

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ZOROASTRIANS PREPARE TO CELEBRATE NAUROOZ

NauRoouz, falling each year on the Spring Equinox March 21, marks the official New Year for Zoroastrians in North America.

Zoroastrian organizations to hold prayers, ceremonies to mark auspicious occasion

Warrenville, Ill., March 10, 2008 FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, today announced that Zoroastrian organizations throughout the United States and Canada, will celebrate the ancient festival of NauRoouz (meaning New Day), March 21, 2008, marking the official celebration of the Zoroastrian New Year (1376) at the turn of the spring equinox. Each organization will mark the occasion with prayers and ceremonies at sunset on March 21. Media and the public are invited to attend. To inquire about a NauRoouz celebration at the Zoroastrian association closest to you, please visit <http://www.fezana.org>

Representing renewal and growth, NauRoouz is observed by tens of millions of people of Central Asian origin, and is celebrated as an official national holiday in many nations, including Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, where celebrations often last 13 days.

The beauty, meaning and symbolism of NauRoouz can best be experienced by visiting your local Zoroastrian place of worship, sharing in our ancient traditions and understanding the depth and breadth of NauRoouz as more than just a religious holiday, but a celebration of a new day and a resolve to work for a brighter year ahead, said FEZANA President Dr. Rustom Kevala. While we are in no way the only people to celebrate NauRoouz, our customs, culture and celebrations are unique to our religion and our story as a growing religious body in North America.

Zoroastrians have long served as effective bridge builders in interfaith dialogue as they see from their own faith, traditions of truth, righteousness, charity, beneficence and respect for creation reflected in traditions of the religions of both the occident and the orient. Zoroastrianism, founded circa 1500 BCE, is credited to be the oldest monotheistic religion, influencing post-exilic Judaism, which adopted some Zoroastrian beliefs such as the ultimate victory of good over evil and the resurrection of souls. These percepts were then transmitted through Judaism to Christianity, and later to Islam. Zoroastrianism flourished as the imperial religion of three Persian

empires, those of the Achaemenians, Parthians and Sasanians, and was the dominant religion from Turkey, and eastward to China during those times. North America's Zoroastrian community includes those who arrived from the Indian subcontinent, known as Parsis, and those who came directly from Iran seeking religious freedom.

The media in recent years has devoted a lot of ink to our declining populations in India, but the untold story is that the North American Zoroastrian community is vibrant and growing, and still celebrating and perpetuating auspicious holidays like NauRooz, Kevala said. As we grow in the North American diaspora, it is our responsibility to proactively reach out and educate the public at large, and to showcase the many contributions being made each day by Zoroastrians here in North America and throughout the world.

#### About FEZANA

Founded in 1987, FEZANA serves as the coordinating body for 25 Zoroastrian associations throughout the United States and Canada. FEZANA promotes the study, understanding and practice of the Zoroastrian faith in North America., represents the interests of its member associations, and carries out philanthropic and charitable activities worldwide. The FEZANA Journal, FEZANA's publication of record, circulates to Zoroastrian households in more than 22 countries, as well as to scholars, academicians and religious organizations worldwide. For more information visit: [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org).

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