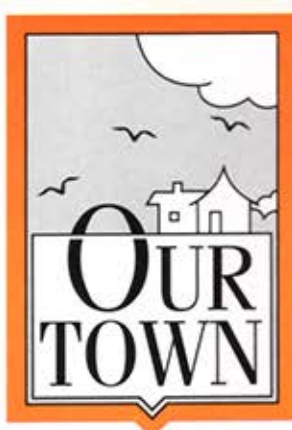


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MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz S. Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz M. Gandhi
SENIOR EDITOR Hilla P. Guzder
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Roxana A. Driver
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Cover: Portrait photograph of Nargis and Riyad Wadia
by Dayanita Singh

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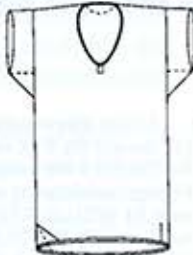
Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"The significant sudreh"

It is a matter of regret and misunderstanding that the Zoroastrian youth in America believe that wearing the sudreh-kusti is not essential ("The significant sudreh," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, November 2002).

While handling the religious cultural project at the city-museum in Ahmedabad, I had observed the same feeling from the administrators at the museum who thought that sudreh-kusti were the 'underwear.' When their misunderstanding was removed they realized that the sudreh was a 'wonder-wear.'

The sudreh's white color reminds us to lead a life of purity, performing good deeds which can be stored in the gireban. The sudreh is the protective shield against



all evil forces. The nine seams of a sudreh enshrine Zarathushtra's nine commandments for a good life: Mazda-yasni (belief in one Supreme Being); Zarathushti (honoring Prophet Zarathushtra); *vee-daevo* (fight against all evil); *Ahure-takaeso* (unshaken faith in Ahura Mazda); *fraspayo* (love and brotherhood); *khaedhram* (respect for all religions); *nidhanithisim* (ahimsa); *khaetvadatham* (dedication); *ashaonim* (honest life).

The kusti reminds us that we are the warriors of Spenta to get victory over Angra. Life is a continuous struggle. We have to pity those who are on the battlefield without such protective weapons.

During the riots in Ahmedabad, the sudreh-kusti was an essential identity for Zarathushtis to assure protection. Covering the head on important occasions reinforces the Parsi identity with dignity. In Iran it was discontinued when custom debarred slaves from covering their heads.

May Vohuman (better understanding) prevail among our young generation!

NOSHIR DABOO
Ahmedabad

"Options to..."

Before one ventures an opinion on crematoriums and incinerators, one must have a grounding in the field of combustion. However, Noshir Dadrawala's regular tirade against crematoriums and incinerators on grounds of creating atmospheric pollution is indicative of his total ignorance of the subject ("Options to dakhmenashini," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, November 2002).

Perhaps Dadrawala is not aware that incinerators for burning municipal wastes are operating in most metropolitan cities of the world including London, Munich and Los Angeles.

Perhaps he is also not aware that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has since 1998 made it mandatory for hospitals to dispose biomedical wastes in an incinerator or in an autoclave in order to ensure hygienic conditions around the hospitals (*Bio-Medical Waste Management and Handling Rules*, 1998).

I wonder also whether Dadrawala is aware of the incinerator for disposal of animal carcasses installed by Godrej under the auspices of the Bombay Soci-

ety for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BSPCA) at the Sakarbai Petit Hospital for Animals at Parel. There is no stench in the vicinity and this facility has been welcomed by all dog owners.

And before Dadrawala talks about dioxins and furans emitted from the chimneys of incinerators and crematoriums, he should have pondered whether the municipalities of scores of cities around the world where incinerators and crematoriums have been installed are so foolish and careless to allow their citizens to be exposed to such noxious gases, and whether the citizens themselves would not have sued their municipalities for inefficient operation and pollution of the atmosphere if their health was affected.

Dadrawala is behind times. Even the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, Sam Bharucha had chastised the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in Jamshedpur that "the time for change has come and that the trustees must look for other means for the disposal of the dead" in view of the total absence of vultures.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

"The regal ranks"

With reference to your article "The regal ranks" (*Parsiana*, August 2002) I can confirm that it's a sorry fact but true that our armed forces are in crying need of officers. From those of us Parsis who have entered the defence services, most have reached flag rank. In my family I can proudly say that three generations have served with distinction our armed forces: paternal uncle Col (Dr) D. R. Bharucha; the three Nanavati brothers; and now my son (48th Armored Regiment).

We as a community should encourage our children to sincerely try and join the armed forces. It offers a rewarding career and an opportunity to serve our country. What more could a person want?

However any child seriously thinking of joining the armed forces needs to be thoroughly trained and prepared at considerable expense which average Parsi families cannot afford. May I therefore suggest that there be a ready source of finance available to those Parsi chil-



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dren wanting to make a career in the armed forces?

When we graduate and are allotted our regiment the going up becomes even tougher. Not for once am I suggesting that those Parsis who are higher up be partial; that's not like us. However if those higher up in the forces keep an eye on the careers of junior Parsi officers and if really worthy, guide, counsel and encourage them along, life would be much better. Promotion to a certain rank usually comes automatically with time, after which, besides one's ability, a lot of other external factors come into play... mainly politics in its various ugly forms.

We are a dwindling minority. It is high time we accept the reality of life in our country and start looking after our own or in time to come we will fall under the category of 'endangered species' and wither away.

Dr FARROKH F. BHARUCHA

Zardoshty Scholarship

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) announces the establishment of a new Religion Education Scholarship fund in memory of the late Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty.



Faridoon Zardoshty: legacy lives on

We are grateful for the munificence of the Zardoshty sisters, Pari, Homayoun, Iran and Farangis

and their families for their generous donation to FEZANA in memory of their beloved father to set up this Scholarship fund.

The Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Scholarship(s) is to be awarded to selected Zarathushti individual(s) for higher studies and research in Zarathushti religion at a recognized institution of higher education anywhere in the world. Current plans are to award these annual scholarships for a period of five years starting 2003. An amount has been budgeted for each academic year and may be divided amongst one or more selected individuals. The Religion Education Committee of FEZANA will manage the eligibility and selection of awards of the Scholarship(s). Selected individuals will be required to agree to allow FEZANA and/or the Zarathushti community to receive a tangible benefit

from their study and/or research.

All interested Zarathushti individuals can request an application for scholarship by providing their contact information, including an e-mail and phone number to: Chair of FEZANA Religion Education Committee, Kayomars P. Mehta, 8122 Circle Drive, Palos Hills, IL 60465, USA. E-mail: kayomehta@aol.com, Tel: (708) 974-1238.

Deadline for receiving the completed applications with all attachments is March 31, 2003.

For further information, visit the FEZANA website: www.fezana.org

FIRDOSH DARA MEHTA

President, Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

Housing and jobs

Over the years, a bogey has been created that if there are no houses, there are no spouses. I think that this concept needs to be rubbished. Parsis thrive in numbers when there was no organized housing. They also thrive economically. Despite the best efforts to make the housing policy transparent, there is bound to be overt and covert cornering of flats — but I am not going into that here.

Close to 45 percent of Bombay's Parsis live in our colonies and bays, for which we have to be thankful to those who built those. How do non-Parsis manage to procreate (I mean the decent, well-educated and well-placed persons) without a trace of organized housing for them? If we are dwindling in numbers, I feel it is by choice. It has become an irrational fashion to blame the providers of housing for the dwindling numbers. Even if a 20-room mansion were to be provided to an educated Parsi, he/she is not going to procreate a string of children. It is in the Parsis' psyche that we should restrict the numbers and add to the quality of life. What the community needs to face, up front, is the worrisome phenomenon of DINKS (double income, no kids)!

To say that we will die out, otherwise, is a bogey. We may emigrate in larger numbers but we will not die out. When Indira Gandhi nationalized the banks, in two stages, there was a misplaced fear (another bogey) that our job opportunities would van-

ish. Nothing like that has happened. Maybe, less Parsis are joining the banks (and joining other institutions). In a way, it has reimpacted a sense of resilience amongst the young boys and girls who no longer dream of joining banks.

The community should stop further investment in housing and spend much more on education, medicare and religious education. It has become a fashion to study English and not read our scriptures in Gujarati. The community's elders should concentrate on interfaith marriages (one in three marries outside) and a spiraling rate of divorce (10 percent). Unless the community refashions its priorities, it will go helter skelter.

BEHRAM T. DASTUR

Is nirang necessary?

For generations, the practice of imbibing a small quantity of nirang, during the holy bath (nahan), prior to the performance of navjote, wedding and other ceremonies and rites, has been considered a part of the necessary rituals.

Nirang is prepared after subjecting the urine from a special bull called varasio, to elaborate and lengthy special prayers called nirangdin. The concerned varasio is stated to be a bull with "not a single black hair on his body." A bull with such stringent attribute is almost impossible to get or non-existent and hence the varasio is just a bull who is a genetic freak, an albino, that lacks the gene which is responsible to give color to the hair, skin and the iris of the eye. Albinos are found in nature in every species of animals from cockroaches to the elephants.

The urine is basically an acidic product and turns alkaline mostly due to bacterial infection. The alleged role of nirangdin prayers to keep the nirang bacteria free can be established if it undergoes and passes a "double blind trial (DBT)" which is normally applied for any scientific claims of similar na-



The varasio at Udvada

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ture. The DBT is conducted by two independent and unbiased qualified observers who only carry out and interpret the result without knowing the source or nature of the experiment.

When comparing the urine samples of a varasio, an ordinary bull and any other animal (including a human being) subjected to nirang prayers with a similar control group, if only the varasio sample shows no growth of bacteria while all the rest of the containers show bacterial growth, then it is established that the urine from only a varasio which is exposed to nirangdin prayers has the desired effect of remaining sterile as claimed. If the same effect of no growth of bacteria is observed in some other dishes then it is established that nirandin prayers have the effect of sterilizing any urine irrespective of its source. This makes the claim superfluous that only the urine from a varasio is a prerequisite for the stated religious rituals.

If samples which are not exposed to the nirandin prayers, also show no growth of bacteria, then nirangdin prayers are not an effective ritual for sterilizing of urine as claimed. The lack of growth in these samples may be due to the inherent acidity of urine which prevents any bacterial growth. The dark portwine color of the nirang is due to conversion of an enzyme urobilinogen in the urine to urobiline and not as a result of exposure to the nirangdin prayers.

One of the pillars of our religion is ashoi (cleanliness) and that is the reason why Zoroastrians are enjoined ablution by washing our hands after each act of passing the urine, followed by recitation of kusti prayers. It is inconceivable that the same Zoroastrians are directed to imbibe an excretory product of a bull (urine) as a way of "purification" prior to certain rituals. What would be the reaction of the protagonist of this ritual to the practice prevalent in certain tribes in Africa, to subject their youngsters to drink a decoction of cattle blood and semen prior to initiation into adulthood?

Faith and science have at least one thing in common. Both are lifelong searchers of truth. The two co-exist and many a times complement each other. Will any qualified and experienced bacteriologist (religious scholars, please excuse) enlighten us on this vexatious ritual prevailing in our community?

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

Expanding in Ontario

With a 31-year record of service to the community, a membership of nearly 1,000 and funds exceeding half a million dollars, the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) is one of the oldest Zoroastrian organizations in North America. A monthly newsletter and a directory keep the community in touch. The Meheraban Guiv Darbe Meher (MGDM) is almost synonymous with the ZSO. Consisting of a library, a prayer hall with a dadgah, assembly hall and other ancillary facilities, it is the center of all its activities which include religious classes for children and adults; a scout troop; dinners and dances; jashans, gahambars and muktads; Senior Citizens' Club; Hormuz Fraternity for men.

An inclusive organization, the ZSO has brought together the Iranis and Parsis, the orthodox and liberal, old-timers and newcomers, the young and old, the rich and the poor. The United Nations has repeatedly ranked Canada, making it attractive for Zoroastrians from all over the world to migrate to Toronto.

In 1977, the late Arbab Rustom Guiv gifted to the ZSO a property with an existing building on it. The property's central location, together with its proximity to two public transit systems and three major highways, ensures that it can be reached from all directions. This means that it can be easily reached by newcomers and the poor who may not be able to afford a car, students who live on the two University campuses, as well as youngsters and senior citizens who cannot drive. A large number of Zoroastrians have purchased homes in surrounding areas of North York, Vaughan and Markham providing an anchor population for the center. The ZSO has made arrangements for several Zoroastrian senior citizens to be housed at the nearby Cummer Lodge. This ensures that the center is used throughout the week and not just on weekends as in some other locations. Located directly on the banks of the gently flowing Don River, it provides a unique spiritual experience where converge the spirits of both Avan and Adar.

In response to the needs of a growing

community, the ZSO embarked upon a plan for an expanded center, with Dr Dhun Noria leading the Building Capi-



Meheraban Guiv Darbe Meher at Ontario

tal Campaign (BCC) to raise \$ 2.2 million. The reconstructed center will consist of a community hall to hold almost 1,000 people, a prayer room, and a lounge besides other ancillary facilities such as a library, caretaker's apartment, kitchens, offices and storage facilities. A large underground parking lot will also be created to permit easy access during snowy conditions.

The ZSO is embarking upon a journey to create a communal infrastructure as extensive as that of Bombay. The rebuilding of the existing center is the first step on this journey. An extensive fund-raising campaign consisting of several events throughout the next few years is underway. The ZSO appeals to Zoroastrians throughout the world to donate generously to this campaign. Donations payable to the ZSO may be mailed to the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Attn: Dr Dhun Noria, Chair Capital Campaign Committee, 3590, Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M2M 3S6. Full details are available at www.zso.org

SAROSH J. BHARUCHA
Ontario, Canada

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

CORRECTION

In the report on a meeting of the executive council of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India ("Readying for the Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress," *Parsiana*, October 2002) it was noted that UNESCO had declared 2003 as the year of Zoroastrian culture. It has now been clarified that this was a request from Azarbaijan to UNESCO on which a decision is awaited. *Parsiana* regrets the error.

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Ruby Hall ICU, CCU also specialises in shifting high risk patients within the departments for investigations & surgeries with accompanying equipment & personnel. With such facilities, it is no wonder that this unit is a "tertiary referral centre" for other ICUs and hospitals. For this purpose "emergency care ambulance" is available to shift the unstable patients to & from other hospitals.

The availability of equipment alone cannot make a unit successful, as the human face of "Intensive Care" is also very important for the panic stricken families. Towards this, the Clinic maintains a good nursing ratio (1:2) & the help of a social worker is also available for patients.



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Events and Personalities

JJ vs BPP

For over a year the trustees of the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution (SJJPBI) have been holding discussions with the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) regarding the premises occupied by the BPP in the J. J. School building on Dadabhai Naoroji Road. Both sides were keen the Press not publicize the talks as they hoped to find a mutually acceptable solution that would safeguard both their interests.

The J. J. Institution claims they require the top floor of the building occupied by the BPP for the school and reportedly offered the Punchayet alternate accommodation in an adjacent structure in the same compound. However this was considered inadequate by the BPP. But according to the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of January 12, 2003, "eviction proceedings have been initiated against (the) BPP by the trustees of the SJJPBI on the grounds of bonafide requirement for secular education." The school has around 2,800 students of which under 40 are Zoroastrians.

The BPP trustees confirm a notice of eviction has been served but at the time of going to press, no case had been filed.

The Punchayet are tenants in the building which they contend was built largely by funds from the Punchayet. The four-storey stone facade building was constructed in 1872. Trac-

ing the genesis of the SJJPBI, the late Sapur F. Desai noted in his *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet 1860-1960*: "Up to the year 1837 the work of the Punchayet slurred on. The members, it seems, took less and less interest. There were five unfilled vacancies and few cared to attend meetings. In order to have a sufficient number attending meetings or the work of the Punchayet, the number was raised to 37 in 1836. Dissensions, however, continued and in 1849 a great blow was administered to Punchayet prestige, nolens volens. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Kt. (later Baronet), declared his own trust, the Sir J. J. Parsee Benevolent Institution, called his managing body a 'Punchayet' and besides education, assumed certain functions, which were till then the prerogative of the Parsi Punchayet. To cap it all the Parsi Punchayet offered a donation of Rs 2,34,000 from its coffers leaving it only Rs 1,89,129. The suggestion was mooted by no less a person than Bomanji

Wadia himself, the founder of the Wadia Atas Bahram."

Bonding with the Directory

Not just residents of Poona, even regular visitors to the upcoming information technology capital of Maharashtra or first-time visitors to the city would find beneficial the new *Directory of Pune Zoroastrians — 2002*. The maximum number of pages, 143, in this 344-page edition are devoted to the alphabetical listing of the resident population, 34 yellow pages feature the business enterprises in Poona, and another 28 pages introduce the different Parsi managed institutions in Poona. Contact numbers of public utility services, a map of Poona, bus and train timings, rickshaw tariffs, an introduction to the city and its sites are the additional plus points of this *Directory*. A few pages reserved for the basic tenets of the religion could serve as a refresher course for all Zoroastrians.

With over 1,150 families listed in this second edition, in addition to the names, residential and office address and e-mail contacts, also mentioned are the blood groups of some individuals. From the titles prefixing the name in most cases we were able to calculate that the sex wise distribution of the Zoroastrian population in Poona is almost equal, the females outnumbering the males by barely 40. Thus among the nearly 3,090 individuals featured here, 1,565 are females and 1,525 are males. With no information on age provided against each entry we are unable to determine the age-wise distribution of the population.



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"It took us almost a year of dedicated efforts to obtain the required information," write Sarosh Palkhiwala, president of the Zoroastrian Youth Association (ZYA) — Directory Project Committee

and secretary Kashmira Udachia in their message featured in the *Directory*. "We still regret that the *Directory* does not contain the names and details of all the Zoroastrians of (Poona) in spite of going from door to door and requesting people to fill up the forms. Utmost care has been taken to publish the correct information," they add acknowledging the cooperation of the youth and the elderly, particularly Dinshaw Tamboly, managing trustee of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). Others who had served on the Directory Committee are vice president Mabrin Nanavatti, joint secretary Monaz Kapadia, treasurer Tehmasp Bharucha, ex officio chairman Farah Bharucha, and members Ferzeen Udachia, Mahzarine Ichhaporia, Kayomarz Gazder, Farida Master, Sherezaad Irani, Anahita Udachia, Perzad Avari and Dinaz Irani.

"Seeing them work day and night without a pause as they motivated and directed a battery of young volunteers, one couldn't help admire how all of them put their hearts and souls into the exhausting project," commended ZYA president Farida Master, adding, "Whether it was prodding people to fill up the forms or...putting the tedious data together or running around for advertisements, they did it all, without complaining...That's why it's a labor of love. We hope you enjoy and value it. We would certainly appreciate your feedback for the same."

Chairman of the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) Eruch Irani noted in his message, "Such duties bring about a bonding in the youth who have



welfare activities that they undertake."

"The Zoroastrian youth have always been an object of my admiration and I have always held the firm conviction that in our youth we have a stock that is magnificent and incomparable. And I must mention that I have never been disappointed," declared Tamboly, noting, "Our community may be losing out on quantity in terms of numbers but with every passing moment our quality, in terms of values, keeps on developing and enlarging..."

An update on the activities of The WZO Trust Funds, Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India and the PPP feature prominently in the *Directory* as do the write-ups on Poona's four fire-temples: Kadmi and Shahenshai Anjuman Dar-e-Meher, Sardar Sorabji Ratanji Patel Dar-e-Meher, Sir J. J. Agiary and the Agiary at J. N. Petit School. Among the Parsi schools are the J. N. Petit Technical High School, Dr Mrs Erin N. Nagarvala Primary and Secondary Boarding and Day School and The Sardar Dastur Schools. For higher studies there are The Wadia Colleges and the Hirabai Cowasji Jehangir Medical Research Institute affiliated with the Jehangir Hospital and Medical Centre. The other health institutes are the N. M. Wadia Institute of Cardiology, N. M. Wadia Hospital, Ruby Hall Clinic and Dr Bandorawalla Leprosy Hospital. The functioning of the Poona Parsee Gymkhana, Pudumjee Parsi Dharamshala and the Poona Parsi Dramateurs make interesting reading too.

What is amusing is to see the five

pages on Income Tax Summary precede the 20 pages of literature on the Zoroastrian religion, its ceremonies, festivals, prayers and significant days. A list of popular books available in the community, fire-temples within and outside India, anjumans, dharamshalas and sanatoria in India, associations around the world and youth bodies and welfare centers in Bombay, would interest different sections of the community as would the data on charitable trusts and even matrimonial bureaux.

From the yellow pages we see that the 30 consultants outnumber other professionals in Poona. Almost equally strong in number are the 29 who are listed under "schools — nurseries — tutors." At the other end of the spectrum, arms and ammunition, astrology, consumer durables, electrical equipment, fertilizers, hobbies, information technology, jewelry, petrol pump, printers, refrigeration, researcher and suppliers each show a single entry. The 37 unnumbered pages of advertisements towards the end of the *Directory* indicate the support the youths enjoy from community enterprises.

Honor and felicity

"Justice Sam Variava is an embodiment of the best qualities of Zoroastrianism — honesty and integrity and a commitment to whatever is good and noble in life. In honoring him we are honoring not just a great Parsi but an eminent Indian and a worthy human being," remarked Edul Bhagwagar, president of the Shree Nagpur and Kamthi Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman, at a special felicitation accorded to the Supreme Court judge on December 28, 2002 in Nagpur.

"Truth, honesty and the courage of one's convictions should be the bedrock of a person's character," commented Variava. Making light of his eminence Variava mentioned that he was but an average student and lawyer whose hard work and adherence to the fine principles ingrained in him by his

From left: E. Bhagwagar welcoming Variava as Rusi Godha looks on; (right): shawl and salver for Variava as (far right) Yezdi Bhagwagar looks on





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At the Sanjan Day function (from left): Khurshed Dastoor, Daviervala, Master-Moos, Dhalla, Tirandaz and Oliaji

seniors like Marazban Mistry helped him scale the ladder of success. Addressing the younger Parsis, Variava commented, "It saddens me to see the spirit of entrepreneurship and business acumen on the wane. I find youngsters anxious to get a comfortable job as soon as they graduate. No doubt this gives a certain sense of security but it is not the same as having one's own business or studying to become a professional. It is hard work and there will be stumbling blocks and failures. But success when it comes is that much sweeter and richer."

Earlier Dr Thrity Patel, director of Human Rights Cell, Department of Law introduced Variava to the gathering of Parsis and some members of the legal fraternity. Young advocate Rayomand Daruwalla proposed a vote of thanks.

The felicitation program, very ably compered by Khurshed Dalal, started with a hambandagi by head priest Ervad Sohrab Bharucha and ended with the congregation singing *Chhaiyé hamé Zarathushti*. This was followed by high tea when guests had an opportunity to interact with the unpretentious Variava, his vivacious wife Dilnavaz and their daughter Naira.

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

Sojourn to Sanjan

The annual observance of *mah Tir, roz Bahman* as Sanjan Day has not always been marked with festivity and gaiety. For years, the late Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor and his co-mobeds from Udvada were the only ones to make a special sojourn to the town just to perform the annual jashan ceremony, it was recalled at the start of the last celebrations on November 20, 2002 as a tribute to the High Priest who had passed away on January 25, 2002.

A special felicitation was accorded this time to the young Dastur Khurshed, son of Dastur Kaikobad, according to a summary of the day's proceedings forwarded by the organizers, Sanjan Me-

morial Column Local Committee (SMCLC). In his address Khurshed Dastoor urged the community to remain united and preserve the religion.

In the absence of documented community history of the period following their landing and settling in India, Dr Homi Dhalla in his keynote address chose to focus on the excavation work in Sanjan and Bahrot conducted under the aegis of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation which he heads. Lauding the government support which has helped finance the cost of survey work initiated in Bahrot, Dhalla urged the community to extend a helping hand too. Referring to the success of their solar panel project to dispose the dead, Dhalla related how his film on the subject made for the National Geographic Channel of Australia with the help of Roni Sabavala of Baroda had been translated into 14 languages. He hoped the Hindus too would take a leaf out of this book and substitute their traditional method of cremation wherein one and a half tree is used to burn each corpse.

President of the SMCLC Rohinton Daviervala gratefully remembered the largesse of king Jai Rana and the wisdom of Dastur Neryosang Dhaval which helped the first set of migrants from Iran to find a safe haven in India. Daviervala was also thankful to benefactors like Jamshed Guzder, Dotivala Bakery (Surat), Agnee Bakery (Dahanu and Vapi), Parsi Dairy Farm (Bombay), Firoze Sethna, Homi Palsetia, Firoze Wadia and Noshirvan Mistry, and his colleagues on the Committee: Nariman Bulsara, Dosabhai Oliaji, Gustasp Jussawala and Dara Varvadewala.

While Ervad Faramroze Sidhwa referred to the problems of Udvada, erstwhile Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Rustom Tirandaz appealed to major trusts to set aside 10 percent of their corpus to purchase all properties around the Iranshah which may be for sale. Prof Meher Master-Moos summarized the

activities of her Zoroastrian College and Marazban Mehta regaled the audience with songs popular in the community.

Mortuary cabinet installed

The mortuary cabinet installed at Bombay's Doongerwadi on August 15, 2002 for the convenience of the families where the *geh sarna* is to be delayed awaiting the arrival of some immediate relative has been used on a couple of occasions despite objections from the orthodox section of the community. In fact *The BPP* (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) Review (Winter 2002/2003) carried a letter from Coomi K. Patel addressed to the BPP trustees expressing her satisfaction with this new facility: "It was due to your farsighted and enlightened policy of starting a morgue that (my younger brother) could see his mother's face for the last time... We were really spared the agony of running from pillar to post to locate a morgue to preserve her body... Your staff at the Doongerwadi and especially the morgue was extremely helpful..."

Located in an outhouse at a little distance from the Albless Bungli, the mortuary cabinet has two tiers to accommodate two bodies at a time. The cold storage machinery is not kept running all the time but switched on periodically to keep it in working condition until such time that a corpse needs to be kept there. For a day's use of this facility, Rs 500 has to be paid at the Doongerwadi, the same charge levied by the Breach Candy Hospital, says the assistant manager Dara Elavia.

Donated by Boman and Armaity Irani in pious memory of his parents Rustomji and Meherbai and brother Khodadad, the state-of-the-art mortuary cabinet, manufactured by Blue Star Limited with technical collaboration from Kolpak of USA, uses the refrigerant gas (R-22) which is environment friendly, states *The BPP Review* (Summer/Autumn 2002). Then BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz was instrumental in initiating this facility, it was acknowledged.

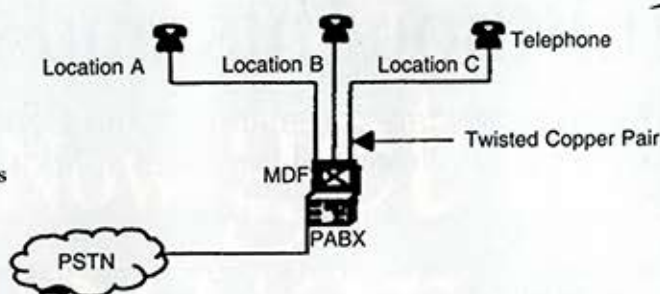
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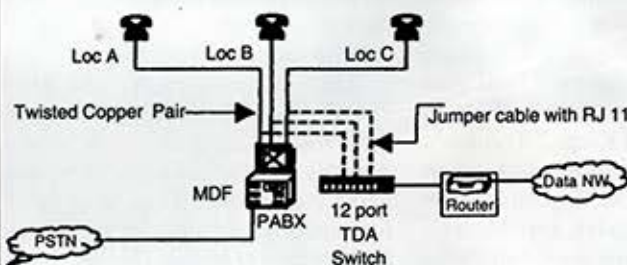
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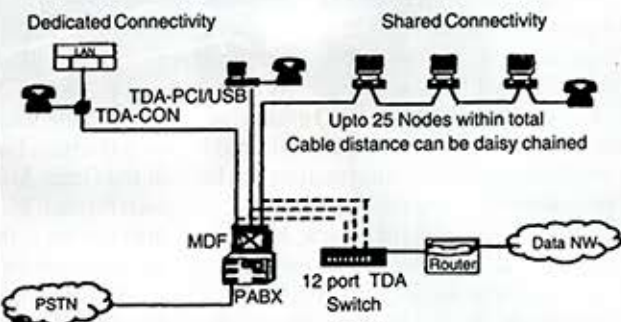
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Youthful thoughts and concerns

Tenth North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress chair
Afreed Mistry provides details of the meet scheduled in July 2003

Arnavaz S. Mama

Nexus 2003 — the 10th North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress to be cohosted by FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) and ZSO (Zoroastrian Society of Ontario) in Toronto, July 24-27, 2003 — will be located at the plush Toronto Congress Center, a business conference facility with a capacity for 680 and lots of parking space near the Toronto airport, says Congress committee chairperson Afreed Mistry. On a personal trip to attend a friend's wedding in India, Mistry, a member of the ZSO executive, met *Parsiana* on December 30, 2002 with some firsthand information on the format of the Congress.

With a list of eight topics, Mistry's team is open to mature speakers though the audience-participants will be restricted to the 13-35 age group, she notes. The topics mirror the thoughts and concerns of this age group, particularly the young ones born and raised away from the Asian homeland. Hence the topic heading the list reads, "No Man's Land: First generation Zoroastrians in North America." The subtitle is revealing: "Neither here nor there — not truly Indian, but not really American/Canadian — 'No Man's Land' identifies and expresses young Zoroastrians' emerging feelings of isolation and uncertainty." Considering that the ZSO and other comparative settlements are around 30 years old and a new association called Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation has just been established in Toronto, could the youths' sense of alienation be derived from the combative, controversial divide between the liberals and conservatives of the community everywhere that focuses on mores and traditions at odds with the new milieu?



Mistry: essaying connections

Bombay, "The City that Parsis Built," will examine "the glory that Parsis were integral in creating." Its obverse, "A Community on Life Support" ... explores the seemingly stark contrast between that achievement and an apparent lack of distinguishable feats in North America. Considering the historical perspective of 600-800 years of acclimatization in the sub-continent before the community rose to its zenith in British India, the American diaspora is young indeed!

History and literature, specifically the *Shahnameh*, will provide the base for the session on "Stories of the Great Ancient Kings." Toronto's own Firdosh Mirza, a former lecturer on the religion at the ZSO, is good at relating *Shahnameh* episodes, says Mistry.

A workshop on how to explain "Who We Are" to the host community of neighbors, friends and coworkers aims to explore ways of communicating the Zoroastrian ethos. At another session 'somebody' will examine the do's and don'ts of Zoroastrianism. "Everyone has an opinion on what is — and is not — Zoroastrian. But where do these beliefs originate? How does one distinguish fact from fiction? This 'somebody' will try to answer those questions," notes the handout. One session will focus on the contradiction between the oft-repeated gender equality within the religion and an "old boys' club" emphasis on restricting the priesthood to (athornan) men only. As for the conversion issue, the youths will debate "What's Blood Got To Do With It?"

Also on the cards is a match-making session, unhappily titled "Relationship Survival Guide for the Lovelorn!" Mistry recalled a Jewish meet in Alberta where 25 girls and 25 boys moved clockwise and counter-clockwise in concentric

circles so that each of them had met all 25 of the opposite sex. The participants were then required to give their name and particulars together with their first three choices. If the organizers found that the participant in question featured on the list of any (or all) of his/her selected candidates, contact addresses, etc were disclosed to the corresponding parties.

Interested speakers are invited to e-mail nazyc2003@yahoo.com or call Delnavaz Mistry (905-794-1956) or Janine Tamboli (416-832-8519). Where a topic attracts a number of speakers, Mistry says they will be requested to furnish a synopsis of their paper so that repetitions can be avoided.

The Congress committee of 30 individuals is divided into six teams, with their leaders reporting to Mistry and Armaity Bamji, the FEZANA representative for Canada. They have allowed for three days after the Congress to show the participants around Toronto and view the Niagara Falls, Mistry informs us. As an adjunct to the recently established World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce a two-day workshop prior to the Congress aims to gather 25 to 30-year-old professionals in a Zoroastrian Youth Chamber of Commerce. Also on the cards is a workshop for religious teachers to discuss syllabi and ways of teaching. The ZSO recently came out with a handbook on the subject written by Mistry, Darius Bharucha and Kermin Mehta in an effort to standardize procedures, says Mistry. After the Congress is over the committee will meet in an effort to evaluate the event, to know if the sessions were understood, plans Mistry.

Registration for the Congress before March 21, will cost US \$ 178 (CND \$ 265) and include all meals including the gala banquet dinner. If registration is made between March 21 and July 1, the rate rises to US \$ 228 (CND \$ 340). Thereafter the cost escalates to US \$ 335 (CND \$ 500) as per the stipulation of the



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Toronto Congress Center, Mistry informs us. An optional night out in Toronto on July 25 will cost an additional US \$ 34 (CND \$ 40). Underage participants (13-17 years) are required to be accompanied by a guardian (in the 18-35 age group) who is registered for the Congress.

According to Mistry, the organizers are expecting about 325 participants but are game for any number up to 680. "The hotel next door" — Radisson Suites — can accommodate four to six in a room, she assures us.

Available on raffle are three prizes — one free Congress registration (or CND \$ 260), one free hotel room (or CND \$ 140) and US \$ 100 gift certificate from Amazon.com. The organizers hope that a substantial purchase of raffle tickets priced at US \$ 6 (CND \$ 10) will "help us keep our costs low." They are also planning a souvenir program booklet with advertisement space priced at US \$ 469 (CND \$ 700) for inside front or back cover in color, full inside black and white page at US \$ 268 (CND \$ 400); half page at US \$ 168 (CND \$ 250) and business card size at US \$ 67 (CND \$ 100). Donations are also welcome, notes the registration form.

Mistry, who works in the IT department of an insurance company, had left Bombay for Muscat with her parents when she was two years old. After a decade the family moved to Toronto where her father Byram is a mechanical engineer working for Carrier Canada while her mother Arnavaz (née Wadia) works for the national ministry of health. Starting her involvement with the ZSO at the age of 13, Mistry went on to acquire her bachelors in computer science from the Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. The Montreal Youth Congress in 1999 was the first one she attended. The Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000 and the 12th North America Zoroastrian Congress in Chicago in 2002 were others. She hopes to follow up with the Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Poona in December 2003.

Responding to *Parsiana's* query regarding plans to rebuild the Toronto darbe mehr, Mistry notes that some members of the ZSO were in favor of creating a proper agiary at the community center, entry to which would be banned to non-Zoroastrians. However, due to a stipulation from the Canadian government that accompanied its grant for the initial renovation of



Consultant civil engineer and music conductor Phiroze Dalal was responsible for the reinstatement of the old iron bridge across the River Thames. The reopening of the bridge was a part of Queen Elizabeth II's golden jubilee celebrations when Dalal (2nd from right) was presented to the Queen.

the premises gifted by the late Arbab Rustam Guiv, this was legally unenforceable. The setting up of a new association with the intention of creating its own facility seems to have been the outcome of this impasse despite 70 percent of the community having voted to rebuild at the present site, implied Mistry. Apart from sentimental reasons, the original location of the community center is a boon to several senior citizens who live close by and meet once or twice a week, she adds.

Meeting with her relatives and cousins in Bombay, Delhi and Jabalpur, Mistry's India holiday was a personal nexus between countries and generations.

Asian of the Year

Karan Bilimoria, founder and CEO of Cobra Beer Limited, one of Britain's fastest growing companies (see "Cobra's cheer," cover story, *Parsiana*, November 2002), was named Asian of the Year 2002. The award was announced by the publishers at the launch of the 15th edition of the *Asian Who's Who in Britain* at London's Grosvenor House Hotel on December 2, 2002.

Bilimoria, who joins such celebrities as industrialist Lord Swaraj Paul, ex UK minister and MP Keith Vaz, cricketer Imran Khan, and others, is the first Zoroastrian to be so honored amid Britain's two million Asian population, informs ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) president Dorab Mistry.

In the presence of a galaxy of political leaders, members of the House of

Lords, film and stage personalities and prominent businessmen Britain's Home Secretary David Blunkett praised Bilimoria's courage and enterprise in launching and building up one of Britain's most famous brands and for "breaking the glass ceiling." The award also recognized Bilimoria's commitment to social and charitable causes.

In his acceptance speech Bilimoria, son of India's Lt Gen (retired) Faridoon Bilimoria, acknowledged the opportunities Britain offered and spoke of how he had turned into a successful businessman after his student years at Cambridge.

Mistry writes of Bilimoria's active involvement with the ZTFE as life member,



Bilimoria: celebrated Asian

generously providing Cobra beer, General Bilimoria wines and financial assistance to the association." On August 21, 2002 when ZTFE celebrated the Shahenshahi Navroz, Bilimoria had been felicitated as guest of honor together with his old schoolmate Rustom Jokhi of Hongkong. On that occasion Bilimoria had spoken "brilliantly" on the topic "The spirit of enterprise — a Zoroastrian virtue," notes Mistry.

A governor of Thames Valley University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Bilimoria is a member of the

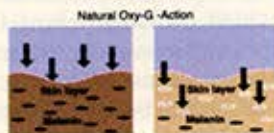
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Asian Business Committee of the Bank of England and is a guest lecturer at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the Cambridge University Business School and the London Business School, notes Mistry.

Racism, any one?

"It is often the case that when one or two black families move into a white area, the level of consternation is out of all proportion to the events. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, how is it that in the minds of the many, the few become so monstrously vast? The answer to this lies in part with the fantasy of purity..."

"By definition, the notion of purity is that of an absolute; there can be no degrees of purity, it is an either-or state, a thing is either pure or not pure. Thus, purity is completely destroyed by presence of the tiniest speck of something considered contaminatory... In this world, a little is a lot. Thus, the presence of even one black person is experienced as too much — it is all spoilt. But what is spoilt is a fantasy, not a fact."

Can the Parsis see themselves in Farhad Dalal's new book, *Race, Colour and the Processes of Racialization — New Perspectives from Group Analysis, Psychoanalysis and Sociology*? Dalal's thesis deals primarily with the color coded world of black and white Britain, but his insights could just as well apply to Parsi phobias.

A full-time psychotherapist in private practice in London since 1988, Dalal set up his own North East London Psychotherapy and Counseling Association with his wife and fellow psychotherapist Pauline (née Henderson).

The question of how race, and specifically color, affects perceptions even of counselors and psychiatrists who lead group therapy sessions has been agitating Dalal for a long time. As a school and university student in England he recalls a classmate "complaining of blacks being lazy, good-for-nothing," the fact of Dalal's presence leading the latter to add "in a conciliatory tone, 'Of course I don't mean you — you're different — you're more like one of us.'" Shedding light on the mind process of such people, Dalal writes, "The danger is that if the speaker discovers that he does not hate one particular black, then this is equivalent to not hating any blacks. Evidence is being read in ways that do not challenge the internalized status quo — the linkages black to bad, and

white to good. Thus the black person, if good, must be made in some way not-black and (almost) one of us."

In his paper "Race and Racism: An Attempt to Organize Difference," published in *Group Analysis*, Vol 26 in 1993, Dalal speaks of a black patient in a predominantly white group who expresses her sense of exclusion because of her color. The analyst and the group seek to relate her discomfort to her past history to imply "What you feel to be going on here is not really happening, it is something from your past that you have transferred into the present. It is a fantasy not a fact. You are not angry with us, it is with some other." Dalal then adds, "A possible reason why the group and analyst find it hard to linger in this particular present, is that to do so would be to face the possibility that the feeling of exclusion is not only a fantasy (in terms of transference) but also a fact — a living event in the group. To remain in the present is to face the pain of being implicated in the differentials of power and privilege."

The son of Nadir and Dilbur Dalal of Bombay, Dalal's tryst with Britain began as a schoolboy when his father, a civilian employee of the Indian Navy's logistics department, was transferred to London. There Dalal continued with his education, and started his working career as a school teacher of maths and physics in East London. After 14 years, in his early 30s, he began a four-year training as a psychotherapist during the course of which he met New Zealander Pauline, informs his mother. After his initial qualification Dalal reduced his teaching commitments to half a week, using the balance time to work as a psychotherapist. In 1987 he began further training at the Institute of Group Analysis (IGA), quitting his teaching career altogether, notes the write-up from the family.

In his first book, *Taking the Group Seriously* (published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 1998) "he argues against schools of individualism and for the relational nature of human life," informs the release. Since 1997 he has been a training group analyst, supervisor and teacher with IGA.



Dalal: cooking up a storm

In 2001 Dalal received his doctorate from the University of East London's School of Social Sciences. His dissertation was titled "Towards an analytic theorization of color-coded object relations," notes the University's Awards brochure. Lecturing and seminars have taken him all over Europe and the Near East, his mother informs us.

Jeremy Holmes, consultant psychotherapist and senior lecturer at the University of Exeter, describes Dalal as "one of the most original, rigorous and far-reaching minds currently at work in the field of psychotherapy." Holmes further notes how Dalal's current book has exposed "the utter vacuity of the concept of race, showing how it is used by the powerful to perpetuate their position and thus how the psyche is inescapably 'color-coded.'"

A cooking enthusiast, Dalal can stir up Continental and Indian dishes for parties of 50 to 100 people, dressing up the neighbors' children to help serve the food, laughs Dilbur. Of Dalal's two sisters, Veera Das is a school teacher in Ooty while Navaz Hilloowala works with the British Council in Bombay.

Dosco knight

The Doon School Old Boys fraternity celebrated the knighting of Dr Jamshed Masani with a write-up in their newsletter titled "First Dosco to be knighted." The investiture ceremony in London's St Paul's Cathedral on June 23, 2001 was in recognition of Masani's voluntary work with St John Ambulance (SJA), the United Kingdom's leading first aid, transport and care charity. With over 50,000 volunteer members SJA maintains a fleet of 1,200 vehicles manned by skilled ambulance crews and treats over 250,000 casualties every year, notes the report, forwarded to *Parsiana* by Jehangir Bisney of Hyderabad. Education skills training and personal development in citizenship are other facilities SJA offers young people.

Masani, now a knight of the Order of St. John, is said to be a pioneer private general practitioner in London with clinics in Mayfair, Central London and The Wellington Hospital. He had graduated in medicine from Mangalore.



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"We need to improve our image"

Trustee Burjor Antia wants to create a happier interface between the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the community

Arnavaz S. Mama

"The role of the new trustees is to rebuild trust (of the community in the Punchayet), to create confidence by being open, united and by doing good concrete work," noted solicitor and incoming Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Burjor Antia enunciates the task before him (and Maneck Engineer).



Speaking to *Parsiana* in his office at Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe (MMCBC) on January 3, 2003 Antia was at pains to point out that currently the reputation of the 350-year-old Punchayet was at its nadir. Wherever he went in the course of his electoral campaign there were complaints, more especially of the housing policy of the BPP. He says he was told that inheritors of tenanted properties were being given leave and licence agreements to endorse and these agreements have some harsh clauses. Chary of attributing motives to anybody, Antia says he has forwarded some of the letters he has received to the department concerned for explanation and will follow up on them because "the reputation of the institution is more important than that of any individual." Specifically, he would like the board to pass a resolution — and have it published in the Press — that inheritors of tenancies will be tenants and inheritors of leave and licence flats will be licencees.

Speaking of the changed environment at the BPP

Antia: addressing complaints. Seen (alongside, L to R) with Eruch Desai, wife Roshan and Minoo Shroff (Photo: Sarosh Daruwala)

which he has served as solicitor working at a concessional rate for over 40 years ("ever since Nadirshah Mulla began assigning me work of the BPP"). Antia recalls that "(B. K.) Boman-Behram and other chairmen used to consult me" before taking decisions. Now he finds himself dumped with issues that have misfired. "In the old days the Punchayet had a good image. Now it has alienated all sections of society. The baugs are in deficit up to three to four crore rupees (which means) that the Punchayet is financing tenants with luxury cars. The baugs should be self-supporting. We must make a greater effort. Regard for the community should be awakened. We need to improve our image, of the Punchayet as well as the community. We should donate for a good cause. People with Mercedes cars (in the baugs) should be told 'When you came you were poor. Now you must help other poor persons. Construct a building, create flats.' Forget the Punchayet. The rich should contribute (to wipe out) the 1,200 odd standing applications." Antia says, "This is my aim, my dream."

Referring to people earning over Rs 50,000 per month who look to the BPP for housing, Antia says, "We should guide them to take loans from banks." It also leads him to question the self-respect of fellow Parsis. "*Asalnaa loko*

bhookhé martaataa pun Punchayet *paasé maangtaataa nahi* (In the old days people hung on to their self-respect. They slept on a hungry stomach but did not beg from the Punchayet)."

Antia also believes that we are "over-emphasizing the housing problem." Instead he says we need to uplift our youth with the very best education to enable them to stand on their own feet. "Children with 96 percent marks are not getting college admissions (of their choice). He proposes a fund of Rs 10 crores to ensure admission to medical and engineering colleges. It is his target. "The community has the money but it has no confidence in the Punchayet. For example, the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau have an income of Rs 75 crores... If we improve our image, the money will flow — for housing, education. Old age homes in Bombay or outside should be our strategy. We must spread religious knowledge. The principles of Zoroastrianism should be known to the youths. It is the base on which we can achieve all else. Our forefathers came with only this..."

Before all else Antia seeks to commission a census of the community. The project, bandied for many years, has failed to take off successfully. But Antia feels that the Tata Institute of Social

Sciences could succeed if the forms were adequately publicized and restricted to a few points. "Do not ask the income. We need to know the number of children, maybe the blood group. What we need to ask is 'What do you want from the Punchayet' and 'What can you provide to the Punchayet?'" Liking each Zoroastrian child to a 'curio,' Antia says, "We must adopt each child. He/she must be properly guided,



educated, employed. It is a utopian dream but we must work to achieve it. (If) we stop annoying the rich... we could find donors for the project, though it's a herculean task! Let our Panchayet build bridges, not walls, between different sections of society," he adds fervently. As an example of what accountability and transparency in the working of a trust can do, he cites the example of the Anjuman Atash Behram which had Rs 15 lakhs in its coffers in the early 1990s when Antia joined as trustee. The fund, he says, has now reached 1.5 crore rupees.

Married to Roshan (née Billimoria) a successful travel agent prior to her retirement, Antia is the scion of four generations of priests in Surat and trained for the priesthood at Bombay's M. F. Cama Athornan Institute where he had the venerable Dastur Khurshed Daboo as his principal and lodestar. Returning to Surat after his SSC, Antia obtained his BSc in chemistry and physics and an LLB thereafter. Passing his Indian solicitor's exam at the first attempt in Bombay, Antia began his legal career in 1962, becoming a partner at MMCBC in 1972 — specializing in indirect taxes, banking, charitable trusts and commercial arbitration. Passing the requisite exams, he is enrolled as solicitor in the UK and Hongkong and since 1973 is Notary Public for the Union of India.

Starting his career working under the late Savak Khambatta, Antia's clients include five Indian and eight foreign banks ("The Central Bank was my first client"), 27 Indian corporate giants and a few foreign ones, enabling him to table "the highest recoveries in the firm." Some of their directorial boards he chairs; on others he is a member. Thanks to the Reserve Bank of India ceiling on directorships, he says he has inducted some of his junior partners at MMCBC on other executive boards. Simultaneously "by God's grace," he has been a social worker and trustee at a dozen public charitable trusts like the Masina Hospital, Sir J. J. Charity Trust, N. M. Wadia Charities, M. N. Sett Charities, the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute. He also serves the Iranshah and the Anjuman Atash Behram as trustee and the Banaji Atash Behram as managing trustee, as per his manifesto. The renovated air-conditioned gahambar hall at Banaji's as well as the renovation of the Cama Baug precincts where he is also managing trustee, are a source of satisfaction to

Antia who says that in his professional work he doesn't charge average income Zoroastrians on principle and responds immediately to upcountry anjumans who seek his legal help.

"If we improve our image, the money will flow. Old age homes in Bombay or outside should be our strategy. We must spread religious knowledge"

"No trustee has undergone the ordeal I have. I know poor peoples' woes!" Antia had told his prospective voters. "I have climbed up in life by foot, not by the elevator!"

As a social worker he came into contact with philanthropist NarYman Dubash who was entrusted to dispose of the money that accrued from the sale of his brother's bungalow to filmstar Shahrukh Khan. As per his brother's wish the money was to be used only for priests. Thanks to Dubash's donations, Antia, as president of the Navsari Parsi Association (NPA), succeeded in distributing over Rs 1.5 crore to priests of 50-year standing and Rs 1 lakh to each high priest. "This was (a) unique occasion in the 1,300-year-old history of our community," notes Antia's manifesto. Antia, Dubash and the office bearers of the NPA had toured Udvada, Navsari and Surat on that occasion "to meet each priest personally and acknowledge his contribution to the community." Dubash acknowledged Antia's efforts with the words, "My dreams got fulfilled through you and the NPA," remembers the 68-year-old lawyer, now one of Dubash's trustees, with satisfaction.

In memory of his parents, Antia established the Late Ervad Hormusji Pestonji Antia and Mrs Dinbai Hormusji Antia Trust in 1987 to aid the helpless irrespective of caste or religion, as well as ailing animals, crops and plants. Donations go out to the Sakerbai Petit Hospital for Animals, for drought and flood relief, to people who have suffered accidents, he tells us.

Antia's has been a consistently orthodox voice at the World Zoroastrian Congresses held in Bombay. Other pub-

lic speeches and published articles have maintained this traditional stance, underterred by the liberal opinions and reformist actions of his brother Kersey, the head priest of the Chicago Zoroastrian Association. The opposition had tried hard to leverage this issue against him in the run up to the BPP election — without success (see "Walkover for Antia," *Parsiana*, January 2003).

His conservative views have not however prevented Antia from accepting trusteeship of the World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust in India, instrumental as it has been in ameliorating community woes at the grassroots. He is also optimistic about the formation of the world body — a topic of considerable controversy in India and elsewhere. "Everyone is now seeing eye to eye. There were some personality clashes, some ego hassles. But the world body will be formed." He envisages it as functioning under policies laid down by its member federations and anjumans with its individual members functioning as workers in the field.

Where its headquarters will be located is a minor issue to Antia: "It can be anywhere... Bombay, London, US."

He had already attended a meeting of the Defunct Anjumans Subcommittee of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India where Sorab Katpitia, former chief executive officer of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP), has performed yeoman service. Katpitia will continue so to do, said Antia, despite the reversal he has faced in his hometown.

Antia, as trustee of the Parsee Surat Charity Fund, had sought and obtained the resignations of SPP president Dr Sam Bhacca and trustee Noshir Dabhoiwala last year when relations between them and the community reached an unhealthy counterpoint, replacing them with individuals more acceptable to Surat Parsis. Now there is "unity in the community between trustees and beneficiaries in Surat. Everything has worked out," he noted.

In Bombay, Antia wants "to involve the entire community in the working of the Panchayet." He hopes to establish committees of committed individuals on youth affairs, education, care for the aged, etc. "It shouldn't be a one-man show. (Everyone) should be involved," he maintains. "The goal of my trusteeship is to bring peace, progress and prosperity in our community."

'Warriors of the community'

The newly formed Traditional Zarathushtrian Trust has taken upon itself the responsibility of protecting the conservative interests

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"Our enemies today are not outside but within our religion... We expect our leaders to lead and not be pessimists (saying) 'All is lost.' What is lost is faith in ourselves," maintained Noshir Dadrawala, the chairman of the newly created Traditional Zarathushtrian Trust (TZT) which was launched in Bombay on August 24, 2002. Looking at the young priests of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa who had conducted a jashan at the Trust launch, Dadrawala commented, "I think the future of our religion and rituals is well secure."

Referring to the periods of glory and defeat in the Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian eras in Iran, Dadrawala asserted, "Like the phoenix we have risen from the ashes... When we came to India we changed socially, compromised on our language and dress but not on our religion and traditions. That is why in a population of one billion in India, 75,000 (of us) can still be identified. We want to maintain our religious and ethnic identity."

With a sum of Rs 5,83,071 pledged to the TZT that evening, Dadrawala urged the supporters, "When there are problems facing us we have to fight them, become the ratheshtars (warriors) of the community." One such ratheshtar — "dearest brother, the late Roni Khan (who)... was instrumental in the formation of the Traditional Zarathustris Mailing List (TZML), the most powerful orthodox voice and Internet medium for the traditional Zarathushti community" — having died just 22 days earlier, it was decided to launch the new Trust in his memory, declared councillor Faredoon (Filly) K. Maravala of London at the launch.

"The need for a trust of this nature

arose during the controversy pertaining to our beloved Doongerwadi land (in Bombay)," mentioned Maravala whom Dadrawala referred to as the brain behind the Trust. In the course of his re-



Dadrawala (center) and JamaspAsa (right) with the young priests at the TZT launch

marks, "critical of institutions, scathing of leaders, unforgiving of those akabars who turn a blind eye when our religion and our *praja* (community) needs them," Maravala questioned, "Can our so-called akabars... can some trustees of our agiaries/atash behrams, can the rogue elements of our mobeds be trusted to uphold our 1,400 years of history in India alone? I think not!"

At the time of the Doongerwadi controversy Maravala pledged to donate Rs 50,001 towards fighting any possible litigation initiated by the Disposal of the Dead with Dignity — Action Group. Within two weeks four other individuals overseas had pledged an equivalent amount, convincing Maravala of the need for this Trust. "Donations from London, Dallas, Houston, Toronto and Auckland alone total Rs 1,94,543," revealed Maravala at the launch.

Four of the seven trustees expressed their views at the Trust launch: Ervad (Dr) Ramiyar P. Karanjia, Karl K. Sahukar, Khurshed N. Pastakia and Dadrawala. The remaining three opted

to be silent spectators: Zenobia R. Patel, Hoshang N. Wania and Rumi F. Marawalla. "It is in the fitness of things that the board of trustees should comprise of personages with high calibre, spotless character, unimpeachable integrity and a deep commitment to the aims and objects of the Trust... It is of paramount importance that there should be synergy and harmony as well as an ideal blend of celebrities and individuals dedicated to the cause," F. Maravala explained his rationale for selecting the Bombay-based trustees while excluding himself because "at the end of the day it will be these good people who will do the work..."

"Being a trustee is a sacred duty," reinforced Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa at the launch of the Trust hoping that "with vision and foresight they would steer the new entity wisely while safeguarding the Zoroastrian tenets." Urging the congregation to "learn to cherish knowledge," JamaspAsa advocated the need to "respect those who have dedicated their lives to the study of the religion."

"It is thanks to the vada dasturs that traditionalism has been maintained in the community," acknowledged Dadrawala, particularly appreciative of JamaspAsa as being "cogent in nailing down the lies." In response to JamaspAsa's query on the functioning of the TZT when a traditional body, the Save Doongerwadi Action Committee (SDAC), was already in existence



Maravala (right); (From left, standing): Wania, F. Maravala, Pastakia, R. Maravalla and Sahukar; (sitting): Patel, JamaspAsa, Karanjia and Dadrawala

Dadrawala clarified, "There is no rivalry or competitiveness. In fact three of the trustees are common to both the SDAC and the TZT. But while the SDAC is a wholly religious trust, the TZT (has included) secular education and relief of poverty in its objects" as wished by the original donors.

The 22 objects of the TZT as outlined in the trust deed are meant "to create and promote enlightened public opinion on various religious issues affecting the Parsi Zoroastrian community and religion; to serve as a religious think tank as also discuss and deliberate at various forums, issues concerning the Parsi Zoroastrian community and religion; to create religious awareness and a sense of vigilance and religious responsibility among members of the Parsi Zoroastrian community; to take up, whenever necessary, issues concerning the Parsi Zoroastrian community and religion before any competent authority in law, including the legislature or judiciary, with a view to safeguard the rights, interests and traditions of the Parsi Zoroastrian community and religion as also all its religious institutions; to edit, print, publish...material in printed or electronic form for dissemination of religious information concerning the Parsi Zoroastrian community and religion..." The remaining 17 objects further elaborate on the Trust's commitment to support religious activities, ceremonies and institutions, centers of learning

and individuals pursuing religious education..."

The Trust is explicit that the "income or corpus shall be applied only in India." The trust deed defines a Parsi Zoroastrian as "one who is born of both Parsi Zoroastrian parents and whose navjote is performed by a qualified and ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priest and includes children born of both Parsi Zoroastrian parents whose navjote is expected to be performed by a qualified and ordained Parsi Zoroastrian priest. Further, for the purpose of this Trust, any Parsi Zoroastrian, either male or female, who marries a person other than a Parsi Zoroastrian shall not be considered as a Parsi Zoroastrian... and as a natural consequence the offspring of such intermarried Parsi Zoroastrians will not be considered as Parsi Zoroastrian either."

"This is not a society offering formal membership," declared Dadrawala. There are thus no fees and no rights. Their trust deed does however allow the trustees to frame a scheme for member-

ship at their discretion permitting members "to feel a sense of involvement with this religious trust and participate more actively and effectively in furthering the religious objects of the Trust." For the present they welcome a sense of affiliation from those in the community who wish to identify with their body which promotes traditionalism. Even more gratefully accepted would be donations from those who can afford to give today or pledge to give tomorrow. "You never know, you might be a recipient one day," mentioned Maravala, noting, "I think not of me, I think not of you, but our beautiful children, our future torchbearers. They are our insurance policy so let us collectively worldwide invest in this insurance policy so that they may reap the benefits in years to come..."

While donors to this Trust would not be entitled to claim any 80G tax benefits, the income from the Trust being exempt from tax under section 12A, the Trust stands to gain. Their present corpus is limited, according to Dadrawala. "Rs 50 lakhs to a crore would be a good 'endowment,' the interest from which would be a reasonably good sum of money to spread the message."

"Your obligation to Ahura Mazda is greater than your obligation to the people who've helped you," admonished then Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Rustom Tirandaz at the launch. "Thus far and no more will we allow our religion to be vandalized by reformists," announced youth trustee Sahukar convincing Dadrawala that "with young blood we should steer the trust to great heights."

"We are changing the religion to suit our personal whims and fancies," pointed out fellow trustee Pastakia. "Why and what do they want to change?... Stop

wearing the sudreh-kusti... stop praying in the Avestan language... discontinue dakhmenashini... let non-Parsis be allowed inside fire-temples. These are easy solutions, short cuts." The Trust has also earned the support of philanthropists NarYman Dubash and Scylla Vatcha, present BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta and erstwhile BPP trustee Dr Mehroo Bengalee, Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and Pervin Mistry of Canada

continued on page 52



A section of the audience at the launch of TZT



A limited edition

Arnavaz S. Mama

Photographer Dayanita Singh freezes early 21st century Parsis on art prints

Even as her mother Khorshed Gandhi grappled with the logistics of mounting the "Portrait of a Community" exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Shireen Gandhi Jungalwala groped for ways to juxtapose the contemporary Parsi presence to the past hall of fame. She cast around unsuccessfully until her sister Rashna Imhasly chatted on the phone with friend and photographer Dayanita Singh while the family was on a trip to Europe in June 2002. When the latter volunteered to dedicate a month to shoot Parsis, "Family Portraits — Parsis at Home, 2002" (which went on display at the Gallery Chemould, October 16 to November 9, 2002) was born.

Shireen hurried home to shortlist

Clockwise from top: Keshoo Gandhi and granddaughter Atyaan; Khush and Mithoo Coorlawala with daughter Sherena Khan and grandsons Darab and Nadir; Jerroo Mango





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40 candidates, then buffered the choices in consultation with art critic and Cymroza Gallery owner Pheroza Godrej. "By no means were we making it a who's who... We wanted a whole strata (of the community). But we couldn't get through to everybody. We had to restrict ourselves to people whom we knew," says Shireen, admitting that the choice of subjects did end up "slightly elitist." Some became uncomfortable at the idea that the pictures would be exhibited and opted out. Nevertheless, it took Jungalwala a month to get their dates so that Singh got shooting every day when she arrived in August.

Though relatively little known in Bombay, Singh has the highest international standing abroad, Jungalwala tells us. In an article titled "Looking for Mr and Mrs Pestonji" in the *Sunday Express* (October 6, 2002) Vidya Shivadas notes that Singh's prints sell for anything between \$ 1,000 and \$ 4,000 in Europe and the US. A retrospective of her work is scheduled to go on display at the Hamburger Bahnhof (the Berlin equivalent of London's Tate Gallery) next year, Gandhi informs us. Best known for her book *Myself Mona Ahmed*,

Singh's series of "Family Portraits" began in 1996. "By focusing on India's cosmopolitan and economic elites, Dayanita has opened a window onto a world rich in anxieties as well as accomplishments, pride as well as prejudice," writes Peter Nagy ("Society and the scalpel of portraiture," *The Hindu Magazine*, October 13, 2002).

Shooting five roles for a single portrait on her top of the line Hasselblad camera, Singh carries her own light which folds, one umbrella and a light gauge. We learn from Jungalwala that the flash is taboo. Having borne the total cost of the exhibition, Singh just covered her expenses at the end of it with a "nominal" price of Rs 9,000 per print as against her more normal price of Rs 45,000 for a signed print, notes Jungalwala.

"Photography is an art form, on par with painting," says Jungalwala adding, "In Bombay it hasn't taken off. The pricing is way out." As Singh herself told Shivadas, "There are two kinds of photographers — documentary photographers who do not limit their prints, and art photographers, who take out prints in limited editions. I fall in the latter group. My photographs are almost as exclusive as paintings. For example, I am taking out



Singh (left) and Jungalwala: "Photography is an art form."

only one edition of this Parsi series. And that makes them precious. But people do not seem to realize that."

"Her intense awareness of the camera's abilities is registered in every detail of her pictures, in the precision of their compositions, and in the countenances of her subjects," notes Nagy. We learn from Jungalwala that every last millimeter of Singh's perfectly square frames must remain precisely so. She will not settle for less, whether it's a mount for the exhibition or a page in the magazine. The pictures as exhibited were grouped in a "very conscious order." Singh had "taped contact prints (of the pictures) in the exact way she wanted to display them," said Jungalwala. Even so, she cut short an assignment elsewhere in India to oversee the mounting



of the exhibition at Gallery Chemould, Jungalwala added.

According to Jungalwala, though Singh starts her session socializing, once the photography is underway, she recedes into the camera so that the relationship, "a flirtation" is between the subject and the camera. "When I go to photograph families, I let people play out their fantasies, their desires. It is like

a theatrical performance," Singh told Shivadas.

"Dayanita is as interested in architecture, decor, furniture and collectibles in her pictures as she is in the personalities of the people as all of the elements contribute to the success of the final portrait," writes Nagy. Filmmaker Riyad Wadia elaborated a case in point when he told *Sunday Midday* (October 13, 2002), "Dayanita's camera never lies. When she came over, she was keen to find a base in the house that resonated the kind of family we are. She chose the family clock,

which is in the family for more than 140 years. And an antique Burmese table bought 30 years back, reflecting my mother's (Nargis') passion, as the backdrop."

A Delhi person, unfamiliar with Parsis, the month-long work in their midst was a highly compressed experience for Singh. Among her comments Jungalwala recalls two: "Everybody

*Above (L to R) Adi Dubash; Gary Singh and Anita Lawyer; Polly Umrigar with grandson
Alongside: Pheroza Vakeel*

wants to switch the lights off!" "Almost every Parsi house has a dog and a piano!"

Shivadas observes that "for the first time, Singh's family pictures feature a lot of men." Singh's response is an eye-opener: "I never consciously kept them out, but somehow men never made it to my final edit. They just did not give enough of themselves to the camera. But here, I saw them dressing up the children, advising their wives on what to wear. I found the concern and pride towards their Parsi identity touching. Even the boys got into their duglis without the slightest fuss."

Jungalwala found that Singh "built relationships with little girls, not so much with boys." The reason perhaps may be found in Singh's comment to Shivadas: "Parsi women were among the first to be photographed in the mid-19th century—sitting erect, with the gara draped over one ear. The aristocratic pose came alive even in a five-year-old when I picked up my camera."

Projecting Udvada

The governments of India and Gujarat have committed Rs 1,21,00,000 to showcase Udvada as a sanctum of religious harmony

P. K. Laheri

A proposal was submitted to the Government of India for providing certain basic facilities which would enable the State of Gujarat to project Udvada as a unique place in our country, symbolizing traditions of tolerance, harmony and progress through partnership with the Parsi community.

The Government of India accepted this proposal and released a grant-in-aid amount of Rs 97.27 lakhs to the Government of Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat has also allocated an amount of Rs 24.32 lakhs for the project making a total of Rs 121.59 lakhs.

It was the recommendation of the Government of Gujarat that the project should initially encompass the following areas:

- establishment of a Museum and Cultural Centre at Udvada
- establishment of a Tourist Lodge cum Reception Centre at Udvada
- establishment of a Heritage Walk at Udvada
- organization of an annual festival of Parsis at Udvada where Parsis from all parts of the world could congregate
- organization of a tourist circuit of the places where the holy fire — *Iranshah* — was lodged prior to its installation at Udvada. This would cover Sanjan where the fire was housed for 669 years after which it was taken to the Bahrot caves for 12 years (1393-1405 AC); Vandsa forest for 14 years (1405-1418 AC); Navsari for 313 years (1419-1732 AC);

Surat for three years (1733-1736 AC); Navsari for five years (1736-1741 AC); Valsad for one year (1741-1742 AC); and thereafter to Udvada where it has remained for the last 257 years (from October 28, 1742 till date).

After discussions with various members of the Parsi community it was decided to form a core group comprising of well-known Parsis and a nominee of the Government of Gujarat who would ultimately get registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) and undertake responsibility of directing and executing the project.

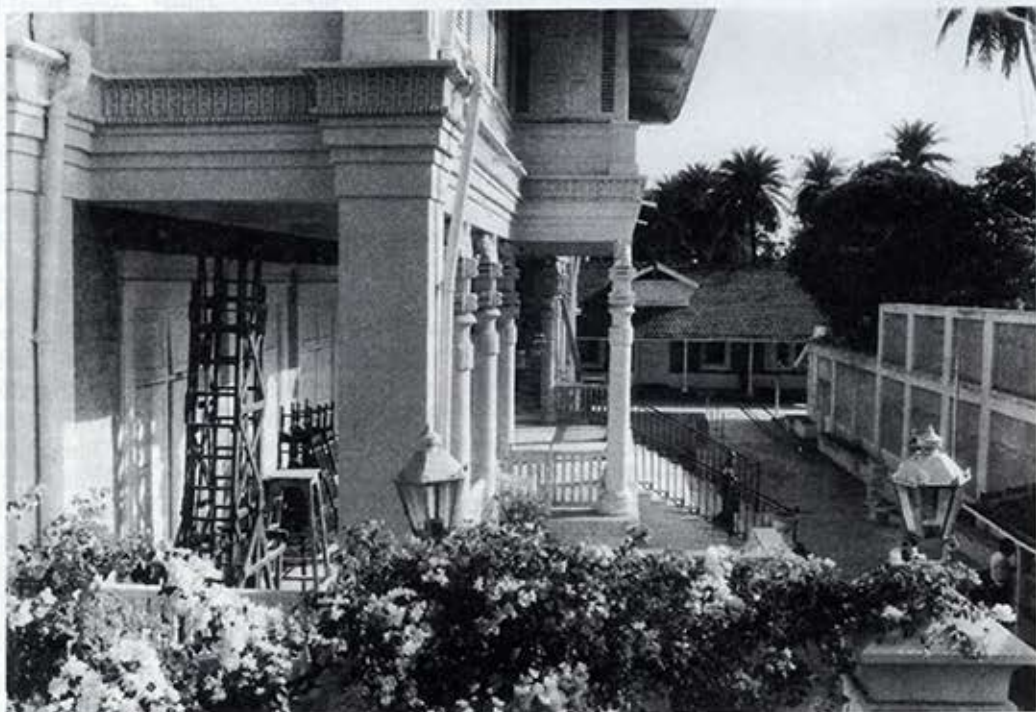
It has now been decided that the core group would have Dinshaw K. Tamboly, international business consultant, chairman, WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Trust Funds and trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) as president. The core group would include P. K. Laheri, commissioner of tourism and

principal secretary (rural development) in the Government of Gujarat; Jehangir R. J. Cama, chairman — Cama Group of Hotels and eminent social worker; Minoo R. Shroff, vice chairman — Raymonds Limited, company director and BPP trustee; Burjor H. Antia, solicitor-partner, Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe, chairman, Masina Hospital and BPP trustee; Homai N. Modi, Governor's nominee and joint honorary secretary, Maharashtra State Red Cross and eminent social worker, and Dr Homi B. Dhalla, president, World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation and religious scholar.

The core group would, at a later date, co-opt other well-known Parsis residing at places such as Udvada, Sanjan, Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Ahmedabad who would be helpful in specific areas of the project.

The chief minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi invited Cama to proceed in the direction of setting up a permanent heritage site at Udvada as well as towards organizing an annual festival where Zoroastrians from all over the world could gather.

A major impetus for this project was received in Ahmedabad in January 2002 during the 'foundation stone' laying ceremony of the Institute of Hotel Management when Narendra Modi and the minister of tourism and culture, Gov-



The Iranshah: a symbol of religious harmony



New structures jar the old-world antiquity of Udvada

ernment of India, Shri Jagmohan who were both present, acknowledged the positive role of Parsis in nation building, ever since their arrival from Persia over 1,300 years ago. Modi appreciated that ever since the Parsis arrived as migrants they had abided by a code of conduct which preserved their identity without offending the sensitivities of any other community.

Referring to Udvada as the most sacred religious place of the Parsis which showcases the glorious history of the Parsi community, Narendra Modi made a suggestion to Jagmohan to project Udvada as a place of harmony, religious

tolerance and opportunities provided to a minuscule community to realize their full potential. This was appreciated by Jagmohan who held that Udvada symbolized one of the finest examples of the cultural tradition of our country.

The first assignment to be undertaken by the core group is the establishment of a Museum and Cultural Centre within a specific time frame. The core group has already undertaken a quick survey of identifying suitable properties at Udvada that could be converted into a Museum and Cultural Centre. Once work on the Museum and Cultural Centre is underway, the organizing of an annual festival would be arranged and announced.

We hope that members of the Parsi community spread all over the world will take full advantage of the facilities

that are being created. Whilst the Government of India and the Government of Gujarat have been generous in their acknowledgement and support for the project, additional funds would need to be generated from within the Parsi community to bring the entire project to its fruition as well as for the recurring expenditures.

It is requested that Parsis too should consider extending their support to this project. Till such time the individuals named above register themselves as a NGO, The WZO Trust Funds has agreed to receive funds and make them available for this project. Contributions therefore may please be sent in the name of The WZO Trust Funds, Shanti, 5th floor, 6, Banaji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001.

Commissioner of tourism, Government of Gujarat, P. K. Laheri is also



managing director of the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited. One of the seniormost Indian Administrative Service officers in Gujarat, he is presently

principal secretary of rural development in the state.



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"I am not at all bored even after working for 54 years! In fact I'm enjoying every bit of it." In this age of rampant golden handshakes, what could that million-dollar job be? As the saying goes, "There is no business like show business." And Nergish Rabadi, alias Shammi, not only believes in it fervently, but continues to bask in its glory.

Starting with her first film *Malhar* in 1950, over the years she has featured in *Ustaad Pedro* as also several films such as *Sang Dil* with Dilip Kumar, *Upkaar*, *Purab Paschim* and *Kranti* with Manoj Kumar, *Musafir Khana* (her first comedy film) and *Kaun Apna*, *Kaun Paraya* with Johnny Walker, *Half Ticket* with Kishore Kumar and Pran, *Dil Apna Preet Parayi* with Meena Kumari and Raj Kumar (her most successful film)... So far she has worked in approximately 500 films (a couple of them even Punjabi) directed by the likes of Mukul Anand, Manoj Kumar, South Indian directors K. Visvanath and Bapu, and so on.

Due to *Malhar's* failure at the box office, Rabadi did not receive any film offers for six months. She had nobody to guide her. She switched over from lead roles to small but significant character roles. She played vamp roles, negative roles, comedy roles, mother's roles, grandmother's roles... That is what made Rabadi a survivor.

There is one particular role Rabadi had played for the film *Lahu Ke Do Rang* directed by Mahesh Bhatt, which she cherishes even today — that of a drug addict: "I had to do a scene in which the drug addict is craving for a drug which is not readily available to her. She goes totally out of control, starts yelling and screaming, eventually burning her room and jumping out of the window. The scene had no rehearsals, no dialogs and had to be shot in one go. I performed what I felt like — from within. After the scene was over, there was pin-drop silence for almost four minutes, without the slightest movement." Eventually, when she pointed out that nobody is saying "Cut!" Mahesh Bhatt admitted he had got too involved! "After reaching home, I felt as if somebody had beaten me up with a stick!"

But what made the "tomboy" of the film world (she never behaved like a quiet, shy woman in the industry) switch

A switch of screens



After enacting significant character roles in innumerable feature films, Nergish Rabadi, alias Shammi, is now in demand for teleserials

Rashna Ardesher

from the silver screen to the idiot box? "I was offered a role in a small telefilm — I don't remember the name — when the film industry was going through bad times. Seeing me act in that telefilm, directors offered me roles in serials." Rabadi has acted in popular serials such as *Dekh Bhai Dekh*, *Imtehaan*, *Kabhi Yeh Kabhi Woh*, *Daal Mein Kala* (co-produced with former film actress and former chairperson of the Film Censor Board, Asha Parekh), etc. Now she has started her own production company, Akruti, with Parekh. Together

they are producing a new serial, *Kuch Pal Saath Tumhara* on Sahara channel in which Rabadi is also playing a grandmother's role.

"Technically, the Indian cinema has improved a lot, but content-wise we have lost quite a lot. The stories and songs are not as good as they used to be," regrets Rabadi who reveals she has always been an admirer of Hindi film actor Naseeruddin Shah: "When I see him in theaters and on screen I feel that I don't know how to act at all! I don't think I can ever reach that height." The actress feels that ladies haven't yet got their due recognition in Hindi films except for a few such as Nargis Dutt for *Mother India* and Shabana Azmi for *God Mother*. The Hindi film industry has certainly given her "the satisfaction of doing the work I love. All that I've lost are some good friends, Nargis Dutt, Sayeeda Khan... If I were to be born again, I would certainly want to be back in show business."

"I had never imagined that I would act in films." That was in 1949 at the age of 20. Rabadi had never received any formal training in acting: "I learnt the basics of acting from director Tara Harish. He also gave me the practice of delivering different movie dialogs. My sister (Mani), in the meantime, had started acting in dramas through the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). I used to watch artistes rehearse and even got the opportunity to play small characters in two dramas. In fact that's how I picked up the Hindi language!"

Rabadi's family was very upset with her for signing with Omar Khayyam Films, after family friend Chimankant Gandhi, assistant to the famous film director, Mehboob Khan, asked her if she was interested in working in films. Neighbors, too, started behaving strangely. Minocher Gyara, [her godfather and *maasa* (maternal uncle) who was the principal of the Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy Charity School where she studied from kindergarten to standard V], was the only person who encouraged Rabadi to join a course in Hindi and give examinations. Later, Rabadi got far too busy in getting her photographs clicked, learning horse riding, etc through Omar Khayyam Films, to bother about the prying eyes of neighbors. She was given a screen name,

Starlet Shammi (below) in her younger days and in her present avatar with sister Mani (right); at the inauguration of one of the Punjabi films (second from right) and with a co-actor in the TV serial *Fauji Ki Diary*



Shammi. Says Rabadi: "Nargis Dutt was a very big star. Therefore the producer and director couldn't accept my original name. They gave me the screen name, Shammi, in the very first film I acted."

Her second film, *Ustaad Pedro*, with another lead heroine, Begum Para, was quite a memorable one, shot simultaneously with *Malhar*. Memorable, because "when I was acting in one of the song sequences on horseback, the horse got out of control midway and galloped away to a hilltop. The entire unit was taken aback. Thanks to the training I had received in horse riding I used one of those techniques to unlock my feet from the saddle and jumped, injuring the ligaments of my left side."

Rabadi was playing the heroine's role in both the films. However, *Ustaad Pedro* was released first, winning audience acclaim. "While the songs of *Malhar* are still a hit, the movie didn't do well. All the same, it gave me the much-needed experience. It was a very emotional movie. And, believe me, I hardly used any glycerin to induce tears," she says.

The heroine's life took a sharp turn when she got married to producer-director Sultan Ahmed in 1970. The couple produced hit films like *Heera* and *Ganga Ki Saugandh* before they divorced in 1977.

After her separation, Rabadi produced a film on her own, *Pigalta Asmaan*. Sultan Ahmed died a couple of months ago.

Rabadi shifted her residence from Bandra to Juhu recently and is staying with her adopted son, Iqbal. She believes that the Zoroastrian religion is one of the "most ancient and most modern religions because the concepts and teachings of

Prophet Zarathushtra — *humata, hukhta, huvrasha* — are applicable even today." On a regular basis she had stopped wearing the *sudreh* and *kusti* from the time she entered films! But she wears them when she visits a fire-temple. One thing she cannot understand is why Zoroastrian women, married outside the Parsi community, are not permitted the same privileges as enjoyed by their male counterparts. "God is universal. One doesn't become religious by following man-made rituals!" she asserts.

Her father, Ervad Jehangir Framji Rabadi, was a priest at the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram. He died of a burst appendix in 1931 when she was only two years old. Rabadi, with a warm and friendly demeanor, reminisces: "My mother Hirabai had to run the household. She started cooking in other Parsi homes and supplied home-made sweet dishes for prayer ceremonies at fire-temples. In her own way, she had made a name for herself." Hirabai being busy the whole day, it fell upon her sister, Dosabai Gyara, to raise Nergish and Mani.

Nergish was very playful and mischievous as a child, she admits. She disliked

studies, preferring singing, participating in elocution and garba competitions and other extracurricular activities: "I always won the first prize for my School, especially in singing competitions." After a couple of years the family shifted residence from Dhobitalao to Khetwadi and later to Tardeo at the Ratan Tata Colony. Her VI and VII standard (matriculation in those days) studies were undertaken at the Grant Road High School. To finance her education Rabadi had to start working as a clerk at the young age of 13 with Artytoys, a toy factory of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust

opposite her residence. The factory paid her school fees directly to the Grant Road High School. After a couple of months, Rabadi worked in J. L. Morrison and Sons as a clerk. "I got both these jobs due to Mani's recommendations. Mani had already started working before I joined," says Rabadi with gratitude. Working and studying was too much of a burden. Rabadi failed in her matriculation.

Compared to the trying times Rabadi faced most Parsi youths today lead a fairly comfortable life. "I sincerely pray and hope that our younger generation puts its foot down and tells the older one to let go of traditions which do not work in today's times," she states. Rabadi is very much aware of the dakhmenashini controversy: "A better alternative is to have an electric crematorium at the Towers of Silence. It is also a clean way to dispose of bodies. One can then dispose the ashes into the sea."

At 74 years, Rabadi has no plans to retire: "I do not know what plans God has for me. I have surrendered at this age completely to His will."





Adding spice to life

His success at marketing packaged ginger-garlic paste prompted Dinshaw Variava to manufacture popular spices and sauces under the Aatash Foods banner

Rashna Ardesher



All he knew was to relish food! Little did Dinshaw Variava expect that he would find his calling in the food industry. Realizing that there was a market for ginger-garlic paste in Bombay, he launched Aatash Foods 10 years ago when his business of corrugating boxes and manufacturing plastic bags under the banner of Ahura Enterprise ceased to be profitable.

Ginger-garlic paste, the first product manufactured by Aatash Foods "clicked mainly because of its quality. In fact, on the strength of ginger-garlic paste, after one-and-a-half years I brought out *jeera-lasan-marcha no masalo* (cumin seeds-garlic-chilli paste). Then came English Mustard. I would not say whether English Mustard is better or worse than Coleman's, but it's good. My latest one is *Dhansak masala* which some Parsis use even in cooking *masoor*. This product is not doing so well because not many people are aware of it. We need to advertise this product," assesses Variava.

Quality is the buzzword for Aatash Foods. Variava remembers well the lesson he had imbibed from Noshir Pochkhanawala (son of Sohrabji, the founder of Central Bank of India) of D&P (Dastur and Pochkhanawala) which later came to be known as Dippys: "Food is not an engineering product. It's

not a diamond that you put through a machine and it comes out polished. In the food business you put in the best quality ingredients and the best product will come out. You cannot improve food by machines." This is the reason why Variava insists on personally traveling to the Vashi market to buy good quality ginger and garlic.

The smiling face of a Super Chef on the package was Variava's idea. Behramsha Engineer, working with the State Bank of India, was Variava's tutor in Standards IX and X when he was studying at the Sir J. J. School. Engineer's good nature and personality would be a lucky mascot for Aatash Foods, felt Variava. Engineer, who had modelled for some pharmaceutical magazines, most readily agreed to lend his face to the packages of Aatash Foods.

There was a time when few distributors took Variava's products. Today, most distributors in Bombay want to take distributorship of Aatash Foods. Says Variava proudly: "All my products are number one in Bombay, (beating the competition,) within six to eight months of Aatash Foods entering the market. I've more than 50 per cent of the market share in Bombay."



Aatash Foods has had its share of failures too. Its Butter Chicken masala had to be withdrawn from the market as it turned sour, says Variava. Dinshaw had also tried his hand at making Chinese sauces: "My biggest mistake was coming out with sauces in big bottles meant for industrial use. Things didn't work out the way I had expected. Using smaller bottles was not cost-effective. I had to withdraw."

Participating in a seminar on food processing at the Hotel Oberoi, Variava observed that food technologists from the Netherlands were surprised to see that India still follows the bazaar system of the World War II era. According to them, the Indian consumer loses out on 40 percent of the harvested crop. So much goes waste that the whole of Great Britain can be fed on that. Laments Variava: "Material handling in India is very bad. I see men directly sitting on tomatoes, bananas, etc in trucks. In foreign countries, 60 to 70 percent of the food is processed near the farm itself whereas in our country barely two percent is processed! There is a wide scope for food processing in India. But the country needs to have lots of cold storages. It can be implemented."



he is hopeful.

As a dutiful wife, Khursheed helps Dinshaw in manufacturing products "as close to home food as possible." Who else but the Parsis of Rustom Baug where the Variavas reside are "quality control champions" for Aatash Foods. Adds Khursheed: "They are most critical of our products which makes us improve and give of our best. That also helps us prepare a formula and standardize our products." Their factory at Rabale in New Bombay has state-of-the-art machinery such as pulveriser, crusher, boiler, sigma mixer, pulper, feeder, sealing machines, steam kettles of 100 kg, etc. Dinshaw's knowledge of packing in his early days came handy: "The outer packing of our products is of polyester and polyethylene and the one that is in contact with food, is a food-graded poly. All our products are well preserved with hardly a gram per kilo of preservatives in them."

Dinshaw had planned on being an entrepreneur since his early days. In 1974, when he was studying for his BA in Burhani College, he decided to start a business in packaging. He learnt the ropes from Goody Pundol, son of the late Minocher Pundol (a religious scholar and founder of the Pundol group) who was in the business of corrugating boxes. After corrugating boxes for 18 years, Ahura Enterprise entered into the business of plastic bags. Dinshaw's first order was for polythene carry bags for La Patisserie. After some time, the Taj Hotel placed an order with him to make laundry bags. In order to remain competitive, Dinshaw got everything done on a job-work basis from *zopadpattis*. The Taj liked the quality of laundry bags and placed further orders for newspaper bags and valet bags. Dinshaw started getting orders from other prestigious hotels. Unfortunately, with prices of

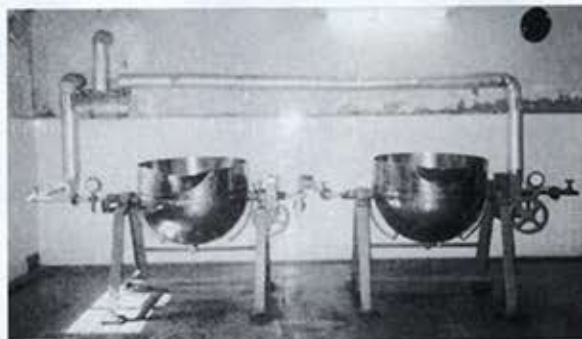
Top: filling and packing the product; Alongside: Steam kettles

granules shooting up and the distributor of granules, Indian Petro Chemicals Limited, closing for two months, Dinshaw could not remain competitive and lost the Taj contract.

Those were hard times. Dinshaw recalls: "I had purchased a plot at Rabale with the intention of making sophisticated plastic liners. But the cost of maintaining the machinery and stock as also the interest on the loan I had taken were mounting. I decided to sell this plot but nobody was willing to pay the price! I did not have the finance to do anything." Help came from two sources: "My father, Framroze Variava, regional manager with Hoechst Pharmaceuticals, pledged his shares up to Rs 3,00,000 with Bombay Mercantile Bank. Also, my ex-father-in-law, Murzban Unwalla — this is my second marriage with Khursheed — pledged his shares up to Rs 3,00,000 as collateral security. Of course, I cleared all my loans and got all the shares released after my divorce from my first wife."

In the meantime, Dinshaw's *maasi* (maternal aunt), Dolly Dastur, sent him a few packets of ginger-garlic paste, manufactured by Sharon in Hyderabad, for marketing in Bombay. Parsis were Dinshaw's main clientele. Framroze knew that this would be a sure shot for son Dinshaw, and suggested that he manufacture ginger-garlic paste at the "rotting plot" at Rabale. "I got my shed at Rabale renovated, invested in machinery worth Rs 5,00,000 and registered with the FPO (Food Product Order)." Getting a licence from the FPO was quite a task, acknowledges Variava, especially since he was not aware of the

In foreign countries, 60 to 70 percent of the food is processed near the farm itself whereas in our country barely two percent is processed!



FPO rules.

Framroze, who had seen Aatash Foods as a proprietorship firm, did not see it expand to a private limited company in the year 2000 with wife Veera, son Dinshaw and daughter-in-law Khursheed as directors. Recalls Khursheed: "Soon after his death in May 1994, sales doubled. It was like a windfall, as if he blessed us from the heaven above."

Dinshaw has already started marketing his products in Poona. With a good turnover in Bombay, he is all set to market his products in Gujarat and southern India: "Aatash Foods plans to come up with a two-floor building at the 8,000 square foot plot at Rabale. There is a project worth two crore rupees in the pipeline. Also, our future products such as *masoor*, *Parsi dhansak daal*, *lagan nu stew*, *malido*, as well as *dal makhani* and *palak paneer*, etc will come in retortable pouches (ready-to-eat food)."

Khursheed, who worked as a telephone operator with the Union Bank of India for 16 years, accepted her voluntary retirement in 2001. She is an excellent cook. Reading and making *malido* are her hobbies. She goes with Dinshaw every day to the factory and takes care of the administrative side of Aatash Foods leaving her husband to concentrate on production, marketing, etc.

Both Dinshaw and Khursheed (daughter of Goolcher and late Jehanbux Tata, panthaki of Bandra's Tata Agiary) believe in the power of Zoroastrian prayers: "Whether it is for money, happiness or good health, our prayers are so

continued on page 52

Birth no bar to priesthood

A Supreme Court judgment permitting a non-Brahmin to officiate as a priest could set a precedent for the Parsis, states the author

Rustom S. Gae

At present an athornan only can function as priest in a fire-temple so long as he is well versed and properly trained and qualified to recite prayers and perform rituals and ceremonies in accordance with the doctrine of the Zoroastrian religion or practices regarded as parts of that religion.

The recent Supreme Court decision in *A. Adithayan vs Travancore Devaswom Board* permitting non-Brahmins to function as priests of Hindu temples will have far-reaching repercussions and wide ramifications throughout the country.

In Kerala there is an institution (known as *Thanthra Vedantha School* at Tiruvalla) which imparts training as *santhikarans* (priests) to students in all relevant Vedic texts, rites, religious observances and modes of worship. The students who ultimately pass through the tests are being initiated by performing the investiture of sacred thread and *gayatri*. Amongst such qualified persons selections based upon merits are made by a high powered committee including a reputed *Thanthri*. The quality of the candidate as well as his eligibility to perform the rites, religious observances and modes of worship are once again tested before appointing him as priest of a temple. Any person, whether a Brahmin or non-Brahmin, irrespective of his caste or creed, is appointed as priest of a temple provided he is duly qualified and trained in his duties, mantras and *Vedas*. There is no reservation for Brahmins for the purpose.

In the above case a non-Brahmin duly selected was appointed as a regular priest of a temple in the State of Kerala. His appointment was challenged as offending the long-standing custom and usage of having only Brahmins as priests and thus denying the right of worshippers to practise and profess the religion guaranteed under articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution of India. A full bench of the Kerala High Court held that it is not

essential that only a Brahmin well versed with rituals can become a priest of a temple. On appeal the question before the Supreme Court was whether the appointment of a non-Brahmin as priest of a temple violates the constitutional and statutory rights of a Brahmin.

It is now well established by Courts that the freedom to practise and propagate religion and the freedom to manage religious affairs guaranteed under articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution extend to a guarantee for rituals and observances, rites, ceremonies and modes of worship which are integral parts of a religion. What constitutes an essential part of a religion or religious practice has to be decided by the Courts with reference to the doctrine of a particular religion and practices regarded as part of the religion.

As regards the right of a Brahmin alone to perform the puja and rituals in a temple the Court observes: "If, traditionally or conventionally, in any temple, all along a Brahmin alone was conducting pujas or performing the job of *santhikaran*, it may not be because a person other than the Brahmin is prohibited from doing so because he is not a Brahmin, but those others were not in a position and, as a matter of fact, were prohibited from learning, reciting or mastering Vedic literature, rites or performance of rituals and wearing sacred thread by getting initiated into the order... Consequently, there is no justification to insist that a Brahmin, or Malayala Brahmin in this case, alone can perform the rites and rituals in the temple, as part of the rights and freedom guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution and further claim that any deviation would tantamount to violation of any such guarantee under the Constitution."

Emphasizing the importance of daily rituals, pujas and recitations to maintain the sanctity of the idol, the Court held

that only a qualified person well versed and properly trained for the purpose can perform pujas and rituals in the temple, since he has not only to enter into the sanctum sanctorum but also touch the idol installed therein. Such person is appointed as priest *de hors* (outside) his pedigree based on caste or creed.

As regards the long standing custom or usage of having only Brahmins as priests the Court observes: "Any custom or usage, irrespective of even any proof of their existence in pre-constitutional days, cannot be countenanced as a source of law to claim any rights when it is found to violate human rights, dignity, social equality and the specific mandate of the Constitution and law made by Parliament. No usage which is found to be pernicious and considered to be in derogation of the law of the land or opposed to public policy or social decency can be accepted or upheld by Courts in the country."

The constitutional position is clear that customs and usages which conflict with fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution are no longer recognized after the commencement of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. The landmark judgment of the Supreme Court allowing non-Brahmins to function as priests of Hindu temples will serve as *causa célèbre* on the subject and will have deep impact on the Indian polity. It will also have far reaching repercussions and wide ramifications throughout the country since it abolishes the monopoly or prerogative of a select few Brahmins to perform pujas and rituals in the sanctum sanctorum. Henceforth any Hindu, irrespective of his race, caste, sect, sex or place of birth, can be appointed as priest of a temple provided he is well versed and properly trained in the performance of daily pujas, rituals and recitations with a view to maintaining the sanctity of the idol.

This gives effect to categorical revela-



tions made in the *Gita* and the dream of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, to abolish all distinctions based on caste or creed. It would therefore be against law to debar the devotees or worshippers from any temple on the ground of race, caste, sect, sex or place of birth.

Principles of law laid down by the Supreme Court regarding the functioning of non-Brahmins as priests of Hindu

temples will so far as may be apply to the functioning of priests in places of public worship of other communities as well. What is essential for the purpose is that the priest so functioning is well versed and properly trained and qualified to recite prayers and perform rituals and ceremonies in accordance with the doctrine of the religion concerned or practices regarded as parts of that religion.

In view of the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court, the Athorman Boarding Madressa at Dadar and the M. F. Cama Athorman Institute at Andheri, the two prestigious institutions in Bombay imparting religious training

to Parsi boys belonging to the priestly class, or any other institution of a similar nature may now allow any Parsi, whether an athorman or behdin and whether belonging to the priestly class or not, to be qualified as priest on his fulfilling the conditions referred to above. For the purpose the constitution of the institution may be amended, if required. There should be no reservation for athormans in this

field of super speciality. The judgment should be all the more welcomed by our minuscule community in view of the acute dearth of qualified priests, specially priests to tend the sacred fire burning in fire-temples, in the community. Now non-athormans may also be allowed to function as priests of fire-temples, etc if they are duly trained and qualified for the purpose.

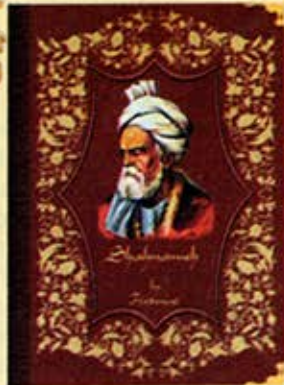
Athormans duly qualified may urge (just like Brahmins of the Hindu community) that the appointment of non-athormans as priests of fire-temples, etc offends the long-standing custom or usage of having athormans only as priests and thus denies the right of the worshippers to practise and profess the Zoroastrian religion guaranteed under the Constitution. For the purpose they will have to prove that such custom or usage forms part of the religious practice which is regarded as an integral part of the Zoroastrian religion by scriptures and by the tradition and usage of that religion. What really constitutes an integral part of the religion or religious practice has to be decided by the Courts with reference to the doctrine of the Zoroastrian religion or practices regarded as parts of that religion. Validity and legality of any such custom or usage will have to be tested in courts of law, since any custom or usage (irrespective of even any proof of its existence in pre-constitutional days) cannot be countenanced as a source of law to claim any rights when it is found to violate human rights, dignity, social equality and the specific mandate of the Constitution and the law enacted in pursuance thereof.

It appears that the matter has not yet received due attention and consideration by the community in general and athormans affected by the judgment in particular. The issue involved is rather delicate and needs to be handled tactfully with circumspection and precision by steering clear of any controversy on the subject. It needs discussion and debate amongst the community, specially religious scholars and high priests of the community.

Rustom S. Gae, a former law secretary to the Government of India, is presently a senior advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. He is known for his expertise on subjects relating to fiscal laws, company law and constitutional law. He writes frequently on legal issues pertaining to the community.



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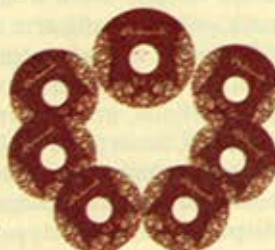
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Prowess in the pool

Sixteen-year-old Rehan Poncha received the trophy for best male athlete at India's 32nd National Games

Hilla P. Guzder

Matching potential with performance, 16-year-old Rehan Poncha's spirited swimming won him the coveted title of best male athlete of the 32nd National Games at Hyderabad in December 2002.

With over 7,000 participants in 32 disciplines from all over India, Poncha's tally of 26 points fetched him the prestigious trophy at the hands of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at the colorful closing ceremony at the packed G.M.C. Balayogi Stadium.



Poncha:
international
participation

Staving off stiff challenges from the country's leading swimmers, Poncha picked up three golds (200 m and 400 m freestyle and 400 m individual medley), three silvers (200 m individual medley, 1,500 m freestyle and 200 m backstroke) and a bronze (200 m butterfly). He was also a part of the Karnataka relay team which raced to top podium position in the 4 x 100 m freestyle relay and 4 x 100 m medley relay and a second place finish in the 4 x 200 freestyle relay.

If Hyderabad turned out to be a happy hunting ground for the teenager, the year 2003 has begun on a promising note with Poncha being awarded a Sports Authority of India scholarship for training-cum-competition in Perth, Australia. "I will be leaving for Australia shortly," Poncha told *Parsiana*. "I am looking forward to it, though I can't deny that I am nervous! Our level of achievement is nowhere compared to world standard. I know

progress will be difficult, but training with faster swimmers provides the impetus to achieve better timings. Though Indian swimmers may do well up to the age of 15-16, international swimmers achieve big jumps in timing thereafter. In 2001, I was well on target. But the following year was really rough for me!"

With sickness and success jostling for space in 2002, Poncha appeared for his ICSE exams from St Joseph's Boys High School in Bangalore in March, securing 84 percent. April saw him in Moscow — the lone Indian participant at The VI FINA World Swimming Championships, swimming in a heated pool, with freezing temperatures outside! Chicken pox laid him low in May, keeping him out of the water for 20 days. In June he swam at the Junior Nationals in Madras, winning five golds, obliterating two national records and picking up the title of best swimmer, Group I Boys.

July brought viral fever, as well as four golds and one silver at the Senior State Championships of Karnataka — his home state since 1999 when Rehan and his parents Jehangir and Shirin moved household and business from Bombay to Bangalore to further his swimming career (see "Splashing success," *Parsiana*, July-August 1997 and Sports, May 2000). Ten days after post viral bronchitis, Poncha winged his way

to Zhuhai in China for the 2nd Asian Amateur Swimming Federation Age Group Championships 2002. In the 15-17 age bracket he annexed second place in the 200 m backstroke with a timing of 2:14.66. The 200 m individual medley won him a bronze with a finish of 2:14.18, a timing faster than the senior (Indian) national record of 2:14.24, as per his bio data. Though unable to secure a medal in the 400 m individual medley, Poncha's fifth place time (4:44.69) was again faster than the senior (Indian) national record of 4:45.80.

On the basis of his steady strokes to progress, Poncha was among the only four Indian swimmers selected for the Asian Games at Busan in Korea in September/October 2002 — two boys (Akbar Ali Mir and Poncha) and two girls (Richa Mishra and Shikha Tandon). Unable to attain a podium finish amidst the power swimming of the Chinese and the Japanese, Poncha's timing of 2:14.14 in the 200 m individual medley succeeded once again in bettering the senior national record.

Born a premature baby and troubled by sinus in his childhood, Rehan is 5' 10" tall "and hopefully growing," laughs Jehangir, himself a six-footer. Rehan fine tunes his skills at the K. C. Reddy Swim Centre under Nihar Ameen, a level five ASCA (American Swim Coaches Association) certified coach.

Perth will see him under the wing of Burney Mulroy who has nurtured Indian talent before. Reflecting on his career graph so far, Rehan terms the best athlete title at Hyderabad "his most treasured award." The facilities at the Games were as good as at any meet abroad, he opines. "I had not had enough time to train because of my sicknesses in the year and the crowded calendar of events. Sure, daily practice



From left: Suresh Kalmadi, president of the Indian Olympic Association, Vajpayee, Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Poncha

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can be a bit of a grind, but I enjoy swimming," asserts the youngster who is doing science with electronics in the first year of junior college at the Shri Bhagwan Mahaveer Jain College in Bangalore.

"My mum and dad have played a really big role in my success. Dad shut down his business as a jeweler in Bombay so I could benefit from the superior swimming facilities available in Bangalore. Not many parents would make such a huge sacrifice," acknowledges Rehan. Jehangir set up a new business in Bangalore dealing in equine products.

The international exposure at the Moscow meet enabled Rehan to observe at close quarters the power, better starts, turns and underwater breakouts of foreign competitors. His immediate goal, he says, is to prepare for this year's World Championships at Barcelona in Spain and the Afro-Asian Games in New Delhi where he aims to be among the top four to five swimmers. The lanes to swimming success are long, choppy and expensive as well, believes the hard-working lad who has been sub junior and junior national champion in 1999, 2001 and 2002, senior state champion in



From left:
Adi Mehta
presenting
Individual
Championships
to Shazneen
Daruwalla and
Hormuz Baliwalla

Karnataka in the same years and the youngest ever (at age 13) senior nationals medallist with a bronze in the 400 m individual medley in 1999, according to his bio data. With many a promising sportsman falling by the wayside distracted by worldly pursuits, Poncha knows that talent, training and tenacity will enable him to surge ahead in the larger international arena.

Aquatic achievement

Plunging into the pool against many an older swimmer, nine-year-old Hormuz Baliwalla and 12-year-old Shazneen Daruwalla won the Individual Championship for the best male and female swimmer respectively at the XI All Parsee Aquatic Meet in Bombay on November 24, 2002.

Conducted by FOZAWAC (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare and Culture) at the YMCA pool, this was the fourth consecutive year Shazneen lifted the Championship trophy. Savoring her victory, the seventh standard student says she "trains very hard," swimming after school every evening and has participated in sea races as well. For Hormuz, this was the first time he won the Championship singly, having been declared joint winner last year with Shazneen's brother Aresh, also a successful swimmer (see "Splashing success," *Parsiana*, July-August 1997). "I particularly enjoy the backstroke. I train seriously and am very happy doing it," says the fifth standard student. Both Shazneen and Hormuz train at the Body Rhythm pool near Bombay's Mantralaya under coach Vispi Bhesania.

With a record 250 entries from around 70 swimmers, (Dahanu being the only participant from outside Bombay), the Meet was jointly financed by the Dr Aloo Dalal Memorial Fund and Peekay

Wines. Veteran swimmer Adi Bharucha conducted the races with the help of other officials, states a FOZAWAC press release.

"We started organizing this Meet over a decade ago, with just a few swimmers and petty prizes of rupees five, seven, 11, etc. The prizes are now substantial and entries cover all age groups, children and adults," asserts FOZAWAC general secretary Rusi Bhungara. FOZAWAC's annual calendar of sports events includes badminton and six-a-side cricket tournaments at the Parsee Gymkhana, table tennis at Rustom Baug and aquatics at the YMCA pool. For athletics, which they used to conduct earlier, FOZAWAC has joined up with the Cusrow Baug United Sports and Welfare League, The Navroze Baug Play Centre, The Zoroastrian Physical Culture and Health League and Mancherji Edalji Joshi Memorial Trust to jointly form the All Parsees Sports Foundation which conducts the Jal D. Pardiwalla All Parsees Athletic Meet instead of the individual associations organizing their own athletics every year, states Bhungara. In 2002 a chess tournament was organized at the Banaji Atash Behram Hall and snooker/billiards competitions are held every May/June at the Elphinstone Club.

The only non-sports event held by FOZAWAC is the felicitation each August of students obtaining over a stipulated percentage at the SSC, ICSE and HSC board examinations, adds Bhungara. FOZAWAC's managing committee comprises Adi Mehta as president, Vispi Dastur, vice president and honorary treasurer, Aloo Shroff, joint treasurer, Bhungara as general secretary, Dinshaw Patel, joint secretary and Xerxes Khandadia and Burzin Bhungara as members.

ADOPTION

We are a Zarathushti couple, without children of our own, interested in adopting a Zarathushti child. Please contact us at:

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MATRIMONIAL

Tall, pretty Parsi girl, 26 years, B.Sc. from London, wishes to correspond with highly educated, tall, Parsi male, between 27-32 years, preferably residing abroad. Please reply with photo and full details to:

The Advertiser
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Faithful follow-up

Parinaz M. Gandhi

When unable to personally visit a fire-temple on its salgreh, the devotee opens the *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples*, places his hand on the picture of the agiary and prays. It is such reports that spurred author Marzban J. Giara to bring out a second updated edition of this compendium in December 2002 with new pictures to make "this tome more attractive and informative." Within 18 months of its release in March 1998 the 208-page first edition, priced at Rs 1,200, was sold out. Despite the increased rate of Rs 2,000 for the 240-page book, of the 1,000 copies printed for the second edition, 150 had already been bought by January 22, mentions Giara.

"Besides a picture for every known Zoroastrian place of worship, information (encompassing) name, address, tele-

phone number, location, distance from nearest railway station, how to get there, date consecrated according to Parsi and English calendar, visiting hours, name of panthaky/caretaker, Parsi population in the town at the time of consecration and now, status of fire (adarian/dadgah) has (all) been updated," states Giara explaining how improvements in computer technology helped him to reach out to unknown individuals and destinations.

Among the 60 new color pictures in the second edition is the one of the agiary at Abu Road. Giara recalls how one obliging individual from Indore responded on the Internet instructing Giara to get in touch with one gentleman in Bombay through whom the necessary photograph could be procured. New visuals of fire-temples in outstation anjumans/associations of Akola, Badnera, Bangalore, Belgaum, Bharuch, Bhuj, Billimora, Calcutta, Chikhli, Igat-

puri, Indore, Jamnagar, Kanpur, Khergam, Lonavala, Madras, Mahuva, Mandvi, Neemuch, New Delhi, Panchgani, Pardi, Satara, Tarapore, Udvarda, Vadodara and Vyara are also included in the second edition. While it is understandable that the adarian fires alongside the atash padshah at atash behrams do not bear separate photographs, the dadgah at Allbless Baug should have merited a photograph. Recent visuals of the overseas shrines at Chicago, Colombo, Houston, London, New York, Quetta, San Jose, Sat-e-Pir find a place in the 2002 edition too. Some associations would send a prompt response, others required e-mail reminders, up to 20 in one case, reports Giara relating another instance of an anjuman which, mistaking his letter for an appeal for financial help, preferred to ignore it!

As compared to the 187 places of public worship covered in the first edition, the second edition accommodates 190, in nine countries spread over four continents. This includes the new Shapoorji Fakirji Jokhi Agiary at Godrej Baug, Seth Ardeshir Bhicajee Patel Dadgah at Salsette, Manijeh Pirojsha

Clockwise from top left: fire-temples at Abu Road, Behram Baug (Jogeshwari), Kanpur and Quetta





With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**



*Fire-temple at
Badnera (top) and
Belgaum*

Whilst originally Giara had estimated the population of the Zoroastrian community worldwide to be 1,30,000, in the second edition he gives a figure of 1,60,000. Yet another addition in this book is in his list of dedications where he includes wife Bapsy to the earlier ones of pious athravans... chronicler Bomanjee Byramjee Patell and his parents Homai and Jamshedji Giara.

"I believe in taking books to the people," Giara had expressed during an

interview with *Parsiana* (see "Shrines for the showcase," April 1998). Seeing the popularity of his first edition, Giara ventured to publish *The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide* (providing comprehensive data on fire-temple and community managed halls and dharam-shalas) and *Parsi Statues*, an illustrated biography of these memorials around the world.

"A keen student of Parsi history and the Zoroastrian religion, he is an independent thinker, writer, public speaker and social worker," Giara is introduced on the jacket of the book. His plans for a central information center or hub from where those interested could order by mail or buy books and literature on the community resulted in the launch of the Parsiana Book Club under the aegis of Parsiana and Giara Publishers (see page 43).

Keen to revive "the community's religious fervor," Giara welcomes reader "feedback, comments and suggestions which would help make such books more useful." The author can be contacted at 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014; Tel: 24166204; e-mail: giara@vsnl.com "Carefully compiled as a labor of love," as states the author in his introduction, "It is significant to note that in this age of sponsorship this book has been produced without any...funding by any trust..."

The list of fire-temple closed shows 14 new entries in this second edition. Details of one each in Ahmedabad, Amroli, Bodhan, Khandwa, Mandroi, Surat and Suvali, two each in Bharuch and Tavri, and three in Bombay are given here in addition to the 33 dar-e-mehers in India and four overseas which were shown as closed in the 1998 edition. Altogether five dar-e-mehers in Bharuch have been closed down and yet plans are afoot to consecrate a dadgah at Jamshed Baug, the new dharamshala operational in that city from December 2002, says Giara.

Chapters on "Status of Atash in Zoroastrianism," "The Significance and Power of our Fire Temples," "Consecration of an Atash Behram," "Important Dates in the Zoroastrian Religious Calendar," "Directory of Anjumans in India" and "Zoroastrian Associations (outside India)" are the other popular features of this book. Besides explaining some Zoroastrian terms Giara also gives details of when the current set of eight high priests assumed their dasturpad.

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 18 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 21 and 46 years, averaging at 29 years.

Seventy Zoroastrian bodies were interred in Bombay's Doongerwadi in the last month of 2002. The two Bombay hospitals (from where *Parsiana* gets the information) registered 15 births. Nineteen deaths were attributed to heart disease. Five were in the 80+ age group. The other killers were: pneumonia/lung disease (12), old age/general debility (seven), hypertension (five), septicemia and brain disease (four each), diabetes (three) and kidney failure, accident and gastritis (two each). Arthritis, intestinal obstruction, liver disease, malaria, myasthenia gravis (muscular weakness), dementia and infection were the seven isolated cases listed. In the case of one death the viscera was kept for histopathological examination. The age range fluctuated between 20 and 100 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for December, in Bombay, was 77 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by two hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would

be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BANGALORE

DIED

Jal Bharucha on October 18, 2002

BARODA

MARRIED

Naznin Minoo Sutaria and *Hoshedar Tehmuras Patwa*; December 8
Freyan Tehmas Surti and *Farzad Kersi Jokhi*; December 15

DIED

Jaloo Sorabji Haladwalla; November 10
Rustomji Behramsha Contractor (83); November 17
Dara Bomansha Medhora; November 23
Hoshang Munchersha Umrigar; November 25
Pervez Limjibhai Gandhi (51); December 31

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Vazishta*, to *Pinaz* and *Rohinton Mahuvawala*, sister to *Huvakhsh*; October 25
A boy, *Hoshedar*, to *Maharukh* and *Rohinton Mistry*, brother to *Purazar*; October 30
A boy, *Farzan*, to *Hufrih* and *Homi Bulsara*, brother to *Delafruze* and *Vahishta*; November 8
A girl, *Farrah*, to *Nazneen* and *Jamsheed Patel*, sister to *Bezhani*; November 8
A boy to *Zinobia* and *Cyrus Dotivala*; December 2
A boy to *Rashna* and *Raiomond Poncha*; December 2
A girl to *Nazneen* and *Bomi Dastur*; December 3
A boy to *Naomi* and *Kurush Kasad*; December 7
A girl to *Khushnuma* and *Khushroo Patel*; December 7
A girl to *Sanobar* and *Rohinton Tampal*; December 12
A boy, *Zerius*, to *Shahnaz* and *Yezdi Irani*, brother to *Sanaya*; December 14
A girl to *Roxana* and *Porus Vazifdar*; December 16
A boy to *Jasmin* and *Hoshong Kuka*; December 18

A girl to *Farzana* and *Mehli Golvala*; December 22
A boy to *Dilnavaz* and *Shahrukh Talati*; December 22
A boy to *Nahid* and *Nowzar Attai*; December 23
A boy to *Kashmira* and *Yezdi Khodaiji*; December 23
A girl to *Anahita* and *Bomi Patel*; December 23
A girl to *Binaifer* and *Hormuzd Billimoria*; December 26

MARRIED

Lily Rumi Mewawalla and *Hamavand Farokh Taraporewala*; December 1
Nilufer Zinoo Master and *Viraf Maneck Boywalla*; December 2
Tanaz Cyrus Dadrawala and *Vispi Sarosh Patel*; December 2
Parinaz Sarosh Patel and *Farzan Nari Nalavala*; December 5
Zarina Sam Nallaseth and *Percy Murzban Dumasia*; December 7
Freny Eruchshaw Kapadia of *Surat* and *Hoshedar Homi Mehta*; December 7
Parynaz Firdosh Mehta and *Khushroo Dinyar Vimadala*; December 7
Benaifer Sohrab Ranji and *Minocher Dinsha Irani*; December 8
Khursheed Minoo Mistry and *Zubin Feroze Mistry*; December 8
Shahnaz Vispi Mody and *Farzad Khushroo Billimoria*; December 9
Havovi Nariman Chinoy and *Kaioomar Jimmy Kekuna*; December 9
Taruna Dinyar Rustomji and *Hoshedar Vispi Lalkaka*; December 9
Hutoxi Keki Sarkary of *Secunderabad* and *Zubin Jimmy Bharucha* of *Rander*; December 10
Ferzana Minoo Bilimoria and *Zubin Framroze Billimoria*; December 10
Anahita Ramyar Batha of *Bangalore* and *Paiterasp Hormazd Cooper*; December 12
Dinaz Dadi Ichhaporia and *Rohinton Jamshed Homavazir*; December 12
Shernaz Behram Karanjia and *Viraf Sam Vasanja* of *New*

Bombay; December 12
Kainaz Kersi Kadodwalla and *Burgess Viraf Ghyara*; December 13
Delfi Firoz Patel and *Sahazad Godrej Namderian*; December 14
Anaita Kersi Ghoga and *Shahrukh Sorab Gutta*; December 15
Kamal Darayus Irani and *Khusnoor Sapal Jijina*; December 15
Ruby Jal Mohta and *Behram Rusi Aderbad*; December 16
Kainaz Rohinton Irani and *Marzban Yazdi Chichgur*; December 16
Shiraz Jehangir Mehta of *Poona* and *Cyrus Gustasp Sethna*; December 16
Hufrih Gustad Turel and *Mehernosh Kersi Mistry*; December 17
Rukshana Adi Merchant and *Rustom Behram Nagporewalla*; December 17
Anahita Purvez Sadri and *Maneck Keki Gilder*; December 19
Shahnaz Morad Rahmani and *Behzad Merwan Mazdayasna*; December 19
Roxan Baji Bilimoria and *Aspi Homi Tangri*; December 21
Benaaz Darayous Hakim of *Baroda* and *Shahzad Pervez Bachana*; December 23
Geeti Ratan Italia and *Donesh Parvez Irani*; December 23
Zerasteen Pheroze Unwalla and *Farrokh Sam Dhanbhoora*; December 27
Pearl Vispee Vesuna of *Poona* and *Sohail Cawas Mali* of *Poona*; December 27
Ruzwin Soli Paymaster and *Zameer Cyrus Palamkote*; December 27
Nazafarin Cyrus Jassawalla and *Beram Sorab Gazdar*; December 28
Shahnaz Behram Badhniwalla and *Pirzad Jamshed Rustomjee*; December 28
Shazneen Nadir Rabadi and *Hanoz Homi Gandhi*; December 29
Benaifer Yazdi Mistry and *Kaizad Viraf Singpurwalla*; December 29

DIED

Jal Dosabhai Daroovala (65), residing at *Abdiali Chmbs, Lamington Rd, Grant Rd,*

400007; December 1
Nariman Merwanji Hormusji
 (91), Bhiwandi Hse, 92,
 August Kranti Marg, 400036;
 December 1
Jehan Naville Wadia (20),
 1/27, Dhunbaiwadi, Parsi
 Clny, Vile Parle (W), 400059;
 December 1
Kekobad Eruchsha Majra (78),
 1403/1404, Edenwoods,
 Shastri Ngr, Lokhandwala
 Complex, Andheri (W),
 400058; December 2
Jehangir Jal Kapadia (68), 5,
 Pandit Mans, N. Petit St, Grant
 Rd, 400007; December 3
Gool Phiroze Sarkari (82),
 C-12, Rustom Baug, Victoria
 Rd, Byculla, 400027;
 December 3
Maneck Framji Bharucha (88),
 9, Old Khareghat Clny, 32/A,
 Hughes Rd, 400007;
 December 4
Bamansha Burjorji Fitter (83),
 1/11, Sir Ratan Tata Clny,
 Tardeo Rd, 400034;
 December 4
Khurshed Sorabji Merchant
 (88), 658, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 4
Amy Aspi Mistry (54), A/19,
 Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; December 4
Homi Jehangirji Mukadam
 (79), B12, 002, Sector 2,
 Shanti Ngr, Mira Rd (E), Dist
 Thane, 401104; December 4
Gulbai Kaikhushu Batliboi
 (100), 48, Ridge Rd, 400006;
 December 5
Phiroze Ardeshir Mehta (83),
 Mani Mount, 24, Altamont
 Rd, 400026; December 5
Mani Jal Mistry (84), 9,
 Flamingo, St Allxius Rd,
 Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 5
Tehmina Rustomji Sanjana
 (95), Meher Mans, J. Petit St,
 Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007;
 December 5
Parvez Shapurji Billimoria
 (83), 721/A, Choksey Bldg,
 Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 6
Adi Lavji Engineer (56), 7/11,
 Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd,
 Byculla, 400027; December 6
Coover Pestonji Jassawalla
 (75), Haji Kasam Bldg, 645,
 J. S. S. Rd, Dhobitalao,
 400002; December 6
Jeejibhoy Pirojshah Daruwalla
 (78), F/12, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
 Rd, 400039; December 7

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	2002*	This issue	2002*	This issue	2002*
BIRTHS						
Boys	10	77	—	4	8	36
Girls	9	101	1	3	7	23
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	38	199	3	14	6	20
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	—	1	1	2	4
Females married out	—	—	—	1	1	7
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	42	451	6	73	5	30
Females	28	441	3	75	8	30
CREMATED						
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2002 (January 2002-February 2003 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as Parsiana does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by Parsiana. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

Ardeshir Nadirsha Cama (82),
 12/1, Cassinath Bldg, Avabai
 Cassinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
 December 8
Farrokh Camaji Cama (87),
 J/14, Cama Park, Cama Rd,
 Andheri (W), 400058;
 December 8
Hoshang Navroji Mistry (66),
 6/3, Sir Ratan Tata Clny,
 Tardeo, 400034; December 8
Shirin Narioshang Rao (83),
 600, Bachan Manor, Jame
 Jamshed Rd, Matunga,
 400019; December 8
Renee Kersasp Rustomjee
 (63), Buena Vista,
 Pochkhanawala Rd, Worli,
 400025; December 8
Dina Behramshah Khumbatta
 (75), 3, Windsor Chmbs,
 Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001;
 December 9
Zerine Bomi Wadiwalla (75),
 F/13, Contractor Baug,
 Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016;
 December 9
Edulji Dinshawji Gotla (54),
 C/2-13, Contractor Baug,
 Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016;
 December 10
Rusi Sherairji Karanjia (68),
 Panday Dharamshalla,
 Thakurdwar, 400002;
 December 10
Sam Edulji Daruwalla (70),
 Sethna Bldg, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; December 11

Bapai Maneksha Master (81),
 Jame Jamshed Bldg, 814,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 December 11
Nani Ardeshir Palkhivala (82),
 Commonwealth, 181, Backbay
 Recl, 400020; December 11
Mehroo Maneckji Patel (82),
 3/10, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg
 Soc, Parel, 400012;
 Elphinstone Rd, December 11
Perin Homi Bhathena (72),
 9/A, Horizon, Pali Hill Rd,
 Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 13
Darabsha Bhikaji Sarkari (91),
 6, Enterprise, Forjett Hill Cro:s
 Lane, 400036; December 13
Mehran Manchershaw Shethna
 (77), B/16, Ginwalla Bldg,
 Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034;
 December 13
Phiroze Bejonji Cooper (91),
 Sarosh Court, Tilak Rd, Dadar,
 400014; December 15
Dinshaw Tehmuras
Khambata (80), 10/17, Sir
 Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd,
 400034; December 15
Jaloo Dinshaw Katpitia (66),
 Q, Dalal Est, Bombay Central,
 400007; December 16
Khorshed Jamshedji Boga
 (82), 171, Baj Bldg,
 Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004;
 December 17
Dolly Hormusji Homina (76),
 4/7, Shroff Bldg, Gamadia

Clny, Tardeo, 400007;
 December 17
Bahadur Nariman Nava (57),
 104, Arihant Vihar, Anand
 Ngr, Vasai (W), Dist Thane,
 401201; December 18
Goolbai Behramsha Waghchi-
pewala (95), 8, Shanker Krupa
 Bldg, Ropa Lane, Chandan-
 wadi, 400002; December 18
Piloo Maneckjee Ichhaporia
 (63), 14, Khareghat Clny,
 Hughes Rd, 400007;
 December 19
Minocher Jamshedji Mehta
 (92), C/20, Taj Bldg, August
 Kranti Marg, 400026;
 December 20
Behram Khodayar Atai (70), 7,
 Santosh Ngr, Opp Police Stn,
 Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050;
 December 22
Rusi Dorabji Patel (70),
 347/A, United Chmbs, Next
 to Shalimar Cinema, Grant
 Rd, 400007; December 22
Kali Dadiba Wadia (89),
 803/B, Adajania Hse, Dr
 Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014;
 December 22
Shirin Rustomji Winemerchant
 (90), 606/2, Sea Crest, 7
 Bglws, J. P. Rd, Versova,
 Andheri (W), 400061;
 December 22
Zarine Russi Khambatta (78),
 G/5, Spenta, B. G. Kher Marg,
 400006; December 23

Banoo Keki Mistry (78), 694, Dr Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 23
 Daulat Minocher Patel (78), 14-17/B, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; December 23
 Adi Dossabhai Sarkari (86), 7/8, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 23
 Khushroo Pheroze Byramjee (56), Shanazeen, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 24
 Farukh Noshir Rivetna (52), Boyce-Malegaonwalla Bldg, 669, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; December 24
 Ratan Ardeshir Patel (74), 11, Dubhash Bldg, 22, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 25
 Khodaram Sorab Irani (72), Piroja Mans, Alibhai Premji Marg, 400007; December 26
 Sheroo Framroze Jilla (72), 22/10, Dubhash Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; December 27
 Rustom Hormasji Pardiwala (83), 2, Hampton Court, Wode Hse Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 27
 Marazban Kaikushroo Birdy

(78), 60, Hardinge Hse, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; December 28
 Nariman Dhunjishaw Mehta (80), 204/A, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; December 29
 Phiroze Jehangir Mistry (92), 12, Buona Casa, Sir P. Mehta Rd, Fort, 400001; December 29
 Phiroze Dosabhai Variava (82), 3, Baria Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; December 29
 Shirinbai Dhanjibhai Daruwala (88), 148, Abbashi Bldg, Opp Daulat Cinema, B. P. Marg, 400008; December 30
 Banoo Sam Irani (70), 6/B, Mistry Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; December 30
 Rati Kersasp Mody (78), Macawee Mans, 2/A, Gumbow St, Fort, 400001; December 30
 Avan Navroji Motivala (84), Palia Mans, 622, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 30
 Tehemurasp Rustomji Mistry (97), 324/B, Sayeed Bldg, M. S. Rd, Grant Rd, 400007;

December 30
 Aloo Homi Wadia (78), Dastoor Blocks, Naigaum Cross Rd, 400014; December 30
 Rusi Jehangir Mullaifiroze (80), 784/A, M. Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 31
 Cava Kaikushroo Palkhivala (75), 2, Sangam, Pandurangwadi, Goregaon (E), 400063; December 31

CALCUTTA

BORN
 A girl, Naomi, to Feroza and Freddy Mogrelia; October 15

MARRIED

Freny Ardeshir Kaka and Eruch Hirji Ghadiali; December 27

Ila Chatterjee and Rayomand Mucadam; December 28

DIED

Tehmi Darius Antia; October 25
 Jal Phirozshah Kapadia; December 14
 Bhikie Khursetjee Katrak; December 19

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

DIED

Ruby Wadia (8), daughter of Arnaz and Bommie and sister of Monaz; December 11

Victoria

BORN

A girl, Alysha, to Michelle and Anosh Nazir in Melbourne; October 16

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CANADA British Columbia

DIED

Nergish Marzban Irani, mother of Zarina Homi Irani in West Vancouver; August 14

Ontario

BORN

A boy, *Jasper*, to *Tazeen* and *Zarir Cooper* in Mississauga; December 7

A girl, *Rachel*, to *Zenobia* and *Harry Silliphant*, sister to Aiden in Oakville; December 27

DIED

Alamai Medhora in Toronto; November 29

Dosoo Erach Songadwala, husband of *Zenobia* and father of *Cyrus* in Toronto; December 16

CHINA

DIED

Perin Mathur, wife of *Parshottam* and mother of *Ashok* and *Anita* of Calgary, Alberta; October 7

GERMANY

DIED

Sam D. Motasha in Petersfenn; October 6

IRAN

DIED

Ravanshad Laal Jahanian (*Soroushian*) in Tehran; October 7

USA

California

BORN

A boy, *Farhad*, to *Navaz* and *Zubin Taraporewala*; June 27

A boy, *Sam Ross*, to *Persis* and *Sorab Vatcha*, brother to Amy in Mountain View; September 7

MARRIED

Shanaz Khambatta of Sacramento and *Alex Hazel*; September 7

DIED

Mehli Mehta (94), husband of *Tehmina* and father of *Zubin* and *Zarin* in Santa Monica; October 19
Shirin Mehrabanipour; October 21

Colorado

BORN

A boy, *Mithra*, to *Hutoxi* and *Marazban Sarkari* in Denver; November 24

Illinois

BORN

A boy, *Joshua*, to *Melissa* and *Zarvan Karanjia*, brother to *Zarius* in Chicago; November 14

A girl, *Karizma*, to *Yasmin* and *Antish Alleck*, sister to *Darnesh* in Chicago; December 8

MARRIED

Tricia Thomsen and *Neville Kanga*, son of *Shirin* and *Viraf* in Chicago; June 29

DIED

Freny Pervez Mehta (81), mother of *Kayomars* and *Hosi* in Chicago; June 23

Russ Byrom Dhondy (72), husband of *Betty* and father of *Sherry Peter Sabbagh* and *Charmaine Davashish Roy* in Chicago; October 23

Indiana

BORN

A boy, *Surya Darius*, to *Meher* and *Debashish Dasgupta* in Indianapolis; November 28

Maryland

MARRIED

Mojgan Partovi and *Kourosh Kianpour*; May 11

DIED

Mehrangiz Goshtasp (*Firoozgar*) *Vafadari* (84), of Tehran, mother of *Kasra*, *Goshtasb*, *Kaveh* and *Katch*; October 29

Michigan

MARRIED

Binaifer Billimoria, daughter of *Roshan* and *Aspi*, and *Percy Amaria*, son of *Goolu* and *Phiroze* in Sturgis; September 15

New York

BORN

A girl, *Carina*, to *Meherzeen* and *Darius Daruwala*; December 11

Ohio

BORN

A girl, *Farah*, to *Bakhtavar* and *Fred Desai* in Cincinnati;

August 19

A boy, *Darius*, to *Phiroza* and *Kaezad Setna* in Cincinnati; September 26

DIED

Aban Parvez Khambatta (58), in Cleveland; October 14

Pennsylvania

BORN

A girl, *Zenia*, to *Nivedita* and *Adil Masani*, sister to *Rohan*; June 21

Texas

BORN

A boy, *Karl*, to *Shernaz* and *Hormazd Sanjana* in Midland; July 8

A girl, *Zara*, to *Arzin* and *Sohrab Italia* in Houston; October 2

MARRIED

Lyla Bharucha, daughter of *Vera* and *Adil*, and *Danny Aga*, son of *Ruby* and *Rohinton*, in Houston; July 13
Soha Chaudhry, daughter of *Tahera* and *Anwar* of Karachi, and *Narius Irani*, son of *Dinaz* and *Noshir* of Karachi, in Houston; July 20
Nazneen Challa and *Meheli Warden* of Vancouver in Houston; November 29
Minaz Bhamgara and *Nozer Dungor*; December 26

Virginia

MARRIED

Arezo Khorsandi and *Daryoush Sabet-Peyman*; June 15

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver



Delnaz Bhatporia, daughter of *Vabiz* and *Dinyar*, and *Raymond Kavina*, son of *Nargish* and *Farokh* in Ahmedabad on November 21, 2002

Sharing Memories

A wedding, a navjote, a birth or an anniversary in the family. All happy memorable occasions. Or even the death of a loved one. Why not share the joys and sorrows with the readers of *Parsiana*? For a nominal charge, *Parsiana* will publish in our Milestones column photographs of the happy event or even of a deceased individual as on a death anniversary along with a relevant caption. The event should have occurred in the preceding 12 months.

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cated for the photograph will be approximately 2" x 3". For Rs 100 extra we would display the photograph for a year on our soon to be launched website *parsiana.com*. Cheques should favor *Parsiana* (please add Rs 20 for up-country bank charges). If you wish to charge the amount to your credit card please mention the card issuer (Visa, Master card, American Express, etc), the card number and the date of expiry of the card. Send the mail to *Parsiana* (Milestones), K. K. (Navsari) Chambers, Ground fl, 39B A. K. Nayak Road, Fort, Bombay 400001. Fax: 22075577, e-mail: *parsiana@vsnl.com*

The musicians Mehta made



Arnavaz S. Mama

In November 2001, 75 devoted alumni of the American Youth Symphony (AYS) donated their time for a special tribute recording of Richard Strauss' *Transfiguration* under the baton of their ailing master Mehli Mehta as a loving farewell tribute. The around 110-member orchestra composed of talented instrumentalists in the 18-25 age group studying with renowned teachers across the US had been founded by Mehta in the mid 1960s. He had presided over the AYS' increasing maturity over 33 seasons until he had retired as its conductor and music director in 1998 at the age of 89. This recording of the *Transfiguration* was played again at Mehta's funeral service, notes his nephew Shahrokh Mehta in a eulogy in the *FEZANA Journal* (Winter 2002). Mehli died of heart failure in Los Angeles on October 19, 2002 at the age of 94.

At the condolence meeting organized by the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation (MMMMF) in Bombay its trustee Mehroo

Jeejeebhoy read Mehta's own explanation of the Strauss opus: "It is 25 minutes long, out of which the first 15 minutes are given to the violent struggle between the sick old man and death — we have played the whole poem many times — but the last 10 minutes is his divine inspiration devoted to the soul leaving the body at the sound of an ominous gong and starting on its last journey, from a dark, confused, lost state to a very gradual seven-note measured theme, by which the Angel of Death which now has become the Angel of Mercy, guides the soul to its spiritual awakening, gently and lovingly to its final resting place, through various stages of Paradise, including the brilliant climax of bowing before Almighty God, to receive His final blessing for the rest of the journey to eternal rest, peace and love — Nirvana, helped by angelic harps, till it disappears and blends with the silence of infinity. And all this, he wrote when he was 25 years old. But, now comes the bottom line! Just before he died at 85 years in 1949, he composed his most

Mehta's farewell concert with the American Youth Symphony

(Photos: Thomas Neerken)

famous *Four Last Songs* and in the last line, of this last song, 'We are so tired from our wanderings — Is this perhaps death?' And he orchestrates this with the same seven-note theme from his *Transfiguration* of 60 years ago, played by solo horn and solo violin — What a genius!"

One who conducted every single item on the program from memory, Mehli Mehta had once remarked that one can do so much more with the music when one knows the music intimately, as noted Adil Mehta, music director and conductor of the California Chamber Ensemble, in the *FEZANA Journal*. "Being truthful to the composer's intentions was the most important thing. (Mehta) knew precisely how he wanted a piece to sound and would not be content until he got that sound," he adds.

Director of the orchestra department of the University of California at Los

Angeles (UCLA) and conductor of the UCLA Symphony and Chamber Orchestra since 1964, until his retirement in 1976 as conductor emeritus, Mehta donated his 50+ years of musical scores with handwritten notes and markings to the UCLA: "a treasure of symphonic repertoire, a legacy for generations of future musicians to study and play," as notes S. Mehta.



With renowned cellist Mstislav Rostropovich

A strict disciplinarian, Mehta was uncompromising when it came to music. "No crossing legs! In my orchestra nobody crosses their legs. And no talking!..." If a player missed a rehearsal the poor players already there would get a lecture. As (renowned filmstar) Danny Kaye once jokingly remarked, the definition of terror was to see Mehta rehearse. A. Mehta recounts his personal experience. People who really knew him realized he was a compassionate man, with a soft side. He would rehire the players he had fired earlier, usually for missing rehearsals. Many of his players would come up to him after rehearsals and have their pictures taken with him, noted A. Mehta.

Mehta is often said to have mentioned that he had no time for second-rate music. That was his initial apprehension when the MMMF was launched. "He was particularly reluctant to have his name associated with music that could be amateurish or unprofessional," said Jeejeebhoy. But after he heard tape recordings of the Foundation's first Sangat Festival — since then, an annual event featuring young musicians of Indian origin or association who are now professionals working abroad — he had a complete change of heart, providing the Foundation team with advice, suggestions and constructive criticism in a lively and continuous correspondence.

Mehta had founded the Bombay Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in 1935 and functioned as its concertmaster for a decade before becoming its conductor. In 1940 he founded the Bombay String Quartet. He would arrange the music stands and chairs with the aid of his sons Zubin and Zarin. Rehearsals were an uphill task with Mehta getting up very early in the morning to wake the Christian musicians in their *koors* (hostels), waiting in taxi or car while they dressed

so that he could shepherd them for morning rehearsals. Similarly he would get the brass and woodwind players from the army and navy barracks. He paid for special suits so that the sextet that played at the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Yacht Club and the Byculla Club could be identically attired, remembered a family source. He invited outstanding names like Yehudi Menuhin and Yasha Heifetz to play with the BSO.

Nothing worked. He found Bombay audiences more interested in celebrity appearances than in the classical concert season. Sometimes he broke even, more often he sustained a loss. One gain from the unrequited labor in Bombay was the professional flowering of Mehta's famous son Zubin who is said to have imbibed his love for music as he listened to the musicians rehearsing in the family living room. As the *Los Angeles Times* (October 20, 2002) noted, "Zubin Mehta said that his father had been his first teacher, that he had grown up listening to his father's symphony and quartet rehearsals and that, until he was 18 and went to Vienna to study, 'everything I knew about music was from my father.'"

In 1955, this youngest of Nawrowji and Piroja Mehta's five sons, who had trained for four years under celebrated violin tutor Ivan Galamian in New York, migrated West. Appointed concertmaster of the Halle Orchestra in Manchester, England, under the baton of the great maestro Sir John Barbirolli, Mehli Mehta participated with it in the Edinburgh Festival for five consecutive years. The next five years saw him touring the US with the Curtis Quartet of Philadelphia. Thereafter, Los Angeles became his hometown where he lived with his wife Tehmina, his former accompanist, who orchestrated the careers of husband and sons for 67 years.

Apart from music, the family was Mehli Mehta's prime concern. He enjoyed the company of his four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. "Nine members of the immediate Mehta family are accomplished professionals in the world of classical music and theater. Mehli's strong pioneering presence has undoubtedly been a guiding spirit," wrote Dr Parastu Dubash, Mehta's grandniece and former presi-

dent of ZAGBA (Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area) in *FEZANA Journal* (Summer 1999).

"Passion and fire is of little use unless there is an outlet to transform that energy within to move, touch and inspire those around you. There are no greater attributes a leader can possess," wrote Farobag Cooper, conductor and music director of the Chicago Philharmonia. Dubash quoted the chairperson of AYS who had thanked Mehli Mehta for his contribution to the Symphony with the words, "Mehli is just not making music but making musicians of tomorrow."

Mehta is survived by his wife Tehmina, and his sons Zubin and Zarin.

The doctor's dignity

Died: Dr Burjor Nusserwanji Colabawalla, 80, founder member and past president of the Urological Society of India (USI), and chairman of The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, on September 23, 2002 following a long illness.

At a time when general surgeons were loath to yield the field to a specialist, Colabawalla stood by his resolve to restrict his practice to urology, the branch of medicine in which he had acquired considerable skill and expertise during his years of training in England, recalled eminent neurologist Dr Noshir Wadia. "He thus became the first dedicated specialist in this field in Bombay and perhaps the second or third to do so in India," admired Wadia, adding, "It was by no means easy in the early years for (Colabawalla) and his wife Mehroo, with two growing children, but he stood firm in his dedication and ethics and refused to promote his practice by any other means than his competence and reputation."



Colabawalla: scrupulous honesty

Appointed as a specialist urologist to the St George's Hospital and the Grant Medical College on his return from the UK, he established the first exclusive department of urology in Maharashtra. As the specialty grew he strove to found the USI. The next challenge before him was to establish a urology department at the newly built Jaslok Hospital and to initiate a renal transplantation program. The financial implications of post-surgery medication for his needy and deserving patients prompted him to initiate the

National Kidney Foundation (India) where he served as founder secretary. To guard against the unethical sale of kidneys he convinced the government to enact the Human Organ Transplant Act, many of its clauses being written by him, revealed Wadia.

An expert advisor to the Government of India's Union Public Service Commission, Colabawalla was reportedly the first Indian to be elected as a full member to the British Association of Urological Surgeons and the Urological Society of Australasia. Visiting professor at the Postgraduate Institute, Chandigarh, S.M.S. Medical College and Hospital, Jaipur and the Kasturba College and Hospital, Manipal, the urologist had formulated teaching programs for various universities and was appointed convener, genitourinary section, of the National Board of Examinations, mentions his curriculum vitae. For nine years he was member of the expert advisory group on urology at the Indian Council of Medical Research and his valued experience had found expression in innumerable medical journals and at different conferences.

"Extremely straightforward, extremely goodhearted but a very misunderstood man," regrets Motee Vakeel who, as secretary for 45 years at the Warden Road Polyclinic where Colabawalla had his private practice, got to know many facets of the man. Even though certain members of the medical fraternity could not sympathize with his scrupulous honesty, his patients felt "very secure under his care," she added.

"His strength was in his integrity, perseverance and single-minded doggedness in pursuing objectives which he considered worthwhile promoting. His weakness was that he could not tolerate fools and humbugs gladly and his inability to deal with such people in a manner which served everyone's best interests very regrettably led him into conflict, thwarting his efforts and leaving him bitter at times," observed Wadia.

Under the influence of the late Minoo Masani, Colabawalla became an active member of The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity and served as its chairman until his dying day. At a condolence meeting convened by the Society on October 3, 2002, the new chairman Prof Sadanand Varde, former minister for education in the government of Maharashtra, recalled the Priya Tendulkar talk show on television where the doctor "in a masterly manner had expostulated the idea of the right to die with dignity." Considering his

approach to death as "very philosophic," Varde referred to Colabawalla's views on the subject, expressed in his booklet *Reflections on Freedom to Choose, Dying with Dignity, Voluntary Euthanasia*.

Therein Colabawalla writes that seeing the suffering of his mother who had a chronic kidney disease with "no hope left...I wondered if there was no humane way of ending her misery...Later during the course of my practice...the scenario repeated itself time and again. I began to despair at my utter helplessness. I began to wonder more deeply about moral and ethical means for a way out of this dilemma both for the patient and myself." The objectives of the Society found a firm supporter in Colabawalla.

On this subject Colabawalla was perhaps "even more passionate than Masani," acknowledged S. V. Raju, editor of *Freedom First*, who had the privilege of working with both these individuals. Colabawalla has been "needlessly painted as being cold and distant," stated Raju clarifying that "he was unpredictable, a maverick who works best alone...An atheist with eclectic tastes... He wanted no religious rites following his cremation, not even a funeral oration." Political issues interested him, not economic ones, and he was concerned about the decline in morality and character of the new breed of politicians, conveyed Raju.

For several years the doctor was active with the Rotary movement and rose to be the president of the Rotary Club of Bombay Main. He had deep knowledge of western classical music, pursued photography and was well read, preferring works of philosophy and biography to fiction, although he enjoyed the humor of P. G. Wodehouse. A connoisseur of good food and wine, his pipe was his constant companion. "We must understand that living is more important than being alive," he stressed.

Having spent six years in England, he attended postgraduate courses at the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal Hammersmith Hospital and worked as a resident in British hospitals before passing the Fellowship examination of the Royal College of Surgeons of London in 1954. After completing specialized training in urology he finally decided to return to India where he had his roots rather than stay on in England where a consultant's post was assured to him. Colabawalla's early education was at Karachi's St Patrick's High School after which he came to Bombay to graduate in science from St Xavier's College and complete his MBBS

from the Grant Medical College, states his curriculum vitae.

Over the years he had served as senior urologist at the Jaslok and the Convent Jain Clinic and Group of Hospitals and was consultant urologist at the Children's Orthopaedic Hospital, Masina Hospital and the medical divisions of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Honored with the USI's urology gold medal, he had helped found the *Indian Journal of Urology* and was additionally on the editorial board of the *British Journal of Urology*.

As the senior urologist had candidly stated in his personal epilog in the booklet, "I love life and approach its ups and downs with rationality—sometimes with some skepticism, but never with pessimism. I take satisfaction in the successes I have had in some of the endeavors in my life. I cherish the affection of my family. I have derived joy from seeing my children and grandchildren grow up to their potential. I enjoy the company of true and good friends. I enjoy the aesthetic pleasures of music, arts and literature. I am therefore not going to give up these pleasures at the mere drop of a hat. But as I grow older I am increasingly conscious of my own oncoming mortality. I am neither afraid of nor obsessed by the event of death. But I am very apprehensive of the process of dying. If the end comes swiftly and quickly so much the better for myself and my family. But if I perceive that the end is likely to be at the expense of my dignity, with physical, mental or moral degradation, attached as a 'human corpse' to man-made devices with loss of my personhood—then I am very clear that I would like my existence terminated because I do not wish merely to exist but to live."

The dedicated doctor is survived by his daughter Khorshed Ruiynton Dinshaw and son Kershaw.

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Makujina: pastor perfect

Died: Ervad Jehanbux (Jimmy) Ardesir Makujina, 65, senior priest of the Zoroastrian community of Northern California and the Bay Area, of a heart attack on June 12, 2002.

"At his funeral we were informed that in true Zarathushti spirit, it was Jimmy's wish that his mortal remains be donated for research, so some unknown person or persons may see with his cornea, hear with his ear bone and save a limb or limbs with Jimmy's skin graft," writes California resident Rusi Sorabji

Jimmy's wish that his mortal remains be donated for research, so some unknown person or persons may see with his cornea, hear with his ear bone and save a limb or limbs with Jimmy's skin graft," writes California resident Rusi Sorabji in an e-mail to *Parsiana*.

"Once in a long, long while, a person touches our lives or the community with words or deeds so special that our lives are changed forever. These are people who expand our vision and inspire us to higher levels of community service," continues Sorabji, adding, "Over five hundred multi-ethnic families from the Bay Area alone were touched by him."

Firdosh Mehta, president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) described the late Makujina as "an individual who has served his community all his life in the capacity of a religious leader and a compassionate human being. Zarathushtis around the world have lost a star in their galaxy." In his tribute, Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli, president of the North American Mobeds Council, spoke of Makujina's services "rendered to humanity in general and to the Zarathushti community in particular" resonating across North America.

The Zoroastrian Assembly's founding president Dr Ali Jafarey encapsulated the late mobed's leading attribute: "Makujina was humble, very humble," adding, "His thirst for religious knowledge and his experience as an active priest made him a living encyclopedia of Parsi Zoroastrianism, of culture, customs, ceremonies, rituals and beliefs of all existing orders... He himself had the clear open mind of a good Mazdayasni Zarathushti."

The Assembly's tribute to him — a memorial service — began with Makujina's gentle voice chanting the *Avesta* as the flames blazed in the afargan. It was the replay of one of two CDs of Zarathushti prayers Makujina had cut to raise funds for his beloved Zoroastrian Association of Northern California (ZANC) — the association he had co-founded with his business partner Daraius Captain in the early 1980s — and its darbe mehr. Sorabji estimates the current ZANC membership at over 600.



Makujina: that others may live

It is also significant that Makujina's prayer CDs lie entombed in the time capsule at Houston's Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center at the other end of the North American continent. Buried with due fanfare in December 2000 as part of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress celebrations, the time capsule is supposed to be exhumed in 2050.

Jimmy was one of three sons and a daughter born to Ervad Ardeshtir and Tehmina Makujina. Schooled at the Dadar Athornan Madressa, ordained at the Iranshah, Makujina graduated in commerce from Sydenham College and worked as marketing representative for Cheeseborough Ponds (India) in Nagpur. "His work involved traveling. Sodid mine. Years later, here in San Jose, when we talked about our escapades and gastronomic experiences in India, he would fade into nostalgia recalling the exotic, deliciously mouth-watering, sometimes hot, sometimes artery-jamming foods from the different cities in India and at the railway dining rooms of old. These were rich Parsi, Punjabi, Hyderabad and Moghlai foods we dare not ever feast on anymore, as both of us were members of the Mended Heart Society. We jokingly called these 'foods to die for,'" writes Sorabji.

Married to his college sweetheart Amy (née Suteir), the Makujinas immigrated to the US in 1978, aided by Jimmy's sister Abaan Shumays who had reached earlier. There they ran into another ex Nagporian, and Captain and he set up a small computer venture together and laid the seeds of ZANC which Makujina served as secretary and as president (with Amy as secretary). He never stopped working for its welfare, enlightening the community on religious matters, donating the gifts he received to the Dar-e-Meher or ZANC despite his fragile health and limited resources. "At the Navroz function in March 2002 Jimmy was honored with a shawl by ZANC in recognition of his long and dedicated service," notes Amy.

Sorabji and Jafarey attest to the couple's warm hospitality. Unknown to them and the rest of his friends and admirers, Makujina's heart condition deteriorated even as he continued his willing performance of religious services "whenever and wherever requested," present as friend, counsellor and beacon of hope in difficult situa-

tions. A myriad individuals seemed to endorse Bagli's tribute: "Nothing we can do is enough for a soul that gave so much in its earthly form of Ervad Makujina."

Makujina is survived by his wife Amy and sister Abaan Ahmad Shumays.

A. S. M.

'WARRIORS OF THE COMMUNITY' *continued from page 23*

whose messages of goodwill were conveyed to the audience at the launch.

Giving his interpretation of the key concepts that are accommodated in the name of the Trust, Karanjia explained tradition as "customs and practices based on the religion and passed on from generation to generation." The Zarathushtian religion offers "positive, life enhancing teachings which keep us away from harm and deception," conveyed Karanjia. "In our fight for the survival of our community, we need grassroots level support, institutional support," observed Karanjia ending with an apt verse: "Take care of your religion today/And it will take care of your tomorrow/Give it all of your love today/And it will take away your sorrow."

ADDING SPICE TO LIFE *continued from page 34*

powerful that there is no need for Zoroastrians to worship Sai Baba or go to churches and durgas." They are absolutely against intercaste marriages, which is "killing the community," as also disposing of the body by electric crematorium. Dinshaw fumes: "When I go to Doongerwadi, I do not get any stench. All Parsis who are not in their right senses and who wish to adopt any other method of disposal of body should... see the condition of bodies which are buried. They will surely adhere to dakhme-nashini." The devoted couple tends for 24 hours the *atash* (fire) burning at their residence in Rustom Baug. Not surprisingly their business ventures were also given Zoroastrian names — Ahura and Aatash.

Parsis are well known for their philanthropies. But very few dare to dream of being philanthropists at a time when they barely see a glimpse of success in life. A trustee of the Sodawaterwala Agiary, Dinshaw is one such person who has decided "to donate 90 percent of my profits to agiaries, atash behrams, dadgahs and other religious causes when I do better."



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