians who follow the Shahenshahi or Qadimi calendar, Jamshedi Navroze is not the New Year's Day (it does not fall on day Hormazd of mah Farvardin), since their calendars have not been corrected for the leap year. However, Zoroastrians who follow the Fasali Calendar, celebrate this as their New Year day.

The day of Jamshedi Navroze coincides with 21st March, the day of Vernal equinox, when the day and night are of equal duration, and subsequently the hours of daylight increase. Navroze is celebrated the world over by people influenced by Iranian culture, notably the Zoroastrians (Parsis), Shiite Muslims, Bahais, and Kurds. What makes Navroze unique is that it is the only holiday celebrated by several religious communities.

Cleaning the house and buying new clothes hold an important place as a preliminary to the celebrations. The Iranians have a special way of celebrating it--a day before the Navroze, a circular table is placed prominently in the house and on it seven items starting with the letters shin or sin of the Persian alphabet are arranged. Hence it is called the Hafta-shin table. These items, along with additional items such as a bowl of goldfish and pictures of Damavand Mountain, are kept untouched on the table for six to thirteen days.

#### ZAGNY BOARD:

##### President

HOMI GANDHI  
president@zagny.org

##### Vice President

NAWAZ MERCHANT  
vicepresident@zagny.org

##### Treasurer

MINOO BENGALI  
treasurer@zagny.org

##### Secretary

KHURSHEED DUSAJ NAVDER  
secretary@zagny.org

##### Joint Secretary

KERMAN N. DUKANDAR  
jointsecretary@zagny.org

##### Members at Large

VISPI KANGA  
vispi@zagny.org

SHERAZAD MEHTA  
sherazad@zagny.org

FERZIN PATEL  
ferzin@zagny.org

MICHEL REID  
michel@zagny.org



The Hafta-shin Table: The seven items may include any of the following: shir (milk), sharab (wine), shakar (sugar), shama (candle), somagh (sumac), shikeh (coin), sib (apple), sonbol (hyacinth), sabzi (vegetables), shisheh (glass), sarkeh (vinegar), etc.

Houses are cleaned and the threshold decorated with chalk



**Please join ZAGNY in the celebration of Jamshedi Navroze on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Do note that too many last minute registrations have precluded us from adequately planning for food and other details at some of our recent events and hence we are going to strictly adhere to RSVP deadlines. Please help us serve you better by registering early. For additional details and to register, please turn to page 7.**

## NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

Submitted by Kerman Dukandar

ZAGNY hosted New Year's Eve celebrations for its tri-state family and friends at our Pomona Darbe Mehr. It was a greatly festive event as everyone danced to the non-stop entertaining music of MC and DJ – Farokh and Dinyar. Adults and kids were side by side throughout the event, from helping out at the front desk to working as a team to win the games. Farokh kept up the momentum of the party with his witty humor, games, and prizes. DJ Dinyar rocked the party with his selection of foot stomping dance music that was so good it was almost impossible to get anybody off the dance floor.

A pleasant surprise of the evening was the 25th silver jubilee anniversary of Meher and Dinyar Hodiwala and everyone got to celebrate along with them and enjoyed the delicious cake.



With a hi-tech live show from NY Times Square thanks to Michel, the countdown - dropping of the crystal ball was fervently watched by the excited guests. The New Year was greeted in with a champagne (and apple cider for the kids) toast. Loads of confetti was tossed around and the hats and noisemakers were abundant. To our regret the night ended, but everyone went home knowing that the year had kicked off to a jubilant start. The ZAGNY Board would like to thank everyone who came and we wish you all a safe and prosperous New Year.

## CLOTHING DRIVE FOR EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS IN PAKISTAN

It was truly heart warming to see how members of our New York Zoroastrian community have given of themselves and their time in an effort to ease the pain of people in Pakistan by donating warm clothing for the families facing the ravages of a severe winter. It was wonderful to see so many volunteers gathering early before religious class, cheerfully sorting and packing warm clothing for the suffering Pakistani men, women and children. In all, 53 boxes (almost 1200 items) were packed and labeled with the required packing slips. It was great to see even our little ones chipping in—pairing up socks and gloves, removing tape from old boxes and just happy to be helping out.

While all present felt blessed to help in this great humanitarian cause, a very special thanks go to **Mehru and Lovji Cama** who single handedly labored to rent a truck to pick up about 200 blankets (donated by Marriott). Thanks to all others who also volunteered their time in the middle of the week to ensure that these blankets were folded and packed for UPS pickup.

Thanks to **Mehru Cama** and **Nawaz Merchant** for coordinating this clothing drive. UPS picked up those boxes on 12th January and they have already reached Islamabad. By the time you read this Newsletter, the clothes will be in the possession/use of the earthquake survivors.

## FEZANA JOURNAL SURVEY

Since 1988, the FEZANA JOURNAL has been providing exceptional service not only to our Zarathushti community of North America, but also to the community-at-large for which it is a major source of information. The journal recognizes the importance of continuing to adapt to the changing needs of its existing and potential customers and would like them to review the role, function, layout and frequency of the publication. Please take a few minutes (should not take more than ten) to complete the survey. It is not posted on the FEZANA website but is available at [www.zso.org/documents/fezana\\_survey.pdf](http://www.zso.org/documents/fezana_survey.pdf). Please print it, fill it out and mail it to Dolly Dastoor, 3765 Malo, Brossard, Quebec, Canada, J4Y 1B4 by **February 15, 2006**. Your comments and opinions will help in improving the quality of the journal in the coming years.

**KUSHTIS FOR SALE:** Parsi style Kushtis, hand woven by a Zoroastrian housewife in Yazd, Iran. Order custom size or select from in-stock by contacting Farah Bhopti (609-799-7757); [farah@bhopti.com](mailto:farah@bhopti.com) or [louk541@mybluelight.com](mailto:louk541@mybluelight.com)

*This newsletter will be made public on the ZAGNY web-site. If you do not want your personal information to appear on the website, please do not submit it to the newsletter for publication.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONGRATULATIONS:

- To Cyrus and Farzana Cama on the birth of their baby girl Delara and to the proud grandparents, Edul and Niloufer Daver and Rohinton and Mahrukh Cama.
- To Lovji and Rupy Hakim on the birth of their grandson Rushad in Canada to their daughter Zareen Pheroze Austin.
- To Dina Khush Mehta on her Navjote ceremony held in Mumbai on the 6th of January 2006.

### CONDOLENCES:

- Our heartfelt condolences to Eruch Munshi on the demise of his sister-in-law Pilloo Bharucha on January 20, 2006 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

- Jamshed and Yasmin Ghadiali--Old email: [Ghad@aol.com](mailto:Ghad@aol.com) has been changed to [ghad@optonline.net](mailto:ghad@optonline.net)
- Karishma (Niloufer) Mirpuri (spouse-Sunil): 25B Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset, NY 11030 (Tel: 516-869-1812) [Kmirpuri@aol.com](mailto:Kmirpuri@aol.com)

**THANKS:** To all the people who helped me with my Extra Credit Project at the November religious class. The feedback I received got me extra credit toward my final grade at school. I really do appreciate all of your help. Thank you all once again. **Zarina Bamji**

**THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CHAMBER OF CONGRESS:** WZCC NY Chapter will hold its next meeting on **March 12, 2006**, at the Darbe Meher. Guest speaker--Mr. Rajiv Bhatia, President of Knights Inn Franchise will talk about franchise services and brand operations as it relates to the hospitality industry. Lunch will be served at 12PM and the program will begin at 1PM sharp. If attending this event, please RSVP to either Rusi Gandhi ([rusi@garden.net](mailto:rusi@garden.net)), Noshir Dutia ([noshd@hotmail.com](mailto:noshd@hotmail.com)), Arnaz Maneckshana ([amanecksha@aol.com](mailto:amanecksha@aol.com)), or Avan Patel ([avan.p.patel@mhn.com](mailto:avan.p.patel@mhn.com)).

## ZYNA MIAMI YOUTH CONGRESS

Submitted by Gustad Mody

Congress after congress, my circle of friends has grown by leaps and bounds and my knowledge of our religion has been further enlightened like the teachings of our Zarathustra. This was no exception at the recent youth congress held in Miami, FL.

It felt great to be around close friends in a tropical paradise (some humid weather and few monsoons would have made us feel right at home). During the days we had our 'Zarathushti' discussion sessions. The networking session was meant to allow workers and students who are in the same industry to make contacts. I was able to meet with other Zoroastrians in my career field. This was great, as I got to learn more about particulars in the industry, and now I have contacts incase I ever need help with my job. There was a memorable Match-Making session. We were given 3 minutes to sell our selves. Despite preferring not to describe my job and location 33 times in a row (it got very repetitive), I did have fun learning those about the others. After all, it's not everyday that you meet a Parsi veterinarian.

In the "what does living a Zarathushti life mean to you" we had a very open discussion where all the youth were able to express how their beliefs effect our behaviors, practices, friendships and other aspects of our lives. The interactive aspect of this discussion truly increased our awareness and knowledge of the Zarathushti religion as it applies in our lives.



The last day was a non-ZYNA affiliated program, a day in South Beach. We had lunch in an outdoor restaurant next to the beach. Afterwards, we went in the ocean and played a big game of Frisbee. It was the perfect weather for a day of sun, sand and close friends.

**Bio:** Gustad Mody works and resides in New York City. His great love in life is food which is proudly displayed and discussed on his personal web site which can be found at <http://ironcheff.blogspot.com>.

From left to right: **Eric Chavda, Kaizad Cama, Farzad Dutia, Gustad Mody**



# ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES

Our ZAGNY monthly religious classes are going "VERY WELL." The Board and the Teachers are pleased to see many new faces this year. At the December class, yearly certificates were presented to all the children who attended classes in 2005. Our Priests, Teachers and Teacher's Assistants were also acknowledged and presented token gifts to thank them for their hard work and efforts in teaching our children about the Zarathushti faith. Our heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciation go out to Pervez Patel, Sam Sethna, Lovji Cama, Daulat Kotwal, Shiraz Antia-Unwalla, Avan Patel, Pearl Ball, Kaizad Cama, Neville Commissariat, Cyrus Nentin, Deena Clubwala and Poruz Khambatta. Because of their dedication, our classes continue to be a success.

## EXCERPTS FROM CLASS IV FINAL EXAM ESSAYS

Parents, ever wonder what our kids are learning in their religion classes? Read some of these excerpts from the **Dr. Lovji Cama's** students. With such a heritage of fine inspired youth, having such clear vision and focus, the future of our community is indeed bright!

### **1. What is more important to you, ethic or ritual? Why?**

To me ethics are more important. The kind of morals and values that you uphold are what defines you as a person and a Zoroastrian. We are supposed to think Good Thoughts, say good Words, and do Good Deeds. If you follow those rules then you are a good person and deserve the best life possible. The rituals you perform don't determine what kind of person you are. I mean, its fine to pray to the fire, which in a way is our symbol of God, but just doing that doesn't make you a true Zoroastrian or even a good person. So all in all the ethics, morals and values you uphold determine who you are and therefore is obviously more important than the rituals you may perform.

**NEVILLE COMMISSARIAT**

### **2. What are the most important ethical beliefs of Zoroastrianism that ring a bell within you?**

Quite a few Zoroastrians don't understand that the most important part of our religion is our beliefs. Praying is useless unless you know what you are saying. A good number of our population recites a prayer at least once a day and yet many have not the slightest idea as to what it means. Take for instance the *Ashem Vohu* prayer. Its meaning not only hints at the path to find happiness, it can also give us all a noble purpose in life.

*Ashem* means virtue. *Vohu* means good. Thus *Ashem Vohu* means virtue is good. Virtue: the quality of being morally good or righteous. Righteous is a word used very often in our classroom discussions. It is not too arduous to determine the meaning of righteous. It means quite simply to do what is right. Yet, it probably covers the entire spectrum of three other important moral principles: good thoughts, good words and good deeds. We must all do what is right. But if you are not sure what is right, think of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. This motto serves as a compass to guide us toward enlightenment.

**PORUZ KHAMBATTA**

### **3. What does fire mean to you? Are you a fire worshipper?**

Fire is a symbol of God because Ahura Mazda has no form and fire represents the divine and sacred. However, I am not a fire worshipper because we worship a divine God and fire is the best representation of that divinity.

**DEENA CLUBWALA**

### **4. What rituals are important to you? When you perform a ritual or participate in one, what do they mean to you?**

The most important ritual to me is praying, wearing my *sudreh* and *kusti*, and having your navjote performed. Praying shows how much you care that you want God to protect you and your family and friends. Wearing your *sudreh* and *kusti* are important to me because to me it feels like when you wear them, you are connected to God and God is always with you, protecting you from evil. I feel the closest to God when I am praying because as you are praying it's as if you are communicating with him. Whenever you are scared you turn to God and pray and he protects you from all evil. As you pray you don't feel scared anymore. I personally have been in many scary and life changing situations and by praying and believing in God, I knew I would be okay, and that God is going to take care of me.

**JESSICA SACHINWALLA**

### **5. What is the concept of Ahriman in Zoroastrianism? Do you believe that our religion is dualistic?**

Ahriman is the "evil spirit," Ahura Mazda's adversary. He is the destroyer, the source of all negative energy. He existed with Ahura Mazda since the beginning of time. Ahriman consciously chose evil, and thus created Death. The central subject of Zoroastrian teaching and theology is the constant battle between Ahriman and Ahura Mazda. Ahriman will eventually be defeated and disappear. He is a dark force whose domain is the material world. Ahriman's main action on humanity is to promote materialism—thought systems which deny the existence of the Divine and of spiritual realms. Ahura Mazda, principle of light, and Ahriman principle of darkness, fight each other on the stage of the world. This gives rise to the question of dualism. This ethical dualism is rooted in



the Zoroastrian cosmology. The conspicuous monotheism of Zarathustra's teaching is apparently disturbed by a pronounced dualism. He taught that in the beginning there was a meeting of the two spirits, who were free to choose—in the words of the Gathas—"life or not life." This original choice gave birth to a good and an evil principle. Monotheism, however, prevails over the ethical dualism because Ahura Mazda, together with the Amesha Spentas, will at last vanquish the evil spirit of evil. This implies the end of the cosmic and ethical dualism. Zarathustra's monotheistic solution resolves the old strict dualism.

**TAMINA DARUVALA**

### 6. What is the role of humans according to Zoroastrianism?

Each religion has different requirements of the individual. Zoroastrianism requires each member to live a good life. A good life can be interpreted in many different ways, but it is generally understood as a life led by honesty, intelligence and respect. A Zoroastrian who lives a good life does everything in their power to fight evil and to follow the path of Asha. The further you go on the path of Asha, the better the life you have lived. A Zoroastrian is expected to have a Navjote performed also. This is a ceremony to show that a child is now a true Zoroastrian. Once you have had your Navjote, you are expected to live a good life devoted to Zoroastrianism. This is basically expected of a Zoroastrian.

**CYRUS NENTIN**

### 7. What are your thoughts on the fact that the population of Zoroastrians is dwindling? Is there a difference between being a Parsi and being a Zoroastrian? Do you have any suggestions for future?

There is a difference between being a Parsi and a Zoroastrian, not all Zoroastrians are also Parsis. We are both. Zoroastrians are those who believe in Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra's teachings. Parsis however are those specific Zoroastrians whose ancestors had migrated to India. Zoroastrians from other countries such as Iran are not Parsis. It saddens me that the population of Zoroastrians is dwindling. A once powerful religion, we have still survived through all the constant persecution. However, that is not the reason why the population is currently at a low. Times are changing and the ideology of what defines a Zoroastrian should also. We should be more open to interfaith marriages. As a child of one, I can say that being born of two religions has not put me off from either religion, but yet wanting to deeply understand both. However, some Zoroastrians felt that since I wasn't a "purebred" I did not fully understand the religion and did not want my navjote ceremony to be performed. Thanks to my parents' persistence and my desire both my sister and me have had our navjote and are proud Zoroastrians. I try to bring in other viewpoints from other religions, and I think that Zarathushtra would be proud to know that our religion is open to people of all kinds of backgrounds and beliefs.

**JASMINE DUKANDAR**

## THE GOOL KOTHAWALA ESSAY CONTEST

All students (15 and under) are invited to write an essay on 1) My Community Service Project **OR** 2) What it means to be a Zoroastrian. Essays should be personal and anecdotal rather than theoretical. They should be 150 words or less, and should be emailed to [vicepresident@ZAGNY.org](mailto:vicepresident@ZAGNY.org) with Name, Contact number, and Age of participant, on or before **Feb 20th 2005**. There will be two categories, 6-10 age group and 11-15 age group. Each category will be awarded a prize of \$50. The prize winners will read out their essays at the Navroze function on March 18, 2005 as part of the Youth Program.

## Nutrition SPOTLight New Year Brings a New Look to Food Labels

Eating healthier and safer in the New Year may be easier, thanks to changes on food labels. Effective Jan. 1, 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires food companies to list *trans* fat content separately on the Nutrition Facts panel of all packaged foods. Evidence suggests that consumption of *trans* fat raises LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels and lowers HDL ("good") cholesterol levels, causing the arteries to become clogged and increasing the risk of developing heart disease and stroke. As food and beverage companies comply with the new labeling regulations, consumers will see nutrition labels listing any measurable (at least 0.5 gram per serving) amount of *trans* fat in a separate line in the total fat section under saturated fat. However, no "Percent Daily Value" (%DV) for *trans* fat is shown. However, it is important to note that the FDA is extending the *trans* fat deadline for those companies who seek a petition. Therefore, consumers should be aware that just because they do not see *trans* fat on the label of the product, does not mean that the product is *trans* fat free.

*Trans* fat (also called *trans* fatty acids) is formed when liquid vegetable oils go through a chemical process called hydrogenation. Hydrogenated vegetable fats are used by food processors because they allow longer shelf-life and give food desirable taste, shape, and texture. The majority of *trans* fat can be found in shortenings, stick (or hard) margarine, cookies, crackers, snack foods, fried foods (including fried fast food), doughnuts, pastries, baked goods, and other processed foods made with or fried in partially hydrogenated oils. Some *trans* fat is found naturally in small amounts in various meat and dairy products.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 slice (47g)	
Servings Per Container 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 160 Calories from Fat 90	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 10g	15%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	11%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	3%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	



# NAVROZE MUBARAK

THE NAVROZE FUNCTION WILL BE HELD AT THE

## DARBE MEHR

106 POMONA ROAD, SUFFERN, NY 10805

TEL. #: 845-362-2104

ON  
SATURDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2006

PROGRAM:	5:30	REGISTRATION
	6:00	ATASH NIAYESH PRAYER
	6:30-7:15	APPETIZERS
	7:15	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
	7:45	TALENT SHOW BY OUR KIDS
	8:30	DINNER AND DANCING



### REGISTRATION: RSVP by March 3, 2006\*

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

		NUMBER	AMOUNT	VEG/NONVEG
ADULTS	\$25.00	_____	_____	_____
NON-MEMBERS	\$35.00	_____	_____	_____
CHILDREN 5-12 YRS	\$15.00	_____	_____	_____
SENIOR CITIZENS (>65)	\$15.00	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL:		_____	_____	_____

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. NO. HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly mail your form with check made out to ZAGNY and mail to:

Minoo Bengali  
1124 Indian Hill Road  
Toms River, NJ 08753  
Tel. No. 732-288-1227

Reservations must be received by  
March 3, 2006.

Registration will be non-refundable

\*Please Note: A surcharge of \$15.00 per person or \$25.00 per family will apply to all registrations done either at the door or received after March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**ZAGNY**  
106 Pomona Road  
Suffern, NY 10901

**Phone**  
845.362.2104

**E-Mail**  
secretary@zagny.org

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>MARCH 2006</u>	
3/5	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM START)
3/18	NAVROZ FUNCTION
3/19	PERSIAN DAY PARADE
<u>APRIL 2006</u>	
4/2	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM START)
<u>MAY 2006</u>	
5/6	5K REVLON RUN/WALK—MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW
5/7	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM START)
<u>JUNE 2006</u>	
6/4 <u>or</u> 6/11	ZAGNY RELIGIOUS CLASSES (1 PM START)

### HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR ZAGNY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2006?

A big "THANK YOU" to those of you who have already sent in your 2006 membership form and payment. For those of you who have not registered yet, please renew your membership as soon as possible. If you have misplaced your membership form from the Dec 2005 newsletter, you can download it from our ZAGNY website [www.zagny.org](http://www.zagny.org).

ZAGNY  
106 Pomona Rd.  
Suffern, NY 10901

---

*We're on the Web!*

*See us at:*

***[www.zagny.org](http://www.zagny.org)***

---