

## *Professional /Academic Biographies and Reflection Statements*

### **AUSTIN, Gool:**

Mobedyar Guloo Austin is a retired Speech/language Pathologist, who decided to go through the mobedyar training a few years ago under the mentor ship of Ervad Tehemton Mirza. Parents of Zoroastrian children were keen that I teach the London (Ontario) kids about our religion, so I took on that task for 10 years. She is a founding member of the brain injury association (BIAL) and enjoyed supporting that population in terms of obtaining services and rehabilitating them. She is continuously interested in health issues and presently is involved with "Age Friendly London", to make London an age friendly city!

### **BAGLI, Jehan:**

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli was born in Mumbai India. He received his B.Sc. and his B.Sc. (Tech) degree from University of Bombay. He was awarded the J.N.TATA scholarship for his Ph.D. studies at the London University. He did four years of post-doctoral studies at the Johns Hopkins University, followed by NRC fellowship at Laval University, He was research scientist at Wyeth Research laboratories for thirty seven years where he rose from Senior Research Scientist to Distinguished Research Fellow and retired in 1997. Dr. Bagli is an ordained priest through Navar and Murtab ceremonies. He was a founding member and President of Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, editor of *Gavashni*, a North American Zarathushti publication, for 16 years, and founding editor of *FEZANA journal*. He is the author and co- author of several books on the religion of Zarathushtra and its rituals. He was the recipient of the FEZANA Excellence in Profession/Business Award in 1994, and Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

### **BEKHRANDNIA, Shahin:**

Ms. Shahin Bekhrandnia is the Jt. Hon. Secretary and Religious Coordinator for the World Zoroastrian Organization in London (UK). She pursued post-graduate research on Zoroastrianism and worked as a teacher. Shahin has been a writer, advocate, and interlocutor on Zoroastrianism in the public sphere. Her articles have appeared in NewStatesman. She is the grand-daughter of a renown Yazdi priest and poet of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **BERRY, Sujata:**

Ms. Sujata Berry is a producer of radio, television, and web stories, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). She currently produces White Coat, Black Art for the CBC. Among her other passions are singing in choir.

### **BIDEGAIN, Ana Maria:**

Dr. Ana María Bidegain was born in Colonia Suiza, Uruguay. She studied History in Uruguay and Belgium, where she earned her PhD, with great distinction at the Catholic University of Louvain. She developed her academic career in Colombia, where she lived and taught for more than 20 years. Dr. Bidegain founded the History Department in the University of Los Andes and opened the field of Religious Studies at the National University of Colombia. In the 2003-2004 biennium, she directed the Social Sciences Research Center of the National University of Colombia. Ana Maria was a Visiting Professor in Harvard's Women's Studies in Religion Program. Currently, she is the Program Director for Research at the Latin American and Caribbean Center at FIU. In 2005, she edited and published two books that resulted from her teaching and research experience in Colombia: *Historia del Cristianismo en Colombia. Corrientes y Diversidad* (Editorial Taurus) and *Globalización y Diversidad Religiosa en Colombia* (Nacional University of Colombia Press). Dr. Bidegain's research interest has been related to two topics: the presence of women in Latin American Christian History and the Religious Experience of Latin American and Caribbean migrants. As a

result, in October 2009 she published the *Participación y protagonismo de las mujeres en la historia del Catolicismo Latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires, Argentina); several book chapters such as “Frauen, empowerment und religiöse institutionen in der lateinamerikanischen geschichte” in *Empowerment von Frauen in der lateinamerikanischen Geschichte* (V.R.Azcuy-M. Eckholt eds) Munster, 2009; “Le Martyre des religieuses en Amerique Latine au 20e siecle. L’importante historique de la vie religieuse feminine pour le Catholicism latino-americain”. In *L’image d’Oscar Romero Héros: Prophètes et martyrs d’Amerique Latine*. (C. Zappia) Academie –Bruylant.BE, Louvain, 2009 and a polemic article co-authored with the theologian Maria Clara Bingemer: “Latin American Matristics: Beginnings of Recognition?” in *Concilium* 2009/5.

**CLUBWALA, Astad:**

Mr. Astad Clubwala is the President of the Zoroastrian Association of New York (ZAGNY).

**DASTOOR, Dolly:**

Dr. Dolly Dastoor is a widely published research clinical psychologist and specializes in the assessment of dementias. She, most recently was Clinical Administrative Chief, at the Program in Dementia with Psychiatric Comorbidity, at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, in Montreal. And also, an Assistant Professor in Psychiatry, at McGill University. She received her doctorate from Concordia University. Before coming to Canada, she was a Senior Research Fellow in Psychiatry and the coordinator of the World Health Organization (WHO) Project on Schizophrenia at the University of Ibadan. She has been active in women’s organizations, especially Zonta International, and attended CSW meetings in Vienna and New York. She is past President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec and of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) the umbrella organization representing over 20,000 Zoroastrians in United States and Canada. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the FEZANA Journal, since 2005. Currently she is a trustee and vice chair of the board of the Parliament of World’s Religions.

**DASTUR, Mehbad:**

Ervad Mehbad Dastur is an active member in GTA community. He was born and brought up in Mumbai, India. He learnt the Avesta prayers to be a Zoroastrian priest from Dadar Athornan Institute and was ordained as a priest at the age of 12. He learnt the Avesta and Pahlavi language and translation during his school and college days. He completed his Bachelor of Commerce from Mumbai University and has been very interested in computer technology from his youth. He has been in Toronto, Canada for over 20 years where he is very much involved as a Zoroastrian priest with the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). He is married to Zenobia and they have two young sons, Xersis and Karl. His older son Xersis is also a priest and takes part in community prayers. Mehbad uses his knowledge of IT to administer the ZSO website and enhance their communications system. Ervad Dastur is also involved with the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC). He has worked for well known companies like SIEMENS and McKinsey & Co. His current full-time work currently involves working for a private company assisting with the IT Operations and Support for the EMS Services across most of Ontario.

**DHONDY, Farrukh:**

Mr. Farrukh Dhondy is an Indian-born British writer, playwright, screenwriter and left-wing activist of Parsi descent, who resides in the United Kingdom. He is well known not only for his writing, but also for his film and TV work. He received his MA at Leicester University and was later a lecturer at Leicester College of Further Education and Archbishop Temple School in Lambeth in London. Dhondy became involved with the Indian Workers' Association and later, in London, with the British Black Panthers. He joined the publication *Race Today* in 1970, along with his close friend Darcus Howe, and former partner Mala Sen.

As a race activist and academic, he came to be associated with Black and left-wing intellectuals and activists such as Stuart Hall and Trevor Phillips. He developed a dialogue with V. S. Naipaul. Dhondy's literary output is vast, including books for children, textbooks and biographies, as well as plays for theatre and scripts film and television.<sup>[5]</sup> He is also a columnist, a biographer (of C. L. R. James; 2001), and media executive, having been Commissioning Editor at Channel Four from 1984 to 1997. During his time with Channel Four, he wrote the comedy series *Tandoori Nights* (1985–87) which concerned the rivalry of two curry house owners. His children's stories include *KBW (Keep Britain White)*, a study of a young white boy's response to anti-Bengali racism. In 2011, Dhondy published his translation of selections from the Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi, *Rumi: a New Translation*. He also wrote the screenplay for the Bollywood historical blockbuster *Mangal Pandey*, starring Aamir Khan and Toby Stephens. In 2012, he scripted a short film called *The K File*. This film dealt with a fictional take on the judgement of Ajmal Kasab and was directed by Oorvazi Irani. In 2013 his critically acclaimed play *Devdas* was premiered in London and was subsequently replayed globally. 2013 also saw the publication of the novel *Prophet Of Love* (HarperCollins). Dhondy was lauded in the respected political magazine *New Internationalist*, in its prestigious "final page". In 2015 Dhondy interviewed Nobel Laureate Sir V. S. Naipaul in India and in London as part of the Jaipur Literature Festival and his publishers produced a collection of his greatest works in an anthology.

#### **DOCTOR, Khushnuma:**

Ms. Khushnuma Doctor completed her Bachelors in Architectural Science from Ryerson University. She worked for 3.5 years with TD Bank in their Architectural/Real Estate Dept, 6 years with PCL/Aecon JV on the Pearson Airport Terminal 1 Redevelopment Project. Khushnuma was a Construction Superintendent with PCL for 8 years, and with Dominus Construction for 1 year. Since the end of 2016, she has been a Finishing Superintendent with Tridel. When Khushnuma was younger, she participated in various Youth ZSO (Zoroastrian Society of Ontario) events, and helped with the Toronto Youth Congress in the '90s. She has volunteered for a few years on the ZSO Entertainment committee. And for 3 years, Khushnuma volunteered on the joint OZCF/ZSO Entertainment committee. Ms. Doctor has been a Director on the OZCF Board on three occasions: '08-'10, '10-'12, and currently '16-'18.

#### **GANDHI, Homi:**

Mr. Homi Gandhi is the President of FEZANA (the Federation of North American Zoroastrians). He has also been past president of ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of New York), as well as holding many other offices within ZAGNY. Homi has served as Co-Chair on the Fezana- United Nations ad hoc committee, and been part of leadership initiatives associated with interfaith dialogue. He is also the Honourary President for Religions for Peace.

#### **GAZDAR, Cyrus:**

Mr. Cyrus Gazdar is the current OZCF President, serving a third term on the Board (prior: Secretary, Vice-President). He has taught middle school for 19 years with the Peel District School Board. After having graduated with a B.A. and B.Ed., he travelled to teach for three years in Japan. There, he met his wife. They are proud parents of a lovely daughter who is currently in grade 11. OZCF has come a long way in its nascent history of 16 years. Our organization was formed on the principles of enriching and advancing our religion through tenets and observances which we affiliate with our faith. To ensure the flame remains forever lit, ground will soon be broken to consecrate a Place of Worship (Atash Kadeh).

#### **GIFFORD, Zerbanno:**

Mrs. Zerbanno Gifford is an author, human rights campaigner, and founder of the ASHA Centre a charity working for the empowerment of young people, sustainable development and peace & reconciliation

worldwide. Zerbanoo holds the International Woman of the Year Award 2006 for her humanitarian work, which spans fifty years of grassroots and global activism. Presented the Nehru Centenary Award, she is a pioneer for Asian Women in politics. She has chaired commissions, advised the British Home Secretary. Director of Anti-Slavery International, she was given the Freedom of Lincoln, Nebraska, for combating slavery. Author of seven books, her own biography 'An Uncensored Life' by Farida Master is published by Harper Collins.

**HOMAVAZIR, Armaity:**

Ms. Armaity Homavazir has been involved with the Zoroastrian community from the time she joined the Youth Group at age 13. Ironically, in some circles, she is still considered a youth - even today! She has been part of the organizing committees for congresses in Toronto, and spoken and contributed to North American congresses since 1986. Armaity is also the founder and director of Camp Pardis which ran for two summers in 1996 and 1998 for 6 weeks each. The project involved children, youth, parents and seniors and garnered government funding for creating jobs for the youth. While living in the UK, Armaity got involved with the YZs and taught Religion classes. A few years ago, she also taught Religion classes in Toronto. Over the years, Armaity has also been involved with Next Gen Now and spoken and moderated several of their events geared at leadership and vision. Armaity lives and teaches in Toronto and cares deeply for the Zoroastrian community. She is hopeful through forums like the AVI, our community will have a clearer understanding of the issues that have brought us here today.

**HINTZE, Almut:**

Dr. Almut Hintze is Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism at SOAS, University of London, and Fellow of the British Academy. Her field is Zoroastrianism and ancient and middle Iranian languages. Major publications include a study of the semantics of words for 'reward' in Vedic and Avestan (2000), commentaries and annotated editions of Zoroastrian sacred texts, such as the Avestan Zamyād Yašt (1994) and the Yasna Hap-tanghaiti (2007), and, with Dastur F M Kotwal, a facsimile edition of the Khorde Avesta and Yasht manuscript E1. She currently directs a collaborative project on the Multime-dia Yasna, funded by European Research Council (2016–2021), to produce an interactive film of a complete performance of the Yasna ritual, electronic tools for editing Avestan texts, and a text-critical edition, translation, commentary and dictionary of the Avestan Yasna.

**KANTER, Daniel:**

Rev. Dr. Daniel C. Kanter is the Senior Minister of First Unitarian Church of Dallas. He is the author of the book, *Faith for the Unbeliever*, released in 2017 and is working on another book called *Navigating Grief*. Daniel has a B.A. in Psychology and Asian Area Studies from the University of Vermont, a Masters of Divinity from Starr King School for the Ministry, and a Doctorate of Ministry from Perkins Theological School at Southern Methodist University. He has been the President of the Senior Ministers of Large UU Churches of the United States as well as a part of a Unitarian Universalist Association task force to define ministerial competency. He has lived in places such as Madurai, Tamil Nadu in Southern India, Bodh Gaya in Northern India, and traveled widely. He works in coalition with Faith Forward Dallas, a multi-faith action group addressing racial equity, poverty and education in Dallas and is involved in numerous efforts for women's rights in America.

**LOUCHAKOV-SCHWARTZ, Olga:**

Dr. Olga Louchakova-Schwartz, M.D., Ph.D., is a visiting scholar at GTU, and Founding President of the Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience and a Chair of Philosophy of the Religion unit at AARWR (American Academy of Religion, Western Division). She is Professor of Philosophy of Religion, Spirituality, and Human Development at the Hult International Business School, and, as a former medical

neuroscientist, a volunteer clinical professor at the Department of Public Health Sciences at UC Davis. Her chief research interests are in religious determinants of health and migration, the problem of first person experience in religious evidence, and foundational theological problems of possibility and necessity in the human knowledge of God. Along with being a meditation teacher and spiritual counselor, she has chaired more than forty doctoral dissertations, and has published more than a hundred peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, including interpretive commentaries on the Catholic philosophy of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Her forthcoming book, *The Problem of Religious Experience: Case Studies in Phenomenology*, Springer, is to appear at the end of 2018.

**MARSHALL, Charlene:**

Ms. Charlene Marshall is employed at CAMH (The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health), within the Psychogeriatric Resource Consultation Program. Charlene has a Masters in Social Work, and is a Registered Social Worker. Charlene is also a lecturer within the Justice Studies programme at the University of Guelph-Humber. She has had previous experience within the areas of corrections and policing, pertaining to the treatment, documentation, and evaluation of victims of abuse, crime, and addiction. Charlene notes that when she tells a new acquaintance where she works, they often share a story about someone in their life who lives with mental illness. Usually, their friend, colleague or loved one has experienced obstacles to care, or has not had an optimal response to treatment. Despite great progress, our treatments, our care models and our healthcare system are not meeting the needs of mental health patients. Why? Because of three big gaps: an applied information gap, a justice gap and an advocacy gap. This means that people with mental illness do not have timely access to evidence informed care and social supports. It means that there is suboptimal investment in the discovery and innovation required for advances in treatment for mental illness. At CAMH, the Vision Statement is “Transforming Lives.” And CAMH lists as its “Strategic Direction Number Six”, to Drive Social Change. But CAMH realizes that in order to realize this, part of its Vision2020, that a substantive transformation in attitudes, in how society thinks about and responds to its citizens with mental illness, is required. We must not stand silent when the human, the civil and the healthcare rights of people with mental illness are not recognized and respected. Therefore, advocacy is deeply embedded in the CAMH mission.

**MASAELI, Mahmoud**

Dr. Mahmoud Masaeli is Visiting Professor at the University of Ottawa. He has pursued a Ph.D. in Political Science and another one in Philosophy (PhD-ABD). Mahmoud completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Saint Paul University concerning the Ethics and International Relations. His areas of research and teaching include Global Ethics, Global Justice, Ethics of Global Development, and Hermeneutics of the Selfhood. He also holds a special interest in mysticism and spirituality. Mahmoud has published books on the causes of terrorism with a concentration on ethics and religion, as well as ethics and uneven development. He is a passionate advocate of dialogical ethics, recognition as justice, and global justice. Mahmoud is the Founder and the Executive Director of Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns (ap-gc.net) which is a global not-for-profit network of ethicist and spiritualist think-thanks searching for responses to global concerns. He has organized 12 international conferences around the topic of global concerns from the alternative perspectives of ethics and spirituality. Mahmoud has been an Ambassador of the Parliament of the World’s Religions for three consecutive terms. He is a Member of the Dances of Universal Peace. He has served on the editorial board for *Philosophy Study* and *Religion and Conflict*.

**MEHRI, Rastin:**

Dr. Rastin Mehri obtained his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), in the University of London, U.K., under the supervision of Professor Almut Hintze and Professor John Hinnells. He obtained his BFA, BA and an MA from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is

currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. His research interests include the history, literature and social situation of the Middle Eastern and South Asian Diaspora in British Columbia, Canada.

**MUTTA, Baldev:**

Mr. Baldev Mutta has been in the field of social work for the last 45+ years. He is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). PCHS is a Health Service Provider in the Central West and Mississauga Halton LHIN geographic areas. He has worked for the last 28 years developing an integrated holistic model to address substance abuse, mental health and family violence in the South Asian community. He has received many community awards for his work on equity, community development, diversity management, and organizational change.

**NIYOZOV, Sarfaroz:**

Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov was born in Tajikistan, and completed his Honors Degree in Arabic from Tajik State University in 1983. Subsequently, he worked and studied in Yemen, Syria, and Tunisia. Upon completing his graduate studies, Dr. Niyozov taught at both Dushanbe and Khorog Universities in Tajikistan. He relocated to Karachi and graduated with the first class of the IED (International Education Development) in 1995. Dr. Niyozov has worked on several of AKU's educational endeavors in Central Asia, including on the establishment of the University of Central Asia. Dr. Niyozov was awarded a scholarship from the Aga Khan Foundation to pursue his PhD in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, which he completed in 2001. His PhD research received best dissertation awards from the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) and the American Education Research Association (AERA, Division B). Dr. Niyozov founded and led the Central Asian Studies Unit at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK. In 2005, Dr. Niyozov joined the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Currently, he is Associate Professor, Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning and his research, teaching, and supervision are focused on education and culture in the developing world (including the post-socialist context), and the education experiences of students from Muslim backgrounds in western schools and societies. He served as Co-Director of the Comparative, International and Development Education Center (CIDEC), and as an editor of the Journal of Curriculum Inquiry (OISE, University of Toronto). He has written extensively about education in post-Soviet countries and the experiences of teachers working with Muslim students in multicultural classrooms.

**PANAINO, Antonio Clemente Domenico:**

Professor Antonio C. D. Panaino is Full Professor of Iranian Studies at the “Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna” and he is presently Dean of the “Faculty for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage” in Ravenna, where also the “Ilya and Lisbeth Gershevitch Library” is located according to the generous wish of this scholar. The same Faculty has acquired the “J. P. Asmussen Library”, which is presently at disposal of the consultants. Prof. Panaino has been Secretary and, then, President of the Societas Iranologica Europaea. Presently he is Director of the Emilia-Romagna branch of the Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient. He has founded with other scholars the International Association «MELAMMU» dedicated to the study of the intercultural phenomena in antiquity with special regard for the heritage of the Assyrian and Babylonian cultures. Prof. Panaino is the Director of the Italian Scientific Mission in Tajikistan. He studied at the State University of Milan and, then, obtained his PHD at the Oriental Institute of Naples with a thesis on the Avestan hymnology. He also studied in Cambridge (Jesus College), London (SOAS), Belgium (Liège). Prof/ Panaino's research interests are: 1) Avestan and generally Mazdean literatures; 2) the history of religions in Pre-Islamic Iran; 3) the mutual influences between Byzantium and the Sasanian; 4) Astronomy and Astrology in the ancient world; 5) Ethnolinguistics of the Yaghnoobi and of the Iranian area. 6) Preservation of the ethno-cultural heritage in areas of crisis and

conflict. Professor Panaino has been visiting professor in many European Universities and Academies [Harvard, Yale, Brown, London, Collège de France (Paris), Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris), etc.]. He is author of various books and more than two hundred scientific contributions. During the last years the research activities of Prof. Panaino have been directed not only towards those scientific areas he loves most, like Avestan philology, Iranian religious history and Pre-Islamic astral culture, but also towards the political dynamics coming out from the meeting between Mazdeism and other religions like Christianity and Manichaeism. Furthermore, paying specific attention to the study of the role of queens in Late Antiquity. And a series of targeted studies on the relations between the Sasanian and the Byzantine worlds. Specifically also, the multicultural implications of the cycles concerning the Evangelic Magi in Christ's Nativity and their role as messengers of a foreign culture. On this subject he has written two books and many other articles, and he is actually preparing a *Namenbuch* dedicated to the names of the Magi in the various traditions as well as other studies concerning different aspects of the three (but, sometimes, also twelve) Wise men coming from the Orient, as symbol of intercultural mediation not only between Christianity and Mazdeism, but between East and West. Prof. Panaino is also an infantry lieutenant in the reserve forces of the Italian Army.

**PANTHAKI, Armaan:**

Ervad Armaan Panthaki is 20 years old, and currently enrolled in the Mechatronics Engineering and Management program at McMaster University. Armaan completed his Navar ceremony in December of 2008, making this the 10 year anniversary of becoming a mobed.

**PANTHAKI, Farhan:**

Ervad Farhan Panthaki completed his Navar ceremony in India in 2004, and has since participated in numerous religious functions, while also completing his academic qualifications in Canada. Graduating from the University of Waterloo with a BSc in Mechanical Engineering, Farhan currently works at Apple in California, supporting iPhone Operations.

**PANTHAKI, Kamran:**

Ervad Kamran Panthaki is a senior in the Bachelor of Technology program at McMaster University, studying Automation Engineering Technology. When he's not studying he likes to read, play videogames, longboard, and play guitar. He was ordained a Navaar in 2008, at Dadar Agiary and has been active at the OZCF since.

**PANTHAKI, Neville Gustad:**

Dr. Neville Panthaki is a Canadian born Parsi Zoroastrian. Neville was fortunate to have studied Zoroastrianism and comparative religion with Dr. Willard Oxtoby. Neville was awarded his Ph.D. in Social Justice Education, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), at the University of Toronto. His doctorate was undertaken with two other Joint Collaborative programs: the Munk School of Global Affairs—Asian Institute's Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), and Comparative, International Development Education (CIDE). Neville also possesses an M.A., and a Ph.D. (ABD) from the Department of History at York University, and a Graduate Diploma in International and Security Studies (York, Political Science). This affords him an interdisciplinary and transnational comparative perspective within his scope for research and teaching. He has a University Teaching Diploma and a B.Ed., both from York University. Neville's research/publications investigate curriculum as communication, pedagogy, identity and belonging; within the context of intercultural history, historical theology, and social justice. He is the Creator and Director of the Asha Vahishta Initiative (AVI), and the Chair of the AVI Conference.

**PANTHAKI, Mahiyar:**

Mr. Mahiyar Panthaki is a Chartered Accountant by qualification and banker by profession. Mahiyar has been working for over 30 years and has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in several countries such as: India, Dubai, UAE, Kenya, Hong Kong, Philippines. He has been based in Canada for the last 17 years. While working in different geographies / cultures, he noticed that religion appears to highlight differences rather than unify people which is ironic, as most people have similar values and aspirations.

**PANTHAKY, Jal:**

Ervad Jal Panthaky was born in Ahmedabad , and brought up in Nargol (Gujarat) where his father acted as a 'panthaky'. Jal became Nāvar at age 11 and Marātab at 12. Moving to Mumbai, Jal completed a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. He worked for Voltas and Glaxo Laboratories. Jal moved to Canada in 1967, working in an electrical mechanical contracting firm as a supervisor, and for the City of Toronto Exhibition Place as Operations Manager. He also did consulting work for various companies in Health and Safety Training until 2017. Ervad Panthaky was a founding Director of the Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF), and has also served as President, Secretary and Director with portfolio. Ervad Panthaky is a lifetime member of NAMC (North American Mobed Council), and a registered Minister of Solemnizing Marriage in the Province of Ontario. Ervad Panthaky has transliterated from Gujarati into English the higher liturgical prayers of: Yazashne, Visperad, Vandidād, Yazashne Rapithvan, and Yazashne-Concise. Uniquely, this includes passages and chapters that are otherwise not printed in other books and instead marked as "Jawat". Jal and his wife Meher, have four children, and four grand-children.

**RAFFAELLI, Enrico:**

Dr. Enrico Giuseppe Raffaelli did his undergraduate studies at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", specializing in Iranian studies, with a focus on Zoroastrianism and the languages of pre-Islamic Iran. He did his PhD studies on Zoroastrianism between 1999 and 2004 in conjunction between the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes Section of Religious Sciences of Paris. *L'oroscopo del mondo* deals with astrology in Zoroastrianism, its relation with Mesopotamian, Classical and Indian astrology, and its influence on Islamic astrology. He has also published several articles and book chapters on astrology in pre-Islamic Iran, and on the Avestan and Middle Persian literature. *The Sih-rozag in Zoroastrianism* focused on the Avestan and Pahlavi versions of the *Sih-rozag*, a text worshipping Zoroastrian divine entities. It includes an edition, translation and philological and historico-religious commentary of the two versions of the text. Enrico G. Raffaelli's present areas of interest include the history of pre-Islamic Iranian literature, with a particular focus on the Avestan ritual texts, and on the Middle Persian texts of the Apocalyptic genre.

**RAHMANIAN, Hamid:**

Mr. Hamid Rahmanian is a 2014 John Guggenheim Fellow. His work centers on film and graphic arts. His work has been exhibited in international competitions and publications. His narrative and documentary films have premiered at Venice, Sundance, Toronto, Tribeca, and IDFA film festivals. He has won numerous international awards and his works have been televised on international networks, including PBS, Sundance Channel, IFC, Channel 4, BBC, DR2, and Al Jazeera. Mr. Rahmanian undertook the immense task of illustrating and commissioning a new translation and adaptation of the tenth-century Persian epic poem *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi, entitled *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings*. This best-selling 600-page art book, which the Wall Street Journal lauded as a "masterpiece," was published by the Quantuck Lane Press in 2013. His artwork from the book has been exhibited and purchased by several museums. Mr. Rahmanian created a cinematic shadow play for the theater based on the love story of Zaul and Rudabeh from the *Shahnameh*, entitled *FEATHERS OF FIRE: A PERSIAN EPIC*, which premiered at

the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2016. He recently completed a pop-up book, entitled, ZAHAAK: THE LEGEND OF THE SERPENT KING, to be released in 2018 through Fantagraphics Books in English and French. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**REDDY, Srinivas:**

Dr. Srinivas Reddy is a scholar, translator and musician. He studied classical sitar in the traditional *guru-shishya* style with Sri Partha Chatterjee, disciple of the late sitar maestro Pandit Nikhil Banerjee. Srinivas also trained in classical South Asian languages and literatures at Brown University and UC Berkeley. He has released three independent CDs and published three books of Indian poetry in English translation with Penguin Books. Currently Srinivas is Visiting Professor of Religious Studies and Contemplative Studies at Brown University where he explores the intersection of religious practice, mystical poetry and devotional music. He lives in Rhode Island and spends his time performing, teaching and conducting research around the world.

**RENDÓN, Laura:**

Dr. Laura I. Rendón is a student advocate, education scholar and consultant. A native of Laredo, Texas, Rendón's work has focused on reducing educational inequalities connected to college access, persistence and graduation of low-income, first-generation students. Rendón developed "validation theory," which has been extensively employed by scholars and educational organizations as the framework to work with underserved student populations. Rendón is also a teaching and learning thought leader in the area of contemplative education. She is the author of the book, *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking Pedagogy): Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation*. Further, Rendón is author or editor of numerous books, journal articles and practice and policy papers, including her new book (edited with Vijay Kanagala) *The Latino Student Guide to STEM Careers*. Rendón is currently Professor Emerita and Co-Director of the Center for Research and Policy in Education at University of Texas-San Antonio. She is a Fellow of the Mind and Life Institute and former Fellow of the Fetzer Institute. Rendón is also on the Board of the John N Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. In 2013 the Texas Diversity Council awarded Rendón the title of being one of the Most Powerful and Influential Women in Texas. Rendón's archives can be found at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection Library, University of Texas-Austin.

**SAMUEL, Joshua:**

Dr. Rev. Joshua Samuel is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at the Marymount Manhattan College, New York. Samuel completed his PhD at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, working with the likes of Dr. James Cone, Dr. Cornel West and Dr. Paul F. Knitter, among others. Samuel's doctoral dissertation and upcoming book (Leiden: Brill) weaves Hindu-Christian comparative theology and Dalit liberation theology to construct a comparative theology of liberation focusing on embodied divine experiences (better known as "divine possessions") among Hindu and Christian Dalits. His research interests include Interreligious Dialogue, modern history of religion (and secularism) and the conceptualization of justice in "world religions." Samuel is also an ordained minister of the Church of South India and currently serves as a priest in the Episcopal Church of America.

**SCHWARTZ, Martin:**

Dr. Martin Schwartz. Coming from undergraduate interests in Indo-European/ historical linguistics, Classics, and ancient Near Eastern cultures at the City College of New York, became a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, under the mentorship of the great and inspiring Iranist Prof. Walter B. Henning from 1962-1967, upon whose untimely death I finished my PhD degree (with a dissertation on Christian Sogdian) with the help of another important Iranist, Henning's student and contemporary Dr. Ilya Gershevitch in 1968. From 1968 to 1970 I taught Iranistics and Sanskrit at Columbia

University, and from 1970-2010/2011 I taught Iranian Studies at UC Berkeley, since which I have been Professor Emeritus there, and have kept on researching and publishing. My publications have ranged over all aspects of Iranian Studies, but I regard my most important and exciting work to be innovative study of the Gathas of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), which I consider the most intellectually intricate, ingenious and consequential poetry in the history of world literature.

**SHEKEL, Michal:**

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the spiritual leader at Har Tikvah synagogue, as well as the Executive Director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis, the Rabbinic Director of the Reform Beit Din and Jewish Information class, and is the *mesaderet gittin* (divorce officiant) for the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto Beit Din. She also teaches adult classes in Toronto covering a variety of Jewish topics and leads a monthly Torah study group. Rabbi Shekel is the original co-editor of the holiday section of myjewishlearning.com. She also spent four years writing the weekly on-line Torah study for Kolel. She is the author of numerous textbooks used in Jewish schools throughout North America and has contributed articles to a variety of Jewish publications. She is currently a regular contributor to the Parashat HaShavuah column in the Canadian Jewish News. Over the course of her career, Rabbi Shekel has served as a board member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and as the Chairperson of the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto. She has also been on the boards of organizations dealing with Jewish continuity and education, outreach, interfaith issues, inclusion, racism, and drug and substance abuse.

**SIDHWA, Phil:**

Mr. Phil Sidhwa is owner, President and CEO, ORGATEC Energy Inc. Phil is also the Chair and Organizer of the OZCF (Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation) project to establish an Atash Kadeh (a consecrated place of worship). He was a founding member of OZCF and has also previously held positions of President and Vice-President of the OZCF. Phil has a combined 30 years of experience in public works infrastructure development, management and operations. He has specialized in public-private partnerships in the renewable energy and water sectors. Phil has led large international enterprises within North America, South America, and Asia. He has worked with all sectors and levels of government, promoting environmental ethics. He is currently the president of the Oakville shrine club.

**SMALLER, Christine:**

Rev. Christine Smaller is minister at Birchcliff Bluffs United Church in Scarborough (Toronto). She is also a PhD Candidate in theology (U of T), studying the discipline of homiletics. Her research investigates how the power of humour facilitates the communication of theological and spiritual wisdom in the pulpit and the public square. Christine has completed her Masters in Divinity (M.Div) and her Masters in Pastoral Studies (MPS). Rev. Smaller is part of the Emmanuel College faculty for the MPS graduate programme of the University of Toronto. Christine is also a Fellow in the Teaching for Ministry Program.

**STANKOVIC, Pola:**

Dr. Pola Stankovic has her Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance Studies from York University. Her research interests include Canadian theatre history, modern European drama, European influences on actor training in Canada, and the influence of Style on performance, production, and the imagination. While completing her Ph.D., Dr. Stankovic trained classically as an actor with the Toronto Theatre Academy, with whom she continues to pursue her training in acting, directing, and teaching. She has performed, consulted, coached, and directed within Toronto's theatre scene and has had the privilege of working with Russian master clown Nikolai Terentiev (*Slava's Snowshow*), as well as award winning clown duo Heather Marie Annis and Amy Lee (Morro and Jasp), among others. Most recently, she acted in the film *Nursery Rhyme of a Madman*, a cinematic adaptation of the 1923 Absurdist play *Madman and the Nun* by Polish

playwright Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, which made its debut at the Montreal Film Festival, and has been shown in France, Berlin, and Toronto.

**STONE, Jeff:**

Father Jeff Stone is the priest-in-charge at St. Jude's Anglican Church in Brampton. He is the father of one daughter (Imogen) and three sons (Elliott, Ciaran [pronounced Keer-ren], and August), whose ages range from ten years down to four years, respectively. Before his appointment to St. Jude, Bramalea North, Father Jeff was the interim associate priest at Our Saviour in Don Mills, and before that, the assistant curate and priest at Redeemer, Bloor Street, in Toronto. He has both a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Pastoral Studies degree from the University of Toronto. Father Jeff has been a priest since January 2015, and a deacon since May, 2014. Father Jeff loves to talk about God, play with his kids, play guitar, bike and walk, and follow the Blue Jays.

**SUSAI, Jesu:**

Father Susai Jesu, is an Oblate Priest belonging to the Religious Order of 'The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate': acronym OMI. He was ordained to the Priesthood in the year 2000. He served five years among the Adivasi Communities in North India. He speaks Hindi fluently. He is from Tamil Nadu, in South India. After having completed his M.Sc. Psychology in Madras University, he came to Canada as missionary in the 2007. After 10 months of orientation into Native Ministry, he was appointed as pastor of Pelican Narrows, and Sandy Bay (both communities in northern Saskatchewan) and served there for almost eight years. It was there, with the help of the Native Elders, that Father Susai learnt to speak the Cree language. Father Susai completed his M.A. in Counselling and Spirituality at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. Since July 2017, he has been the Pastor of Sacred Heart Churches of the First Peoples, Catholic Church, in Edmonton, Alberta. Sacred Heart is the first designated National Parish for all First Nations peoples in Canada (including Metis, Inuit).

**TUMARKIN, Sivan:**

Mr. Sivan Tumarkin is a lawyer and co-founding partner of Samfiru Tumarkin LLP, a 20-lawyer firm that specializes in personal injury, disability and employment law, with offices in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver. He obtained his BA from York University in psychology, and his LLB from Queen's University. He hosts a weekly radio show on topics pertaining to personal injury and disability law in Toronto and Ottawa, and appears regularly in various media outlets as a commentator on legal matters. Sivan spends his spare time with family and friends, cooking, as well as learning ancient Greek, pouring over ancient myths and history. But for life's unpredictable circumstances, he would have become a professor of classics (ancient Greece and Rome), an archeologist, or possibly a modern day oracle at Delphi.

**WOODLEY, Randy:**

Dr. Randy Woodley, as an activist/scholar, distinguished lecturer and wisdom keeper, addresses a variety of issues concerning American culture, faith, our relationship with the earth and Indigenous realities. His expertise has been sought in national venues as diverse as *The Huffington Post*, *Moody Radio* and *Time Magazine*. Dr. Woodley is a legal descendent of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma. He has been involved in mentoring Indigenous leaders for three decades. Dr. Woodley (PhD Intercultural Studies) also serves as Distinguished Professor of Faith and Culture and Director of Intercultural and Indigenous Studies at George Fox Seminary in Portland, Oregon. Some of his books include *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*, 2012 (Eerdmans) and *Living in Color: Embracing God's Passion for Ethnic Diversity*, Intervarsity Press, 2004.