

**FROM & BY: MEHER AMALSAD, WESTMINSTER,
CALIFORNIA, USA**
ERVAD ZERKXIS ZARRIR BHANDARA
RECIPIENT OF THE
**2012 North American Mobeds Council Community
Services Award AT THE 2012**
North American Zarathushti Congress in New York.



*From Left to Right: Shehernaz Joshi-Verahrami, FEZANA President Bomi Patel,
Award Presenter Mrs. Nirupama Rao, Ambassador of India to the United States,
Zerkxis Bhandara and Kobad Zarolia, President, North American Mobeds Council*

It is a distinguish honor to share that our 17-year old Ervad Zerkxis Bhandara from Orange County, California, USA; was bestowed with the 2012 North American Mobeds Council Community Services Award at the 2012 North American Zarathushti Congress in New York. Zerkxis is the first ever young mobed to be a recipient of this prestigious award.

Since character counts, an outstanding Zarathushti is the one whose character exemplifies the selfless Zarathushti spirit of caring, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect and kindness. Ervad Zerkxis Bhandara is one of them. He is a caring, trustworthy young 17-year old individual who is committed to make this world a better place for the entire human race. He is respectful of other's beliefs and lives what he believes.

As a Youth Ambassador of our Zarathushti community, Ervad Zerkxis Bhandara is a vibrant, caring and gifted young Zarathushti. Born and raised in California , USA , he enjoys cooking with passion and feeding with compassion.

His prime goal in life is to become a well-rounded and properly educated Zarathushti priest. In his spare time Zerkxis enjoys reading about Zoroastrian theology, philosophy, and traditions from renowned authors such as Modi, Kanga, Dhalla, and Kotwal. Something rather intriguing about this spirited young mobed, is the explicit joy he takes in praying from the Avesta on his own time; at times spending hours engrossed in the mantric vibrations before going off to school in the morning. Besides reading the books on Zoroastrian religion, he also reads the books on different religions, acquiring knowledge of all religions thus working towards his academic goal of doing a research in comparative study of world religions focusing on the similarities to create a strong unity in diversity.

For the past 6-years, Zerkxis has performed numerous Jashans for the Parsi/Irani community of Southern California , which averages to at least two a month. Other ceremonies that have been carried out by Zerkxis include last rites (Geh-sarnu, Sarosh-nu-Patru, Uthamna, Chahrum, and other post Chahrum ceremonies), Aashirvad (wedding), and a numerous Navjotes. To-date, he has also performed about a dozen Death Ceremonies, five Aashirvads, as well as numerous Afringans and Farokshis.

What is truly commendable is that not only most of these prayers he knows by heart but also that he performs these ceremonies through his heart by investing his feelings into it, thereby adding a spiritual dimension to these prayers and ceremonies. Furthermore, Zerkxis takes every opportunity to explain the ceremonies he performs where the laity is not just a spectator but involves the laity to fully participate in the ritual thus making a connection between the laity (physical world) and the spirit world. At such a young age, this is indeed laudable and worthy of communal recognition.

During the 10-days of Muktdad, he is involved in praying Satums over the cooked food prepared by himself, performing the Jashan and Farokshi everyday and actively participating with the community members in the Hum-Bundagi.

In 2010, *at the young age of 15*, Zerkxis was the prime catalyst for the Fareshte ceremony commemorating the opening of the new Zoroastrian Association of California (ZAC) Center in Orange, California, USA.

Recently, in the last few months Zerkxis, along with his father Sensei Mobed Zarrir Bhandara, has been instrumental in conducting weekly humbandagi and meditation sessions every Sunday morning for the Southern California Zarathushti community.

Zerkxis also nurtures a fire at his residence and keeps it burning 24 hours a day due to his immense dedication. One Boi ceremony is performed on the fire daily. This daily Boi ceremony is performed to the Atash Dadgah Saheb along with all the prayers starting with the Farajiyat prayers, Atash Niyash and Doa Nam Setayashne. After which he recites the Doa Tandarosti, the Avesta Tandarosti and the Paname Dadar Afreen all by and from heart for the benefit of the community and world at large even on week days early in the morning before going to school.

His daily prayer time ranges from one to two hours, in spite of his very busy school schedule. Although it is difficult to juggle time with high school courses which include Advanced Placement and Honors classes, Zerkxis has maintained a GPA of at least 3.5 and has also actively participated in other extra-curricular activities at school and ZAC.

Zerkxis remains a steadfast follower of his faith and a dedicated mobed to our Anjuman. He has devoted his soul and spirit towards reaching out to not just the local and global Zarthushti community, but also to mankind in general. He has helped ZAC in many other ways as well, such as providing transportation of heavy items, fundraising, etc. Zerkxis also assists other young mobeds in performing Jashans and Navjotes. He is always willing to travel long distances and perform religious duties whenever called upon and ***he does so without accepting any remuneration and even if he does, he donates the same to the less fortunate individuals***. He is only 17 years old, but has served as a true Zarthushti priest more than many do in a life time.

It could be aptly said that Zerkxis is quenching the spiritual thirst of the Zoroastrian community of Southern California.

He is the proud son of Teenaz and Mobed Zarrir Bhandara.

Zerkxis has given the gift of his life with dedication to enrich the lives of others.

He is a shining example of our Zarathushti tenets of

Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

Thus, this rising star of our North American Zarathushti community

has definitely earned and deserves the recognition of

THE NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES AWARD