

## **Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 213 – Historical Mobedyar Initiation of an Iranian Humdin by NAMC with photos**

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS) is a Zoroastrian Association Member of Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) based in Seattle, Washington State. It has over 70 Irani and Parsi families. However, they have no Mobed available to them even in near proximity.

At the FEZANA AGM in Seattle some years ago, the then NAMC President Mobed Kobad Zarolia was approached by Humdin Alayar Dabestani with an urgent need to have a Mobedyar trained in Seattle to perform basic ceremonies for Irani as well as Parsi families and suggested a very capable and enthusiastic Irani Humdin Jamshid Pouresfandiary as their candidate to be a NAMC Mobedyar.

As required by the NAMC Mobedyar Manual, Alayar sent a formal request for the same to Mobed Kobad and NAMC agreed to train Jamshid and requested Mobed Soli P. Dastur to be the mentor for Jamshid which Soli agreed to do.

Initially, Soli and Jamshid used telephone to communicate and Soli sent NAMC Mobedyar Manual to Jamshid and started the basic prayers. However, this mode of communication was not satisfactory. Thanks to another Mobedyar candidate, Humdin Hormuzd Katki from Washington, DC, who suggested to use video conferencing using SKYPE software, we have been using this mode of communication for Jamshid then on.

Due to many personal health problems of Soli as well as their move to a new home, the training was sporadic. However, we started it earnestly from July 2015 and have been regularly meeting on Sundays, from Soli's home, his friends Jahan and Nancy Daruwalla's home and even from Udvada Station Bungalow of Soli's nephew, Mobed Zarir and Rukshana's home.

We closely followed all the prayers prescribed in the NAMC Manual and even added new ones required by a Mobedyar. Soli created audio files for all prayers with translations for some. The two books on Jashan and Obsequies by Mobeds Jahan Bagli and Adi Unwalla were very helpful to use and essential for the Mobedyar Training.

At each SKYPE meeting, Soli will have the prayer to be learnt by Jamshid and Jamshid will be praying it during the SKYPE meeting. Soli will interject with correct pronunciation, meaning, some historical background as appropriate. Soli then will update an EXCEL worksheet to keep track of the prayers' progress.

The enthusiasm, perseverance and eager to learn attitude of Jamshid was beyond comparison. Soli has seen no better Humdin for Mobedyar training. Many times, we compared Parsi prayers with Irani prayers and Jamshid helped Soli to understand the difference. Sometimes, Jamshid would wish he could get corresponding prayers for Irani Humdins and Soli with his connections with Dasturji Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary in Tehran as well as Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi of California was able to get them for Jamshid which is highly appreciated and we both are very grateful to these wonderful Irani mentors. In so doing, Soli learnt quite a bit about Irani prayers, ceremonies, and customs.

Finally, it was time for the examination of Jamshid as a Mobedyar and President Arda Minocherhomji requested Mobed Tehemton Mirza to give the exam to Jamshid as required by the NAMC Mobedyar manual. This was done by Tehemton using SKYPE and Tehemton was overjoyed to do so and passed Jamshid in the exam with flying colors. Tehemton was very impressed by Jamshid's knowledge of the required prayers by a NAMC Mobedyar and above all he was really impressed by Jamshid's prayers. As he informed the NAMC AGM in Toronto: "Jamshid does not pray?!? He sings!?" You could not give a better credit to any Mobedyar.

So, finally, we had Jamshid's Initiation in Seattle on Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> in front of over 80 Irani and Parsi Humdins. Jamshid was first given a Nahan in his home by Soli and then Jamshid performed the Daily Prayers with Soli before the Jashan ceremony and then he performed the Jashan Ceremony with Soli as his Rathwi, helper. The whole initiation was wonderfully performed by Jamshid. At the end of Jashan ceremony, all prayed together 21 Yatha and 12 Ashem as well as the Doa Tandoorasti.

After the Jashan, Soli gave a glowing tribute to Jamshid for his enthusiasm, perseverance, and always ready attitude to learn and thank the Humdins of ZSWS, especially Alayar Dabestani and Mahrukh Motafram, for their continued involvement in the process as well as NAMC for giving him a unique chance to train an Iranian Humdin to be a NAMC Mobedyar. He specifically directed his request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid from now on as a Mobedyar to perform the ceremonies he can do.

Then Mobed Arda Minocherhomji, NAMC President, gave an oath to Jamshid for what he can and cannot do as a NAMC Mobedyar and then presented him with the NAMC Mobedyar Certificate duly signed by NAMC. Alayar then spoke and thanked NAMC and Soli for training Mobedyar Jamshid. He also repeated Soli's request to the Parsi families to use Jamshid as a Mobedyar.

President Navzer Hormuzdi of WSZS then thanked NAMC, Arda and Soli for training Jamshid and hoped that he can perform both Irani and Parsi prayers for their association to bring both Irani and Parsi communities together. Jamshid then thanked NAMC, Soli, Arda and all for training him and for attending this very important event in his life.

Finally, thanks to so many Irani and Parsi ladies, we had a humongous spread of Irani and Parsi food buffet style which was heartily consumed by all.

As mentioned in the subject of this event's description, this was a very unique event and we all should be very proud and hopeful for a cordial get togethers of Irani and Parsi families in future all over North America.

[Please see the attached photos of the Mobedyar Jamshid Pouresfandiary Initiation.](#)

## **SPD Comments**

1. This was a very unique event in the history of NAMC, FEZANA and North American Irani and Parsi communities.
2. We hope that such events will bring both Irani and Parsi families together as one Zarathushtri community.

3. Jamshid Pouresfandiary is a unique Zarathushtri and I was very fortunate to be his mentor.

**May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!**

**Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)**

**(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from [Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni](#) – Page 424, adapted Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original)**

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli