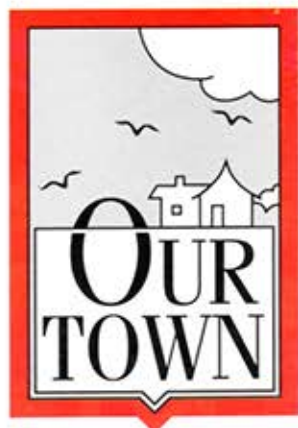


چنان بد که یک وز بی انجمن	به نخل که رفت با چنگ زن	به پیش اندر آرمش آهوی خست	جان مرو خندان به آزاد گشت
که ای ماه چون مکن را به زده	بر آرم بهشت اندر آرم کرده	که ام آهوی آگنده و خواهی بهیر	که ماه و جان است بهشتی



بدو گفت آزاد و کای شیر مرد	چو خواهی که خواست گیتی فرو	کای را به زده که به جسم ام کو	به آهوی بخویش مردان نبرد
توان ماه را زده گردان بهیر	به سپید سواد های آن ز تو نیز	به تیر و سپیکان سر بر گرفت	شود ماه و از تیر تو نبرد بهیر
به پیکان سر و پای و گوشش نه	بر و سپیان مرد و نخل کیم	سر و گوشش پایش به پیکان خست	بر آگشت از دشت آرام شود
هم آگند چو آهوش اندر گزید	از این سان که دیدی هزار فکرم	کینک بدو گفت ای سپیدی	کینک بدو ماند اندر گشت
همان در سر و کاه و ماه و دگر			بدان آهوی آزاد و را دل خست
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Parsiana

March 2002
Volume 24 Number 8

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Parsiana is edited and published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, A-191, Road No 16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana (W), 400604. All rights reserved. Processing Comart Lithographers. Editorial enquiries: 2078183. Advertising: 2078104, 2072915. Subscription: 2665661, 2662709. General: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541, 2075572. Press: 5804162. E-mail: parvo@glasbm01.vsnl.net.in parsiana@yahoo.com parsiana@vsnl.net For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. ISSN: 0971-3786.

Annual inland subscription for one year (12 issues) Rs 400; for two years (24 issues) Rs 750; for three years (36 issues) Rs 1,100. Foreign subscription rates: Seamail for one year Rs 675/ US \$ 15/UK £ 10/Euro 17; for two years Rs 1,250/ US \$ 28/UK £ 19/Euro 32; for three years Rs 1,900/US \$ 41/UK £ 29/Euro 48 (please allow six months or more for seamail delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 950/ US \$ 21/UK £ 14/Euro 24; for two years Rs 1,800/ US \$ 40/UK £ 27/Euro 45; for three years Rs 2,700/US \$ 60/UK £ 40/Euro 68. For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3; for Euro cheques add Euro 5. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana.

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In Memoriam
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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.

Be wary of 'worshippers'

It is with great disdain that we have learnt about the untoward incident at the Karani Agiary in Cusrow Baug on Sunday, February 17, 2002 (*mah* Meher, *roz* Hormazd).

We are informed that two gentlemen of dubious ancestry entered the Agiary on the pretext of listening to a religious discourse by a Parsi lady. It was only when she announced at the end of her lecture that those present became aware that the gentlemen in question were from Tajikistan professing the Zoroastrian (!) religion.

The lady under discussion is conducting a so-called 'Zoroastrian College' and issuing degrees not recognized by any university in Bombay or India.

We write this to inform the respected trustees and panthakies of all atash behrams and agiaries to be wary about such persons so that such adverse and

unfortunate incidents do not occur in future.

All our religious institutions in India and Pakistan such as atash behrams, agiaries, dakhmas and bunglis, consecrated places of worship are specifically intended for the use of Parsi Zoroastrians only. They are not open to anyone merely professing the Zarathushti faith.

Dastur (Dr) KAIKHUSROO M. JAMASPASA

High Priest, Anjuman Atash Behram

Dastur (Dr) FIROZE M. KOTWAL

High Priest

Meher Master-Moos, president of the Zoroastrian College, replies

It is indeed astonishing that the letter writer duo rushes into Press on mere hearsay without bothering to ascertain the correct facts. On what basis does this duo arrogate authority to itself to tell people to violate the Constitution of India?

The two Dasturs are misinformed as to what occurred on February 17, 2002 at Karani Agiary, Cusrow Baug. In fact I was to deliver a discourse after the Hormazd *roz*, Meher *mah* jashan at the Agiary. These lectures I have been giving for over 15 years, when the late respected panthaky Nadirsha Aibara and I used to take turns every month on Hormazd and Behram *roz* since these lectures were first started. On February 15, 2002 Sohrab Dehmobed of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman sent a gentleman named Ardeschiri to the Mazdayasnie Monasterie office informing us that he is from the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman and had come from Iran to Bombay to study the Zoroastrian religion. He came to the Karani Agiary hall on February 17 to listen to my lecture. I was praying in the kebala and I was informed after I came out of the kebala that the panthaky had asked him to go out of the Agiary hall. My lecture began immediately. He waited outside the Agiary door till my lecture was over to meet me.

As regards the second gentleman Prof Rustom Fuzaylov, head of the English Department of the Technological University of Tajikistan in Khujand, a highly respected University academic, he is a Zoroastrian gentleman of old original Iranian stock, whose navjote was performed by the Iranian Mobed

Jamshedi Kamran, after Tajikistan gained independence from ex-USSR. He is in India for the purpose of writing the entire *Avesta* in Cyrillic Tajik script, to make it easier for the persons of old Zoroastrian stock in Old Iran, now named as the modern republics of Tajikistan, etc. to read our *Avesta* prayer book in their script presently in use. This has been done from time to time; just as Tehmuras Sethna of Karachi wrote the *Avesta* prayers in Roman script to make it easier for Zoroastrian children living in Pakistan, UK, USA, Canada, even India, and just as Ervad Kavasji Kanga during his time wrote the *Avesta* prayers in Gujarati script; because Zoroastrians in India and other countries had forgotten how to read *Avesta* prayers in the original script.

In fact, Fuzaylov was invited to share the lecture platform with me at the Karani Agiary as I was speaking on the subject of Navroz, and the Navroz Scrolls discovered in the "Kuh-e-Mogh" mountain (mountain of the Maghavs) in Tajikistan. Many highly educated persons were attending my lecture including persons from the legal profession, and they complimented both of us after the lecture.

The two Dasturs say that the Zoroastrian College (ZC) is "issuing degrees not recognized by any University in Bombay or India." In fact the correct position is that ZC has affiliation/collaboration with eight international universities including inter alia, the World University (Arizona, USA), the Open International University for Complementary Medicine (Sri Lanka), the United Nations (UN) Peace University, the Tajikistan Technological University. The degrees issued through ZC are recognized in every country of the world which is a member of the UN General Assembly and signatory to the UN Peace University resolution. The Government of India is a signatory to the resolution, as also Pakistan, Sri Lanka, UK, Canada, USA, etc and the degrees by research thesis issued through ZC are recognized in these and all other signatory countries.

It is astonishing that the duo states that it writes to inform trustees and panthakies of all atash behrams and agiaries "to be wary about such persons." Precisely what do they mean?

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between the good
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*that makes the
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Under the Constitution of India, every Zoroastrian has a right to enter and pray in places of worship meant for Zoroastrians in India. How can anyone stop any Zoroastrian from entering and praying in any agiary or atash behram? It would be a violation of constitutional rights. Nobody in India has any authority to violate the Constitution, least of all trustees and panthakies of agiaries and atash behrams.

The last para of their letter is even more astonishing. As indicated in the book *Zoroastrians Worldwide at the Millennium* released at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in December 2000, there are Canadian Zoroastrians, British Zoroastrians, and Zoroastrians in Europe, USA, Iranian Zoroastrians, Australian Zoroastrians, Pakistani Zoroastrians, Indian Zoroastrians, etc. Iranian Zoroastrians include those living in the present political boundaries of Iran and also those living in old Iran provinces of the Sasanian empire such as Khorrasan, Bactria, Soghdiana, the Caucasian Mountains, etc which historically came under the suzerainty of Communist USSR for a period of about 80 years in the 20th century and are now independent republics such as Tajikistan; as also those

Iranian Zoroastrians living outside Iran, in UK, USA, Canada, Europe, Australia, etc. How absurd of the two Dasturs to think, let alone write in the public Press, that religious institutions in India and Pakistan such as atash behrams, agiaries, dakhmas, bunglis and consecrated places of worship are "intended for the use of Parsi Zoroastrians only." Do they seriously mean to say that when Zoroastrians from USA, UK, Canada, Iran or anywhere else come to India, they are to be prevented from using the Zoroastrian places of worship? This is nonsensical.

The term dastur is derived from "dastagir = to lead by the hand." These two Dasturs appear to have acted hastily without bothering to ascertain the correct facts and in fact their letter is both misleading and defamatory. They should take greater care in future; otherwise they will lose the respect of the orthodox behdin community.

Prof Rustom Fuzaylov replies

Spitama Zarathushtra first taught the Paegam of Ahura Mazda to our ancestors in the court of Kai Vishtasp in my country. For thousands of years, my people have preserved and practiced these teachings. Till today in the re-

mote villages in high mountainous regions the local dialect spoken by the people is very close to Avesta. In the 20th century my people came under the Communist regime during which time all religions, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism were prohibited; and places of worship closed down and converted into bazaars and offices.

Since 1991 when my country was liberated from ex-USSR, in our republics we are free to worship and revive the faith of our forefathers.

I am the head of the English language department at the Tajikistan Technological University in Khujand, an ancient city over 5,000 years old. Tajikistan is the modern name for the geographical area previously known as Khorrasan, Soghdiana, Bactria, and other provinces of the Iranian Empire from the Kyanian dynasty. Many millions of Tajik people are of ancient Kyani *tokhum* (lineage). So our government is reviving the *Avesta*. Even the new hotel built by the government in Dushanbe is named "Avesta."

In 1992, our Tajik government held the first World Avesta Conference to celebrate our first republic anniversary and invited many scholars from other

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countries, including Zoroastrian College delegates. In 1994, our Tajik government held a UNESCO supported conference to mark the 1,000th anniversary of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. Zoroastrian mobeds from India knowing Persian were invited to Tajikistan to perform the navjotes of our people, but due to the then Tajik war they could not come. In 1996, our Tajik government held the second World Avesta Conference. In 1999, our Tajik government held a Conference for Somonid. Mobed Jamshedi Kamran, a Persian-speaking Iranian mobed, was invited and he performed the navjotes of Tajiks in Dushanbe. In 2001, on our 10th republic anniversary our Tajik government held the third World Avesta Conference when the entire *Avesta* translation in Persian, written in Cyrillic Tajik script, was released. Kamran was again invited and he performed the navjotes of persons, including myself, who were trained and ready.

I have come to India for the purpose of writing out all the *Avesta* prayers to publish a standard textbook of *Avesta* prayers in Tajik Cyrillic script; so that my people can read the *Avesta* prayers more easily. This would help more per-

sons to be trained and ready for navjotes. We lost this knowledge of performing ceremonies during the Communist period in my country. Now we have to revive it. So I have come here for this purpose, and to learn from the respected Zoroastrian priests in India, as the ceremonies are still performed here. I have visited and prayed in many agiaries and atash behrams in India since coming here, and stayed in Zoroastrian dharamshalas in several places in India. I am thankful to all the educated, kind, good and hospitable Zoroastrians who have helped me throughout India, in Delhi, Bombay, Hyderabad, Sanjan and elsewhere, in my endeavor to revive our faith in my country.

I am really surprised how these two 'Dasturs' can write such a letter in the public Press, which is all full of wrong statements about me when they have never met me. In my country to be 'disdainful' is a very shocking attitude of mind for any person who is educated. I expect better cooperation from the Zoroastrian priests in India.

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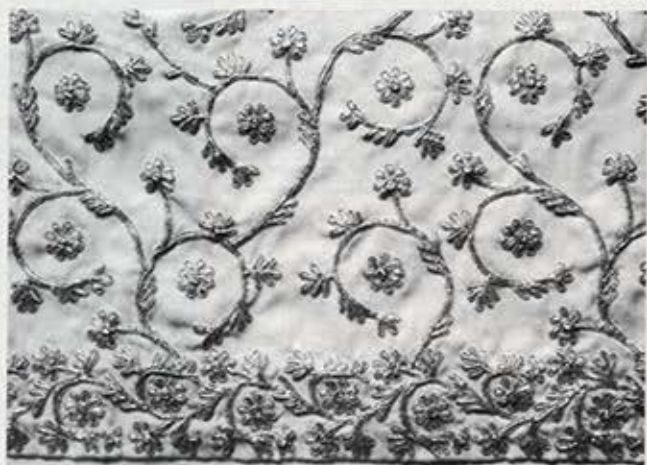
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Secretary, Zoroastrian Association of Quebec

"Disawalla's dismissal"

"Disawalla's dismissal" (*Parsiana*, November 2001) makes startling reading and bears testimony to the high-handed and arbitrary behavior of the trustees of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman (BPZA). It is unequivocally a case of discrimination and victimization on the alleged ground that he does not believe in dakhmenashini as provided in article 4.1 of the Rules and Regulations of BPZA. This is conspicuous by the trustees remaining silent spectators as regards other Parsis not believing in the said system. Dr M. D. Disawalla is a long-standing resident of Bangalore, having held high positions in the medical field, and commands great respect in Bangalore. Being singled out for dismissal attaches a

stigma to his untarnished reputation as a respected elder of the community.

The ground given by the trustees is merely a subterfuge. The real ground is that Disawalla does not toe the line of the trustees, and has the courage and pragmatism to fearlessly criticize not only them for their acts of omission and commission but also the clergy for uncalled for interference in BPZA's affairs.

Though Disawalla is a strong believer in the burial or cremation system, he has never influenced any member of the community against the dakhmenashini system, but has on the contrary assisted those who believed in that system. In view thereof enlightened members of the community will not be misguided by such vindictive treatment meted out to him by the trustees.

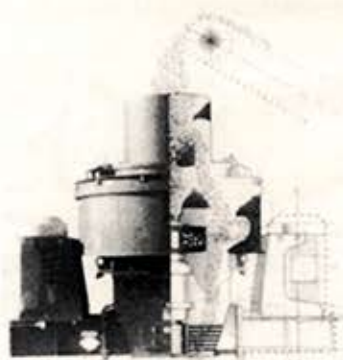
On examination of the views of eminent scholars [including Dastur (Dr) Maneckji Dhalla], the Mysore High Court held that the dakhma and aramgah can co-exist and that any Parsi is free to select the system of burial, even where the dakhma is in existence. In view thereof article 7.4 providing for dismissal of a member not believing in dakhmenashini, being repugnant to the

judicial principle laid down by the High Court as above, is liable to be challenged as being null and void and ineffective in law. (Similar principles apply to article 4.1 and clause 14 of the trust deed regarding BPZA.) In this connection Prof A. R. Wadia, a renowned scholar of the University of Bangalore, succinctly observes in his book on the above case: "We have established the principle that dakhma is not a matter of religion." A fortiori dakhmenashini is also not a matter purely relating to religion, but is a matter governed by the relevant provisions of the trust deed, clause 14 in the present case.

In view of the above when the relevant trust deed governs the field, the view expressed by the high priests and religious fundamentalists against burial and cremation is not justified and should not be given undue weight and importance in the matter.

Much as Disawalla or some other persons might like to see a battle in court revived, I would not. I am afraid that would split the community in India which is already greatly diminished. We must wait for a meaningful consensus for the purpose. It will also come in time. Being an octogenarian, it will not

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be in my lifetime, but hopefully it will be in the lifetime of some of the readers of this letter. In the meantime wiser counsel demands that parties concerned discuss objectively the whole matter and come to a negotiated settlement in the larger interests of the community.

RUSTOM GAE
New Delhi

Dismiss (terminate!) a life member? Never heard of nor imagined. A life member, by definition, means a member for life and/or the life of the organization. Since Disawalla is alive and well, the said organization, BPZA has to be liquidated before its life members may have their designation terminated.

To the trustees and officers of the BPZA we say: grow up, wake up, and live up to your assumed stature and corresponding responsibilities. Your petty squabbles amount to no more than "I said, you said, he said, she said." Take counsel from Zarathushtra's words recorded in *Yasna* 30.2 instead of invoking antiquated statutes dusted off the bookshelves. Be introspective rather than egoistic: it's our deeds that we ultimately take with us — not our egos.

Who loses? Surely not Disawalla,

but the Zoroastrian community of Bangalore for not acknowledging and incorporating the expertise and wisdom of this man. May good judgment prevail and the debacles cease.

Dr MEHROO M. PATEL
Westchester, Illinois, USA

We were deeply grieved to learn of the unilateral, autocratic and disgraceful act, perpetrated by the clergy/BPZA, to castigate and expel from its membership a well respected gentleman, a distinguished senior citizen and a true and genuine Zoroastrian — Disawalla.

During our long stay in Bangalore, we had found members of our community extremely friendly, helpful, cooperative and have fond memories of the good times we had there. The members of our community are well educated, endowed with sufficient knowledge, common sense, are thoroughly enlightened and fully capable of taking care of themselves. They do not require diktats from the clergy/BPZA. The clergy/BPZA seems to have assumed the role of schoolmasters to prepare the students to be fit enough to cross the Chinvat bridge. Do as you are told, otherwise how will you cross the bridge

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and go to heaven? Please God forgive them for they know not what they are doing!

The clergy/BPZA seem to have found an excuse — a rather untenable one — to castigate and expel Disawalla from the membership of the BPZA, just because his ideas were not in tune with those of the BPZA in regard to dakhmenashini. Due to certain unfortunate incidents which had taken place in 1982, I had conveyed to the clergy my intention to be cremated. Many others who are members of the BPZA as well as the Gathic Anjuman held the same view. The question arises, why were they not expelled then?

Disawalla, being a qualified and experienced medical practitioner, is well versed with all the aspects of hygiene and environment and therefore competent to talk on dakhmenashini. Perhaps he is the only one amongst all the Zoroastrians of Bangalore who can speak on the topic with authority and from the scientific point of view. Instead of heeding his advice, the clergy/BPZA have thought it fit to expel him from the membership of BPZA. Is this a justifiable act?

The body of a dead person is nothing

but flesh and bones. It does not matter how it is destroyed. But it can be done with dignity to the satisfaction of the people who have lost their dear ones. For how long are you going to remain adamant on the old system? Adopt cremation, the simplest and the most appropriate method.

The two recent incidents in Bangalore, namely the expulsion of Disawalla and the insult and humiliation meted out to Rustom Gae of Delhi, have perturbed us deeply. These issues are of a very serious nature, requiring prompt action in order to maintain peace and unity within the community. Unknowingly the clergy/BPZA are riding a high horse, disregarding normal behavior of decency and decorum, which clergy, trustees, anjuman/institutions are expected to observe. Let us not tarnish the good name and goodwill built up by our ancestors whose hard work, toil and sincerity have paid us great dividends.

It is only great and noble souls who have the courage to shed their ego and accept their mistakes.

DALI J. GUNDEVIA

“Zoroastrianism enjoins...”
I refer to the article “Zoroastrianism

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enjoins conversion" by Kaikhosrov D. Irani and Farrokh Vajifdar (*Parsiana*, October 2001) wherein scriptural references on conversion are given from the *Gathas*, the *Vendidad* and the *Fravardin Yasht*.

I would like to add one more reference from the *Khordeh Avesta* by Ervad Kavasji Edalji Kanga in *Sarosh Yasht Vadi-ni-Nirang*, wherein we pray *Sarosh Yazad-ni-Panha Hojo* for "Hamé Iranian (all Iranians), *O Pairo-Dakeshan ...Gehan Daman* (all living beings)... *Behdinin* (behdins)... *Tajiane Beste-kustiaan*," which is translated as "kustitying *Arbo* (Arabs who have accepted the Zarathushti religion)."

This proves that conversion was permitted and enjoined even during the time of Prophet Zarathushtra.

DARA DARABSHAW ARIA
Bangalore

Much of today's practice of our faith is as per the view of the conservative "no change is the best change" lobby.

If these views and practices are acceptable to the majority of the laity of an anjuman or punchayet, so be it. But let the righteous not frighten the gullible, innocent, trusting and simple-

minded sections of the community, that anything contra is un-Zoroastrian.

The opposite view can be practiced and propagated to prepare people for change. One day, the minority may become the majority.

Aha, but that is exactly what the diehards would not wish. Stamp out pragmatism and reasoning — and if the community goes the way of all nature's endangered species, so be it.

Controversial subjects such as conversion, intermarriage, navjote of children with one Zoroastrian parent, disposal of the dead, to name a few, are basically self serving *Parsipanu*, not religion.

Readers of *Parsiana* ("Zoroastrianism enjoins conversion,") would have digested the research and views of two respected Zoroastrian experts stating positively that the Zoroastrian religion enjoins conversion.

In 1944-45, it was stated in court under oath in the deposition by Dr Jamshedji Maneckjee Unvala, MA, PhD of Bombay and Heidelberg University, Germany, a scholar of Avesta and other ancient languages, that a sub-committee appointed by the Parsi Punchayet, comprising men of great eminence like

Dasturs Kaikhusroo Jamsaji and Dorab Peshotan Sanjana, Behramjee S. Anklesaria, Ervad Bomanjee Nusserwanji Dhabar and seven others was of the unanimous view that the Zoroastrian religion enjoins conversion. He stated, however, that apart from himself (who did not subscribe to this view) there is not a single student who says that the Zoroastrian religion does not enjoin conversion.

In conclusion, the above witness is recorded to have stated, "It is particularly on the basis of custom that we Parsi Zoroastrians have ceased to practise conversion."

This letter holds no brief for conversion but it does behove the preachers and leaders to be honest with the laity. The same Unvala in the same testimony clarified that there is no religious *firman* (obligation), either in Avesta, Pahlavi or Pazand texts, which stipulates that a dakhma and aramgah cannot coexist. Several customs for which the *Vendidad* is said to be the authority are "...primitive and nearly impossible to perform or observe today... most of these customs are not observed today even by those who should observe them."

Unvala stated that the first Parsis

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came to India in the beginning of the ninth century. Yet, the first record of a dakhma in India is found only in the 14th century. The dakhma in Tehran was closed before 1926 and burial is practiced.

I do not decry customs, which are Parsipanu. But let not these customs be equated with religion, the non-observance of which brands an individual as un-Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian. Zoroaster preached good thoughts, good words, good deeds. This is the bottom line of the Zoroastrian faith. To sack people from the community, or to call the child of one Zoroastrian parent a bastard brands the perpetrators and not the victim as bigots of the Zoroastrian faith.

RASHID MINOCHER

Bangalore

"Missing monajats"

In "Missing monajats" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 2001) Bhikhaji M. Adenwalla regrets that the old and famous tradition of reciting monajats is about to fade away from the memory of the Zoroastrians.

As a member of a research project on Zoroastrian rituals at the University of Heidelberg (Germany), I am currently

preparing a PhD thesis on monajats. Some of these monajats in Persian and Gujarati are preserved in a few old editions of the *Khordeh Avesta*. Some other specimens are kept in public libraries such as the Meherji Rana Library and the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute.

Probably, some additional monajats are to be found in private libraries spread all over the world. Whereas it was comparatively easy to get access to these old editions of the *Khordeh Avesta* and the monajats which are kept in public libraries, it is unfortunately very difficult to get any information about monajat manuscripts belonging to private owners. Most of the private libraries in India mentioned by Cawasji Katrak in his book *Oriental Treasures* (1941) do not exist any longer or happen to be in the possession of people unknown to me. Therefore, I would request any reader who might be aware of the whereabouts of these libraries (such as in Surat the libraries of Mobed Pirojshah Framjee Pavri, Ervad Eruchshah Bomanjee Dastur Kumana, Dosabhoy Hormasji Dalal, Ervad Bomanji Aspandiyarji Dastur Rahadina, Ardeshir Noshervanji Dastur and in

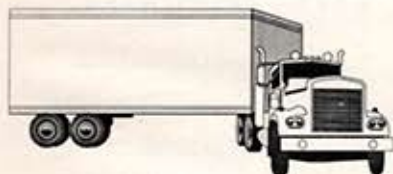
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Bulsar the library of Dastur Khurshedji Phirozji Pestonji) to kindly get in touch with me.

Moreover, I am keen to rediscover an oral tradition of the monajats. This task brought me to Iran where I had the opportunity to record some of these unpublished, orally transmitted monajats. Only old people still remember the monajats while the young Zoroastrians find this kind of prayer old-fashioned and worthless to preserve. Accordingly, it will be only a matter of time until the monajats will totally disappear from the memory of the (Iranian) Zoroastrians. In order to prevent this old prayer tradition from fading away without leaving any traces, I am looking forward to any kind of assistance in obtaining more information about this important and beautiful part of Zoroastrian devotional traditions. My e-mail is BSchmerbeck@aol.com

BEATE SCHMERBECK
 University of Heidelberg (Germany)

Antiquity and necessity

I am referring to "Antiquity and necessity," by Home K. Behram (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 2001) stressing on a vegetarian diet.

Of the nine daily *firmans* (obligations)

enjoined in the Zarathushti religion, one is 'Nithaisnithisim' meaning ahimsa, and sympathy for all creatures, to earn the blessings of Bahman Amesha Spenta, the protector of the animal kingdom.

There are many references in the holy *Gathas* to kindness, good behavior and a vegetarian diet.

The natural formation of teeth in the mouth of human beings is similar to that of vegetarian animals like cows, bullocks, goats, lambs, horses, donkeys, camels, kangaroos and such others who live only on grass, leaves, fruits, grains and vegetables. There are no special long grinding teeth in the mouth of human beings as found in carnivorous animals like tigers, lions, wolves, dogs, leopards, bears, foxes, etc.

It is worth noting here that vegetarian animals are strong enough to bear heavy weights, and lead vigorous, energetic and useful lives. For good health too, a vegetarian diet is advised by doctors.

NOSHIR DABOO

Ahmedabad

"Kanpur's past glory"

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(Parsiana, August 2001). I have very fond memories of Cawnpore as Kanpur was then known, and I try to search out old acquaintances from there. I lived in that town for eight years with my uncle Dr Manchershaw E. Variava, who was the younger brother of Dr (Capt) Hormusji E. Variava. These two well-known doctors had their practice on Mall Road, then known as Thandi Sarak. Many Parsi families were magnanimously helped by them. It is of historical significance to mention that when Subhas Chandra Bose was running underground he was helped by Dr Katiar, a physician who practiced across the road from M. E. Variava. On Katiar's request, Manchershaw helped him. In the early 1940s many Parsis held responsible positions in various mills and were well off. It was quite common among the car owners to give a lift to a Parsi walking on the road. I had the privilege many times. Education was of prime importance amongst the Parsi families. During festive occasions, there were concerts and piano recitals. These were excellent and entertaining. During private family get-togethers the older people entertained with Hindi songs. One such was Noshir Byramji, a gold

medallist from Poona's Engineering College.

Our ladies often hosted the English cricket team, who enjoyed their delicious curry-chaaval, dhansak and kababs. It used to be a delightful day at Green Park with players' families and friends. A few families were bristle merchants during those days and there was a significant number of Central Bank managers who helped the Parsi community to thrive. Though our community performed all the religious ceremonies that were well attended we had no real education of our religion in school or at home.

MINU K. PATEL
Westchester, Illinois, USA

Aid Junglewasi Ghambar

Over 100 years ago several Zoroastrians resided on the seashores of Nargol, Saronda, Davier, etc. The menfolk toiled in the jungles for the major part of the year, only occasionally visiting their families as in those times it took them almost two days to reach their homes.

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that they could meet at least once a year, in the jungle area on the east of the railway line where they had their agricultural activities. This Ghambar originally was for males only which we gradually opened up for females and children.

We have religiously preserved the traditions of our forefathers and we organize one Ghambar every year when Zoroastrians in large numbers come from Bombay and other places. This year the Ghambar was scheduled for March 17, 2002 in Surangi.

In the past we got sponsors at regular intervals coming forward to bear the entire expenses of the Ghambar in the memory of their dear departed relatives. But with the expenses of one Ghambar mounting up to Rs 50,000 we have not had sponsors for the last five years. While the expenses are increasing, our interest income is decreasing. We therefore appeal to you for sponsorship or donations in cash or kind, which may be sent to Rohinton M. Daviervala, Treasurer, Khan Bahadur's Bungalow, Sanjan (W. Rly) 396150; Tel. (0260) 576229, 576459. Cheques may be drawn

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RUSTOM M. VAID

President, Shree Junglewasi Jarthosti Ghambar Fund

Zoroastrian or Rastafarian

As a regular reader of your magazine, currently resident in the UK, I have been looking for a good quality short essay on the basic tenets of our religion and a short history of the Parsis and the once powerful Persian empire.

The article should be suitable for any Zoroastrian living abroad (or to a greater extent suitable for people who live outside the Bombay/Gujarat areas) to give to an interested friend or colleague who may not have previously heard about the religion. Rather than reinvent the wheel, I would be grateful if any of your readers could please either let me have a copy of any suitable article or the name of any relevant work/author. My e-mail address is javidcanteenwala@hotmail.com

Perhaps Parsiana could also include a suitable article (as a special pullout) in

its next Pateti or Navroz issue. I am sure several corporate advertisers would be willing to sponsor a well written article that can be handed down generations.

A few years ago, a close friend of mine was asked about his origins and religion (at a dinner reception after a medical conference in Europe). He launched into the usual Jadi Rana and the milk and sugar story, mentioned our position as probably the oldest monotheistic religion in the world, our flight from persecution and oppression in Persia, etc. On finishing what he believed was an enlightening précis of the history of the Parsis, a lady asked him if that meant that he believed in the holiness of Emperor Haile Selassie (the last king of Ethiopia). She had wrongly concluded that Zoroastrians and Rastafarians were synonymous.

I am sure that our several color conscious, 'we are better than the rest' aunties (*fuis, kakis, masis* and *mamis*) will indignantly rally around and find a suitable essay to dispel any such similarities, albeit in name alone.

JAVIDCANTEENWALA

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In praise of spring

Western writers generally link tulips to Turkey simply because the Dutch merchants first brought the tulip from Turkey some 408 years ago in 1594. But rarely do they tell you that it originally came to Turkey from Persia. Traditionally Iranians (Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis), when decorating the haft shin table at Navroz, would always have tulips along with hyacinths and daffodils. Here is my poetic effort for Navroz:

Ahura Mazda's gift to mankind is here/
For which we sing Him praise/And
praise to thee, Oh Navroz/For the beauty
of your days.

Oh praise to the coming of spring./For
there is beauty and music in your name./
As the blustery cold and dull days wane./
"Rejoice, Navroz is here," all Zarathushti
hearts proclaim.

Navroz wakes up a sleepy dew dropped
world/As newborn buds and leaves peek
through the icy earth/Sonbels (hyacinths),
tulips, daffodils fill the air/
With their fragrance so heavenly and
rare/For all mankind to revel in the
loveliness of colors they wear.

Navroz truly is a precious time/When
greetings and prayers ascend from grate-

ful hearts/To make these days the most
blest.

RUSI SORABJI

Campbell, California, USA

Band banning

It is futile to complain against the noise pollution in Bombay. I am not complaining about the ear shattering festivals. I am not complaining of the literal bombing during Diwali. I am not complaining of the loudspeakers, during the Navratri festival in every *galli* (lane), chawl and society in Bombay, blaring *Choli ké peechhé kya hai?* and *Chhaiyan Chhaiyan* at deafening decibels, with 50-year-old loudspeakers in today's age of technology!) emitting 50 percent music and 50 percent distortion.

I am not complaining of the Ganpati processions with all the pomp and glory, *dhol* and *dhamaka*. I am not complaining of the daily call for namaaz at the mosques at 5 a.m. In fact, I am a firm believer in the freedom to practice one's religion, as per one's beliefs.

If I am not complaining what is the point of all this? Well, I am a Parsi Zoroastrian and feel very deeply, for it seems to me that we, the minutest of minorities have a different set of rules laid out for us, to be followed for our

weddings and navjotes!

I believe Bombay has standing orders from the commissioner of police regarding the timings and intensity of music allowed, for all occasions and functions. These laws seem to apply only to us — the Parsis and Iranis.

We Parsis and Iranis have to shut down our music, in Albless Baug, Malcolm Baug, Colaba Agiary at 10 p.m. sharp and at Saher Agiary and Cama Baug at 9.30 p.m. sharp.

Five minutes after that, if our musicians or our disc jockeys have not closed 'shop,' we always have to reckon with an inspector and a group of constables, gatecrashing the baugs, reminding us of the law.

Is this so-called law put into practice only because we are law-abiding citizens? Is it put into practice because we, as a community, are peace loving? As per our custom, our weddings can only be performed after sunset. The ceremony and prayers take approximately an hour. How much time does that leave us to dance, enjoy and make merry? By the time the guests get into the mood, after a drink or two, to shake a leg, the party is forced to come to an end!

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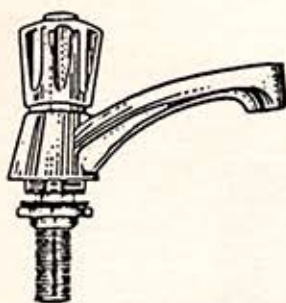
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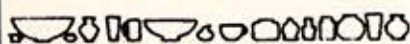
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Punchayet takes this matter up, I am sure this unnecessary disparity in the law can be avoided. It is not a problem that cannot be solved. A relaxation of even one hour will help to make the evening a happier one for an occasion that may be the most important and joyous day of their lives.

NOSHIR NADIRSHAW SANJANA

Anomaly in name

We Zarathustis sing *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathosti* with all the justifiable pride and gusto at our command. Yet when one of us is asked what religious faith or denomination one belongs to, in the same breath, pride and gusto one answers: 'I am a Zoroastrian.'

It does not need a religious scholar to perceive this huge incongruity occurring consistently in this department of our lives. Just recently I received a calendar from our august body, the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO). Right on the frontispiece this same incongruity hits the eye where it reads 'The World Zoroastrian Organisation' immediately followed by 'The World Zarathustrian Trust Fund.' To quote another example, our august association Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe has recently acquired the premises at Harrow and has called it 'Zoroastrian Centre' but no sooner you enter the main hall you read the plaque announcing the munificent donation by the 'Zartoshty Brothers.' Not long ago we read in *Parsiana* ("The poetic rise of enterprise," March 2001) about the launch of the International Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce at the Houston Congress. Is it not enough to cause immense perplexity to any stranger?

The sole purpose of writing this letter is to bring forth this glaring anomaly. Could we not form a body of eminent coreligionists and decide once and for all what we want to call our minuscule fold of, I understand, less than 100,000? We are extremely proud of being the faithful followers and disciples of our beloved prophet Spitama Zarathushtra which, as a youngster I was told, means the 'Light of the Golden Star.' It is said it was the Greeks who first called him Zoroaster and it later got anglicized as such. In the light of this it is my opinion that our fold, faith and institutions should be rightly called 'Zarathusti' (not Zarathustrian) universally and our prophet by his correct name 'Zarathustra.'

Let us all unite and get rid of this

blundering anomaly once and for all. Admittedly this transformation cannot be made overnight. We will doubtless get there eventually and earn our beloved Prophet's celestial blessings.

SOLIMASTER
London, UK

Beware of marrying out

From your articles I find that you seem to condone mixed marriages and also revolutionary unorthodox views.

I am opposed to both boys and girls marrying outside our community because it poses an ethnic and demographic threat to our *Parsipanu*. It would be interesting to carry out a survey of all Parsi girls and boys who have taken non Parsi spouses to ascertain how they are faring. I find most of the *jamaïs* (sons-in-law) are *gharjamaïs* (residing with the girl's family).

In my district and surrounding areas I daily read of wife burning and dowry deaths. How can a Parsi girl ensure that the boy she is marrying is taking her only out of love and affection? Many conmen are surrounding our simple Parsi girls. Beware!

When a boy begins earning well his parents have great expectations from him. They would least accept an out-cast marriage.

DARA M. DOSABHAI
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Unsung hero

A large number of Shiv Sena leaders and followers including Member of the Legislative Assembly Dinaz Patrawala, Member of the Legislative Council, Vilas Avchat, and ex-Corporators Dnyaneshwar Gavde and Saroj Kapadia attended the funeral of Darabji Bomanji Ghadiali who expired on December 8, 2001 at his residence in Bombay. Following a severe heart attack on May 20, 2001 he had been confined to bed.

A public condolence meeting was also held on December 17, 2001 at Narandas Wadi, Fort, Bombay where handsome tributes were paid to the memory of Ghadiali who in 1966 was selected to be a leader of the Shiv Sena's Fort unit. In 1969, he was selected as its first *shakha pramukh* (area chief) which office he held for almost 14 years, the longest term for a *shakha pramukh*.

In the formative years of the Shiv Sena movement, when there was stiff opposition from all quarters, Ghadiali stood like a solid rock behind it and

*I believe that nothing can
be greater than a business,
however small it may be, that
is governed by conscience,
and that nothing can be meaner
or more petty than a business,
however large, governed
without honesty and
without brotherhood.*

— The First Viscount Leverhulme



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ensured that every program chalked out by it was a thunderous success. He happens to be the first and lone Zoroastrian who identified himself with the sons of the soil theory much before the same was adopted and practiced by the Shiv Sena.



Ghadiali contested the Bombay municipal polls in 1978 against a formidable rival, securing the second highest votes. His was a dynamic, enthusiastic and inspiring personality, an asset indeed to the Fort unit. He was ever ready to help the people irrespective of their community.

Born on October 24, 1923 Ghadiali hailed from Nargol. He started his career as a fire officer in the Bombay Fire Brigade. Later on he left his job to join his father's business in watches — "Napoleon Watch Company" situated at Perin Nariman Street in Fort, Bombay. For many years, he was the president, Fort Traders' Association and also served as president of the Ganesh Utsav

Ghadiali: on the forlorn path



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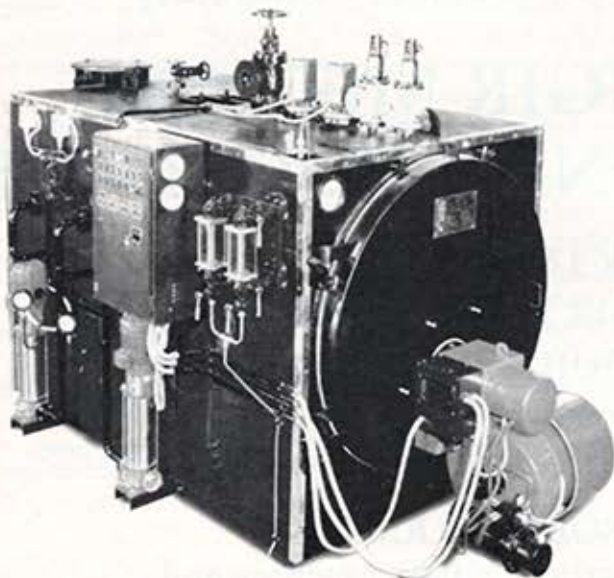
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Mandal, Fort. He was the vice president of the Rustom Baug Residents Association, Byculla, Bombay.

This unusual Parsi gentleman strode quite a forlorn path by choosing to join the Shiv Sena movement during its heyday and remained steadfast with it till his last breath.

GOPINATH BHALEKER

Religious representation

The religious leaders in Europe who met at the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) decided to form a European Religious Leaders Council. The Council will consist of the world's major faiths (including Zoroastrianism). The Council will have 30 members and we shall have one seat.

Forty-two percent (269 million) of the population of Europe which is Roman Catholic will have five seats on the Council and we Zoroastrians 0.000018 percent (12,000) shall have one seat. This shows the generosity and change in mindset that numbers are not important. What is important is that every single individual counts when working for the common good.

Now we, the Zoroastrians, have the opportunity to be heard and with that comes responsibility. We must ensure that we offer the wisdom of our tradition for the common good that will lead to the final renovation of the good creation, by cooperating in common actions.

This needs

- individuals willing to offer their expertise on issues that concern us all, e.g. poverty, drugs, HIV, religious freedom, asylum, education, support for the youth, equality for women, etc;
- funding to enable persons to participate in the appropriate meetings;
- research to evaluate what our scriptures have to say on the various issues.

I hope our community will fully participate and offer support. Those interested can contact me at 18/20 Vale Road, Bushey Herts, WD23 2HE; Tel: 01923 211168; Fax: 01923 211169; Web: www.religionsforpeace.org

JEHANGIR SAROSH

President, World Conference of Religions for Peace
Europe

"Pilgrimage of peace"

Leaders of 200 world religions flanked the Pope in Assisi on January 24, 2002 in an unprecedented "pilgrimage of peace" in opposition to the use of violence in God's name. Commitments to

work for peace were received in 11 languages including Hebrew, Arabic, Farsi and Punjabi.

In response to the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York the Pope said: "Humanity is always in need for peace. We wish to do our part in fending off the dark clouds of terrorism, hatred, armed conflict, which in these last few months have grown particularly ominous in humanity's horizon."

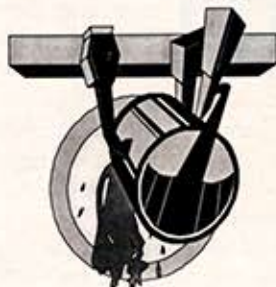
The peace day began early with a colorful twist, when the various participants in their robes, beards, dog collars, skullcaps and turbans boarded a train at the Vatican's private station bound for Assisi, where the 13th century Saint Francis, a warrior turned friar, who wrote the prayer beginning "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace" is buried. On its way towards the Umbrian hill town, the train slowed at stations for crowds to greet the passengers.

On arrival, the Pope was ferried through Assisi's crooked streets. As the religious representatives walked up the aisle to the large tent covering the square by the Franciscan monastic complex to greet him, an audience of several thousands clapped and cheered.

The Pope's address followed various "testimonials to peace" given by key religious speakers. Later, after prayers and a "frugal" lunch in the monastery refectory, participants made a commitment that religion would never be used again as a pretext for war, conflict or violence. The prayer sessions, which took place in the Franciscan complex, were the highlight of the event. Among those present was a delegation led by the Russian Patriarch Pitirim whose arrival was read as signalling a thaw in the frosty relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church. As the Christians prayed together, groups representing other religions prayed in separate rooms and cells in the adjacent monastery. Later when the representatives met in the afternoon to give their commitment to oppose religion being used as an excuse for violence, the Pope, followed by other representatives, lit the candelabra. It will remain in Assisi as a testimony to their undertaking. All involved then exchanged wishes of peace with each other and the Pope.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Foron, France

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Flying high

Just five days after he was appointed Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command (EAC), Air Marshal Manek Bomanshaw Madon was



Madon: distinguished service

decorated with the Param Vishist Seva Medal (PVSM) by the President of India on January 26, 2002, notes a communiqué from the EAC headquarters in Shillong. The PVSM recognizes his lifetime achievements and distinguished service of the most

exceptional order.

Prior to assuming his new responsibilities he was senior air staff officer at Western Air Command (WAC), one of the most operational commands of the Indian Air Force (IAF). His other staff appointments include project manager, Aircraft Project Management Organisation at the ministry of defence, senior officer in charge administration at the Central Air Command and air defence commander at the WAC, notes the write-up summarizing his accomplishments.

For nearly 40 years Madon has been associated with the IAF, being commissioned as a pilot in the fighter stream in 1963. He is known to have flown almost all types of fighter aircraft in the inventory of the IAF with approximately 5,000 flying hours to his credit. Having commanded a frontline MiG-21 squadron "Scorpions" in 1983-85 he enjoys the distinction of presently being the commodore commandant of the squadron, adds the write-up.

In the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and

1971 Madon was an active participant and the Su-7 aircraft that he had flown in the Khemkaran sector in the operational combat mission in the 1971 war earned him a Vayu Sena Medal. A qualified flying instructor as also fighter combat leader, Madon has served as a senior directing staff at the premier Tactics and Combat Development Establishment. An alumnus of the Defence Service Staff College, College of Defence Management, College of Air Warfare, National Defence College and Administrative Staff College of India he was commandant, Air Force Academy in Hyderabad, the alma mater of some of the finest pilots in the world.

Signal serial

The Parsi community has been a subject of curiosity and discussion and sometimes even misconception. What is their religion? Whom do they worship? Where do they come from? The teleserial *Humata Hukhta Hvarshita* has through its 52 episodes filled this void, acknowledged Dadi Engineer, president of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO), India at a felicitation at the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa on January 5, 2002. Congratulating the director of Frohar Films, Ervad Cyrus Dastoor and his committee, Engineer described their efforts as

"a labor of love because all the members work completely gratis," mentions a press release summarizing the proceedings.

In addition to Dastoor who was presented a plaque, WZO (India) also felicitated his team members: Silloo Mahava (production in charge and public relations), Yasmin Charna (administration and projects), projects coordinator Dr Arnavaaz Havewala, production executive Aban Baria, cinematographer Pervez Irani, set designer Sam Kerawala, and committee members Merzban Bhesania, Darayas Chacha and Maharukh Driver.

Giving due credit to the Cama Athornan Institute for equipping him with the requisite knowledge to undertake this project, Dastoor referred to the harrowing times when there was no money to pay the technical staff until an ameshaspand or angel would come forth with guidance to continue the project. The cooperation of the high priests, scholars, speakers, the Athornan Mandal and the Dadar Athornan Madressa, as also the donors was commendable, stated Dastoor. He was hopeful that through the telecast of the serial every Zarathushti would be fortified with the necessary understanding to impart the basic principles of the religion to others.

The audience that evening got an opportunity to view the highlights of the 52 episodes already screened as also glimpses of the forthcoming ones. While outlining the history of the serial, Mithoo Jesia referred to its conception, its first few episodes when high priests were shown giving talks on religious subjects, the subsequent ones when interviews with well-known personalities were conducted, the entertaining ones when children of the community were given an opportunity to showcase their talent and culture.

The soundtrack and music for *Humata Hukhta Hvarshita* was com-



At the WZO felicitation for Frohar Films from (left): Jesia, Dadi and Silloo Engineer with insets of Dastoor (left) and Mahava

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posed by Kersi Mistry. A new audiocassette that includes the songs, monajats and melodies used in the teleserial was released by Silloo Engineer. The 52 episodes of *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshata* are available on compact disc and video, announced Jesia, urging the community to buy them to educate those seeking knowledge.

Health unit

Four bright young medicos are raring to go at the Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir Health Unit at Bombay's Gamadia Colony. The Unit's administrator Arnavaaz Khan hosted a special meet on January 24, 2002 to introduce dental surgeon and consultant periodontist Dr Tanaz Boyce Mirza, ENT surgeon Dr Vikram Jaisinghani, dermatologist Dr S. P. Sirur and consultant ophthalmic surgeon Dr Cyres Mehta to the Parsi Press.

Also meeting the doctors and the Press was Jasmin Jehangir. Khan hoped to involve Jehangir in the administration of the Health Unit founded by her grandmother-in-law, the redoubtable former Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) chairperson Lady Hirabai Jehangir.

The 53-year-old institution located at Tardeo caters to the community, ranging from the middle class to the down-and-out, at costs ranging from 75 to zero percent of what would be payable elsewhere, emphasized Khan.

The addition of the four young doctors to a substantial existing team led by cardiologist Dr Dinyar Gamadia aims at reopening departments like ophthalmic and ENT surgery which had been discontinued some time ago, Khan noted. With a donation in hand she is hoping to reprovide the facility to the community once an elevator is installed to service the adjoining Khan Hospital (also known as the Cottage Hospital) where a contingent of about six nurses and as many ayahs and ward boys care for a maximum 31 patients at a time.

Mehta, who returned from the US in mid 2001 after acquiring professional fellowships in phacoemulsification cataract surgery, advanced non-invasive glaucoma surgery and refractive surgery, referred to India as the home of cataract and glaucoma blindness because of its huge population and insufficient eye-care facilities. The high incidence of diabetes among Parsis especially impacts the eyes, he noted. Declaring the results of average cataract

surgery as "quite bad," Mehta suggested the induction of a phaco machine whose price now ranges between six and eight lakh rupees but is cost effective in the long run as it requires less anesthesia and aftercare and the patient "can go back to work fast." Until then he seemed willing to bring his own mobile unit when required.

Sirur, who sees mainly bacterial infections, warts and boils among his patients at the Health Unit, suggested the addition of a cauterizing machine and a biopsy punch graph in the operation theater.

Boyce Mirza, who specializes in gums and gum diseases, notices teeth which are "mobile" because of bone loss. She described her technique as "putting in bone graphs with surgery." It would require an ultraviolet ray curing light which, along with its composite material, would mean an outlay of Rs 25,000 and may not be needed at the Unit just yet. The Unit is "decently equipped" for normal extractions and fillings, she says, emphasizing its very high level of sterilization. Full-mouth scaling is also on offer at the Unit and Boyce Mirza is pained that younger members of the community do not avail of these benefits, preferring to patronize private practice instead.

As the age group that has been frequenting the Health Unit is 50+ Jaisinghani has largely been seeing hearing disorders and a need for hearing aids. He suggested that the BPP, which runs the Health Unit, should evolve a procedure to provide these gadgets. He also suggested that when investing in a microscope for ophthalmic use it might be possible to find a model which is also compatible with ear surgery.

Noting that the Health Unit's resources were more restricted than that of the B. D. Petit Parsee General or Masina Hospitals, Gamadia suggested "we could look into instrumentation in future." He also wanted to avoid surgical procedures "because (we are) not adequately equipped for high anti-sepsis requirements." He referred to the need for funds when "in a fair number of cases people feel they should be treated free."

Boyce Mirza and Jaisinghani felt the need to counter two misconceptions in the community: that the Health Unit is a facility only for the aged and that charitable institutions (like this one) do not offer quality health care: "The level

of sterilization is very good. We use only disposable syringes and needles," she affirmed. The current charge of Rs 10 per year for a case paper was considered totally inadequate and reinforced the popular myth of professional inadequacy, they maintained. "We are willing to work; we are sad when there are no patients," noted Boyce Mirza.

The Health Unit, which also offers pediatrics, gynecology, orthopedics and physiotherapy, runs a free milk and nourishment scheme as well as a fund for providing expensive medicines to impoverished patients, welcomes donations from the community. Cheques favoring the Lady Jehangir Health Unit may be addressed to the institution specifying the end use for the contribution.

Medical services available at the Health Unit:

- Cardiology: Gamadia on Tuesdays at 11 a.m.; Dr Vidya Doshi on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 4.30 p.m.
- Dentistry: Orthodontist Dr S. M. Javeri one Wednesday a month at 1 p.m.; Dr S. Divecha on Tuesdays at 2 p.m.; Boyce Mirza on Thursdays at 1 p.m.
- Dermatology: Sirur on Thursdays at 9 a.m.
- ENT: Jaisinghani on Wednesdays at 9 a.m.
- Gynecology: Dr D. S. Dalal on Wednesdays at 4.30 p.m.
- Homeopathy: Dr D. D. Gamadia, first and third Mondays at 10 a.m.
- Medical: Dr M. A. Nalladaru, Monday to Friday at 9 a.m.
- Ophthalmic: Dr R. J. Patel on Fridays at 10 a.m.; Dr H. H. Vakil on Mondays at 10.30 a.m.; Mehta on Thursdays at 10 a.m.
- Orthopedics: Dr V. H. Jokhi on Fridays at 12.30 p.m.
- Pediatrics: Dr S. H. Mullan on Saturdays at 10 a.m.
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- Physiotherapy: Dr M. Z. Khatkhate on every working day at 8 a.m.

Arnavaaz S. Mama

Sound and secure

Managing 13 trusts/funds, the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) board is the custodian of a total corpus of Rs 171,308,346.58 according to the audited statement of accounts forwarded by their president Dr Sam Bhacca for the financial year ending March 31, 2001. While SPP itself showed a corpus of Rs 76,451,989.44, the next highest

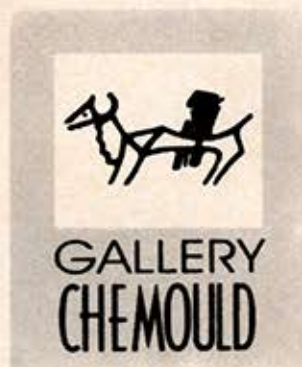


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corpus of Rs 29,703,931.32 was shown by the Nariman Home. The Alpawala Institute recorded the lowest corpus of Rs 188,730.59. The SPP controlling immovable properties valued at Rs 16,404,633.82 earned rent and income from land valued at Rs 455,442 and expended Rs 1,044,859.44 in respect of properties while the Patel School showing the next highest figure of Rs 4,826,554.08 for immovable properties gets a yield of Rs 127,536.

In keeping with the trend of preceding years, the SPP expended the largest sum of Rs 11,534,023.10 on secular education this year as against Rs 10,724,712.62 the year earlier. For medical relief the amount expended was Rs 990,858.50 as against Rs 783,513 in 1999-2000. Towards relief of poverty, the sum spent was Rs 848,470.50 of which Rs 374,560 were distributed as doles to poor Parsis.

During the year under review the SPP received donations from individuals amounting to Rs 226,359 and from public trusts, Rs 128,974.75 with Rs 45,000 specifically earmarked for earthquake relief, bringing the total to Rs 400,333.75. In the previous year they had received Rs 312,026.71 as dona-

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**Headquarters of the
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Photo: Ashvin Mehta

tions from individuals and public trusts.

Among the other institutions which expend sums on educational causes are the Nariman Parsi Zoroastrian Girls Orphanage which spent Rs 1,305,859.83, the Bai P. M. Patel Singanporwala Girls School, Rs 1,548,420.90, the Surat Parsi Boys' Orphanage which spent Rs 1,542,300.46, The First Dastur Meherji Rana Trust Fund Rs 88,748, the Seth Sorabji Nausewanji Parukh Polytechnic Institute Rs 70,932.20, Sorabji Burjorji Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust Rs 56,700 and the Seth K. H. Alpawala Industrial Institute for Women and Girls Rs 38,293.

The Bai G. N. Mehta Maternity Hospital spent Rs 196,055 on medical relief as compared to the Seth R. D. Tarachand Parsi General Hospital which showed Rs 1,209,052.58 and the Nariman Home and Infirmary Rs 1,955,572.98. The Dastur Darab Pahlana Trust spent Rs 40,000 towards medical relief.

While the SPP has been forwarding a copy of their audited accounts for the last many years, this year they also reported that they had kept their accounts open for inspection by community members at 13 institutions in Surat, notable among them being the Kadmi and the Modi Atash Behrams, Bisni, Goti, Rustompura, Saiyedpura and Baug-e-Padshah agiaries, the Nanpura and Ookedji Dharamshalas, the Rustompura and Andrews Libraries, the anjumans at Gopipura and Nanpura.

Even before *Parsiana* could study the SPP accounts, we were forwarded a copy of the *Gujarat Samachar* of October 2, 2001 wherein it was

initiated an enquiry via the charity commissioner. On enquiring with Bhacca, *Parsiana* was promptly furnished a sheaf of documents with a caution that since "reopening of the enquiry (makes it) sub judice, we are advised by our lawyers that at present it should not be published."

In the meantime the SPP keeps augmenting its funds and continues investing the sums, with their auditors D. N. Shukla and Company attesting "that no money of the public trust has been invested contrary to provisions of section 35 of the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950; that no alienation of immovable property contrary to the provisions of section 35 have come to our notice."

President's portrait

To honor the memory of the late Dinshaw Bapuna who had served as president of the Nagpur and Kamphthi Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman for 23 years his portrait was unveiled by his successor Edul Bhagwagar at the Bilimoria Brothers Parsi Dharamshala Hall on January 23, 2002.

The young and old members of the

Parsi community gathered in full strength to pay respect to the doyen of Central India's Bapuna Group of Companies who died on July 31, 2001. The entire Bapuna family too had come from different corners of the globe to honor the patriarch. Among those who had graced the occasion were Nagpur's well-known politicians, businessmen, industrialists, lawyers, doctors and sports personalities. The congregation was later treated to a grand dinner hosted by the Bapuna family, according to a report sent by Shiraz Gimi, president of the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana.

A few weeks earlier Bapuna's portraits had been installed at the Bai Hirabai Mullan Dar-e-Meher at Nagpur and the agiary at Akola, states Gimi. It was during his tenure as president of the Anjuman that the Nagpur Agiary was renovated and restored on the occasion of its centenary. When building a complex for middle-class Parsis in Nagpur, the philanthropic Bapuna had ensured that funds were never a problem for the deserving. His charities extended to diverse social and sports causes.

Zoroastrians' 'just' war

"Why are Parsis so prominent in the opposing professions of war and medicine? What is there in the Zoroastrian religion that so inspires them?" Research professor at the University of Derby and visiting professor to London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Prof John Hinnells posed these questions to himself as he addressed the topic "War and Religion in Zoroastrianism" at Bombay's K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) on January 17, 2002. He was in the city in connection with a book on the Parsis of Bombay in collaboration with Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, High Priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram.

Unlike the "Hellenistic dualism of spirit and flesh," Zoroastrian theology perceives the material world as a fulfilment of the spiritual world, said Hinnells, adding, "Zoroastrianism gives sanctity to the material world as no other religion does." Conceiving evil as a "force trapped in the good material world," it is referred to as



*Dinshaw Bapuna's family
gather at the unveiling of
the patriarch's portrait*



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druj or the lie and equated to disorder, violence, chaos and destruction. "Fighting the lie is the primary duty of Zoroastrians. The doctor and the soldier are fighting the lie in their respective spheres," remarked Hinnells. A war is a just war when it is fought to restore order and harmony as determined by the principle of Asha.

In the light of the exhortation to charity so deeply embedded in the Zoroastrian psyche, the Parsis have overwhelmingly subscribed to medical charities, both personally in terms of entering the profession and financially by way of setting up hospitals, wards, clinics, dispensaries and sanatoria. This is one prong of the Zoroastrian fight against the *druj* of disease and physical suffering.

According to the Pahlavi texts "Hormazd declares himself a healer and a priest. The priests were the best healers. (It was their) divine function, not merely human. The Prophet himself was a priest, which is not true of any other prophet." The interaction between the spiritual (*menog*) and temporal (*getig*) worlds being governed by righteousness in thought, word and action, the doctor, the warrior and the priest are

all involved in maintaining the divine harmony. "Wherever a Zoroastrian sees violence or disorder, he sees the need for a just war," maintained Hinnells.

The lecture had first been given at SOAS in memory of the London high priest, the much loved Dastur (Dr) Sorab Kutar. Initially an army doctor, Kutar had been decorated for bravery in the North African campaign by Field Marshal Montgomery. Hinnells narrated that Kutar had frequently renounced the safety of the camp to rescue afflicted soldiers in the field.

In the course of his opening and closing remarks KRCOI trustee Muncherji Cama referred to an old Arab saying "Heaven forbid you live in interesting times," adding, "We are living in interesting though turbulent times." Later recalling how the warring city states of medieval Italy, home of all kinds of charlatans, criminals and power hungry rulers and usurpers, had spawned the great Renaissance of art and culture which remains a high point of modern history to this day, Cama hoped that the developments of our own chaotic times may also produce similar milestones in the cultural history of the world.

A. S. M.



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Site for the scouts

Enjoying the distinction of being the oldest continuously running scout group in the country, claiming three generations of members, Sethna's 18th West Bombay Scout Group recently launched its website. Creating its presence on the Internet and the world wide web the new site was undertaken "with an aim to keep its members in Bombay and those all over the world...in touch with what is happening at the troop," notes an e-mail forwarded to *Parsiana* by Marzban Giara.

The website <http://sethnas.org> offers an interesting insight into the history of this troop, its long list of honors, awards and milestones with an array of information on boy scouting and current happenings at the troop. The design and technical aspects of the website were handled by Rover Arzan Wadia with the coordination of Rover Homiar Hathiram and advice of Rover Yazdi Patel and other managing committee members of the Sethnas Scouting Society, states the news report.

Nearly all the contents of the site need to be credited to the late scouter Khurshedji Mistry who had joined the troop as a small boy in 1914 and retained his ties for the next 81 years, meticulously documenting the group's activities and accomplishments.

Originally known as the 18th-19th Bombay Scout Group, the troop has its origin in the foresight of Rustomji Edulji Sethna who stumbled upon a book on the then relatively unknown activity of boy scouting. Seeking to make young boys into great citizens, he guided them on their quest to excel in the everyday world. After joining the group in the cub pack at the age of around six, they advance to the scout troop or the sea scout troop when they are 11 and excel as scouts until they reach maturity when they become rovers and then take on the duties as guardians of the group.

"As the years have gone by and our old boys have gone into different parts of the world to chart their own fate and futures, we hope that the website will become a virtual meeting ground for them, a place where they can come back and revive memories of their younger years," states the press release.

Cultural cohesive

"The desire to hear lilting old Parsi melodies seems firmly embedded in the Parsi ethos," writes Dhun Fram Billimoria, committee member of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association (PZA) of Calcutta giving an account of the musical program they organized at the Mehta Atash Adaran hall on December 30, 2001.

Gujarati music generates the spirit of *Parsipanu* and evokes religio-cultural sentiments that bring the community together, remarked president Adi Rabadi. Guest artiste Jamshed Kotwal from Bombay who had come to regale the audience with songs from his first musical album *Ame Parsi, Ame Great* referred to his life's work interspersed with humorous anecdotes. He then rendered a series of inspiring religious songs including one which was not in the album, *Minoi thi geti maa aavi, amaari din Zarhosti* which were highly appreciated. But the ones which were an instant hit were the humorous songs *Daddy, Daddy, Ghoro Karao, Oh Dear Mumbai, My Dear Mumbai* and the evergreen *Ame Parsi, Ame Great*. In deference to audience requests he also sang a few Hindi film songs.



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To show their appreciation the PZA presented a silver salver and a bouquet of flowers to Kotwal as joint honorary secretary Dinsha Surti read the vote of thanks.

The popular *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathosti* sung with zest by all present in the hall reinforced that songs are a strong link that bind the culture, customs and religion of the community. The sumptuous dinner catered by Ervad Soli R. Kotwal brought to an end a memorable evening.

Dance to divinity

Dividing her time between New York and Bombay, between teaching, researching and performing, contemporary dancer Uttara Asha Coorlawala's dedication was rewarded with yet another distinction — the Dadabhai Naoroji International Award for Excellence and Lifetime Achievement. The Award conferred on her on May 25, 2001 in Bombay honors her "for creating a contemporary dance vocabulary for India and for having wrought a profound and permanent change in the Indian dance environment," notes a press release. Instituted by the Dadabhai Naoroji Parliamentary Centenary Com-

mittee, the award recognizes service to the nation and society.

Her seminal work is archived in the Dance Research Collection of the New York Public Library, Lincoln Centre, New York and finds a place in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* published by the Oxford University Press. Sections of her doctoral thesis and other writings are required reading for courses at Barnard, Columbia, UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles), Temple University and other dance programs, according to the press release. She is a professor at Long Island University and also teaches at Barnard College and Princeton.

Her lifelong aim has been to create a fusion between eastern and western forms of dance. She undertook intensive courses in yoga and Bharat Natyam, graduated from Smith College, trained under the legendary dance diva Martha Graham in New York, and performed with the Pearl Lang Dance Company and America's other great dance companies including Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham.

In 1970 her performance of Yakshi (inspired by the stone sculptures she had seen at Sanchi as a teenager) that

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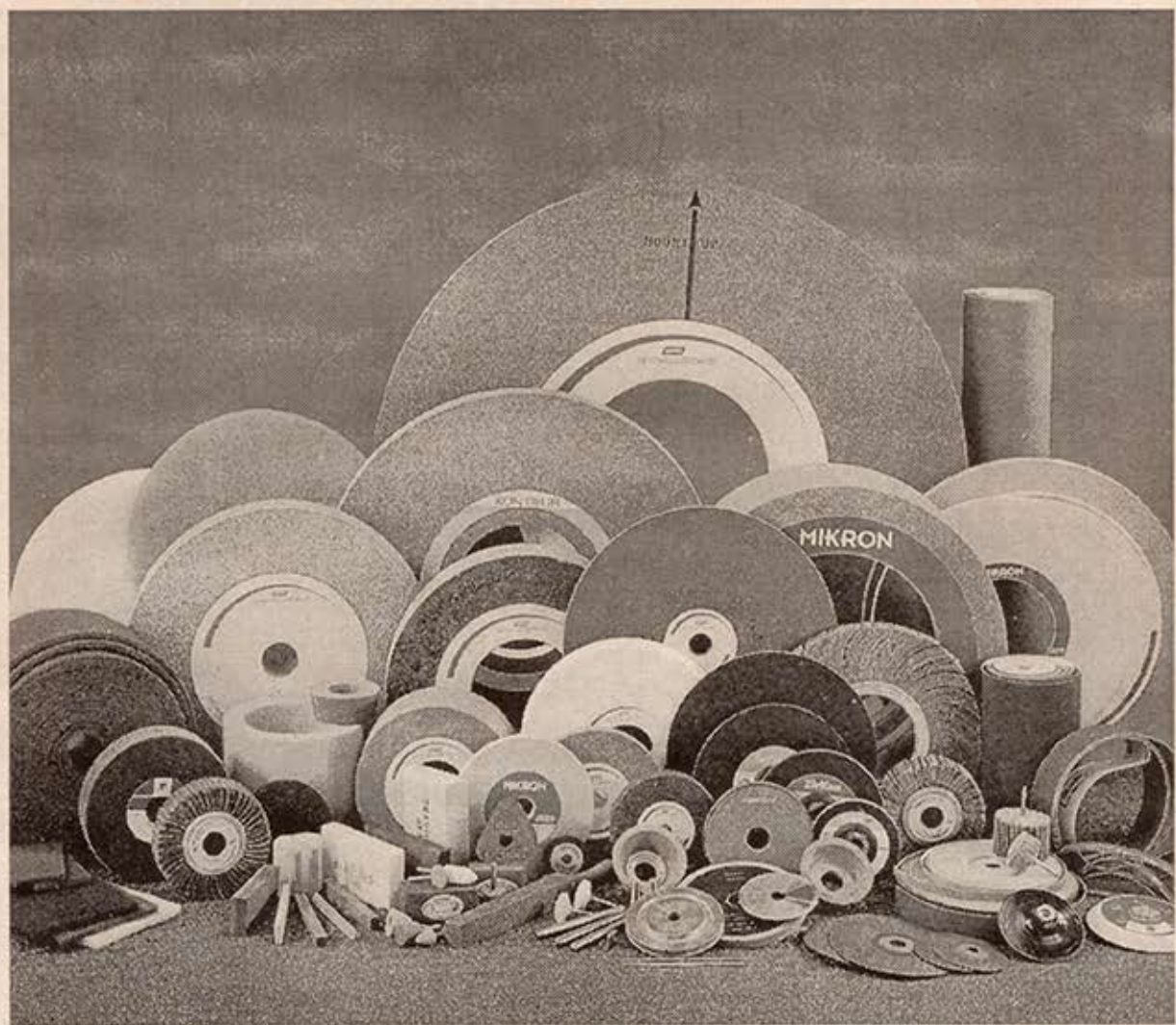
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Coorlawala: embodying the essence of dance (alongside) and conducting a class at the Leipzig Conservatory of Dance (far left)

fused Indian sensibilities with western dance techniques propelled her into the post modern movement. To ensure a continuous interaction between cultures she formed the Mandala Dance Theatre Company comprising eight young New York based dancers. "In 1974 they embarked on a nine-city tour in India and despite initial bewilderment, the tour changed perceptions about modern dance, giving the rich tradition of Indian dance a new direction and adding a new chapter to dance history," mentions a write-up by Gopika Vaidya. "A year later Coorlawala's dance changed dramatically through a chance meeting



with Swami Muktananda Paramhansa (who) christened her 'Uttara' after a princess in the *Mahabharata* who was taught dance by Prince Arjuna in his 13th avatar. Asha became Uttara Asha and with this emerged a new quest for truth through dance," adds Vaidya.

Over the years she has embarked on 20 international dance tours sponsored by cultural and government agencies. She is the past recipient of the JDRIII

Rockefeller Fellowship in USA and the Homi Bhabha Fellowship in India. With dance remaining an essential and central part of her being she is credited with having helped to reconceptualize the place and role of India in the global history of dance. Coorlawala lives up to the words of her guru Martha Graham that dance should "energize the spectator into keener awareness of the vigor, the mystery, the humor, the variety and the wonder of life."

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best that life has to offer. Second best is never good enough... I place great value on aspiration... I drive my motorcycle each day to enjoy that sheer driving pleasure, elan and luxury it holds," mentions motivational speaker Cyrus Jehangir Sataravalla, credited by *Business India* (January 7-20, 2002) as being "the only person in India with a

tions but symbols from my subconscious to reach beyond the normal set standards."

"The BMW has the undisputed reputation of being the finest motorcycle in the world; the ultimate touring machine — quiet, reliable, super smooth, very expensive... BMWs endure and they command respect as superb machines," wrote Sataravalla in response to *Parsiiana*'s queries.

Built in 1978 and priced at \$4,195 (around Rs 63,000 at that time) according to the *Business India* report, model R 100 S came to him in 1999 after years of correspondence with the Munich based Bayerische Motoren Werke AG. The company's historical archives sent him a rider's manual and technical data with the warning: "Keep them well, they are normally not available anymore." They are meant to last a lifetime and to be passed on to the next generation, states another news report.

In one of his missives to *Parsiiana*, Sataravalla puts it succinctly: "I'm a



Sataravalla: "believe in the powers within focussed thought"

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Although happy with his material possession Sataravalla was quoted in *Business India* as stating, "For me the BMW and Rolls Royce are not acquisi-

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man who passionately believes in the powers within focused thought. What happens to you is never as important as what you tell yourself inside. Your life is not one of chance. It is one of specific choices — decisions made during each ordinary everyday moment...Dreams are meant to come true in the here and now."

For Sataravalla these words are particularly meaningful for way back in 1977 after a grueling 13-hour life saving surgery his entire large intestine was removed in USA and 15 years later two feet of his small intestine. But the optimist describes the scenario: "This time it was not just life smiling upon me with this great blessing but destiny pointing a direct path I was to traverse. What remained was what counted, my inborn spirit and hidden awesome creative powers...That is the specific domain, that magical realm inside that my seminars focus on, guiding each to awaken to the crackle of that lightning bolt within urging you to strike way beyond temporary limitations, to tune instead into an altogether higher plane of awareness."

After studying at St Stephen's College in New Delhi he began his vocation as a tea taster in Calcutta in 1979

with Goodricke to be followed by 10 years as a fire extinguisher salesman with Minimax. "Today I set alight and fan that creative fire within people," mentions Sataravalla who under his Quantum Success banner conducts sessions for clients like Atlas Copco, Bajaj Auto, Dr Beck and Company, Garware Wall Ropes, Kirloskar Brothers, Mahindra and Mahindra. He then set out to recommission a shut down tea factory on a desolate hilltop in the Nilgiris where he spent nine months out in the wilds often surviving on wild honey when hunger gnawed, learning what "survival, danger, endurance and commitment meant."

Currently he is engaged 17 hours a day to complete his book *Beyond Guts*, the hard cover English edition of which is due to be published in April 2002. The feedback from internationally acclaimed best-selling author Dominique Lapierre, who found the foreword "exciting, warm, touching," Sataravalla feels is "a wonderful beginning for my coming book."

Stage savvy

"I had occasion to see the novel perfor-

mances of the Parsi Theatre which (were) eye-catching, for they had some excellent acting. They were also neater, compact and did not drag on like the others." Noted poet Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's interface with the theater which had been reported in her memoirs, *Inner Recesses Outer Spaces* was relived at the exhibition curated by Ranesh Ray on the occasion of her birth centenary celebrations at Delhi's India International Centre from October 22-31, 2001, mentions Naira Ahmadullah. Some other nuggets about the Parsi theater in the last quarter of the 19th century can also be gleaned from her writings:

"The Zoroastrian Natak Mandali went back to the '80s. Other Parsi companies followed like Elphinstone, Alfred. A repertory was formed in Urdu, Shahanama, that performed colorful shows like Arabian Nights as also Shakespeare. Among actors in my time, Baliwalla is best remembered as the most innovative and daringly adventurous. He took his troupe abroad, visited England, played before Queen Victoria and was rewarded by her in token of her appreciation, a fact very few seem to know. Some of these Parsis



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were resourceful in stagecraft besides histrionics. They used for their themes Sanskrit and Persian mythology, medieval legends, historical events from diverse races and peoples, made adaptations to suit local conditions. They brought women on the stage and the artist Gohar attained much fame. They also did pantomimes. I regret that those who never saw these plays constantly malign them contemptuously. They were a passing phase by their very nature but nevertheless carried a flavor of their own which made considerable impact even on seasoned theater artists of the time.

"It was the Parsi Theatre that introduced the Hindi drama to the Calcutta audience. Though matured, the audience seemed to have fallen for it. Even a veteran artiste and one of the pioneers of modern Bengali Theatre, Sisir Bhaduri, joined the Bengali Theatre of the Madans who ran the Parsi Theatre. It is equally interesting that Prithviraj Kapoor, the veteran actor of Bombay, had his first innings in the Calcutta Parsi Theatre."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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At the economic helm

As Sri Lanka's minister of finance, Kairshasp Choksy is working to revive the country's paralyzed economy

Arnavaz S. Mama

As the United National Front government undertook to rebuild a civil war shattered Sri Lanka after the seven-year rule of the People's Alliance party, the incoming Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe chose President's Counsel Kairshasp Choksy as his finance minister. Choksy, the country's first "full-time finance minister after 14 years," inherits an economy "torn at its seams. The losses are astronomical. The deficits are gargantuan," Ravi Ladduwahetty describes Sri Lanka's financial landscape in a prelude to his interview with Choksy published in *Daily News* (January 28, 2002).

In the published interview Choksy himself describes the economy as "in a state of paralysis. Economic growth, for the first time in our history, is below zero. Inflation is running at around 15 percent. The budget deficit last year was as much as 11 percent of GDP (gross domestic product). Recurrent expenditure has exceeded revenue. The outstanding public debt is Rs 1,414 billion. This means that taken as an average over Sri Lanka's population, every citizen of Sri Lanka carries a debt of Rs 76,000."

It will require an iron will for Choksy to push through his program of reducing current expenditure while maintaining capital investment, simplifying the tax structure, deregulating business transactions, pushing Rs 25 billion worth of stagnant projects through to productivity and effectively utilizing the US

\$ 700 million annual allocation in foreign aid that, he says, has remained unutilized since many years. At a time when government revenue is facing a projected decline of Rs 30 billion, it will maintain the additional payment of Rs 1,250 million in salary increases to public servants and Rs 750 million in additional pension costs which the outgoing People's Alliance had promised to the electorate, as per the interview article.

Choksy's task could hardly be envied by any economist in the world. That Wickremesinghe has handed it to Choksy could be because of the latter's proven talent for finding his way through political landmines: he had steered President Ranasinghe Premadasa to victory in the Sri Lanka Supreme Court in 1988, routing Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the former Prime Minister, who had challenged Premadasa's election on the grounds of intimidation et al. The hearings which spanned 525 working days, examined 910 witnesses and covered 26,000 pages in recorded proceedings entered *The Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest trial in history.

Refusing to be pinned down to a "fixed timetable," Choksy was banking on "the ongoing ceasefire (with insurgent LTTE to) help reduce military expenses." He hoped to revive the pri-

vate sector in the course of his government's peace talks with the LTTE and also "contain inflation... through the increase of foreign direct investment (FDI)," greater deregulation and trade.

To establish the transparency and accountability that the business community is seeking in a land where "corruption and kickbacks were rampant" for 25 years, as noted Ladduwahetty, Choksy said that all large tenders would need the approval of the finance ministry. Choksy expected to maintain apparel exports and revive tourism in view of the prevailing ceasefire; to promote small and medium scale industries in the rural areas to create employment opportunities; to improve management in the public sector by chairing a committee that will "frequently review and coordinate the progress of each project to ensure efficient and timely implementation." By these and other concomitant measures like curtailing the budget deficit, Choksy hopes to rev up the currently projected -0.6 percent growth rate of the economy to a positive five percent.

Choksy is a respected constitutional and commercial lawyer. A trustee and the most high profile of the 60 odd Parsis who now constitute the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Trust, Choksy had had a berth in an earlier United National Party government. In a chat with *Parsiana* in 1998 he had ascribed the reduced numbers of the community from an earlier estimate of 350 to the change in citizenship laws that mandated that a person and his/her father had to be Sri Lanka born to qualify for citizenship. Half the community had then chosen to return to India. When the study of Sinhalese became com-



Choksy (above and alongside) assuming ministerial responsibility with Freny, Kharsheed, Vishtasp and their wives Pervin and Sirina looking on

pulsory, it triggered a migration to Australia, Choksy had told *Parsiana* (see "The Zoroastrians of Serendip," *Parsiana*, January 1999).

Choksy, his wife Freny and their three sons, chose to remain. While Jamsheed pursues his academic career in the US as associate professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University, Vishtasp is a lawyer and Kharshed, a research manager with the US Agency for International Development in Colombo.

Jassawalla's artificial heart

Congestive heart failure, a degenerative progressive disease, kills 500,000 Americans every year, informs *The Gateway* (August 14, 2001), the bulletin of the Rotary Club of Bombay. There are only two treatment options available—a heart transplant or the use of an artificial heart. With only 4,500 donor hearts available worldwide, the demand for artificial hearts is reckoned at 100,000 a year all over the world.

The Gateway ascribes these figures to a talk given by Jal S. Jassawalla who is said to have spent his entire working life developing an implantable artificial heart which received the approval

of the US Federal Drug Agency (FDA) two years ago. Since then 1,300 patients have received a new lease of life, notes *The Gateway*.

The World Heart Corporation's senior vice-president, Jassawalla, with 15 patents for implantable devices under his belt, is said to be working to develop the next generation of heart assistance systems.

*Jassawalla:
giving a new
lease of life*

The topic of Jassawalla's Rotary lecture was "Challenges in the making of an implantable artificial heart." This integrated pump drive unit is placed in the upper left quadrant of the abdomen. It has an inflow connection to the left ventricle of the heart and an outlet connected to the aorta, the main artery of the body. The device is designed to be self-regulating, he said.

Describing the advantages of the artificial heart as compared to a transplant, Jassawalla said, "First, you leave the normal regulatory mechanisms intact if you leave the heart in place.

Second, the heart can act as a back-up should you have a problem with the device. And third, in a few patients we have removed the device after a prolonged period of support. We call this a 'bridge to recovery application' which we would not have been able to do had we removed the patient's heart."

Powered by a pair of batteries, the device is made of material that is biocompatible, inert and not capable of triggering the body's rejection mechanism, notes the *The Gateway* article.

The durable miniature device transfers power without damaging the body's tissues and is blood compatible. It has been designed to keep pace with the human heart which beats 15 million times a year, notes the write-up. It is monitored with a remote so that non-invasive intervention, if ever required, is possible.

The artificial heart was subjected to long-term bench testing, animal experiments and clinical trials spanning 18 months, which involved comparison of survival with "controls" (patients treated with the best available medical therapy). The device recipients recorded a survival rate of 87 percent against the controls' survival rate of 35 percent,



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winning it the FDA approval. Moreover, the patients who survived enjoyed a better quality of life, leading normal lives, Jassawalla told his audience.

Developed at a cost of \$ 250 million, the device has been implanted in patients throughout the world whose average age is reckoned at 48 years. Jassawalla informed the gathering that the next generation systems will be smaller, simpler and "more forgettable" for the recipient. His team is also working to extend the product life of the device from the current five to 10 years and to reduce the cost from the present \$70,000 (which does not include hospital stay and other expenses) as well as the overall cost of the therapy, said Jassawalla.

The son of Roshan and Sohrab Jassawalla, Jal is a former student of Bombay's Cathedral and John Connon High School who completed his masters in mechanical engineering from Stanford University in 1970 and his MBA from Berkeley in 1978. Married to Diane, Jassawalla enjoys a good read. The couple have two children, a daughter Amisa, 16, who has just graduated from high school and a son Nikhil, 14, informs their grandmother Roshan.

Repaying the community

The Bank of America's vice president/business partner relationship manager, supplier diversity and development (SD&D) group in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, Rustam Wadia advises minority business enterprises: "Don't be content with merely being a supplier — position your company as a partner; forge an alliance," as notes the *Minority Business News USA* (November 15-December 15, 2001). The article further observes that Wadia provides leadership expertise, information and solutions to SD&D "champions" and their teams to help them achieve the Bank's goal of spending at least 15 percent of its procurement dollars with minority owned businesses.

Reinforcing a corporate culture that "welcomes, values and promotes diversity," Wadia serves on the finance group's diversity business council which provides information, arranges forums and makes recommendations to senior management "on how to achieve the Bank's associate diversity goals," as per the publication.

The son of Shirin and the late Noshir Wadia, Rustam schooled at St Mary's, Bombay and acquired his commerce



Dolly Malva, president of the Zoroastrian Association of California, presented Mobed Zarir Bhandara with a shawl to commemorate a decade of voluntary community service, moral and spiritual guidance, religious education, the performance of ceremonies, interfaith representation and spiritual healing

graduation from Sydenham College before proceeding to Lynchburg University in Virginia for his MBA. Wadia has been with the Bank of America since 1986 when he joined as a manage-

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ment associate in Virginia. As a relationship manager in 1991 for the Community Development Banking Group, he successfully executed the Bank's community development initiative for the western and south western regions of Virginia, notes the report. Moving to Charlotte in 1997 as a product specialist, Wadia assisted relationship managers oversee several national, non-profit alliances.



Wadia: providing leadership expertise

Strongly motivated to help others, Wadia has been active in the non-profit, affordable housing and community services areas. Besides housing, his focus of attention has included the environment, a museum of African-American culture and the local chapter of the American Red Cross. He was a full-time loaned executive with the United Way of Roanoke Valley's 1987 campaign. Married to Farida who shares his community concerns, Wadia enjoys reading and listening to western classical music, says his mother.

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"The infidels do not inherit"

Farhang Mehr

Injustice done to Zoroastrians in Iran
is condemned by the author

A recent event has confronted the Iranian Zoroastrian community with a dilemma: to stay in Iran and face gradual extinction, or to migrate and be assimilated in the melting pot of international communities abroad!

This is the event: A Zoroastrian called Behrooz Foroodian had embraced Islam some years ago.

His mother and father died on June 22, 1999 and April 25, 2000 respectively. Foroodian has five siblings, three brothers and two sisters. Under the current Iranian Islamic Civil Code, Behrooz claimed all inheritance as the only Muslim heir. His siblings maintained that the Zoroastrian Religious Code, which is recognized by the Islamic government, applied to the deceased parents and should therefore govern the inheritance. The dispute reached the law court. In the meantime Foroodian wrote a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei which read (in translation):

"The supreme leader, your august reverend Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

"After respectful salutation, I seek your sanctified verdict on the following issue: If one of the members of a Zartushti family, (living) in Iran under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Republic regime, embraces the Shia Islam, and subsequently the parents die, how should the inheritance be divided among the several children, having regard to the fact that only one child has embraced Islam?

"Wishing an increasing success for all Muslims and with thanks.

Behrooz Foroodian"

Underneath the letter is written (translation): "In the name of the Most High

"With a Muslim heir, the infidels (*Kâfers*) do not inherit." The curt rejoinder bears the seal of the Ayatollah.

Consequently, the 'Tehran Court No. 515' gave its judgment in favor of

Behrooz Foroodian and deprived the other heirs of their share of the inheritance.

A few years ago, under different circumstances, a married Zoroastrian woman was enamored of a Muslim man who happened to be a

Pasdar (a member of the Revolutionary Guard). She obtained her divorce from her Zoroastrian husband and brought an action in the court for custody of their children. The former Zoroastrian husband, in order to retain custody over their children, had no alternative but to become Muslim, even in name.

Unfortunately, such sad events may repeat themselves in the name of Islamic justice and lead to the extinction of the Zoroastrian community. From the beginning of Islam, financial gain has been offered as an incentive in fighting for victory in its religious wars, for avoiding payment of *jazya* (personal tax) and now for gaining inheritance.

The new Iranian law (Article 881 annex), depriving *Zimmi* (minority community, viz Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians) heirs of their lawful inheritance has no basis in the *Koran*. It

was enacted only 10 years ago. It prescribes that if a member of a *Zimmi* becomes Muslim, the other family members will not inherit.

In June 1996, when my wife Parichehr and I visited Iran at the invitation of the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance to participate in the Sixth World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC), an Iranian Zoroastrian had alerted me to this new law. I discussed it with Parviz Ravani, the then Zoroastrian representative in the Parliament (Islamic Majlis). He indicated that before enactment of the law he had protested but to no avail.

I had therefore been on a lookout for an appropriate occasion to bring that question up, to some high-level Iranian authority. Fortunately, the right time came during the course of the Sixth WZC. At the invitation of the Office for Religious Dialogue (within the International Studies and Research Center of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relations), a one-day conference was arranged between the Muslim and Zoroastrian scholars. On the Islamic side the participants included Ayatollahs Taskhiri, Seyed Mohamad Khamenei (leader's brother), Hojatolislam Dr Hojati Kermani and several Tehran University professors. On the Zoroastrian side were the late Mubed Rustam Shahzadi, Mubed Dr J. Oshidari, Dr Mahyar Ardeshtari (president of the Sixth WZC), Ravani and Dr Khusrow Dabestani (present Zoroastrian representative in the Parliament), Dr K. Vafadari, myself and my wife and a few others.

After a discourse by Kermani on Islam and its treatment of other religions and by me on Zoroastrianism and its treatment of other religions, a question and answer session started. That provided the best opportunity for me to raise the new law concerning inheritance and *dieh* (blood money).

After quoting the 'Article 881 annex' of the Civil Code, I requested the Muslim scholars to indicate the relevant Koranic basis for that law. None was offered. Then I explained that this practice only started in the early 17th century when a Christian (Armenian) boy in Isfahan embraced Islam. His father died a few months later. The boy claimed all the inheritance. The matter was referred to Mohammad Baqer Majlessi, the great Mujtahed of the Safavid court,



Fire housed in the Pir-e-Sabz

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who gave his verdict in favor of the newly converted Armenian. This rule was extended to other religious minorities — Zarathushtis and Jews, during the Oajar dynasty period, until the second half of the 19th century, when it was repealed by Nasser-al-Din Shah at the urging of Maneckji Limji Hataria. Unfortunately it has been reestablished under the Islamic Republic. After my explanation, Ayatollah Seyed Mohamad Khamenei asked one of the Tehran University professors to study the matter and subsequently report to him.

Seyed Ali Khamenei, the religious leader, and Hojatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani (the then President of the Islamic Republic of Iran), during their meetings with Zarathushti delegations to the Sixth WZC.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had said (translation): "Friends and my Zarathushti compatriots! This is a new and sweet meeting for me. Although in our dear Iran, the followers of all religions live together in an atmosphere of friendship and peace the Zarathushtis have a closer bond with the Muslims. First,

because Iran is the birthplace of the Zarathushti religion. This is a matter of pride for this country to be the birthplace of one of the divine religions. Few lands have had the privilege of being graced with a divine religion and one of its natives being selected by God to be a prophet and receive revelation."

Rafsanjani had stated (translation): "Centuries before the arrival of Islam in this country, our dear Iran witnessed the birth of the Zarathushti religion, which is a divine religion, and Zarathushtra is one of the divine prophets. Islam has acknowledged the divinity of this religion and has recognized it as such."

Needless to say, in the light of these statements, as well as one made subsequently by Hojatolislam Mohammad Khatami, (the present President of Iran) which I shall describe below, I was quite bewildered when I saw the ruling in 2000 with the seal of the religious leader, underneath the letter of Foroodian. I still want to assume that it was written without Ayatollah Khamenei's knowledge!

Let me now recall the September 1998 meeting of Iranian immigrants with Khatami. During the President's visit to the United Nations, again I

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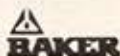


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brought up the unjust law on inheritance to the attention of the new President. When I asked for the floor, I mentioned that I was Zarathushti and my question concerned Zarathushtis in Iran. The President was magnanimous enough to recognize me by saying that "Iranian higher education, learning and culture are truly indebted to you" and then admitted that all Iranians have Zarathushti roots. He continued that the Zarathushti religion today stands as one of the great four divine religions: Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam.

This was my question to the President: "The Islamic Republic Constitution, like the previous 1906 Constitution, has recognized three minority religions in Iran: Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism, and has allocated certain seats to them in the Islamic Majlis. Also the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic, like the Civil Code of the previous regime, has allowed the followers of these religions to observe the rules and customs of their own religions in the matters of personal affairs such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and wills. Unfortunately in 1991, a law was passed (Section 881 bis of the Iranian Civil Code) which adjoins that if a member of a religious minority family becomes Muslim, that person will become the sole heir when the parents die, regard-

A Zoroastrian dharamshala in Esfahan endowed by the Zartoshty brothers Photo: Zend M. Zend

less of the degree of his or her relationship to the deceased, and regardless of the fact whether such a relationship is through consanguinity (blood) or affinity (marriage). This law is unjust and has indeed frustrated the advantages of the law that religious minorities, in matters of their personal affairs, are subject to their religious laws and customs. So far as I have researched,

this new law has no basis in the *Koran*. According to universally accepted practice, it is the personal law of the deceased that should govern inheritance, not that of one of the heirs. This is the law accepted by all nations, in all religions. In your speech today you referred several times to 'civil society' that you would like to see in Iran. You also

If a Zarathushti is murdered or killed through manslaughter, or receives bodily harm in any way, no blood money will be paid to him or her

spoke of justice. In the name of those noble goals, I earnestly entreat you to issue an order for investigation of the matter, and for establishment of justice.

"The other issue that I would like to raise is in connection with payment of the blood money (*dieh*) to a victim or the victim's heirs. In the Iranian Criminal Code payment of blood money is assessed for Muslim men and women, but there is no provision for payment of

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blood money to the victims from religious minorities. Consequently, if a Zarathushti is murdered or killed through manslaughter, or receives bodily harm in any way, no blood money will be paid to him or her as the case may be. Again, since you stated today that in a 'civil society,' all people must enjoy equal rights and those who have been treated unjustly should demand their rights through the existing legal channels, I earnestly request you to issue an order for the matter to be investigated and the injustice be removed. I believe that in the Iranian civil society all people who are proud to be Iranians should enjoy equal human dignity and every effort must be made within the legal framework to attain equality."

President Khatami replied, "I am not familiar with these laws. You have the right to express your views. So long as a law is on the books, it will be implemented. But if there are different views, these must be expressed and we must make efforts to bring our views closer to what goes on in today's world, and try to understand them. Mindful of the prevailing interests of the society,

our laws should be more encompassing. Citizens of all religions, just because they have accepted Iranian citizenship, must benefit from all the rights of citizenship. And presently, all this exists to a great extent; if it seems that in some cases there are shortcomings, they must be resolved through discussion and dialog."

Despite these reassurances for the equally dignified position of religious minorities, review and possible changes in the law, made by the Iranian authorities at the highest levels in 1996 and 1998, nothing seems to have been done. Hence the Foroodian case and the injustice done to Behrooz's siblings, is a case for Dabestani, the present Zarathushti representative in Parliament, to seek justice, jointly with representatives of other religious minorities in the Majlis within the directives of the President himself. It is a test to try out both the Iranian government's sincerity and its ability to deliver on its promises.

About three months ago the Armenian representative in Islamic Assembly Majlis declared that because of legal discriminations in Iran, many

Armenians have migrated to North America, Australia and Armenia and he feared that in a few years, the Armenian population in Iran will drastically dwindle. I hope that would not happen to the Zarathushtis. Every reasonable effort must be first made in the interest of justice, welfare of the Zarathushti community, and the preservation of the Zarathushti community, religion and culture in Iran.

With the reelection of President Khatami and serious efforts by Dabestani, I pray that these unjust laws will be repealed and that Zarathushtis will be able to live in Iran, the cradle of the Zarathushti religion, in peace and with dignity.

Scholar, author and activist Farhang Mehr was



Iran's former deputy prime minister who left the country during the Islamic revolution. A professor emeritus of Boston University, Mehr is presently editor of Humata, the journal of the Center for Ancient Iranian

Studies. This article has been reprinted from Humata, Fall 2001.

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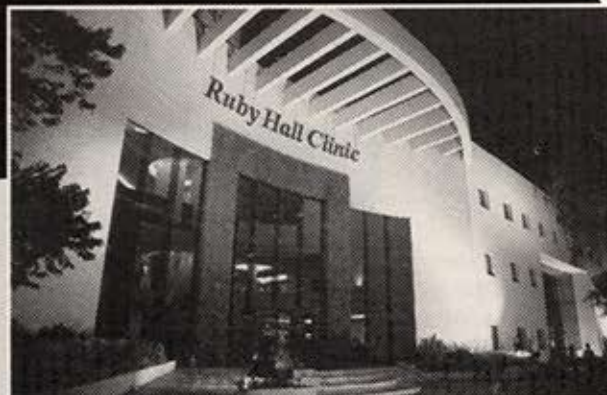
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For many that grew up and live away from the main Zarathushti homeland areas, Zarathushti culture may be a concept and a heritage and not as much a part of their everyday life. But for those living in the main Zarathushti-populated areas, it is a matter of being a Zarathushti every day and everywhere, growing with it, seeing and feeling it and living the Zarathushti heritage as an integral part of their close and homogeneous community.

The pace of change was almost non-existent in the small cities of Kerman, Yazd, Shiraz and Isfahan for many decades, where Zarathushtis found a peaceful way of coexisting with the majority Muslims. Families lived together and maintained their traditional way of life very dearly. The strict Muslim environment, in a way, brought Zarathushtis even closer. The younger generation easily accepted the old ways and felt a sense of duty to safeguard the heritage.

It was noon again at Iranshahr Male Elementary School in Kerman. Mehrban, the school administrator standing at the classroom door, lined up the students, except for the few non-Zarathushti ones, who were excused. The line was heading across the street to the atash kadeh (fire-temple) where the students said their daily prayers before they were allowed to eat lunch.

The young boys took turns every day to read aloud from the *Avesta*, while the others whispered along. This daily ritual was a part of every Zarathushti elementary student's life for six years. The late principal, Mirza Borzoo, took personal interest in checking this daily event and giving a short speech on Zarathushti values. Almost all male Zarathushtis in the town have gone at one point through this over 40-year-old tradition.

Zarathushti schools were recognized as the best in the country. Many non-Zarathushti



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Images of his Iranian homeland flash through the author's mind

families took pride in taking their children there, as did many teachers to teach in these progressive schools. Most of the school properties were donated by Zarathushtis. Lifelong dedicated teachers and staff here had a reputation for devotion, hard work and discipline. Their products moved on to pursue successful careers.

on minorities in government and military jobs, but mostly due to their success and reputation for honesty and dedication.

Zarathushtis were better educated, employed and involved in the community than other minority groups. Zarathushti doctors, teachers and tradesmen were highly respected and trusted. Many Zarathushtis were either in the middle or upper class.

It was very common for a son to work with and to take over the father's business. Many larger trades had all Zarathushti workers, who started as young clerks and assistants and later earned partnership status. Several Zarathushti families owned large farmlands and enjoyed wealth and influence in the community. The informal system of charity, elders as mentors, and regular religious, ritual functions helped keep the community together.

In addition to the main atash kadeh, there were many other dedicated, sacred properties named after Zarathushti 'angels' (Varahram Izad, Oshtad Izad, etc). On the day of the month whose



Bazaar in Isfahan (top) and (along-side) a rooftop jashan in Yazd

Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama

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name matched the location, Zarathushtis crowded the property with religious functions and rituals. It was a combination of a social gathering and religious beliefs that brought scores of Zarathushtis to an atash kadeh on a certain day each month.

In a town of reportedly 10,000 Zarathushtis, this minority group was closely knit and enjoyed strong ties. Most Zarathushtis knew each other. While this helped to foster a feeling of belonging and support, its downside included some undue gossip.

There were horror stories from a generation earlier about discrimination and severe hardship for Zarathushtis. They were required to pay a tax for not being Muslim and their food and belongings were considered unclean. While the community lived in peace and harmony with the majority Muslims, the feeling of separation and discomfort helped keep the community even closer together.

In the later years of the Shah's regime, as Iran was being modernized, many younger Zarathushtis migrated from the villages to the main towns and from the towns to the capital. Tehran was known as the land of opportunity and the Zarathushti community there began to flourish. Zarathushtis, as the main minority, gained the right to one representative in Parliament. They were mentioned with respect in the media and in publications.

Life may never be the same for the immigrants who left Iran for the West. Most of them left in a hurry shortly after the revolution, adapted to the western way of life, and established careers and life in North America. They could no longer practice the same religious-cultural functions as frequently, belong to a homogeneous community or relate to their heritage as fellow Zarathushtis did back home, but they kept up the ties and pride in their ancestral heritage.

As much as the newer Zarathushti generation here persists in questioning the old ways and assimilates into the western lifestyle and mentality, the older generation has remained faithful to their early upbringing and not forgotten the relatives left behind. It is always a joy to hear news from back home, have a personal contact or a visit, or even just talk about the good old days in the motherland.

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The fire's fortieth

The Delhi Parsi Anjuman celebrated the ruby anniversary of the Katrak Dar-e-Meher with a jashan and reasoned discourse

Text and photographs by Arnavaz S. Mama

In reverent service to Ahura Mazda's "most potent symbol... the fire of the temple, of the hearth, of the heart" in the words of Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna, the Parsis of Delhi celebrated the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher with three days of intellectual stimulation and jollity starting with the commemorative jashan on December 21, 2001. Made "soot and smoke free" thanks to the professional expertise of architect Prof Kavas Kapadia, refurbished in granite, the flower-bedecked Dar-e-Meher sparkled in the afternoon sun.

Why were they celebrating its 40 years? "There can't be more than five or six of those present when the fire was enthroned. Don't think they'll be around 10 years hence," noted Sethna in the course of his sentimental salute to those present and past at the inaugural function that followed the jashan. Even as he acknowledged the aid of Kapadia and of DPA vice president Dadi Mistry who collected the donations that funded the project, Sethna recalled the Dar-e-Meher fire's first tender, Ervad Daraius Bagli, the rerecording of whose prayer cassette was released on this occasion by FPZAI (Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India) east zone vice president Homi Bodhanwalla of Jamshedpur. Termed "the 'dancing dasturji' by local papers," the late Bagli "had looked after his flock as a good shepherd, yet wrote plays and played games," according to Sethna. Lauding the "great work and great donations" of Daraius' wife Dhun, son Cawas who officiates as the DPA head priest and his wife Benaifer, all of whom daily maintain the Anjuman complex comprising the Mengusi Dharamshala, the Dar-e-Meher and the Bhiwandiwalla Hall, Sethna's homage to the Bagli family was roundly endorsed by the Delhi Zarathushtris packing the

Bhiwandiwalla Hall. Also released on the occasion was the latest edition of *Dipanjali*, the periodical of the DPA.

Also on offer were two exhibitions — the work of photo journalist Homai Vyarawalla in the basement of the Bhiwandiwalla Hall and of textiles (tanchois, garas), period pictures and artefacts in the Jungalwalla Hall organized by Dadi Pudumjee and Diana Khambatta.

Another institution of which the DPA is proud is The Farohars, the second generation religious class for children aged four to 14 originally begun by scholar Piloo Jungalwalla and now run according to Jungalwalla's guidelines by her old students, notably Kerman Mehta and Rukshana Shroff. The two "pillars of strength whose persistence, hard work and enthusiasm had helped maintain Parsi traditions," in Sethna's words, were presented mementoes as were all the present and past Farohars who had remained with the class for those 10 years of their lives. Several individuals who had helped the DPA in a number of ways, were thanked and honored with mementoes, especially the TCI [Travel Corporation (India) Limited] and its Parsi links in Delhi — Behram Dumasia and Jamshed Sidhwa.

After a brief variety performance by The Farohars, keynote speaker Dr Lokesh Chandra of the International Academy of Indian Culture (IAIC) was introduced by Jungalwalla as the "distinguished son of a distinguished father." The library of the IAIC contains fabulous Tibetan, Mongolian, Iranian and Sanskrit manuscripts collected by Chandra's father over many years of travel in Central Asia, including a cupboard full of books on Zoroastrianism, and several tankas of which one featured four giani Buddhas at the corners and the seven Amesha Spentas in a circle at the center, noted Jungalwalla.

Addressing the topic, "Moral values from the teachings of Zarathushtra,"

Chandra noted that ancient Avestan texts describe the geography of eastern, not western Iran — the mountain ranges of the Hindukush and Seistan, modern Afghanistan and neighboring regions.

Hence the origin of Zoroastrianism should be sought in eastern Iran. He spoke of the Ashinov, Iranians of the Vedic period, who were great physicians and surgeons, providing artificial limbs to those who had lost theirs in war.

The scholar, who was equally familiar with a variety of languages and traditions, deftly criss-crossed the borders between Hindu, Zoroastrian and Buddhist thoughts to the amazement (and bewilderment) of the audience.

The major concern of the Iranian mind, according to Chandra, was to find the nobility of the human being, not the divine being. "Existence should be the primary concern of human beings. It transcends parochial concerns." He said Zarathushtra prohibited the slaying of bulls. Chandra called it "the first clear statement against the eating of beef" and wondered whether Indian vegetarianism was the influence of Iranians. Describing Eastern Iranians as trilingual — they knew Sanskrit, Persian and Greek — Chandra noted that the turquoise, considered to be an auspicious gem, was used in meditation and therefore also used by Tibetan monks.

Referring to the violence unleashed by the Taliban who consider themselves soldiers of God, Chandra noted that "the clash of civilizations should lead to something higher." Describing the Zoroastrian approach as "ethical rather than spiritual," Chandra noted, "The Avestan tradition has not been duplicated. In the cold, simmering climate of distrust and hate Zarathushtra is walking. Take him along... You with all your culture, all your wealth, can create a world of responsibility in relationships. Existence is for transcendence, transcendence for existence," he advised.

When former solicitor general Tehmtan Andhyarujina questioned the speaker on the Iranian tradition vis-à-vis Judaism, Chandra noted that because of Zoroastrianism's positive concern for man "Zoroastrianism can illuminate the dark corners of hate and negation. In Judaism man does not hold the central position."

Lawyer and crime novelist Armin Wandrewala asked, "Is there any such

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thing as absolute truth? And would absolute truth be dangerous in today's terms where one person's faith is another's fundamentalism?" Answered Chandra: "(There are) no absolutes from my point of view in the Avestan tradition. Best truth is not equal to supreme truth. The divine becomes relative because the accent is also on the human."

The morning of the second day was devoted to "The societal issues affecting the Parsi community" with member of parliament, diplomat and scholar Dr L. M. Singhvi in the chair who spoke of Zoroastrianism as the "living bridge between moral issues and the community as it perceives itself and as others perceive it... It is important for all of us to understand the remarkable continuity of Zarathushtra's traditions and teachings." He spoke of the Prophet's teachings as "not only a Parsi community heritage but of the world. He inspired what in Vedic tradition is called *dharma*, the conception of order and moral values." Flagging off demographer and DPA trustee Ava Khullar's presentation on "the demographic crisis of the Zoroastrian community," Singhvi noted, "Parsi demography is running in the opposite direction to the Indian phenomenon. Numbers are important to continue polity and to take polity to heights that the Parsi community has taken it."

Ascribing the declining numbers to "almost total urbanization and modernization" Khullar said the community was facing the "predicament of progress" — small family norms as well as non-marriage to ensure a materially richer existence. Though the phenomenon of a negative growth rate (more deaths than births) affects all progressive western communities, the total strength of the Zoroastrian community is too low to withstand this annual decline, she explained. "The overwhelming concern for identity is overshadowing the more crucial matter of our long-term survival," Khullar opined.

While 30 percent of Parsis (over 45 percent in Delhi) have non-Parsi spouses, 10 percent of Parsi marriages within the community end in divorce and 15 to 20 percent of men and women remain unmarried, the orthodox lobby devotes its energy to attack those who deviate from tradition rather than considering the need to evolve with the changing time and situations, rued Khullar. In contrast to the rural history of the Parsis when out of wedlock children fathered by Parsi men with the *dubra* tribal women of Gujarat

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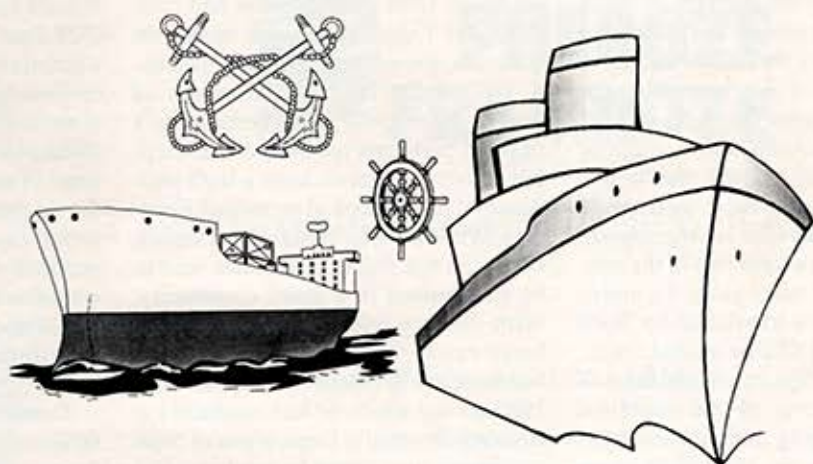
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L to R (top row): The refurbished Dar-e-Meher; Singh and Chandra; Bharucha and Andhyarujina; (center) The commemorative jashan; Khorshed Nowsherwanji, K. and A. Sethna; Daraius (top) and C. Bagli; (below) Perveen Mehta unveiling the foundation stone of the Dharamshala; the Jijinas (top); Mistry, Dhun and B. Bagli



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were quietly navjoted and brought into the Zoroastrian fold, Khullar noted that 99 percent of non-Parsi spouses in Delhi were from the educated upper strata of other communities yet their children were not being accepted. She referred to recent events — viz the attempts to set up a council of high priests and the use of terms like 'bastard' to denote children of mixed marriage — as a regressive approach to community problems.

Do these traditions have religious sanctity? Khullar quoted the words "*Daaddin beh mazdayasnan, agai ravahi goafrangani baad, hafta keshvar zamin; aidun baad*" which form part of the concluding stanza of every yasht. Its meaning, according to a translation by Irach Taraporevala that Khullar quoted, reads, "May the knowledge, extent and fame of the commandments of the excellent Mazda worshipping religion ever increase over the world, over all its seven regions. So may it be."

The way forward according to Khullar was to counter the low aspiration levels of the middle segment of Parsi youths in Bombay; generate the striving for excellence; encourage early marriages; tap the genetic pool of Iranian Zoroastrians; keep mixed marriages within the fold. "It is

very difficult to change the thinking and lifestyle of a people... Once members of a community have enjoyed the advantage of non-marriage and low fertility, the process is almost irreversible," admitted Khullar. Hence, she advised that we desist from confrontation and conflict, and focus, with vohu mana, on cohesion, growth and reasoned debate.

Neurologist Dr Nadir Bharucha of Bombay who spoke of the community's medical problems noted that a conception exists that Parsis have a high incidence of psychological or mental disorders. While he hadn't studied this aspect, Bharucha felt that eccentricities tend to be exaggerated in a small community. With passing reference to G6PD and breast cancer, Bharucha concentrated on neurological problems. He spoke of a 1985 survey which he had conducted at Bombay Hospital's Department of Neuroepidemiology where he was helped by his father Dr Eddie Bharucha. Of the 14,010 persons comprising 4,500 households in Parsi colonies up to Mahim who had been surveyed, 2,014 people had said they were suffering from neurological disorders. He said they encountered cases of peripheral neuropathy, sciatica and spondilosis but no leprosy. Bharucha

noted that the study recorded essential tremors at 1663.1 per 100,000 — one of the highest in the world. It is a benign condition, not to be mixed up with Parkinsons and is probably inherited, he added. The study recorded one of the highest findings of Parkinson's disease (328.3 per 100,000) whose cause may be a genetic predisposition or may be due to environmental factors. Though the cause is not really established the incidence of disease increases with age. Bharucha said cases of stroke at 842.3 per 100,000 was the highest in the world. Comparing stroke cases with a parallel controlled population he found that stroke patients were also suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes, transient ischemic attacks, heart disease or harbored high cholesterol levels.

Consanguinity (cousin marriages) is a factor only in cerebral palsy, mental retardation and epilepsy, noted Bharucha. The prevalence of multiple sclerosis is comparable to that in Europe, he added. One in four Parsis over the age of 20 registered hypertension though one-third of the affected people were unaware of it. He also noted that 25 percent of patients were not complying with the treatment which included diet and lifestyle changes neces-



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sary to combat neurological disease.

Introducing Andhyarujina, Singhvi said, "Maybe, he'll be able to tell us what would happen if Parsi law is more applicable to Parsi demography." Responded Andhyarujina, "Parsi problems of demography do not affect the statute law of Parsis but the customary law which has failed to keep pace with changes in the community. Unless we change customary law, statute law cannot keep pace."

Andhyarujina noted that the migrant Zoroastrians did not carry a body of law; they acquired some through the *Rivayats* (a body of letters between the Zoroastrians of India asking questions and the Zoroastrians of Iran answering them). When the Panchayet system was adopted, it laid down customs and laws for the community. There were anomalies under the British: in presidency towns English law was applicable; in the mofussil, English law did not apply. The law of primogeniture (inheritance/succession of eldest son) however did not apply to Parsi succession nor did the English ecclesiastical law of restitution of conjugal rights (the legal enforcement of an unwilling spouse to continue the marriage) after the Privy Council overruled a British judge's ruling on appeal, said Andhyarujina.

When the Parsi Law Association was formed under Joseph Arnold, it led to the promulgation of the Parsi law of marriage and divorce in 1865. Having two wives had been a mark of prestige prior to 1865. Now suddenly bigamy was outlawed. "It was a curious spectacle," smiled Andhyarujina. The first Intestate Succession Act was also passed in 1865. Both Acts have been amended subsequently, the most recent amendments having reached the statute books in 1988 and 1991 respectively.

"The statute is sufficiently progressive, but there are issues where the Parsi community is at odds," noted Andhyarujina citing the adoption issue. He also noted that the continuance of the jury system in the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act was an anomaly which "today serves no purpose except busy-bodies getting prurient satisfaction." Ninety-nine percent of Parsi matrimonial matters are resolved by understanding, connivance and collusion which is not officially admitted, he added.

On the adoption front while Hindus have a very successful guardianship and adoption act, the obstacle to conversion stands in the way of adopting the child of a non-Parsi father. In the 1908 Parsi Panchayet Case it had been held that the customs of the community superseded

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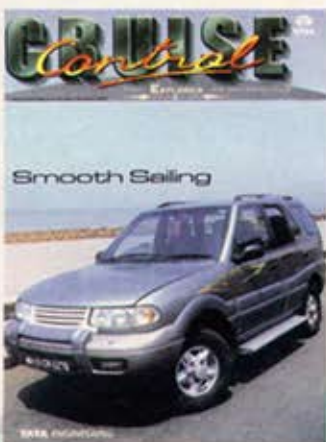
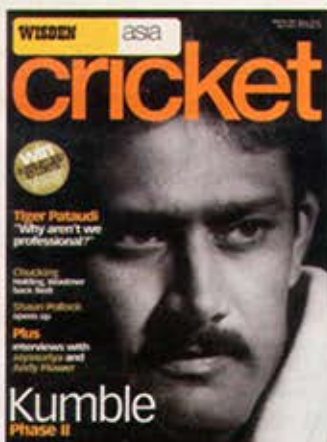
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tenets of the religion because in India Parsis had become a caste, noted Andhyarujina. In the Bella Case the Privy Council had upheld the 1908 judgement and declared that it was up to the trustees of the Rangoon Ajiary to allow or disallow the attendance of Bella, a Parsi mother's child.

Can these judgements be challenged? "Any litigation will be bitter and acrimonious and should be avoided. It splits the community in an undesirable way. Live with the problem and convince the other side that times are changing." Though Andhyarujina "refused to subscribe to the view of clerics that intermarriage is adultery or that its issues are bastards," he urged the audience "to understand that large scale conversion would lead to the dilution of the community" and impact accommodation in Parsi baugs.

Registrar — general and census commissioner J. K. Banthia registered his appreciation of Sethna's help in rousing interest and information in the community. One result of the interaction with Sethna was the administrative step taken by the census authorities that the form be countersigned by the head of the household to ensure that the information was correctly recorded.

"Is the community living? Is it ac-

cepting the challenge of a dynamic society or is it a passive observer of its declining numbers?" asked Banthia. Citing the example of the smallpox vaccine which the Parsis were the first to accept among the Indian communities in the 19th century, Banthia related how successive smallpox epidemics claimed fewer and fewer Parsi victims in Bombay where the progressive prelates had issued no fatwa against it while the priests of Navsari and Surat had threatened the parents of vaccinated children with excommunication on the grounds that it would pollute the pure Parsi blood. Faced with the biggest epidemic in Bombay in 1871, "the compulsory vaccination act was invoked but the Parsis of Fort Bombay had woken up 15 years earlier." Noting that less than 100 Parsis died of smallpox between 1871 and 1947 Banthia stated, "Progressive people in society can take up the challenge of religious obstacles."

By the late 19th century Parsis were already comparable to European communities because of their low fertility and low mortality: 30 percent of women in Ireland did not marry but those who did had more than five to six children, Banthia cited the figures. He also compared the Parsis to postwar Japan and Eastern Europe where populations de-

clined very fast due to high abortion rates — adding that the practice of abortion was not common to the Parsis. Registering his willingness to assist in a special epidemiological study of the community he urged the punchayets and the community to help themselves by providing a data base.

"The Parsi community needs to be inoculated with the resolve to multiply and replenish," noted Singhvi in his summing up of the session. In "danger of losing the pinch of sugar in India's glass of milk," Singhvi suggested that a comparative study of Zoroastrians in India and in Iran would be useful for a social understanding of the Parsi community. Considering himself "a non-Parsi Zarathushti so that there can be no legal restraint," Singhvi noted, "Zarathushtra's message is as relevant today as the day it was disseminated. In terms of that tradition there would be millions of Zoroastrians in the thought processes of the world."

The afternoon session saw poet, novelist, DPA trustee and former IPS (Indian Police Service) officer Keki Daruwala chair the panel discussion on "Parsi creativity in the 20th century." Noting that poet Adil Jussawala and poet, playwright, painter and medical practitioner

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L to R (1st row) Kamerkar, Daruwala, Dhalla, Giara, Dhondy, Wandrewala;
(2nd row) Farokh Rustomji and K. Sethna; Manekshaw, Rinchen Nargolwala and Malcolm Deboo; Dumasia and A. Sethna;
(3rd row) Vyrawalla with a portrait of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Pudumjee, Kapadia (top) and Dhawan;
(4th row) Garas, jhablas and other textiles at the Jungalwalla Hall; Khullar

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Gieve Patel had "refused to come because they do not subscribe to the Parsi label," Daruwala remarked that the Parsi novel had acquired prominence because of Rohinton Mistry and Bapsy Sidhwa. He described Mistry's *Such A Long Journey* and Boman Desai's *Memory of Elephants* as sociological novels in the time warp of the Bombay community when these authors left India for the West. The poets on the other hand, have remained here and belong to the older generation, said Daruwala.

Contributing her views on 'writing' to the session, Wandrewala noted, "A writer is to a great extent dependent upon the reader... at the mercy of the reader's perception, the reader's interpretation. Often, a work of fiction has layers woven into a seemingly simple text, hidden meanings, allusions, which may mean different things to a divergent cross-section of readers. A reader may sometimes discover meanings not intended by the author! 'Creative reading' is a reality, as much as 'creative writing!'"

To the question, what is Parsi creativity? Wandrewala noted, "A writer writes from his/her imagination and experience, not necessarily consciously as a Parsi... A writer, poet, playwright who happens to be a Parsi is indeed likely to find the Parsi ethos finding its way into the work. But I agree with Keki and the other writers/poets he mentioned about eschewing labels like 'Parsi writer/Parsi poet/Parsi playwright!' Creativity cannot be circumscribed by definitions or compartments."

With passing reference to the nataks of Adi Murzban and Dorab Mehta, Wandrewala read excerpts from two serious plays: Patel's *Mister Behram* and Cyrus Mistry's *Doongaji House* and from her own crime novel *The Turning*, ending with a reference to the genre of cookery books, one of whose prominent practitioners, Bhicoo Manekshaw, was present in the audience. (Manekshaw's specially prepared malido, partly for the jashan, had delighted Parsi and non-Parsi guests.)

"I don't know what is Parsi creativity," argued puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee who, according to Daruwala, had won every award in the field. He referred to his teacher Meher Contractor who had helped him formalize his hobby and went on to explain the four puppetry techniques: string puppets which are manipulated from above; rod puppets manipulated from below; glove puppets which the puppeteer wears and shadow puppets worked from behind the screen.

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The Farohars rendering a monajat

Describing the puppet as "something like a vessel in which I put my imagination and you put your imagination and that gives it life," Pudumjee noted, even "if the technique is very strong but the message is not relevant, you won't hold the audience." The pieces are generally related to social issues, political satire, music and movement, he noted. When Parsiana adopted his puppet for its letters column in 1976, it was the closest he came to "Parsi creativity," he noted.

Speaking on Parsi theater Asiatic Society vice president Dr Mani Kamekar harkened to the Parsi patronage of Shakespearean drama after settling in Bombay. The next step was to initiate moves towards a native theater which, originally viewed as a lowly profession, got a shot in the arm with the foundation of the Parsi Natak Mandali by the Elphinstone Dramatic Society in 1850. With Kaikhusroo Kabraji and others, Hindu mythological themes were adopted and appreciated by the native audience, said Kamekar.

Introducing Navroze Dhondy of Percept Advertising as a votary of photography, poetry, travelog and "half a novel," Daruwala teased, "Do three half novels equal one full novel?" and quoted Ogden Nash who once said, "Thou shalt not be on friendly terms/With those in advertising firms!"

A genial Dhondy strode to the mike and asked "Why me? Because the General said, 'We want some comic relief!'" Equating advertising with creativity and Parsis with creativity he solved the theorem of Parsi involvement in advertising which according to him, began with the classic sugar and milk story of the Sanjan landing — "Parsi creativity at its best!"

Noting that Parsis were generally copywriters in the advertising agencies while the artists were Maharashtrians,

Dhondy's roll call of advertising personalities included Kersey Katrak of MCM, Nergish Wadia of Interpublicity, Sam Balsara of Madison and B. G. Nariman of the exhibition cell. The late Freny Variava's Blaze was the Parsi firm that pioneered cinema advertising while the Gimis' Selvel did likewise with outdoor advertising and advertising films. He attributed the community's success in the advertising field to their attributes of being "jovial, happy, vibrant, classy, enjoying life and spreading the joy."

Professors R. K. Dhawan and Novy Kapadia, co-editors of the two volume publication *Parsi Fiction* along with Jaydipsingh Dodiya, launched the set, offering the Rs 1,000 work to those present at the session at a special discounted price of Rs 600. A reader in English at the University of Delhi, Kapadia said Parsi writing is being taught as part of Indian writing in English.

In the discussion that followed, the audience asked "Where is our Parsi identity in creativity?" "Does a drama written by a Parsi become Parsi drama?" Though Daruwala maintained that there is no such thing as Parsi poetry or Parsi drama, he conceded to Parsi fiction. Kamekar maintained, "Parsi identity is your way of living, in all your activities." Wandrewala noted, "Zubin (Mehta) conducts as a musician; Jehangir Sabavala's paintings can't be classified as Parsi."

The third panel discussion the following day saw eminent cultural personality of Delhi Dr Kapila Vatsyayan in the chair who was introduced by Sethna quoting the late Field Marshal Cariappa's words "*Ési saal ki jawan* (versus) *athara saal ke buddhé* (80-year-old youth; 18-year-old old man)"

Scholar, speaker and founder of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) Dr Homi Dhalla gave a video presentation of the WZCF's activities. Defining culture as "a totality of the past

and the present... a way of relating to the earth, the plants, animals, fellow human beings," Dhalla spoke of the anxiety of weakening cultural traditions in the globalized scenario. Noting that Gujaratis in the UK and Maharashtrians in the US are keeping their culture alive, Dhalla commented that in the recent decades Parsi emphasis had been on religion; there was little done to preserve the culture and history base of the community.

With the community divided into various segments from the ultra orthodox to the totally reformist without a religious or social leader of world standing and no common ritual accepted by all Zoroastrians to bring different generations together in an enjoyable environment, Dhalla noted, "Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies within us while we live."

The WZCF is involved in putting Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa's 70 manuscripts, ranging in age from 500 to 800 years on CD Rom to preserve them for future generations. It is involved in reprinting rare books, runs Gujarati classes where 400 Parsi children are being taught Parsi poetry and is in the process of publishing an anthology of the work of Ardeshtir Khabardar and Behram Malabari who wrote in Gujarati, English and Urdu. A project to save the Bahrot caves is receiving the WZCF's prime attention.

Welcoming author Marzban Giara and India's first lady press photographer Vyarawalla was Dr Shernaz Cama, coordinator of the UNESCO sponsored Parza project that aims to document various aspects of the Parsi community in India. She noted that 90,000 pages of rare books in the Meherji Rana Library of Navsari were being microfilmed as part of the UNESCO project.

Giara, who has published various informative books on Parsi institutions, told the audience that his latest book on Parsi statues was inspired by a girl he met on the landmark walk in Bombay organized by the British Council to celebrate its anniversary in 1998. Is there a list of Parsi statues? she asked. Giara's book lists 226 Parsi statues in India, Pakistan and Iran.

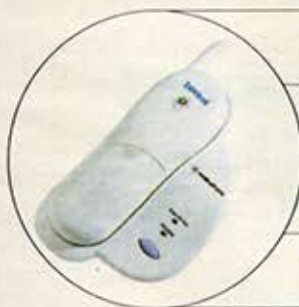
Vyarawalla's photo documentation of the history of Indian independence and the early decades thereafter was a revelation to the young and jogged the memory of those who had witnessed the passing parade. Even more stunning was the octogenarian Vyarawalla's clear memory of names, events and incidents that were



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encapsulated in the brief captions below the pictures. She and her late husband Maneckshaw had learnt the technique of photography through trial and error, developing the striking black and white prints that had weathered 50 years in her tender care. The time had its advantages — the film and paper were cheap; there was "no security nuisance;" there was no eve teasing and she could bicycle home alone in Delhi at 3 a.m., without fear, because "law and order was so well enforced," she said. On the other hand photography was comparatively in its infancy and each flash meant the use of a fresh bulb. Apart from the bulky camera the photographers had to carry two bags — one of new bulbs, the other for the used ones. Being a woman among a host of male photographers was "neither an advantage nor a disadvantage" for Vyarawalla who never saw herself as different from her colleagues. By 1970 however "all the gracious, nice people were followed by badly behaved people (who) started pinching foodstuff from the tables." Also, the security officers in Indira Gandhi's time became overbearing, got in the way, prevented photographers moving around freely. The final straw was the shortage of material because of India's precarious foreign ex-

change position: Vyarawalla decided to quit.

Vatsyayan remembered seeing Vyarawalla on the night of August 14/15, 1947, the night India became independent. Recalling Vyarawalla's sprightliness then and on various occasions at Teen Murti, Jawaharlal Nehru's residence, Vatsyayan commented, "It's wonderful to see her exactly as she was. The world was afraid of Homai Vyarawalla!"

"I always had a stern aspect. I must have been formidable with my cameras!" laughed Vyarawalla.

Noting that his "good friend Adi Sethna had been in school with me in prehistoric times," philosopher-prince-politician Dr Karan Singh enjoyed the photographic exhibition. "I have met everyone of the people in the pictures... We were the privileged generation; we met these legendary figures. The later generations haven't had this opportunity." Providing the valedictory address on "The Parsi community — an example of individuality and integration" Singh spoke of the "multiplicity and pluralism of cultures" in India. "The Vedas say, 'Let noble thoughts and ideas come to us from every side.'" Referring to Cyrus and Darius as "some of the greatest kings in the world," Singh referred to the Zoro-

astrian landing in Sanjan and that the community "kept its word to the king of Gujarat." They never proselytized or harassed and "made outstanding contributions to every facet of national life." Noting that "Jeh (J. R. D. Tata) was chairman of Air India (AI) when I was tourism minister," Singh recalled the "whole group of bright executives that made AI one of the five best airlines in the world — today one of the five worst, but that's another story!" Recalling nuclear scientists the late Dr Homi Bhabha, and Dr Homi Sethna, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, Adi Sethna and other outstanding defence personnel, and politician-diplomat the late Homi Taleyarkhan, Singh noted, "The point is that individuality and integration are not mutually exclusive. It can be maintained even in a globalized society... if there is a firm spiritual center. If not, (one can) become excentric/eccentric and psychologically disturbed... The fire-temple is symbolic of this inner fire... in each human being... To encapsulate a spark of the divine in the deepest recesses of our being (is) the final goal of human destiny. All of us bear a very powerful responsibility (to) fulfill our individual and collective destiny."

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bation for the Anjuman's trustees whose time, money, energy, effort made this anjuman "one of the best anjumans of the Parsi community in the world." Noting that Dhun Bagli had been associated with the anjuman for 50 years — 10 years before the Dar-e-Meher came into being, she was presented with a gold chain by Khorshed Sethna on behalf of the Anjuman. Dhun was deeply moved when all the Dharamshala staff trooped in with garlands that reached above her ears. "I'd like to say I've loved my time with you all and would like to stay, with the approval of you all." All meals for the

event had been catered by the Baglis.

Recalling the late Daraius Bagli who was at the bedside of families when required, Mistry informed the gathering that Daraius' father had presented him a shawl when the agiary was consecrated. "It has now been passed on by Dhun to their son Cawas."

The Sethnas and the Jijinas who had recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries were presented gifts on behalf of the DPA. Remembering the late Shiavax Nargolwala, president of the DPA for over 25 years whose determination had led to the establishment of the

Dar-e-Meher in 1961, Mistry also expressed the Anjuman's gratitude for the generous donation from industrialist Dhunjishaw Neterwala and his family toward the expansion of the Dharamshala with six additional rooms on the second floor. The symbolic foundation stone laying ceremony was organized behind the Dar-e-Meher with the participation of Feroze Neterwala who represented his father and other members of the Neterwala family. Mistry gave a commitment to complete the project by March 21, 2002, for, as Sethna had noted, "The task of leadership is to look ahead."

In the light of the *Gathas*

The Delhi community's respected senior citizen, Piloo Jungalwalla (née Nanavutty) had been conferred a Padma Shri in March 2000 by the President of India in recognition of her seminal publication *The Gathas of Zarathushtra, Hymns in Praise of Wisdom*. Published by Mapin India in 1999, the work is both a translation and a commentary on the *Gathas*. A religious scholar in residence, the Delhi Zoroastrians were profuse in their appreciation of Jungalwalla's role in the religious education of their youth as reflected in the generations of the Farohars.

Revealing that an outstanding Hindi translation of her book — the first ever Hindi translation of the *Gathas* — is being readied for publication, she noted her intention to now concentrate on the parallels and differences between the *Gathas* and the early *Vedas* in the course of a chat with *Parsiana* at the end of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman celebrations.

Jungalwalla's first translation of the *Gathas*, co-authored with the late Dastur Framroze Bode in 1952, has been amplified, updated, annotated and illustrated in her present work. Specimens of the early scripts displayed in the book include the gold tablet of Ariaramnes, the twin brother of Cyrus I — Cyrus the Great's grandfather — which, as Jungalwalla informs us, led to the deciphering of the Behistun rock inscriptions of Darius I in Iran. The visual presentation enables the lay reader to be aware of the many different scripts in which our forefathers documented their ideas.

Providing a description of society in Zarathushtra's time on the basis of archaeological and anthropological find-

ings, Jungalwalla illumines the reader about the social standing of the *Karapans*, *Kavis* and others whom the *Gathas* denigrate. They were respectively, assistant priests who murmured the prayers and powerful chieftains under whose patronage bands of villagers called *ratheshtrars* (charioteers, from *rath*, chariot) raided the peaceful villagers.

"The poorest of the poor were the *Drighu*, probably orphans whom the tribe adopted even as they still do in the villages of India. In the *Gathas*, Zarathushtra claims to be Zaoter, chief officiating priest. Yet he deliberately identifies himself with the *Drighu*. This word occurs in our basic prayer, the *Ahuna vairya*, also known as the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*."

In her introductory chapter on the legend of *Gaush Urva*, literally the soul of the cow/ox/cattle, Jungalwalla says she has illustrated the cruel ritual sacrifice of the cow in Aryan history and drawn on the various attitudes to the cow, including the Indian symbolism that equates the cow with the light of dawn ("Tiny cirrus clouds streaking across the sky are described in the *Vedas* as young heifers," she notes) and also a young girl, similar to the English usage of "lamb" or "lambkin." Jungalwalla says there is a "striking resemblance" between the lament of *Gaush Urva*, embodying the soul of creation, in *Yasna* 29 and a passage in the *Srimad Bhagvata Purana*. A picture of the Elamite figu-

rine of *Gaush Urva*, about three inches high at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, shows her holding a large carafe, possibly her own milk, in her front proofs.

Disappointed that the Parsis of India are not reading the study which concentrates on the relationship between the various divine powers, the Amesha Spentas and their role in the life of human beings, Jungalwalla says no such comparable study has been attempted since Dastur M. N. Dhalla's monumental *Zoroastrian Theology*. She says her work depicts the modernity of Zarathushtra's teachings and their relevance today — how wrath, cruelty and the lie (or drug) vitiate human existence. This concept of evil reappears in the middle Persian *Andarz* literature: "Ahriman does not exist... he is a shadow in the mind."

"All the divine powers of Ahura Mazda dwell in every man," waiting to be manifested in the actions of his daily life, waiting for him to become the saoshyant or savior who establishes truth, justice and goodness, waiting for him to help renew the world through good thoughts, words and deeds, says Jungalwalla. Zarathushtra, she says, teaches each one of us to be responsible for our thoughts, words and actions.

Underscoring the rigid discipline in her translation, Jungalwalla says, "I was not allowed to get away with a single assumption" by scholar Farrokh Vajifdar of London who helped shape the content of the seven-year effort. For example she refers to the word '*Bendwa*' "which appears in two verses of the *Gathas* and nowhere else in the *Avesta*, sighing, "(I am) just as much in the dark here as anyone else."



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Looking at diseases with new eyes

Dr Noshir Wadia found that neurological diseases in India and the West tend to manifest in different ways

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Dr Noshir Hormusji Wadia is a role model for physicians and his evolution as a master clinician neurologist extraordinary of India has charted a course which young aspirants choose to follow... Thousands of neurological patients have sought his advice and he has served them with a god-given touch of compassion regardless of their social status," reads the citation to the first Rameshwardas Birla National Award (1999) for an outstanding clinician practicing modern medicine. The presentation at the hands of Dr Hari Gautam, chairman of the University Grants Commission was organized by the Bombay Hospital Trust's board of management at their S. P. Jain Auditorium on August 4, 2001.

In his acceptance speech Wadia counted his blessings with humble nonchalance, "A caring doctor is amongst the privileged few who gets paid to do what he enjoys doing most, whilst millions strive simply and even boringly to earn their daily bread."

The J. J. Hospital and Grant Medical College's consultant neurologist for life (a gazetted designation formulated for him by the Government of Maharashtra when he retired from active duty there as honorary doctor and tutor earning Rs 250 per month at the end of 25 years of service in 1982), Wadia continues as director of the department of neurology at Bombay's Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre.

He has garnered sheaves of honor in 45 years of service to his profession and society including the conferment of the doctor of science, honoris causa by the Benaras Hindu University in March 2000. Its citation notes that the "internationally acknowledged" Wadia, president of the Neurological Society of

India (1963-64) and founder member of the Epilepsy Association of India, "is the only Indian to have the distinction of being elected as first vice president of the World Federation of Neurology." The award presented by All Physicians of Maharashtra State at MAPICON 2001 notes: "You turned each obstacle into opportunity for us with your extraordinary brilliance and unmatched wisdom... Your knowledge has no bounds. Your humility has no limits. You have left an indelible mark on our hearts... With a deep sense of gratitude we remember you as our wonderful teacher and seek your blessings for ever."

Wadia is currently president and chancellor of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology in Kerala. "Serendipity has strange ways to bring men and ideas together for a good cause," he writes in the Institute's silver jubilee souvenir about to be published as *Silver Lines*. Initially restricted to two major specialties — medical and surgical neurology and cardiology — the Institute was the progeny of Maharaja Sree Chitra Tirunal, of the erstwhile state of Travancore, C. Achuta Menon, the sagacious chief minister of Kerala and the government of India which placed it under the ministry of science and technology (not health) to provide high grade service, education and research in medicine and biotechnology and to innovate new medical devices. A third wing, started shortly after inception for health sciences studies, conducts research and training in public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, etc.

Run by an independent body of reputable men from all walks of life, it was mandated that the president of the 26-acre Institute be an individual of high

public reputation and integrity without political affiliations, notes the *Silver Lines* article. Wadia has succeeded G. Parthasarathi, India's former permanent representative at the UN, and jurist Nani Palkhivala in that honored post after serving on the Institute's governing bodies for over 20 years. Recognized as an "Institute of national importance" and a deemed university, the Institute offers 21 degree and diploma courses including speciality nursing. The constantly expanding facilities are provided free of charge to the poor and at half or less than half rates to low income groups. Only about 20 percent of patients pay the full charge for the expert medical care but no special rooms or services are provided to them, notes Wadia.

Silver-grey serenity envelopes the short, slightly thick-set man smiling benignly at our confusion over neurological nomenclatures as he speaks of the three-fold evolution of his medical skills — as healer, teacher and researcher. Referring to the treatment of patients as a doctor's primary duty, Wadia describes "the joy you feel, the inner satisfaction, when a patient gets well. It is amazing how people react to you in India. The emotional attachment to a doctor which we have here is very rewarding and not comparable in any other part of the world!"

Equally important to Wadia is teaching. If you have not "passed on the knowledge painfully acquired... you have not carried out your mission in life," he declares, viewing in his mind's eye the generations of students now "making their name all over the world." It is a mission he has inherited from his "heroes" Dr Minocher Mody and Dr R. V. Sathe during his undergraduate years at the Grant Medical College, from Sir Russel Brain and Dr Douglas McAlpine, surgeon Dr G. Rowbotham and Dr Ronald Henson during five years of neurology apprenticeship in the UK. All these dedicated men performed miracles with clinical insight and human compassion when the "CT (scan) and MRI and much else had not been born, when all we could do to make a (neurological) diagnosis was to put a little air into the brain, record EEGs and perform myelograms with oily dyes... McAlpine was a superb bedside teacher and it is to him that I owe much of what-

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ever ability I have to teach (as also to Prof Kothari who enlivened chemistry by his lectures at Bombay's St Xavier's College)," acknowledges Wadia in his "Autobiographical musings" published in the *Evolution of Neurosciences in India — Biographical Sketches of some Indian Neuroscientists* edited by Prof K. Rajasekharan Nair.

"Minocher was a fantastic physician," says Wadia who closely observed the benign Mody as a student even though he did not have the opportunity to work as a resident under him: "His whole approach, demeanor was sympathetic. I learnt a lot from him. He never did research but he looked after his patients and taught superbly!"

Of Brain, an international authority on neurology "whose book I had read many times through long hours of post-graduate study," Wadia notes, "(He) was a big man in every way. He had published the first edition of his book a little before he reached his 40th year. It was an instant success. He was the president of the Royal College of Physicians then, chairman of a Royal Commission, member of many national and international committees, editor of *Brain*, etc. He was consulted by patients, often high and mighty, from home

and abroad, including Winston Churchill, but he showed equal concern for his NHS (National Health Scheme) patients in the hospital wards. Despite all his commitments, he read voraciously and wrote profusely on a variety of divergent topics... He was a quiet man of few words, appearing pompous and remote to those who did not like or know him, but really a shy, concerned, unassuming man. He never talked about himself or his achievements which were many. He could cope with his enormous load of work and commitments by being thoroughly organized, punctual and to the point. For example, when we residents wanted to talk to him about ourselves, we had to ring his secretary, Ms Marwood, for an appointment. He would come the next day with a smile and say, 'Ms Marwood says I have to talk to you for 15 minutes.' This is how he saved or I should say shared his personal time. To some, this would appear superficial and pompous, discourteous or even ridiculous, but to those of us who knew him and worked with him it was quality time. In 15 minutes he would grasp our problem (whether in research, career development, personal, etc), give a solution and promise to help if he could. And he was

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as good as his word."

The great human beings that his mentors were seem to have led Wadia to consciously cast himself into a similar mold. His Indian teachers said, "chaal, (neurology department) *shuru kar* (come and start)." He recalls the enthralling 1950s when a newly independent India was embarking on a journey of modernization, "the heady days... of Jawaharlal Nehru with his 'promises to keep,'" that made the neo-scientist itch to return home to partake in the joyous task. "There was no desire to stay back," he writes, adding, "Sadly, those invigorating days are no more for the young... Now the rules, the red tape don't let effective people give of their best," he rues.

When Wadia joined the J. J. Group of Hospitals as an assistant honorary neurologist under Dr Menino D'Souza he was the first in the field except for Dr Eddie Bharucha at the King Edward Memorial Hospital. However, "The contrast with London was stark. There was a somewhat unbridgeable time, vision and sound gap." His London students had been confident and outgoing. The J. J. lot were shy, uncertain and tongue-tied. He recalls other contrasts: "I had been used to a secretary, a dictaphone, a large neurology library, a medical records department which produced back records of 30 years in a few hours and OPD by appointments. Back home there were no special neurology beds, no records worth their name, open walk-in-out patients, notes were what you wrote and not dictated, and an old irreparable EEG machine. It took some adjustments, but after some moments of uncertainty and hesitation, I decided to meet the challenge and plunged into the uncharted waters of Indian neurology. There was no going back." But all in all, "it was an exciting time with things taking shape despite many handicaps," under the visionary guidance and support of the doyen of surgery Dr Shantilal Mehta who was the J. J.'s medical superintendent. The neurology department expanded briskly from six to 100 beds within four hectic years. Alas, political interference led Mehta to resign in the early 1960s and to be replaced by a bureaucrat from



Baroda who refused to grant Wadia any further facilities with the words, "There is no milk for patients in Baroda, and you want more x-ray plates!"

The third ray of the Wadia prism reveals the academic man. Though not a laboratory trained researchist, Wadia's ability to look at diseases with new eyes led him to realize that disease in India differed from its manifestations in Europe and England. Not only do environment and genes change the pattern, there is still much infection

abounding in India which has been rooted out in England. "In India when you treat brain tumors you think of TB tumors" which can now be medically treated unlike gliomas, common in the west, which are cancerous and require surgery. Wadia was the first to realize the tubercular origin of these tumors which are found in abundance in India but had not been seen by him during his years in UK hospitals and in those initial years even tubercular tumors had to



Alongside: Wadia (3rd from left) receiving the Birla award. Below: The three generations of the family and Noshir and Piroja (bottom)

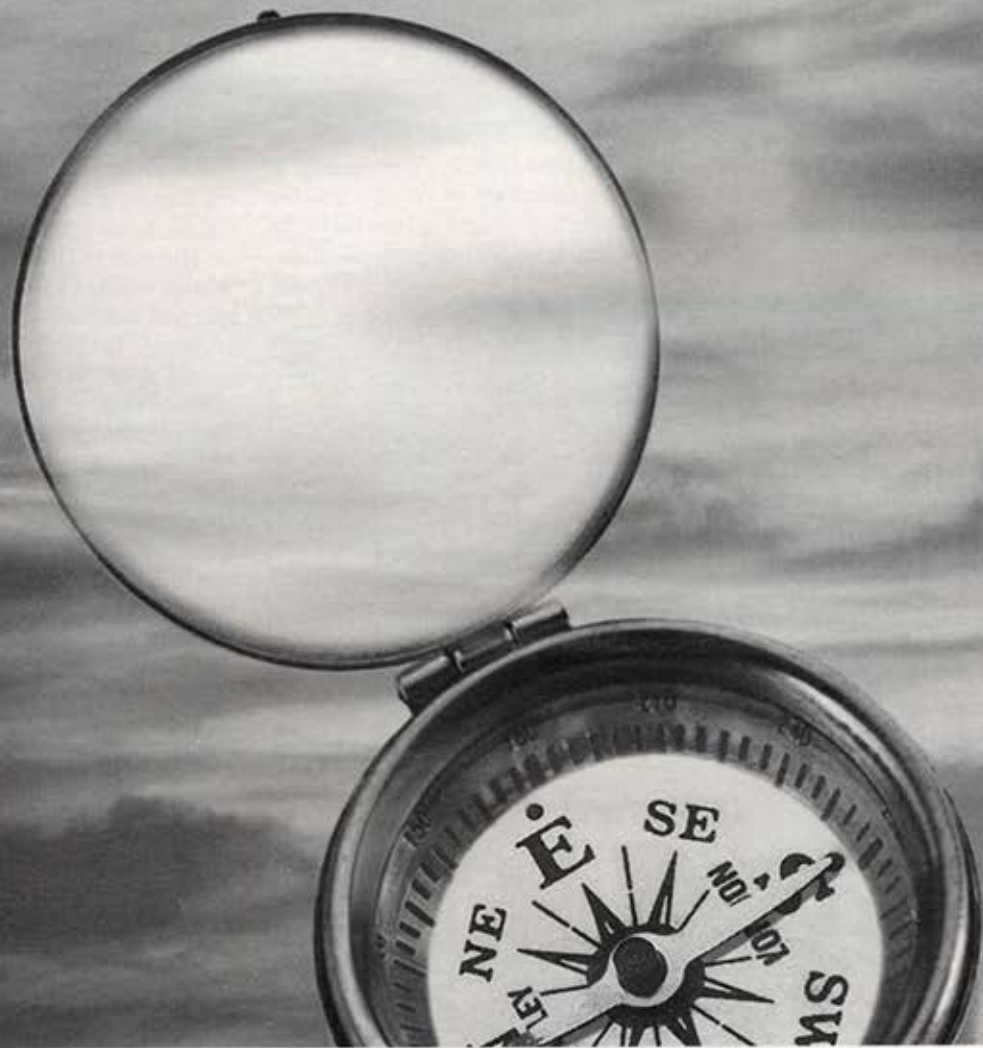


be operated.

Another Wadia observation was that multiple sclerosis which is so common in northern Europe has a very low incidence in India with the exception of Parsis. He quotes its all-India prevalence at 0.5 to 2.0 per 100,000 as against 24-30 per 100,000 among Parsis. He conjectures that Parsi genes make them prone to the disease as the climate and environment are common factors to both populations.

The early 1970s had seen an epidemic of conjunctivitis. At that time there had also been manifestations of polio-like disease among adults and Wadia says he found that each of these adult polio patients had had the "red eye" disease. "Four to five months after the conjunctivitis epidemic abated the neurological polio-like disease (also) disappeared," recalls Wadia. The conjunctivitis pandemic had spread from Ghana to Japan affecting millions in its wake, Wadia informs us. The virus was identified by Japanese virologists, and Wadia forwarded to them the refrigerated sera of his patients. They matched the Japanese specimens. In 1981 when the epidemic came back of India, Wadia says he collected 581 patients

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who had the viral infection which entered through the eyes to produce polio-like disease in adults. His astuteness won Wadia the fellowship of the Indian Science Academy which is among his prized possessions.

A founder member of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of India, the Cerebral Palsy Association of India and the Muscular Dystrophy Society, Wadia says he encourages his students to do likewise, help patients and their relatives, spend time with them, help them raise funds through contacts. "The doctor must do this to give something back to society," he believes.

The field of ataxia also bears the Wadia imprint. A disorder of the small brain or cerebellum which shrinks or degenerates, ataxia affects several members of the family through generations. It manifests itself in a drunken gait and speech, the patient becoming bedridden over time, says Wadia. The first of this group of diseases was originally identified by a German in 1861 but working in the 1960s Wadia noticed his Indian patients (Parsis excepted) also displayed very slow eye movements. It was first described by Wadia and his colleagues and proved in post mortems in collaboration with British scientists.

Unfortunately, genetics not having been developed in India, the credit for the discovery of the relevant gene went to a scientist in Cuba.

Parsis are more susceptible to strokes, paralysis, Parkinsonism and Alzheimer's disease, says Wadia, "because we live too long." Primary neurological cases in the community are rare, he notes, adding that when one surfaces at the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital (PGH) he transfers the patient to the Jaslok Hospital as a separate neurological department at the PGH is not warranted, given such few patients.

The son of Hormusji and Dinamai, Wadia was born in Surat in 1925 and was still studying when his father died. Unfazed, his elder brothers Jal and Jimmy soldiered on with the family's timber business to give young Noshir the opportunity to finish his vocational education. Married to Dr Piroja (née Irani) a clinical neurophysiologist who joined their speciality team at the J. J. and thereafter at Jaslok, Wadia's affection includes her two sons Ruiynton and Kaikhushru from her previous marriage. Both are now established chartered accountants and bankers and the four grand children complete the Wadia family.

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Formerly an active sportsman (Wadia refers to his cricketing forays that strengthened the professional team spirit in his autobiographical musings) Wadia is now content to watch the sports channels on TV, savor the pleasure of his garden in Khandala. The shared joy of classical music, both Western and Indian, is an additional bond between Wadia and his wife.

While Wadia says he would prefer the children to marry within the community he concedes that "many circumstances today lead them to seek partners outside the community," adding, "I don't think one should fight and destroy their life. I am not so sure that we have such happy unions within the community that once married out, they should be ostracized." He goes to the next logical step and asks why out-married women, who "wear the sudreh and kusti, continue their Zoroastrian prayers even better than many of us," should not have the privilege of raising their children as Zoroastrians?

Very proud of their religion — neither Wadia nor Piroja would like it to change or die out — they nonetheless believe it is "wrong" that a dead man's

non-Zoroastrian wife of long standing is made to sit out and not attend the prayers.

"If I die, I'll go to Doongerwadi," asserts Wadia, adding, "(It's) the natural thing, done over generations. But there is room for an alternate mode of disposal of the dead." The original disposal of the dead in Iran must have been functional, reasons Wadia. He also notes that there are any number of places in the world without dakhmas. "Do souls in UK or USA not go to heaven?"

Expressing personal doubts about the practicality of breeding vultures at Doongerwadi Wadia says, "Circumstances are leading us to accept change... reality is pointing elsewhere. We shouldn't drive people away from the religion. We are too small a community to become so pedantic!"

Neurological nuances

At *Parsiana's* request Wadia differentiates between the two common types of dementia. When neurons (or nerve cells) degenerate, it is called Alzheimer's disease. When a series of small strokes interfere with blood supply to the brain it is termed vascular dementia. Diabe-

tes, old age and smoking could also contribute to the latter. New drug therapy has been created for the treatment of Alzheimer's, says Wadia but the snag is to differentiate between normal aging with memory lapses and early Alzheimer's, wherein the doctors are dependent on diagnostic technology like the MRI scanner and SPECT.

Wadia is liberal with his time to educate *Parsiana* and its readers in the various hi-fi equipments that probe our mental health:

- the EEG or the electric encephalogram studies the electricity of the brain. It is invaluable in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy which results from the disturbance of the brain's electric charges.

- The MRI scanner records the structure of the brain, pinpointing changes or tumors.

- SPECT measures the activity of the neurons which extract the necessary glucose and oxygen from the blood flowing through the brain. If the neurons are dying, the brain does not extract these agents and this is recorded by SPECT.

continued on page 162

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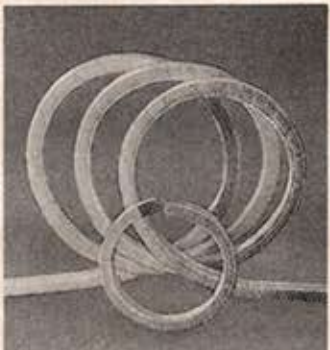
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Man of vision

Dr Keiki Mehta's Eye Institute offers the latest knowhow in rectifying optic problems

Dina Mehta

Once you step within the portals of this Eye Institute, be prepared to spend some time here. In the crowded entrance hall, on straight-backed chairs against walls, patients are waiting. Patiently. There is no place for you here so you walk into the belly of the ante-room where a chair has just been vacated. From the ante-room you advance into the main arterial passage and wait on a chair there, or a series of chairs as you move up the queue.

Nervous figures edge past you, solitary or in clusters, but they soon melt away into the cubicles that line the two sides of the long corridor. Up and down its length glass doors open and close, open and close, absorbing and releasing patients, doctors, clinical staff. What looks like chaos is choreography — creating a theater of charged movements for you tensed in your seat, a captive audience...

Till it's your turn (at last) to be impaled by the chin to the various computerized machines of awesome precision lodged in successive cubicles, and monitored by doctors/trainees who are there to examine and evaluate every facet of your eye. Armed with all the data, your last stop for the final scrutiny is the cabin of the big boss, Dr Keiki Mehta, dour as a Scotsman, abrupt in his ways, but with a rich subterranean lode of humor that could emit sparks during the consultation.

He is 60 years old and heads The Mehta International Eye Institute and Colaba Eye Hospital in Bombay (in collaboration with centers in Texas and Boston, USA), where optimal levels of eye care (diagnostic, clinical and surgical) is available. Mehta directs several specialized clinics here for cataract, glaucoma, contact lens, child care, myopia, etc; and here for the first time in India a concerted effort has been made to assemble the most sophisti-

cated equipment (from Japan, USA, Germany) in one co-ordinated institution.

With the advanced technology and expertise now available, Mehta is of the



The Mehtas (from left): Vinifer, Cyres, Keiki and Zenobia

opinion that for the treatment of cataracts India is on par with any country in the world. "Indeed, at the American Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery in San Diego, Indian doctors conduct instruction courses — four were held last year," he says. "This is because Indian surgeons have more experience with cataracts."

Cataracts can be soft or hard, Mehta elaborates on the theme. "In the hard category we have the medium hard and the suprahard. All tropical countries have a higher incidence of cataracts because of exposure to ultraviolet rays. The hard cataract is formed when the patient does not want surgery so long as he can see at least one finger up close with the affected eye, though it is advisable to operate at a much earlier stage." Yes, the average Indian tends to be apathetic about eye care. "He will send his car for regular servicing, but won't have his eyes checked even once a year."

Here I admit that it is after a lapse of years that I'm consulting him. His report is quick, albeit with tongue firmly

in cheek as he deadpans: "It calls for a celebration." Champagne? I'm tempted to ask, but my next question is decorous enough: do we have enough doctors in India to serve our needs?

By his reckoning there are 17,500 eye doctors in the country, plus or minus 10 percent. In rural areas the number is negligible, so that the rural eye services wing run by the Mehta International Eye Institute must serve a very real need. A 100 percent charitable organization, I learn from the brochure before me, the Netra Rukshak (Eye

Saviors) aims to set up quality eye examination and treatment centers, using the latest technology. And to hold eye camps in Maharashtra, for minimum costing, that will virtually yield 100 percent visual recovery. For this training zones for doctors, administrators, nursing staff are on the cards. But its main task is to educate the villager about eye care.

"Our backlog of the corneally blind is enormous," Mehta informs me, "so the Netra Rukshak plans to distribute pamphlets and make video films to increase awareness of the need to donate eyes after death." The free 80-bed eye hospital set up in an Adivasi area is not yet functional. Some of the top eye hospitals in India he lists are: The All-India Institute for Medical Sciences in New Delhi, the Shanker Nethralaya in Madras and the Aravind Eye Hospital in Madurai.

With India having the highest number of certified blind in the world, what is the number one cause of blindness in our country? It used to be smallpox, I'm surprised to learn. "Today cataract is a major cause of reversible blindness. And one and a half lakhs are corneally blind, whose eyesight can be restored by a simple corneal graft. The success rate of corneal transplantation is almost 90 percent, but we need to round up more cornea donors. Also much depends on the special cells which line the innermost layer of the cornea — the endothelial cells. If they are deficient the operation will fail." To evaluate the crucial cells, a new Advanced Specular Microscope has been installed in the Special Corneal Clinic here. "For the first time," Mehta warms up to his

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subject, "specialized software has been developed to visualize, locate and assess the number and health of the endothelial cells. The double advantage is that we can now also objectively assess the state of the donor corneas."

Which he'd said were in short supply, I remind him. How would he entice city donors for a better collection?

"A certified Eye Bank is attached to the Special Corneal Clinic, but it's an uphill task." And Mehta cites an example: Recently *The Times of India* issued special donor cards and collected 1,22,000 signatures. But of these, finally, only 375 eyes were collected! "The point missed here is that not just the would-be donor but his relatives must also be counseled, while the patient is still in hospital. We also need to check that those authorized to remove the eye after death are skilled enough not to make a botch of the job."

If cataracts and corneal blindness are reversible, what caused irreversible blindness?

"Glaucoma is one. Raised pressure in the eyeball damages the optic nerve," Mehta explains. Glaucoma is often diagnosed too late to prevent visual loss but at the Special Glaucoma Clinic its management has shifted from simple pressure checks to computerized evaluation and treatment. "Diabetes is the other enemy." After 40, one in 15 is a diabetic, I learn to my dismay. "Diabetes affects the cornea, causes inflammation of the coats of the eye and in the retina it leads to bleeding, the formation of fibrous bands and retinal detachment. At our Special Diabetes Clinic the latest equipment assesses the retina, and a state of the art laser seals off the hemorrhaging sites, thus reducing the risk of blindness."

Was it true that Parsis are particularly prone to eye disorders?

Mehta answers in the affirmative. As a small, inbred community we suffer from genetic weakness in certain areas of the body, namely the heart, the stomach and the eye. "Yes, Parsis have weak corneas. Yet an institution like the Parsee General Hospital in Bombay does not have its own Specular Microscope. It is also essential that a special glaucoma unit is set up there."

What were his views on the hygienic factor in our method of disposing the dead?

"Ecologically the best method, the

least polluting, but not always practical. In New Delhi we have no dakhma and bury or cremate our dead. In Bombay our Doongerwadi is hemmed in by proliferating housing complexes and the human encroachment on the habitat of birds evidently disturbs them." It is evident that Mehta is entirely on the side of the birds. He speaks of how

distasteful and even lethal to the feeding vultures must be the drugs we pump into the bodies of our terminally ill. "The Parsi Punchayet worthies should respond to this challenge on a war footing to change the scenario."

I change the subject. Suppose I received a blow to my eye, what were the immediate dos and don'ts he'd pre-

"Low Risk Techniques"

He sees eye to eye with his illustrious father. Dr Cyres Keiki Mehta, consultant ophthalmic surgeon, director of Netra Rukshak with a string of degrees trailing his name from here and abroad, sits in a cubicle at the Mehta International Eye Clinic not far from his dad. Junior has a confident, easy manner and one can picture him being cheery with his patients and kind to perturbed old ladies.

From the time he was three years old, Cyres wanted to be an eye surgeon. Dr Mehta is now 30 and has accomplished much in his field. New surgical techniques learnt on recent fellowships in America and Germany are practised by him in Bombay. At the Shepherd Eye Clinic in California he was trained by Dr Steven Bylisma in Laser Adjunctive Deep Sclerectomy (LADS), introduced here for the first time by Cyres at the Glaucoma International Congress hosted in 2001 by India. "This is a low risk, non invasive surgical technique by which even the most severe cases of glaucoma can be controlled without entering the eye," says Cyres. "On an average I perform two such operations a week, so far with no complications."

The entire procedure must require incredible skill. "A selected 1.4 mm zone of the diseased area of the eye, where an obstruction prevents the fluid from draining out through the normal channels, is thinned," he explains, "leading to a gradual fall in pressure." In conventional penetrative glaucoma surgery, a sudden drop in pressure affects the vision, which does not recover for two weeks to a month. "But LADS is kinder to the eye tissues and the visual loss does not occur," says Cyres. "Later, if required, a simple outpatient laser procedure is carried out to increase the fluid outflow through this thinned area."

Another field in which lasers are used worldwide today is vision correction. From Nuremberg, Germany, Cyres recently returned with extensive training

in LASIK (Laser-Assisted in-Situ Keratomileusis), which is the most advanced method of correcting refractive errors like nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hypermetropia), and astigmatism (where the cornea is oval in shape rather than round).

"In this advanced technique a thin flap from the cornea is folded back," says Cyres, "then the corneal tissue is gently reshaped with laser, which results in a change in the shape of the eye." The light rays now entering the cornea focus directly on the retinal screen at the back and do not fall short of it (as in myopia) or beyond it (as in hypermetropia). The flap or hinge is then placed back. Such is the magic of laser that no stitches are necessary, the entire procedure can be completed on an outpatient basis. "And once the correction is made, the cure is permanent," says Cyres. "In myopia, for instance, the number cannot shoot up again." For more details a free consultation may be scheduled with Cyres' wife Vinifer, who works as the refractive co-ordinator.

"Untreated myopia," Cyres explains further, "can result in a host of complications. For instance high myopes need a periodic retinal evaluation, where often degenerative patches occur which can lead to detachment." For professional reasons, too, boys in the armed forces and the merchant navy, also actors, models and all performing artistes need to reduce their dependence on glasses and contact lenses.

So do prospective brides, I suggest. It was one more demand made on the girl by the future mother-in-law, if not the groom himself. "They take it very seriously," I add.

"Well it is seldom in India," laughs Cyres, "that anyone goes in for corrective vision for a whimsical reason." And he recalls the case of an 80-year-old in California who underwent corrective surgery because he wanted to surf!

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"Step number one, is to apply ice to the injury. Then examine your vision — make sure it is in no way distorted or you see less. If so, dash off to your eye doctor. If not, visit him anyway within the week to check that the iris (the colored part of the cornea) has not moved backwards with the blow and there is no retinal tear."

"Will the day be here when a totally blind man can be made to see?" I ask. At the back of my mind, I suppose, are the miracles performed by the Christ.

His answer thrills me. "By utilizing microchips and having the new implantable telescope (costing around Rs 40,000) fitted in the eye, yes, in the distant future the blind will see."

Impressive images

The bio data of Dr Keiki R. Mehta, born in Hyderabad on October 3,

"One and a half lakhs are corneally blind, whose eyesight can be restored by a simple corneal graft"

1941, makes impressive reading. That he holds a brilliant academic record comes as no surprise. He stood first in the MBBS exam from Ludhiana and first again in his Master of Ophthalmology exam from Chandigarh. He has a Diploma in Ophthalmology from Ireland, another from the Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, and has studied with Prof Franklin in Utrecht, Prof Binkhorst in Holland and Prof Galin in New York.

An innovator of advanced surgical

techniques as well as tools (designer knives, forceps, rotators), Mehta has presented papers on original research projects in India and abroad and authored six books. He is the recipient of 12 awards, international and home-brewed; and in January 2002, the International Council of Cataract Surgeons at Barcelona, Spain, honored him with the Outstanding Recognition Award based on his pioneering work in cataract surgery, with special reference to his 'Cold Phacoemulsification' method. Today he works in an honorary capacity with several prestigious hospitals, societies and associations for the blind. A caring man, he was honorary eye consultant with the 100-bed Municipal Eye Hospital in Bombay for 17 years. He is the honorary ophthalmic consultant to the Governor of Maharashtra.

The lens lady

She fits you with invisible windows on the world. An optometrist, in the last 27 years of her practice she must have fitted, literally, thousands of lenses at the Colaba Eye Clinic. Looking young, and fragile as a porcelain figurine despite the white coat of many pockets, there is yet a quality of resilience about Dr Zenobia Keiki Mehta who with a group of technicians runs the contact lens department here — her other roles as supportive wife and mother she does not wear on her sleeve.

I got my first pair of lenses when the fitting of them was a tedious trial and error ordeal. Multiple lenses were tried on the fatigued and smarting eye in pursuit of the one that turned out to be the best fit.

And vanity was the unvoiced reason why you wore them. Dorothy Parker's couplet, "Men don't make passes/At girls who wear glasses" was taken to heart by college girls. Euphoric at the idea of dropping the unsightly crutches from their noses, collegiates opted for the invisible lenses as did a sprinkling of hardcore socialites. Also some professionals, who had reasons other than cosmetics for wearing them, like boys in the armed forces and performers on stage and screen. (Could you enact *Cleopatra* or *Asoka* in bifocals?)

Over the years, easier techniques evolved for the fitting of contact lenses. The use of a new computerized corneal

topographer (EyeSys, USA) with the latest software permits an accurate analysis of the cornea; and since the fitting is done on the computer itself (without tears) the patient can hope for the ideal pair.

"Contact lenses are now prescribed for therapeutic uses too," says Zenobia when I call at the clinic to hand in my hard pair for its periodic testing. "For instance, when one eye is near-normal and the other has a very high power, with spectacles it would be impossible for the two eyes to function together." Such a condition is called anisometropia, I'm told. And in answer to my spate of queries Zenobia presents me with loads of relevant literature.

Many are the therapeutic uses of contact lenses, I learn. They are prescribed for non-healing corneal ulcers, for abnormalities like keratoconus (bulging or coning of the cornea), for stabilizing unstable cornea following surgical procedures and for dry eye syndromes. For the very painful bullous condition (small blisters on the surface of the eye), there is no other known treatment. In all these cases the very thin, specially designed therapeutic lenses act as a bandage and allow the eye to heal.

You have a choice of soft or hard contact lenses, but it is best to let the doctor decide. For example, soft lenses (flexible, cushy, large enough to cover the white of the eye) are prescribed for high numbers, but are unsuited to astig-

matism, my reading informs me. My old hard contact lenses (rigid, and small enough to cover only the iris) were upgraded to gas permeable (GP) lenses, which are hard but have some flexural ability and allow oxygen to go through the lens to the eye. This enhances the flow of tears and combined with the high wettability of the plastic used, the surface does not develop dry spots and less oil adheres to it.

New materials and uses for lenses are evolving. Bifocal contact lenses and colored cosmetic lenses are already on the market and "toric soft" lenses are recommended for wearing after cataract surgery. Also good to know is that infection with contact lens is rare and occurs if the case in which they are stored is contaminated, or the cleaning solution is unsterile or too little of it is used as an economy measure. Eye drops usually suffice to clear up the infection.

Children, I am surprised to learn, are the best patients for contact lenses. They accept them easily and lose them less than adults (I could write a skit on the number of times I've lost and found my lenses). As a rule, if the power required is above three dioptres and increasing, contact lenses are medically indicated for six-year-olds onwards. At this rate, perhaps spectacles will one day become obsolete!

"They well might, over time," smiles Zenobia on my next visit to collect my lenses.



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The pride of Iran

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A seminar records how the *Shahnameh* revived Iran's flagging culture after the Arab invasion

"I praise the holy Creator, who converts dust into those who can speak and see; who through a small ant reduces a ferocious lion to helplessness and who gives power to a mosquito over a brave elephant; through Thou this world gets greatness and its lowest depth. I do not know who Thou art; whatever Thou art, Thou art." Though the cadence of the original Persian stanza of Abuol Qasem Mansur (better known by his pen name, Ferdowsi) may be infinitely more beautiful, Capt Hormazdiar Desai's fine translation encapsulates for us the wide, freewheeling concept of life that informs the master craftsman and his verse.

To celebrate Ferdowsi's epic creation, the *Shahnameh* (SN), the Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) in Bombay and the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) embarked on a three-day all-India seminar (November 9-11, 2001), where 19 scholars presented papers examining the multifaceted impact of the SN on the hearts and minds of the poet's contemporaries and the generations that followed.

"In the course of history... some figures have not been confined to their own geographical territory and they have moved beyond their time and undoubtedly Ferdowsi was one of them," remarked Issa Rezazadeh, the cultural counselor at the IRI embassy in New Delhi, in his inaugural address. He referred to Ferdowsi's presentation of the idea that "history is nothing more than

a transformation of constant and similar values and events."

We find not only history and mythology on reading the SN, said Rezazadeh; we are reading "the book of our own life," of the symbols and values around us. All the characters of the SN symbolize values: Faridoon is the symbol of benevolent wisdom; we need the courage of Rostam in our difficult and hard times; Toos is a personage consumed by jealousy... "Go through the SN. Look among the characters for the values of daily life. It makes the SN fresh," he advised.



Combat between Sohrab and Gordafarid (The Great Heroes in Ferdosi's *Shahnameh* painted by Mahmoud Farshchian) Top: The Ferdowsi mausoleum in Iran

Courtesy: IRI Culture House, Bombay

Remarking on the "manifestation of excellence of two important centers of civilization," IRI consul general in

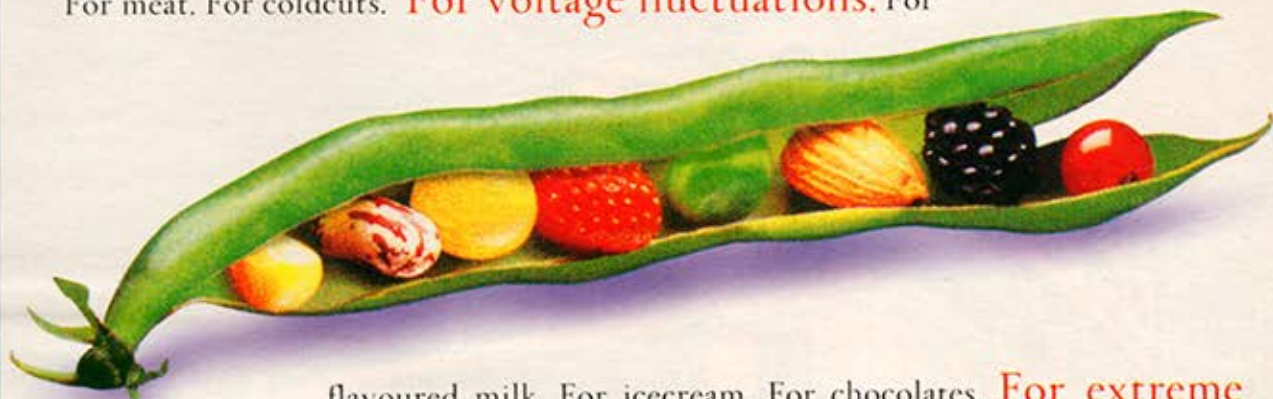
Bombay, Mahdi Honardoost commented on the cross references between the *Vedas* and the *Gathas*, the *Mahabharata* and the SN, noting examples of cultural bonds between India and Iran. "Ferdowsi reminds the readers of the ancient cultural impact of Zoroastrianism, of the liaison between Zoroastrianism and Islam," he noted.

Director of the Culture House of the IRI Ali Fuladi termed the bonding between his institution and the KRCOI that had resulted in the hosting of the seminar at the KRCOI's J. J. Modi Hall as "not merely friendship but old common cultural heritage." The Indian intellectuals' acceptance of Persian, which became an official language of India from about the 11th century AC to the mid 19th century, had led to "the birth of its daughter, Urdu," said Fuladi. But the prevalence of Persian itself was based on the citadel of the SN which revived the glories of ancient Persia, gave life to the language of the people which had been suppressed and denigrated by its Arab rulers and fanned the flame of "nobility and freedom" among the Iranian people in their search for human values.

Prof Sharif Husain Qasemi, Delhi University's head of the Persian department, provided the keynote address. He referred to the admixture of history, mythology, folklore and tradition that constitutes the SN and advised his listeners to refrain from investigating the authenticity of its content as it reflects

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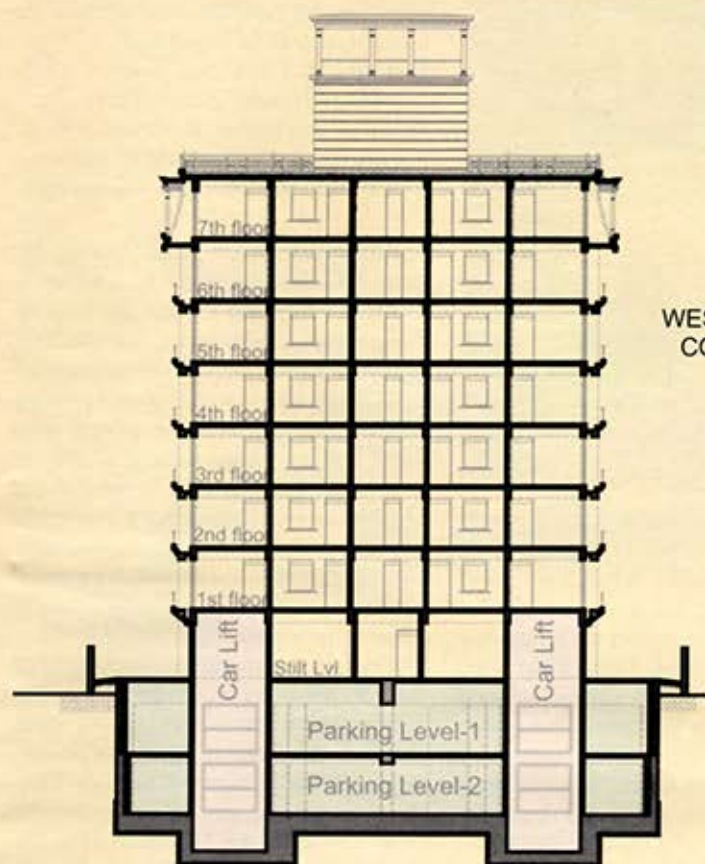




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Honardoost, Patel, and Ahmed
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Ansari, Upadhyaya, Basheer-Unnisa,
Bilquis, Qasemi, Havewalla, Fatema,
Hasan Photo: Nazneen Vajildar, Spectravision

the sociocultural traditions of Ferdowsi's time: "Ferdowsi developed the existing ancient traditions and narrated them in his own individual style." Egypt, Turan, China, Kabul had also been in contact with Iran. Ferdowsi devoted much space to the sociopolitical history of India, Qasemi noted. Ferdowsi had gleaned that the Indian subcontinent was vast and prosperous, continued Qasemi. Rulers of Kashmir and Sind had been in constant touch with Iran and Turan. Trade, games, debates at

court level, marriages between the royal families, art, artisans, scholars and scholarship created bonds. When Shiyavush, son of Kaikaus, led his army against Turan, there were Indian troops among them; someone from Afrasia had been sent to India; Framarsh's army included contingents from Kashmir... A number of names and places mentioned by Ferdowsi are yet to be located, (but) Indian incense burned in the fire lit by Gushtasp, son of Lohrasp. Ferdowsi notes that "we" burned the idols and

replaced them with fires. Darius III invited Indian engineers to dig canals to carry water and sought the help of Porus against Alexander. Alexander's invasion did not stop Indo-Iranian relations. India and Iran exchanged epistles in their own languages i.e. people who knew both languages were available on both sides. In one of the verses (of the SN) Noshirwan asks about the religion of India ('Are they really idol worshippers?') and Ferdowsi describes the game of chess in the course of his work. Qasemi provided examples.

One of the continuing programs of the KRCOI is the reprinting of selected works which have been out of print thanks to the largesse of Iranian philanthropists Mehraban and the late Fari-doon Zartoshty. On this occasion the new edition of *An Introduction to the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi* (from the French

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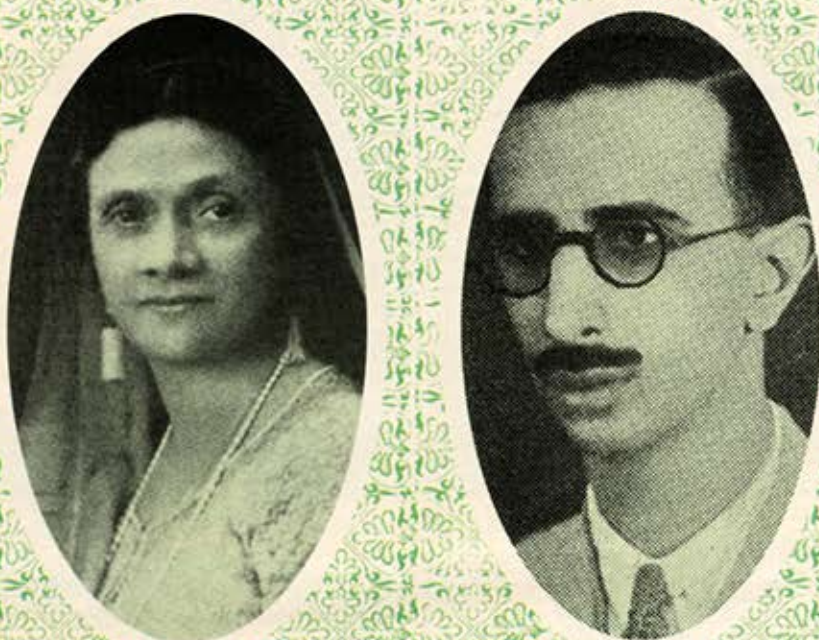
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by Jules Mohl) as translated by Jamshedji Dorabji Khandalawala was ceremonially released by KRCOI president Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy. Constituting an elegant link between the Parsis of Bombay and the IRI authorities, KRCOI trustee-secretary Homai Modi had helped Fuladi in his labor of love which embraced not only the organizing of the seminar but the beautiful exhibition of Iranian paintings, lithographs, calligraphy, crafts and breathtaking printed reproductions showcasing Ferdowsi and the *SN* that had prefaced the seminar. Popular cine star Dilip Kumar who inaugurated the exhibition recalled his roots in the North West Frontier Province where the only written language they knew was Persian and reflected on the "enormous intellectual size of Ferdowsi, his perception of history and love for the Persian language... which even in this modern age can bring obsolete cultures to life."

Calligraphy whose aesthetic appeal provides a dimension beyond the message of the words, shares the honor of an art form with literature and painting, especially miniatures, in Iran and the IRI Culture House had organized calligraphy sessions with Prof Mohammed Salahshoor for those interested.

Speaking on the common features shared by Iranian and Indian mythology according to the *SN*, Dr Mani

Kamerkar, vice president of the Asiatic Society of Bombay, drew parallels between the two cultures. Like all Indo-European myths, the tales of *SN* and of the Indian epics are set against the struggle of moral ideas against the powers of darkness. Tehmuras, the son of Hoshung, tamed the devil by binding him to his chariot, very like Durga riding the lion; Hoshung, the first law-giver, is akin to India's Manu; Jamshyd, like Manu (and Noah of the *Bible*) had been warned of a devastating winter (and/or floods) and instructed to help preserve the flora and fauna of the world. "The golden age of Jamshyd is comparable to the golden age of Ram where justice, peace and plenty ruled," noted Kamerkar adding that the ultimate victory of Jamshyd and Durga against evil forces is celebrated to this day by the festivals of Navroz and Dassera respectively.

According to Kamerkar the age of Zohak historically marks the period of changing weather conditions, the coming of the ice age and the upheaval of settled society. Here the resemblance is in the form of the two serpents that spring on Zohak's shoulders on the kiss of Ahriman. Indian mythology too associates serpents with evil, noted Kamerkar.

Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer who has been providing in-depth interpretations

L to R (1st row) Fuladi; Nazir Ahmed and Modi; Rezazadeh and Honardoost. (2nd row) Jejeebhoy; Havewalla and Modi; in the audience Bahdur and Nawaz Mody, Dr Nelie Noble and Arnavaz Khan

Photos: Nazneen Vajifdar, Spectravision

of the *SN* the first Wednesday of every month at the KRCOI since over two years, spoke of the five dynasties that people the *SN*: the Peshdadian, the Kayanian, the Achaemenian, the Parthian (also referred to as the Hakamenian or Askanian) and the Sasanian. Zarathustra arrived in the second half of the second dynasty and though no archaeological evidence exists of these first two dynasties, their existence is a part of oral tradition, Peer maintained. Peer, a long-standing scholar of Zoroastrianism, noted that the events and individuals portrayed in the *SN* correspond to details in the *Fravardin*, *Mehr* and other *Yashts*. Ferdowsi emphasizes how the perception of time changes over the ages; at other times, the scant data available leads to the compression of events, creating a feeling of anachronism, commented Peer, adding that the last period of Jamshyd's life was similar to our present epoch where the individual ego is preminent!

Speaking on the topic "Ferdowsi and the West" Dr Syed Ainul Hasan,



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associate professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, noted how a translator's striving for beauty often militates against the original author's intentions. "Distortion of the original feeling and sensitivity may succeed in making the translation as charming and attractive as the original... but it violates the originality of the ideas and the basic philosophy of life...of the original author..." In this context Hasan cited a work more familiar to English readers — Edward Fitzgerald's rendition of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* which, according to Hasan, fails to convey the basic feelings of Khayyam. Similarly, he said, that the emotional tone and final effect of Mathew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rostam* "is quite distant from the impression of Ferdowsi's *SN*. He not only lacks the high seriousness of the great epic, but also does not display the basic concept of such a great combat between father and son. Although the entire poem invites readers to get involved (in) the affair... it fails to give any clue as to whom one should lend (one's) support and whom to consider responsible for the tragic end of Sohrab." Hasan also noted that unlike Ferdowsi who expresses joy at the very existence of

Rostam, Arnold's technique does not overwhelm the reader, almost creating a sense of indifference. In conveying Rostam's helplessness Ferdowsi "portrays the very existence of Almighty God whose help is sought even by an unchallenged warrior.... Arnold overlooks this important aspect of Eastern intelligentsia... The spirit of Persian poetry is tragic because it sees in our moral destiny the presence of evil in every event, even in the noblest of human endeavors... Misery deserved and misery undeserved, each is the will of God, for God is the cause of everything that happens, be it good or bad. This significant belief, which is the spirit of the whole *SN* could hardly be witnessed in Arnold's interpretation."

The "national ego and chauvinism of (the Turanian) Tahmina who wanted the strongest man, Rostam, as her husband but refused to make any sacrifice as his wife, mainly caused the tragedy of Rostam-Sohrab. She hated Iran and never agreed to the idea of going there; but nurtured the dream of conquering Iran with the help of her son, Sohrab. She thus desired ruling over Iran with Rostam as the king and herself, the queen. This Iran-Turan conflict has been completely overlooked by almost all

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L to R (1st row) Upadhyaya, Bajan, Kamerkar, Dalal, Bilquis; (2nd row) Ansari, Basheer-Unnisa, Bhoot, Peer, Hasan, Shekhar Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama

Europeans who have dealt with the *SN*."

"It is a transcendent tribute to the overwhelming power of Ferdowsi's poetry that, in spite of its subject-matter, its standpoint, its definitely anti-Arab and, occasionally, almost anti-Islamic bias, the *SN* obtained and has maintained such universal currency in the lands of Islam, and even among people like the Tartars and Turkomans whose names he execrated as the traditional enemies of Iran," noted Prof (Dr) S. Basheer-Unnisa Begum, professor of Persian at Osmania University, Hyderabad. Speaking on "Ferdowsi and the influence of the *SN*," Basheer-Unnisa refers to Ferdowsi's characters as household names not only in Iran and Afghanistan but in large parts of India and Central Asia, adopted by peoples not necessarily of Iranian lineage. "The entire nomenclature of the Parsis of India, both male and female, is, of course, derived practically from the pages of the *SN*. It is remarkable that these Parsi names do not hark back to the original forms preserved in their religious books. They call their sons Faridoon and not Thrataona, Jamshyd, not Yima Khshaita, Kaykobad and not Kavi Kawadha, Kay Khusrav and not Kava Husrava, Isfandiyar and not Spentodata, Ardashir and not Artakhshir."

Stating that "the soul of Iran has been kept alive by the strains of the *SN* for a thousand years," Basheer-Unnisa adds, "Ferdowsi is the father of most

that is good, true and beautiful in the literature of Iran. From his pages soldiers have derived martial spirit and heroic ardors, statesmen have learnt policy, kings, royal dignity, and the whole Iranian nation a pride and patriotism that have kept them together against a thousand calamities for a thousand years." She also informs us that over the portals of the University of Tehran is Ferdowsi's Farsi equivalent of "He has power who hath knowledge" while the poet's other moral precepts bedeck other walls of this great pile of buildings.

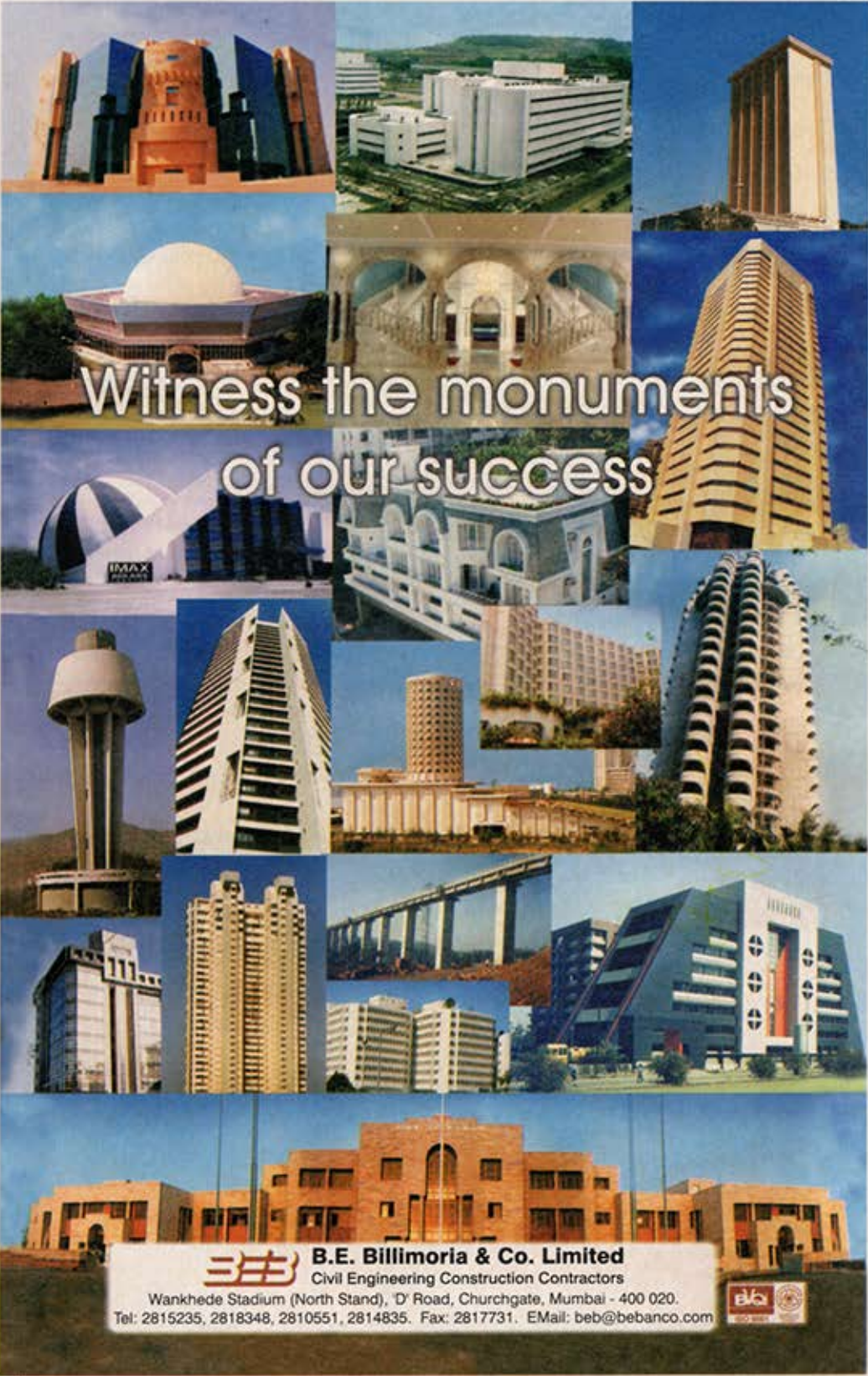
SN scholar Ervad Parvez Bajan described the genus of epic poetry as dating back to the "infancy of a race or people" when oral tradition was alive to glory and shame but before the evolution of civilization brought "reason to bear on tradition and disentangled myth from reality... Almost all epics were recorded in the shape of history or literature when the nation had achieved the art of writing. Only then traditions have their true national ring and flavor, only then can they be put into form and preserved so that they reproduce for all time that peculiar inimitable fragrance, that aroma of the childhood of the world. They should be thus recorded, but such a task requires the rise of a great poet, dexterous and worthy, national enough to weld into an organic whole the tangled mass of tradition. Such versatile genius must be well aware of the existing situation of his own time. But such poets are rare and consequently true epics are also rare.

"*SN* is history clouded by fable. It does not, like the *Iliad*, deal with one single great event, but consists of a series of narratives beginning with fabu-

lous times and going down to the period when the old civilization gave place to Islam...

"It throws light on the courts of the kings, the manner of submitting petitions, the reverence observed by the noblemen for the kings, and even the costumes of royal and princely personages. It tells us likewise how royal orders were drawn and issued and how the guilty received punishment; what rules and regulations about taxation existed, and how land was distributed. We are even given information of how weddings were celebrated, what dowries were presented to the bride and the costumes worn by them, e.g. the detailed account given about the banquet prepared by Kaikhosrau in honor of Rostam. A full account is given of Esfandiar's funeral procession and the coffin prepared for him by order of Rostam. The battles are described with such minuteness that we know all about the methods of fighting and the weapons used. Finally the religious conceptions, the moral ideals, the deities and spirits worshipped according to the Zoroastrian creed are made familiar to us through this monumental work." Thus, said Bajan, Ferdowsi's work belongs not to the realm of literature alone, but to history and sociology also.

Born in the village Shadab in the Tus district of Khorasan circa 941 AC, Mansur was said to have adopted the pen-name Ferdowsi (meaning heavenly) when Shah Mahmud of Ghazni registered his pleasure at the poet's instant composition of a verse at the imperial bidding by saying, "You have made my darbar bright as Ferdows," notes Desai. Thereafter he had to contend with three



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other court poets in a rhyming competition which Ferdowsi won thanks to his knowledge of history. The press release provided by the IRI Culture House notes that the oral tradition was rife among the dehqans or small landowning farmer class to which Ferdowsi belonged. There also existed a book called *Khudai Nameh*, a chronicle of kingly tales updated by Dihkan Daneshwar with the help of priests and courtiers in the reign of Yazdegird III, the last Sasanian king. Only some references to this work now exist among the Arabic translations of old Persian texts. For a couple of centuries after the Arab invasion, the Persian language fell into disuse until the Samanid kings, being of Iranian origin, sought its conscious revival.

The four main types of poetic composition in Persian are the *masnavi* (a long, descriptive, narrative or didactic composition in rhymed couplets), the *qasida* (a panegyric aimed at securing royal favor), the *ghazal* (ode) and the *rubai* (quatrain), noted Bajan. According to Desai, Ferdowsi's sole object in composing the great epic was to earn enough to find his daughter a noble match. It is also recounted that Ferdowsi was keen to restructure the earth dam on

the existing canal in his native Tus with a masonry construction to ensure reasonable water supply throughout the year.

Daqiqi, a reputed poet and a zealous Zoroastrian according to Desai, had already begun to translate the Pahlavi *Khudai Nameh* into Farsi verse but was killed by a slave when he had completed about 1,000 verses. These verses were incorporated into his *SN* by Ferdowsi who is believed to have been implored to do so by the dead Daqiqi in a dream, related Desai. When Mahmud Ghazni, a tyrant but the most outstanding patron of the arts at that time, started a systematic collection of all relevant data from all possible sources to reconstruct the early history of Iran, he was aided by Adar Burzin, a native of Kerman and a descendant of the Sasanian King Shapur, who had spent the major part of his life collecting traditions of the ancient Iranian kings. Mahmud initially passed on the job of versification to his poet laureate Unsuri who, considering himself unequal to the task, bowed out, declared Desai.

Once commissioned, Ferdowsi was promised 1,000 gold pieces per 1,000 couplets. Bestowing his trust upon the

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king, a Sunni Muslim, Ferdowsi sought payment in a lumpsum only after his 60,000 couplet opus was complete. While he labored, the king's ears were systematically poisoned by his rivals at court. "The tolerance which Ferdowsi has shown in the introduction to the *SN* was used by his enemy to impute that Ferdowsi was not only a Shia but also an atheist and a materialist," noted Desai. When his 12 years of mental agony and devoted work was rewarded with 60,000 silver coins instead of the promised gold, Ferdowsi distributed them between his loyal friend Ayaz, the owner of a public bath he frequented, and a bartender, requesting Ayaz to tell the Sultan exactly what he had done to the king's niggardly reward. When the enraged Sultan, his ears still ringing with false stories of Ferdowsi's infamy, threatened Ferdowsi with trampling by elephants, the poet made a public apology and left Ghazni in the guise of a darvish. But before he left, he etched in a corner of the main Mosque at Ghazni "The fortunate court of Mahmud of Zabulistan is like a sea. What a sea! One cannot perceive the shore! I plunged in it but found no pearls. It is the fault of my stars and not of the sea." He also left a sealed envelope with Ayaz to be delivered to Mahmud 20 days after his departure. It contained the satire that became world famous, noted Desai. Even in that state of anguish Ferdowsi stuck to the facts with dignity and restraint. Referring to Mahmud's lowly birth (he was the son of the slave of a slave), Ferdowsi's satire, though bitter "is utterly devoid of invective and innuendo which mar... most satirical poems of the Arabs and Persians," commented Edward Browne in his *Literary History of Persia*. Wrote Ferdowsi, "Do not entertain any hopes (expectations) from one born of an unholy alliance, for howsoever much you wash a Negro, he will not become white. If you plant, even in paradise, a tree, which has bitter roots, and while watering it, you feed it with water from the river of paradise and feed its roots with honey and milk, in the end, it will show the qualities of the seed and would bear only bitter fruits... If you go past one who sells amber, then your clothes would all be scented. But if you go near one who sells coal, you will not be covered by anything except blackness... I have, by my poetry, made the world like a paradise on this earth, for no one else has

planted seeds of better poetry. There was no other poet like Ferdowsi at any time in any age. What was bad was that fortune did not favor him."

Ferdowsi had returned to Tus. He was old, feeble, tired, broken-hearted when some years later he heard a young boy recite a verse from his satire: "If the king had a king as his father/He would have placed, on my head, a crown of gold/If the mother of the king was a lady/I would have been immersed, up to my knees, in silver and gold." Emotionally disturbed, the 83-year-old poet swooned, never to recover. In the meantime the Sultan, hearing quotes from the *SN*, repented his parsimony and despatched the promised 60,000 gold coins, 12 camels loaded with gifts and a robe of honor for the old poet. In a final irony of fate, even as the caravan of gifts entered the city from one gate, Ferdowsi's last remains were being taken for burial through another. Ferdowsi's daughter is said to have angrily spurned the Sultan's belated generosity but Ferdowsi's sister spoke of the poet's desire to build the dam and the Sultan is said to have ordered it to be built.

The authorship of the gigantic masterpiece, thus composed by a single creative genius unlike the *Mahabharata*

"which is a mighty mixture of many minds and ages," has never been questioned, unlike the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, stated Bajan.

As the press release from the IRI Culture House notes, the *SN* "does not begin 'in the midst of things' but with the creation of the world and the appearance of the first shah..." Unlike the Greek and Indian epics it is monotheistic and "its focus on the life of the royal court makes it seem closer to the tales of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table than to Milton's great poem (*Paradise Lost*). It contains not one story but many, not a single climactic event, but a multitude of them, not one hero but a long sequence of heroes and heroic princes. Rostam, who is the last and greatest of a family of heroes from the Iranian province of Sistan and who dominates many of its finest stories is no more than an offstage presence in other tales. He also dies when the poem is only two-thirds finished. The events in *Gilgamesh*, Homer and the European epics are tailored to the limits of a single human life, but the events of the *SN* stretch across many generations and a single hero may live for centuries..."

"While there are a number of recur-

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rent themes in the *SN*, such as the immortality of noble deeds, the malignancy and inevitability of fate, and the persistent hostility and envy of Iran's neighbors, the theme that underlies all of these is that God prefers Iran to other nations and sustains it through the institution of the shah. So long as His chosen shah sits upon the throne, Iran will endure. When Shah Yazdegerd III is slain in 652 AC, the Iran of the *SN* comes to an end...

"The religion of the *SN* is Zoroastrianism, but a Zoroastrianism that has been stripped of its fire temples, rituals and prayers. Ferdowsi was a Muslim as were his patron, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (d. 1030), and the members of his court. As a consequence either he or his sources have passed the stories of the *SN* through a filter, eliminating what would have been most offensive to Muslim sensibilities. What remains is a vague but persistent dualism in which the powers of good, Ahura Mazda, and evil, Ahriman, are in perpetual conflict. Rostam and Kay Kavus pray to the supreme god, Izad or Yazdan, (Creator and Keeper of the World) who Zoroastrians believe presides over the struggle between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. Ultimately Yazdan will give

victory to good, but in the course of the *SN* it is Ahriman's power that increases. The shahs who rule become progressively less worthy and 'hunchbacked fate' spreads ruin and destruction where he will. The poem also ends with the conquest by the Arabs and Islam, a crushing defeat for Zoroastrian Iran."

"It was customary for every king to have a personal illustrated copy of the *SN* done by the most prestigious artists of the time," notes Rameen Javid Moshref. Shah Tahmasp, the second Safavid king who ruled from 1524-70, owned a copy with 254 miniature illustrations, a masterpiece of world art which has survived to provide an impressive documentation of early Safavid culture, notes Moshref.

Prof Sabar Havewalla of the JNU expanded on the story of the evil Zohak and Kaveh the rebel who incited the fearful people to fight the tyrant.

The son of a wise, just, popular king named Merdas, the ambitious Zohak killed his father and invaded Iran, imprisoning the pompous and proud Jamshyd who, bereft of his former wisdom and dignity, had lost his popularity among his people.

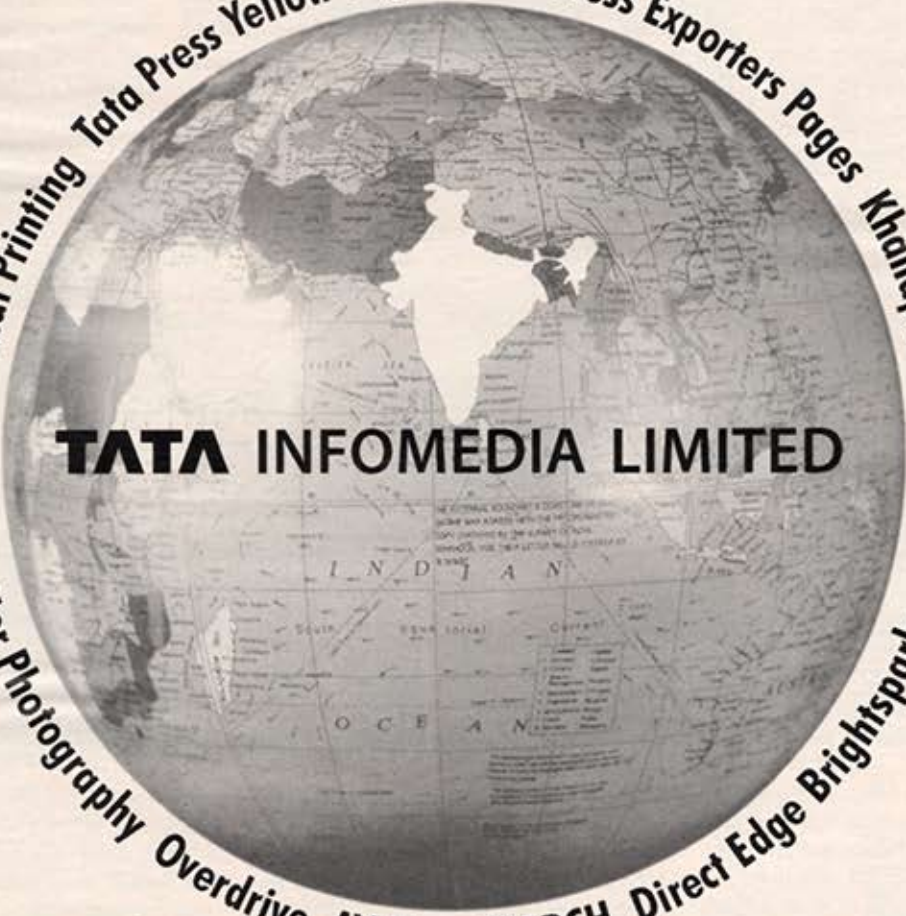
Kissed by Ahriman, Zohak sprouted a snake on each shoulder that had to be

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fed the brains of two Iranian youths of all walks of life, every night. The helpless Iranians nursed their hatred but could not muster the courage to fight until Kaveh, a blacksmith whose 18th son was now commandeered for the snakes' evening meal, stormed into the palace. Demanding his son's release, Kaveh called Zohak a "cruel king." Zohak, who had dreamt that a young man by the name of Faridoon would destroy him, had had innumerable men killed in an effort to counter his faceless enemy. He now nervously acceded to Kaveh's demand and asked Kaveh to sign, like his sycophant courtiers, a document declaring him to be just and kind. Kaveh not only shredded the document, he left the palace urging all people to join the fight for justice. Kaveh led the people under his banner — a leather apron tied to a spearhead — to the young Faridoon, brought up in hiding by a sage in the jungle. The makeshift banner, later adorned with silks and jewels, became the symbol of a resurrected Iran under Faridoon with Zohak dethroned and tied until death in Mount Demavand.

According to Havewalla, Zohak is referred to as Dahhak in the *Avan Yasht*, as Azhidahak in the *Yasna*, the *Videvdad*, the *Behram* and *Zamyad Yashts*. "An invader ruling over a rival country very cleverly fabricating a plan to wipe out a young generation posing a threat to the ruler, is a very common strategy. History is full of such evidences," noted Havewalla, adding, "Modern Iranian literature is full of reference to Kaveh and his first 'people's revolution.' His *Derafsh-e-Kaviyan* (flag of protest) is an idiomatic expression in Persian literature symbolizing social revolution in Iran and protest against social injustice."

According to Prof Maria Bilquis of the Aligarh Muslim University, apart from Iran and Afghanistan there are 25 manuscript copies of the *SN* in the British Museum Library, 33 (complete and incomplete) in the India Office Library in London, 13 at the Bodleian Library at Oxford and many more scattered all over India. Dr Chander Shekhar, reader of Persian at the University of Delhi, stated that it is difficult to establish when the Persian manuscripts started coming into India or when Indians started creating these manuscripts them-

selves, many of which are abridged editions. Dr Nazir Ahmed, professor emeritus at the Aligarh Muslim University, described the difficulty of scholars who find that these manuscripts are not properly edited and hence one cannot make out exactly



Iranian crafts on display at the exhibition

what Ferdowsi wrote. He suggested that all manuscripts should be collected and an annotated edition produced by a body of scholars.

Speaking on the motif of Rostam and Sohrab in Sanskrit literature, Prof S. A. Upadhyaya, director of post-graduate research at Bombay's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, noted that certain ideas recur in the literatures of the world because all great creative artists get their inspiration from the universal collective unconsciousness. He referred to the episode of Lord Shiva and Ganesha; to the sons of Ram who challenge his right to rule because they are not aware of him as their father; Tolstoy, in one of his stories, depicts a man whose racial hatred impels him to throw another off the railway platform to die in the cold, only to realize later that the victim had been his son who arrived on an earlier train. Though this motif of conflict between father and son who do not recognize each other is common, Upadhyaya said, "In Indian culture no one is killed. It is part of the Hindu culture that the drama does not end in tragedy like Rostam and Sohrab." Emphasizing the message of the ethical virtues of charity, humility, etc — the eternal values, common to all great literature and all religions — Upadhyaya remarked, that if all of us could grasp it, we could reach the utopia of a peaceful world through our common heritage.

Eminent scholar Prof Ahmed Ansari reviewed the Sohrab and Rostam

episode in terms of Greek tragedy highlighting the irony of life. Persian language and literature was a craze in Victorian England with Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Hardy and Fitzgerald meeting every evening at Thomas Carlyle's home to read the Persian *SN*, he noted. According to Ansari, Tennyson began to learn Persian at an advanced age. Like the prolog and epilog of Shakespeare's plays or the chorus of Greek tragedy, from the beginning Ferdowsi prepares the reader for war and the conflict between Sohrab and Rostam, said Ansari. He philosophizes, draws metaphorical similes like the whirlwind blowing away newly blossomed fruit, fire indiscriminately burn-

ing fresh twigs and old branches, depicts foes and friends alike joining the fateful conspiracy to keep their identities secret. Sohrab's name disappears from the *SN* except for three references after his death, but Rostam's presence remains throughout, even in absentia, observed Ansari.

Archeologist Dr Katy Dalal presented a more humane concept of Alexander the Great whose conquest of Iran led to the end of the Achaemenian era. Son of Philip of Macedonia and his shrewish fourth wife, Alexander was removed from his mother's custody at the age of five and sent to live with his tutor Deodidas where he learnt the discipline and frugality that contributed to his successful long marches. When Darius was spiked to death by a supposed ally, it was Alexander who covered the King's body with his own cloak and sent it for royal burial, said Dalal. But the sight of numerous Greeks on the way to Persepolis, their eyes gouged out, ears and hands cut, sparked an avenging rage that led to the pillage and burning of Persepolis. According to Dalal, Alexander was "quite a mystic" and held philosophical discussions with the *sadhus* he encountered.

The anti-Arab tenor of the popular *SN* which overrides restrictions of race, religion and country led Arabic poets to write an *Omarname* to neutralize the *SN*'s impact, said Basheer-Unnisa. Speaking at the valedictory function guest of honor Nazir Nizamuddin Patel, Maharashtra's commissioner of cultural affairs, spoke of the live link created by Ferdowsi between the three great lan-

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guages of Arabic, Avestan and Persian and laughed at the statement attributed to British statesman Thomas Macaulay that the entire literature of Indian and Persian languages could be stored in two cupboards. "Serious work on the *SN* alone will need 10 cupboards! Ancient and medieval Indian history cannot be written without reference to Persia," he noted.

Because Iran is a beautiful country ringed by aggressive neighbors it could not retain tranquility and peace, noted Honardoost, chief guest on the occasion, adding that the Achaemenian empire was "conceptualized on a defensive basis." Referring to the intertwined "sense and soul of the *SN* and the *Avesta*" Honardoost said that the history of ancient Iran could not be written without reference to the thoughts and words of Zarathushtra. "The deeds of *SN*'s heroes speak of a pure relationship with the divine," said Honardoost referring to the parallel of Ferdowsi's own life and his resistance to Mahmud who was a tyrant.

Unlike Egypt, Syria and the other lands of the former Iranian empires conquered by the Arabs which accepted Arabic in preference to their native

tongues, Ferdowsi restored the Iranian language to its people, said Havewalla as she thanked the organizers on behalf of the participating scholars. "By honoring Ferdowsi we are saluting a nation that despite its many vicissitudes maintained its pride."

Tailpiece

The audience at the *Shahnameh* seminar was treated to a brief CD demonstration by Benaifer Bhoot of Atash Enterprises. Currently transferring the seventh volume of Dr Bahman Surti's prose translation of the epic which she has scanned on CD Rom, the seven disk set devotes one CD per volume, illustrated with animation, coins, clothes, monuments and other pictorials courtesy the IRI Culture House. Bhoot hopes to launch the set, priced at Rs 1,750, with a special event at the KRCOI. The *Shahnameh* project is part of a greater project towards which Bhoot is working — to form a club to rehouse street animals and train them for handicapped people. Ferdowsi would probably approve. Among his treasure trove of mythical characters were a few horses and a very special bird!



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Mehtas' municipal mission

The voters from Ward 20 were determined to have a member of the Mehta family continue to represent them at the Bombay Municipality

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"Most people would get thinner with the tension of elections but I am happily putting on weight," laughs Anahita Rusi Mehta, the newly elected corporator of the Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (Bombay Municipality). Although victory was expected for this Congress (I) candidate, the fact that she won 8,370 votes as against her nearest rival from the Bharatiya Janata Party who got 1,686 has been a continuous cause for celebration. During the course of the *Parsiana* interview on February 24, 2002, a fortnight after the polls, she must have received at least three reminders to inform her that her presence was being anxiously awaited at the felicitation function in the nearby B.I.T. Chawl.

When campaigning at her Ward 20 which covers Central Bombay's notorious Foras Road, Shuklaji Street, Bharatnagar, Khetwadi Back Road, Mehta recalls the overwhelming support she got from her electorate who kept reiterating that there was no need for her to be canvassing from door to door. They assured her that being obligated to her late father Rusi Mehta who as corporator for 20 years was responsible for many of the improvements in this neglected area, their loyalties lay only with the Mehta family. And accompanied as she invariably was by her brother Noshir, who until this year had adopted their father's mantle as corporator and continued with his good work, was another plus point in her favor. "Had I not had such a hectic schedule and had I noted down the many instances they related of help proffered by my father, I would have had a diary full," she states. "I was barely given a chance to say anything except 'thank you, thank you,'" she adds.

The fact that she speaks fluent

Marathi and Hindi, ("even better than Gujarati," she confides) helped the voters identify her as "*aamchi pori* (our daughter)," she observes. In fact, one of the senior-most and faithful Congress (I) party workers, 90-year-old Prabhavati, popularly addressed as "aai" by the juniors, continues till this day to give 32-year-old Anahita a chocolate every time she meets her, a practice the senior lady had introduced over two decades ago for Rusi Mehta's third child.



Anahita Mehta:
concerned
corporator

What made Anahita stand for the election? "It was thrust upon me," she declares matter-of-factly. "I was left with no other choice." When the Municipality announced its 30 percent reservation for ladies, the wards selected through a lottery system had to compulsorily field women candidates. As luck would have it, Ward 20 (or Ward 23 as it was referred to earlier where her father had served for four terms until his assassination on Anahita's 18th birthday in 1987, his seat being then occupied by Noshir) was one of those earmarked for ladies. Realizing the responsibilities involved in accepting this challenge, Anahita initially showed her reluctance. But with the encouragement and support of senior Congress officials like Murli Deora, the confidence reposed by the residents of the area and guidance assured by Noshir who insisted that "public demand *chhè; tané karvuch parsé* (you will have to bow down to public pressure)," she took the plunge. Younger sister Pari was excused as she was then tied down with her infant's asthmatic attack. Anahita though was expected to march on with the support of her husband Izhar and mother-in-law although she too has a little son Jaser, not yet three years old. Even after marriage she continues to

retain her maiden name on the rationale that the electoral register and identity card reads "Anahita Rusi Mehta."

While she had yet to receive her first exposure of a Corporation meeting scheduled for March 5, Anahita was familiarizing herself with the facts and figures concerning her constituency: There are 35,500 registered voters in her constituency of whom barely 35 percent (12,220) came to cast their vote. Fifty-five percent of her constituency members must be Muslims, she believes, the Parsi component numbering approximately 150, mainly from the Khetwadi Back Road locality. In her father's time Balaram Street where many Parsis reside was also included in the same constituency, but not any more.

"See the population 50 years ago and today. But nothing has modernized here. We are still stuck with the British drainage system and storm pipes which cause repeated flooding in the monsoons," she relates. Since hygiene and cleanliness are not priorities with the people here she finds "pipes and drains are choked, house gullies are perpetually dirty, gutters are overflowing." And it becomes a vicious circle, observes Anahita, when some of the municipal workers feel it is futile fighting against this filth. The attitude assumed is: "*ghaan chhè, ghaan rèhsé, marvaadéni*."

Initially in the Gol Darwaza locality the women would go and stand in a queue every morning at 4 a.m. to get water from the tap outside. Thanks to her father's intervention and persistence each of the rooms now has a tap and the early morning ordeals are over for which they are perennially grateful to the Mehtas.

Presently Noshir is guiding her every step of the way and if Anahita is required to be in two places at the same time, the brother holds the fort at one place while she takes care of another emergency. She has had many occa-

sions to interact with the populace of the area in the course of her involvement with the welfare center started by her father. The center comes to the aid of those with medical problems and educational difficulties, she says.

Anahita's education was at the St Agnes High School, Clare Road, after which she graduated in science, specializing in life sciences and biochemistry from Bombay's Sophia College. Preoccupied for eight months with her mother's major illness the year she graduated Anahita says she neither opted for postgraduate studies nor a vocation in science thereafter. Presently she is the owner of the flour mill in the Rusi Mehta Compound and although her daily presence there is not mandatory as elder brother Dinshaw supervises the business, she is aware of the processes involved in the factory.

"Born and brought up in the area," notes the publicity pamphlet distributed at the time of her elections listing her other assets as "honest, hardworking, dedicated, non-corrupt, loyal Congress worker from a family who has sacrificed for the people of the area." The unpretentious office in the Rusi Mehta Compound housing a wooden desk, a

"We are still stuck with the British drainage system and storm pipes which cause repeated flooding in the monsoons"

couple of chairs and cupboards serves as her base. With her residence in the same modest building on a floor above, she smiles, "the people know where to contact me."

Anahita may be frank and forthright on most subjects but try eliciting her views on the controversies plaguing the Parsi community and she will give guarded replies, "That, Dinshaw (being a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet) can handle... Dinshaw is very capable."

She may be the only Parsi corporator presently in the Bombay Municipality. She may be the first Parsi lady corporator to serve the city. But rather than dwell on suppositions Anahita would prefer to concentrate on the tasks in hand such that "the basic necessities of good shelter, water, cleanliness can be assured to all the residents." Once the Corporation sits

for its first session and the committees are formed, she would be expected to contribute to the tasks delegated to her whilst ensuring that the ruling Shiv Sena party is performing its duty.

Would she encourage other Parsis to become corporators? The willingness and ability to put in "hard work is important," she qualifies, be that person "a Parsi or anyone else." Knowing that so many people from your constituency are illiterate, lacking in facilities many urbanites take for granted, your responsibility and obligation to do something for them increases, she explains.

Anahita may have joined the Municipality but she refuses to consider contesting Lok Sabha elections. "This is not politics. We are here to serve the people," she declares. "With his reputation and hard work my father had a lot of chance of winning as a MP (Member of Parliament) but he was content to put in four consecutive terms as a corporator."

Stirred by "the amount of love and trust" the electorate has reposed in the Mehtas, Anahita says she can now understand why she was prevailed upon to contest the elections: "If not in the interests of the family, the party, then for the sake of the people."

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Origins of the Parsi priesthood

The evolution of the priesthood in India evidenced dispute between the priests themselves as well as with the laity which resulted in bloodshed

Dastur (Dr) Firoze M. Kotwal

The Sasanian empire came to a formal end with the murder of Yazdegird III at Merv in 651 CE, but it was not until 200 years or more had passed that a group of devout Zoroastrians from Kohistan in the northeast of Iran found the ever-increasing religious persecution too much to bear and resolved to seek freedom of worship elsewhere. They traveled south to the port of Hormuz on the Persian Gulf, also known as Moghistan, place of the magi, i.e. Zoroastrian priests, and eventually secured a ship and sailed eastward, men, women and children. Their first halt was at the port of Diu in Kathiawad, where they are said to have stayed for 19 years. From there they sailed again towards the southern part of Gujarat, but met with a dreadful hurricane in the middle of the sea. The faithful devotees of Ahura Mazda stood up and prayed to Him to deliver them from this calamity. If they reached unhurt the shores of Gujarat, they vowed that they would consecrate a sacred fire in honor of Bahram, the god of victory, who helps and protects the devout in perilous journeys. Their sincere prayers were speedily answered, and the violent storm subsided. The founding fathers of the Parsi community reached the shores of southern Gujarat in Vikram Samvat 992, i.e. 936 CE. They named their newly-founded colony after Sanjan, a town in the Khwaf district of Kohistan, from where they originally came.

In fulfilment of the vow taken on the high seas, the Parsi settlers began to make preparations for installing a sacred fire on the soil of their new haven, Sanjan. They sent two priests overland to Khorasan to undergo the purificatory ablutions (*barashnom*) and to bring back with them the *alat* [ritual implements necessary for consecrating a sacred fire, specifically the fire-ash of an atash bahram, consecrated bull's urine

(*nirangdin*) and the hair of a sacred unblemished white bull]. Other Khorasani priests, well-versed in executing such holy works, accompanied them on their return to Sanjan where, in accordance with the dictates of the religion, they consecrated the sacred fire and installed it in about the middle of the 10th century CE. For about three centuries, the Parsis lived together in Sanjan. When their numbers grew, members of both the clergy and laity began to move away towards the northern part of Gujarat, and to establish colonies there.

Priests naturally formed the backbone of the group of Parsis who came to India in 936 CE. Their early history down to the time of Shapur Shahriyar, the common ancestor of almost all Parsi priests, is irretrievable. Besides Shapur Shahriyar, the ancient commemorative list of departed worthies contains the names of Hormazdyar Ramyar and Neryosang Dhaval, his grandsons, from whom the priests of four major groups trace their lineage. Of these two grandsons of Shapur Shahriyar, Neryosang Dhaval is celebrated as a Sanskrit scholar who lived in Sanjan in the latter part of the 12th century. (A later legend mistakenly regards Neryosang Dhaval as the leader of the group who consecrated the Atash Bahram in Sanjan, although Bahman Kekobad, the learned Sanjana priest who wrote the *Qissa-e Sanjan* in Navsari in 1599 CE, does not mention him at all when he describes the installation of the Sanjan Atash Bahram. Erroneously considering Neryosang to have been the leader of the group, the Parsi priests remember his name in ceremonies by prefixing the old Persian title 'Mobad' to it. The same practice is followed in the case of Neryosang's cousin Hormazdyar Ramyar and his grandfather Shapur Shahriyar, although this may be due to Hormazdyar and

Neryosang both having a son named Mobad.)

Among the Parsis who migrated northwards from Sanjan, there was a band who settled in the little town of Navsari in about 1275. Zarthosht Mobad, a grandson of Hormazdyar Ramyar, accompanied them together with his two sons, Kamdin and Mobad, to cater to their religious needs. (Zarthosht Mobad first established a *dar-i mihr* in a small, modest house which, in course of time, became well-known as the Great *Dar-i Mihr* or *Vadi Dar-i Mihr*. Priests of all denominations took pride in being initiated there. They also use the *alat* consecrated in this oldest and most prestigious *dar-i mihr* of India.) Afterwards, Zarthosht's younger brother, Bahram Mobad, left Sanjan for Bharuch (Broach) with another batch of Parsis, to become eventually the ancestor of the Bharucha priests. In Navsari, Pahlani Mobad, a grandson of Zarthosht Mobad, chose to go to Surat and eventually became the ancestor of the Godavra priests. (The region between the river Tapi and Narmada is generally known as the *godaru*, and the priests living in it are called *godavra*.) At the end of the 14th century, the Parsi population of Navsari increased considerably, and the descendants of Kamdin Zarthosht had to employ another priest, named Hom Bahmanyar, from Sanjan. Bahmanyar came to Navsari with his only son Faredun as an employee of the descendants of Kamdin Zarthosht, but continued also to serve the Sanjan Atash Bahram with his son. After some years, the descendants of his brother Hormazdyar Bahmanyar in Sanjan objected to their earning a livelihood in two places, and asked Faredun and his two sons to work either in Navsari or in Sanjan. Faredun and his sons referred their case to their employers and indicated their willing-



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ness to settle permanently in Navsari and forgo their right to serve the Atash Bahram in Sanjan, provided that the descendants of Mobad Kamdin, headed by Pahlān Anna (the honorific title of 'Kaka' was applied to Pahlān Anna who lived long and was a much respected man in his time) and Kaka Dhanpal (the father of the famous scholar-priest Asdin Kaka. Kaka is here a proper name) agreed to divide the share from the proceeds of ceremonies equally between themselves and the three sons of Faredun in perpetuity. The family members of Pahlān Anna and Kaka Dhanpal agreed to this proposal, and the three sons of Faredun Hom became equal partners with them, to be called thereafter the Bhagaria or Bhagarsath, i.e. the co-sharers. These five priests became the lineal ancestors of all Bhagaria priests, forming, as it were, five family groups or stocks, called *pols* (Gujarati *pol*: 'a street, a lane'). A leading member from each of the five *pols* held an important religious office conferred on him by the Bhagarsath Anjoman. The five offices are:

- The head of the Kaka Pahlān stock made the heir of a deceased person recite the formula of *sosh* on the third day after death, in the presence of an assembly. (The senior priest formerly used to recite a short formula named *sosh*, a shortened form of *srosh*, exhorting the eldest son to have the *srosh* ceremonies performed for the benefit of the departed soul.)
- The head of the Kaka Dhanpal stock acted as custodian of the consecrated bull's urine (*nirangdin*). (This right has since been conferred on the Kotwal family belonging to the Asha Faredun stock.)
- The head of the Asha Faredun stock conducted the penitentiary prayer (*patet*) in an assembly gathered to honor the departed soul on the third day after death. (This right has since been transferred to Meherji Rana on his appointment as High Priest.)
- The head of the Mahyar Faredun stock gave permission for initiations into priesthood, called *nawar* and *maratab*, and a member of his family was entitled to conduct the first day of the *nawar* ceremony.
- The head of the Chanda Faredun stock maintained records and preserved documents for the Anjoman's archives.

These five offices seem to have been allocated in about the middle of the 15th century and remained in this way

until 1579, when the whole Anjoman of Navsari appointed Meherji Rana as the first High Priest (Vada Dastur) of India.

By the middle of the 15th century the priests seem to have settled comfortably in groups within different regions of Gujarat. In order to safeguard the interests of each group, the elders met

The influential Behdins convicted 12 Bhagarias on charges of murder and had them imprisoned in Surat

together in conference in Sanjan and established five priestly jurisdictions, called *panthaks*, demarcated by rivers. They all agreed that no priest would ever perform any ceremony, even for himself, in a *panthak* that did not belong to him. The five divisions of the *panthak* were made in the following way:

- Sanjana priests: from the river Dantora to the river Par.
- Bhagaria priests: from the river Par to the river Tapi.
- Godavra priests: from the river Tapi to the river Narmada.
- Bharucha priests: from the river Narmada to the river Mahi.
- Khambata priests: from the river Mahi to the river Sabarmati.

Neither the original covenant signed by the elders of the five priestly groups nor its copy exists today. The agreements made in subsequent centuries between different groups of priests bear out that the priests in general fully respected the covenant and regarded it as sacrosanct. The oldest existing document which reflects this state of affairs is dated 1543 CE. It is an agreement between the whole Anjoman (which included both the Bhagaria priests and laymen) of Navsari and the Sanjana Anjoman, and it spells out the priestly jurisdictions of two major groups of priests, the Sanjanas and Bhagarias.

In the latter half of the 15th century, Sanjan fell on evil days on account of the devastating attack by the armies of Sultan Mahmud Begada of Gujarat in 1465 CE. In order to protect the sacred fire against possible sacrilege by the Muslim conquerors, the valiant Sanjana priests carried their most precious posses-

sion to the mountain fastness of Bahrot about 14 miles to the south of Sanjan, and hid the fire in a cave-dwelling with windows, doors and pillars, already carved out of the steep rocks. After a brief stay in the Bahrot hill, the Atash Bahram was taken to Bansda, and then, through the good offices of Changa Asha, a wealthy layman of Navsari, it was carried to Navsari in about 1479. The three courageous priests who brought the sacred fire to Navsari were Khurshed Kamdin, Nagan Ram and Chaiyyan Shaer, from whom the nine existing families of Sanjana priests are descended. They still enjoy the exclusive right to serve the sacred fire.

With the enthronement of the sacred fire in Navsari, both the Sanjana and Bhagaria priests began to live amicably, helping each other in the affairs of the religion and respecting the covenant entered into by their elders more than a century before. The presence of the sacred fire, housed in a building provided by the Bhagarsath Anjoman, added luster to the fair name of Navsari, which now became in its own right the headquarters of both the Sanjanas and Bhagarias. Because of the calamities which had befallen the Sanjana priests in Sanjan and its vicinity, their economic condition became straitened. They asked the Bhagarsath Anjoman to help them by giving them the diocese of the town (not the whole region) of Bulsar. The Bhagaria priests came to their rescue at this difficult time and granted them the diocese of Bulsar. The Sanjana Anjoman of Navsari sent Shapur Rana to serve the Parsi community there. Because of a quarrel between two groups of laity, another *dar-i mihr* seems to have been established in Bulsar under the charge of Jamasp Bhaiji, a Sanjana priest. In course of time, the descendants of Shapur Rana and Jamasp Bhaiji began to manage the affairs of Bulsar independently from the Sanjana Anjoman, refusing to pay the ecclesiastical dues, and consequently they lost their right to serve the sacred fire.

In the last quarter of the 17th century, there arose in Navsari a deadly feud between the Bhagarias and a few lay members of the Parsi community called the Behdins ("those of the Good Religion"). For the sake of supervision and equitable distribution of religious work amongst the priests, the Bhagarsath Anjoman of Navsari passed a resolution in 1672 directing the priests to perform

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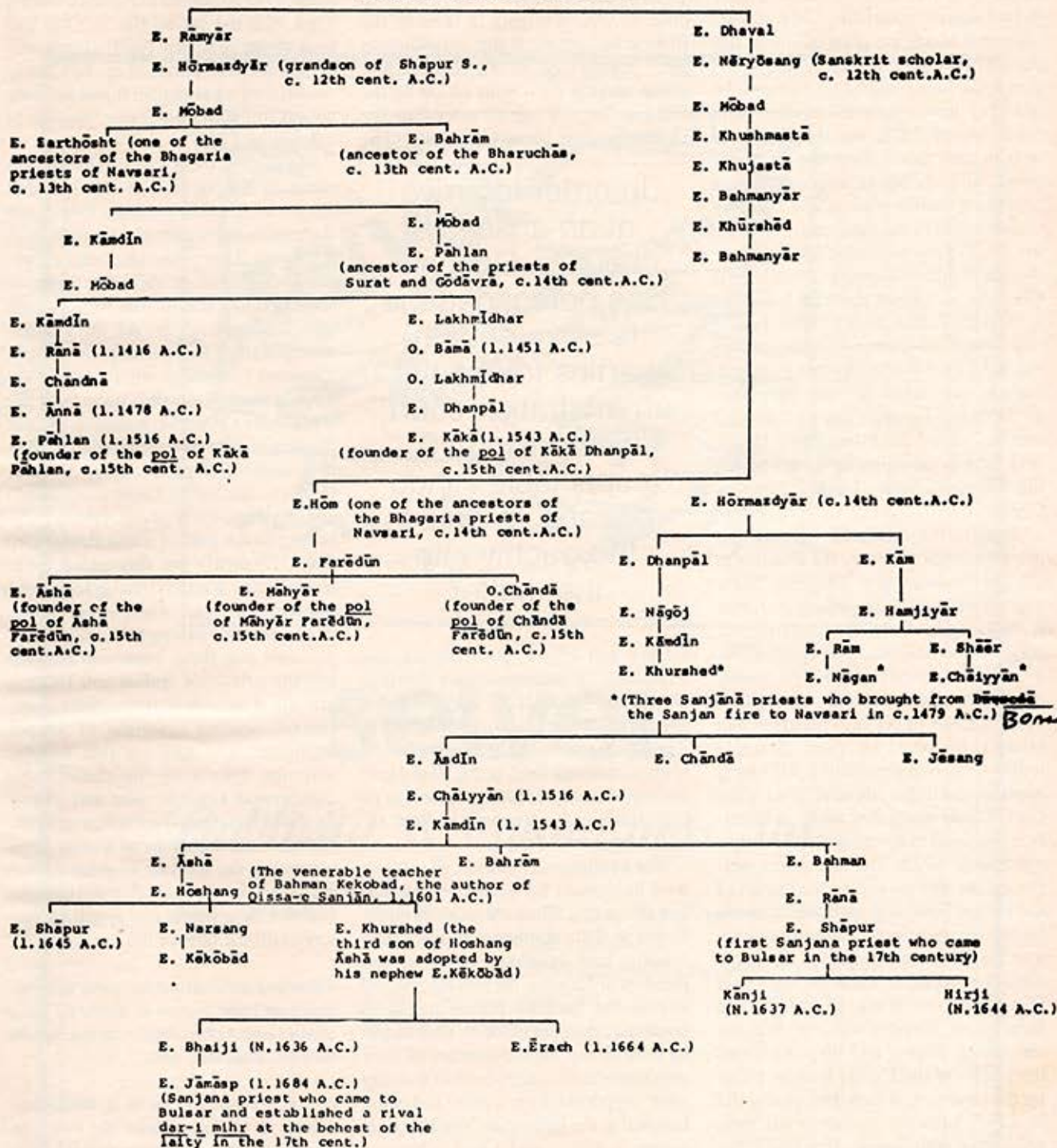
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GENEALOGY OF PARSİ PRIESTS

E. Shāpur son of E. Shahriyār
(ancestor of almost all Parsi priests)



Index: c. = circa 'about'; l = living; d = died; N = Nāvar; E = Ervad; O = Ostā

certain major ceremonies according to their turns in and around Navsari, as also in other distant parishes such as Bombay and the nearby Parsi settlements like Chaul, Kalyan, Bhimardi and Thana. The Behdins of Navsari did

not approve of the mandate issued by the Bhagarsath Anjoman to the priests and resolved in a meeting in 1673 that they would have ceremonies of their households performed by priests of their own choice. This stance of the Behdins

infuriated the Bhagarias, and in course of time things took an ugly turn culminating in the murder of two Bhagaria priests in 1686 at a public place called Tarota. This dastardly act of murder agitated the Bhagarias so much that

they, in their agony, killed six Behdins in retaliation. The influential Behdins convicted 12 Bhagarias on charges of murder and had them imprisoned in Surat. Later on, they were released from jail through the good offices of Kunverji Nanabhai Modi, the great leader of the Parsi community at Surat, and were sent back home safely to Navsari. In order to implement effectively their resolution of 1673, the Behdins won over to their side a dissident Bhagaria priest, Minocheher Homji, who began to act as a family priest of the Behdins with the help of his three sons. In order to earn a living with ease and comfort, three more Bhagaria priests, viz. Meherji Chandna (surnamed Kakalia, belonged to the Kaka Pahlani stock), Dada Chandji (surnamed Dadachanji, belonged to the Asha Faredun stock) and Peshotan Sohrab (surnamed Rabadi, belonged to the Asha Faredun stock) followed suit and joined the Minocheher Homji fold, which now began to be called the Chaharo Sath (United Four in Gujarati).

Despite the unstinted support and lucrative help offered by the Behdins to the United Four, the Bhagarias were successful in 1731 in getting a charter from Gangaji Rao, the governor of Navsari, and Pilaji Rao Gaekwad (1730-1732), the ruler of Gujarat. The charter upheld the legitimate and sole right of the Bhagarias to perform marriage and other ceremonies of their clientele within their own jurisdiction. This gave a serious jolt to the priests aligned to the United Four who, after much deliberation, resolved to merge with their original fold in 1732. The Bhagarias welcomed the merger bid by the priests of the United Four, and with their characteristic magnanimity, admitted them into the Bhagarsath Anjoman through a mutual agreement made in the Vadi Dar-i Mihr on April 16, 1732. The Behdins of Navsari did not like the reunion of priests, and they instigated the priests of the United Four to break up the covenant, which they gladly did in 1734. In order to safeguard their privileges with honor, the Bhagarias made a petition to Gangaji Rao for preventing the priests of the United Four from encroaching upon their traditional rights. The leading Behdins took up the gauntlet and acted as defendants on behalf of the secessionists. In order to arrive at an amicable solution Gangaji Rao persuaded the leaders of both parties

to appoint an arbitration court, comprising 10 respectable Hindu citizens, to probe thoroughly into the matter. They all agreed to abide by the decision given by the court. The committee of 10 gave its verdict largely in favor of the Bhagarias, although the secessionists were recognized as an independent group and the dar-i mihr set up by the Behdins for the use of priests of the United Four was accorded validity. (The

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second half of the 20th century has witnessed an unprecedented shortage of priests. In order to tide over this appalling situation, the Bhagarsath Anjoman unanimously resolved in a historic meeting held in the Vadi Dar-i Mihr on January 3, 1982, to admit to its fold all priestly groups who had seceded from it in the past.)

For a couple of centuries, all went on well in Navsari between the Sanjanas and Bhagarias. Then, because of an increase in their numbers and disruptive support and encouragement by the Behdins of Navsari, the less disciplined among the Sanjana priests began to break the covenant made by their elders by performing the ceremonies of their own households and of those of the laity who supported their cause and were inimical to the Bhagarias. The Bhagaria priests protested, and asked to have an equal share in the proceeds of the Atash Bahram if the Sanjanas wished to persist in performing ceremonies within the priestly jurisdiction of the Bhagarias. The Sanjana priests filed a suit against the Bhagarias in the court of the Gaekwad of Baroda, the then ruling authority who was camping at Songarh

near Surat at the time. After a few hearings of both sides, the Gaekwad gave his verdict in favor of the Bhagarias. The Sanjana priests, who owned some 25 to 30 houses in Navsari, left the town with the sacred fire in 1740 and took shelter in Bulsar. Not finding themselves at ease there, they ultimately established a permanent home for their sacred fire within their own panthak at Udvada in 1742.

To sum up, the Khorasani group who came to Sanjan in 936 CE included priests who established the first Atash Bahram in India with *alat* brought from Khorasan. After centuries, their descendants dispersed to different parts of Gujarat and founded five well-defined ecclesiastical regions. All the Zoroastrian priests of India, except those from Khambhat (Cambay) whose genealogy has not been preserved, trace their descent from a common ancestor, Shapur Shahriyar (see the genealogical tree provided). The priests from Broach, Godavra (including those from Surat) and Navsari (only those priests who belong to the *pols* of Kaka Pahlani and Kaka Dhanpal) are descended from Hormazdyar Ramiyar, the grandson of Shapur Shahriyar; whereas the priests of Navsari who belong to the other three *pols* and also those surnamed Sanjana and the priests of Bulsar and Udvada are all descended from Neryosang Dhaval, another grandson of Shapur Shahriyar. The spiritual link (*silsila*) with the Khorasani fire through the consecrated fire-ash, *alat* and priests has been maintained unbroken in India. Although the monarchy of Iranian kings has ended, the spiritual kingship of Iran still lives on through Zoroastrian ceremonies. It is hoped that it will be preserved till the time of the resurrection.

Edited and reprinted with the author's permission from Irano-Judaica II, edited by Shaul Shaked and Amnon Netzer for the Ben-Zvi Institute, Jerusalem, 1990.

Former high priest of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Bombay, Dastur (Dr) Firoze M.



Kotwal is the author of several books and articles on Zoroastrianism. He was formerly principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute, a visiting lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Harvard University and a visiting fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge University.

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Royal recognition

Kersi Gherda's services to charity
and Jehangir Minina's contribution to Indo-British
trade merit an Order of the British Empire

Hilla P. Guzder

'Power'ful man Kersi Gherda and 'Steel man' Jehangir Minina have been awarded an OBE (honorary officer of the civil division of the most excellent Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II. Currently chairman of Tata Services Limited, Gherda received the OBE in recognition of his "valuable services to many British affiliated charitable institutions including the Cheshire Homes in Bombay and to Indo-British trade." Presently director of Corus India Limited, Minina's "valuable services rendered to Indo-British trade and the advancement of British commercial interests" received royal appreciation. The awards were conferred on them by Howard Parkinson, British Deputy High Commissioner in Bombay at a private ceremony in December 2001, according to a communiqué from the British Deputy High Commission.

The badge of the OBE consists of a gold cross on a red ribbon with an accompanying citation. The Order was created way back in 1917 by King George V and was intended to acknowledge the efforts of individuals across the world who had assisted Britain during the First World War and, for the first time, women and foreigners were included in an order of chivalry. Nominations are scrutinized by specially appointed committees comprising experts from different walks of life. The final list is sent to 10, Downing Street for ratification by the British Prime Minister, adds the communiqué.

Parsiana interviewed the two eminent personalities:

The business of charity

With his snowy hair and mustache, salt and pepper eyebrows and steady gaze, 'electric' man Kersi Gherda does not seek to electrify the atmosphere around him with illuminative strikes and bolts — rather, he emanates an aura of calm-

ness, powered by intellectuality. Like the economics man he is, he believes in economy of words — they come slow and measured. "I never had an inkling (of the award)," he says. On many occasions things do filter through the grapevine, but in this case there was ne'er a whiff. "I was really quite surprised, though pleasantly surprised and honored," he acknowledges.

Gherda's office is situated, aptly enough, amidst the offices of The Tata Power Company Limited [into which the Tata Electric Companies (TEC) have merged]. Gherda was for 27 years with the TEC from which he retired in 1994 as vice chairman and managing director (see "In a 'power'ful position," *Parsiana*, August 1993).

Tata Services renders a variety of support services — economic, labor, etc — to the various Tata companies. Asked to trace the genesis of his involvement with charitable activities (for which, mainly, he was awarded the OBE), Gherda instructs us "to put the pen down and listen," as he narrates the story. Group Captain Leonard Cheshire (later Lord Cheshire) was a daredevil pilot of the RAF (Royal Air Force) in World War II. Towards the end of the War, Cheshire was sent as the RAF representative on the Superfortress which dropped the atomic bomb over Nagasaki. "He was a veteran, winner of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Victoria Cross, Order of Merit and a host of other decorations, but this event churned him up," recounts Gherda. In London one day after the War had ended, Cheshire was visiting a friend in hospital who had been told that hospitals could do nothing further for him. Cheshire took the friend to his own home and tended to him till the man died peacefully.

"The Cheshire Homes all over the world are intended for incurables — paraplegics, the disabled, people for

whom hospitals can't really do much but who need to be looked after," he explains. The Cheshire Home in Bombay, with which Gherda has been associated for over 25 years, was the third Home after the one in London and the first overseas. Cheshire himself came down to Bombay in the early '50s and remained to supervise the construction of the (original) wooden structure named Bethlehem House, opened appropriately enough on Christmas day, 1955. "It is a cheerful Home, the Sisters of the Society of Christ Jesus who run it are very good," he declares. The patients are encouraged to occupy their time with art and craft, making fine figurines, soft toys, caning, etc which bring in a small income as well. "In the past Lady Duggan used to have an annual pantomime at her residence Lawnside at Harkness Road. One pantomime could raise enough funds in those days to keep the Home going for a year," he smiles. Many eminent Parsis like Queenie Captain, Dr Jamshed Vazifdar, Fali Kumana and others were associated with the running of the Homes. When Kumana resigned as treasurer, Gherda was invited to join the committee. "As chairman I do visit the Home occasionally. But fund-raising is very important and good contacts are always useful," he maintains. The Homes also receive gifts in kind, people donate food on birthdays, death anniversaries, etc, college students chip in with voluntary work as part of their social service activities. There are 300 Homes and day care centers all over the world and 24 Homes in India, Gherda informs us.

Gherda's association with the Red Cross also spans a quarter century. Chairman of The Indian Red Cross Society, Maharashtra State Branch, Gherda touches upon the problems they have encountered over the years — labor laws, difficulty in obtaining funds, etc. The Red Cross runs the Bel-Air Sanatorium in Panchgani which treats patients with tuberculosis as well as AIDS, he states. With the Maharashtra Governor taking a keen interest, the Sanatorium is getting more assistance, he adds.

Chairman also of the Breach Candy Hospital Trust, Gherda briefly mentions that the Hospital, patronized mainly by the affluent, treats patients free or at low cost in the Godrej Wing

built by the House of Godrej.

Born in Calcutta in 1928, Kersi's father Minocher was a general practitioner there. One unfortunate day, when Kersi was quite young, the doctor was called upon to visit a patient on a ship in the dry dock. The lights had failed and missing his step he fell and was fatally injured, narrates Kersi. His mother Shera died when he was 14 and maternal grandfather Gustadji Dastoor sent for the lad to be brought to Bombay.

After his schooling at the Cathedral and John Connon, Kersi did his BCom from Sydenham College, following it up with an ACA (Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India), FCA (Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) and FCS (Fellow of the Institute of Company Secretaries). Joining Volkart Brothers, he worked there for 10 years till he joined TEC as controller of accounts in 1967. Moving up the corporate ladder in TEC — the pioneer and the single largest power generating utility in the private sector — Kersi was director in all the three enterprises which together formed the TEC — The Tata Power Company Limited, The Andhra Valley Power Supply Company Limited and the Tata Hydro-Electric Power

Supply Company Limited.

"Business life was much slower and easier in the old days," he muses. But the TEC had to function in the stifling business environment of the '70s and '80s. "I remember that the first Janata

with you — the colleagues on the board, executives and workers. Motivation is crucial. The most brilliant idea is worthless if your co-workers fold their hands and refuse to implement it! In today's liberalized atmosphere I feel I would have liked to be in line management," says the 'electrifying' man.

Bringing his expertise to bear on a number of other associations, Gherda has been past president of the Bombay Management Association and past regional director for India of the Institute of Internal Auditors. He is an executive committee member of the Employers Federation of India and was on the LAB (local advisory board) and later LAB chairman of the Bank of Nova Scotia. Gherda also serves as director of Tata Ceramics Limited, Kotak Mahindra Finance Limited and is chairman of a number of other companies.

Gherda describes himself as a "strong believer in the Zoroastrian faith." He is the chairman of the Banaji Atash Behram and a trustee at the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution and the J. B. Vatcha High School for Girls. Himself a navar-martab ("I was very happy to do it"), Gherda learnt the required scriptures at the Mehta agiary in Calcutta and proceeded to Navsari (from where his grandfather hailed) for the actual initiation. Married to Motu in 1954, they have a son Mino working in the Toronto Dominion Bank in Bombay and a daughter Zenobia Farokh Unvala and two grandchildren Xerxes and Rohaan. "Oh yes," he says, "I do see a future for the community." Looking at numbers mathematically, things might



With their awards (from left) Minina, Dr. Prakash Kothare (MBE) and Gherda

Government reduced our (top executives') salaries from Rs 7,500 to Rs 5,000 and there was a time when income-tax was more than income!" There was not just lack of encouragement; bureaucratic "breaking actions" put tremendous stress on industry. "There was a block in vision. Fortunately there has been a change in pronouncements and policy, though I'm not sure implementation matches the pronouncements," he notes. "If the climate had been right, half of the Indian talent that is now in the USA would not have left." Gherda adds that a top bureaucrat had once told him that it would be beneficial if every secretary (of the various ministries) was made to work for a while in the commercial sector! "It is very important to carry your workforce

The Mininas: (from left, standing) Jehangir, Hormuzdyar, (seated) Darius and Anahita Pundole, Rhoda. The Gherdas: Kersi and Motu (second and fourth from left) with Zenobia and Xerxes Unvala and Mino Gherda (far right)



not look so rosy, but his heart tells him "such a fine community can't die out."

Man of steel

"British Steel has been in India in some form or other for the past 50 years," says marketing man Jehangir Minina, whose association with British Steel has spanned the entire 40 years of his working life. Minina retired in December 2000 from his position as regional general manager, Corus Liaison Services India Limited.

"Known to a wide circle of colleagues and friends as 'Jangoo,' his career was colorful and varied... During this long and distinguished period he saw many changes and, as country head of British Steel India, was himself closely involved in the process of economic and trade liberalization which began in the early '90s," states *News*, the business magazine of Corus International in its issue of December 2000.

The Corus Group, Minina informs us, is currently the third largest in the world in the steel industry. His quiet demeanor reflecting the strength of steel, Minina traces the story of the turnaround of British Steel from a loss-making "bottomless pit" (as then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher characterized it!) employing 250,000 people worldwide, into a leaner, more resourceful organization after privatization in the late '70s. After the subsequent merger with the Dutch firm Koninklijke Hoogovens, "we felt a new brand identity," and turned from just steel into a metals company, with steel and aluminium products, he says.

As the local representative of British Steel, Minina also took on the task of guiding the children of British Steel employees who ventured to see the Indian subcontinent, monitoring them sometimes through tricky situations like riots or through politically sensitive areas, with their inherent dangers. Till last month, Minina was also the deputy chairman of the British Business Group (BBG) executive committee. "The chairman is always a Britisher," he explains, and the BBG is an Indo-British partnership which supports and assists representatives of British businesses in India, as well as fosters trade, cultural and charitable causes.

Born in Nagpur in 1935, Minina came to Bombay as a lad of nine, following his father Hormuzdiar's demise at a young age. Lodging at Rustom Baug, Minina's early scholastics were

at Antonio de Souza High School, followed by a BCom from Sydenham College. In January 1960, he joined The Indian Tube Company Limited, a Stewart and Lloyds enterprise, travelling extensively in western India to market the imported Stewart and Lloyds brand products as well as those of the

"Managers must not be caught under a banyan tree. You must allow your number two to grow"

local venture. The marketing man also underwent various management programs of British Steel in the UK.

The arrival of restrictions in the form of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act in the late '60s compelled UK based steel companies to shut shop in India. This led to the formation of the Indian Tube Company Agency Division to promote the by then nationalized British Steel Corporation (BSC) and its products. "The license raj with its controls and conditions became all too familiar to us over the next two decades," notes Minina. As branch manager in Madras, Minina's sales synergies secured large orders for shipbuilding quality plates, etc for the first frigate to be built by Cochin Shipyard, as well as substantial orders from Bharat Heavy Electricals, etc.

Customer contacts stood him in good stead in the difficult business environment of the '70s, with the order book at its lowest. In 1979, as regional manager, western India, of British Steel Liaison Services, he consolidated the customer base. The early '90s and the liberalized atmosphere gave business a boost. Minina was appointed country head for India for British Steel and the company secured large orders from Indian Railways, Indian Oil Corporation, Steel Authority of India, Tata Iron and Steel Company, etc. Minina was also instrumental in forming a wholly owned Indian company called BS Johnson Limited to stock and trade and for downstream steel related activities.

In '97, Minina was appointed director of JBS Steel Products, a joint venture between the Jindal Group and British Steel. He was also alternate director on the board of Graham Firth India and chairman of Teekay Metaflex Limited,

a successful UK based joint venture which produced stainless steel engine liners — a customer for Avesta Sheffield, a company owned (despite its name) by Europeans, not Parsis in the mecca of stainless steel — Sheffield!

Modest to the core, reticent about his achievements, Minina attributes his success to his wife Rhoda and family, and to his colleagues at work, including Darayus Shroff who took over the reins, and Shernaz Paghdiwalla, manager, finance and administration. Emphasizing the merits of commitment and loyalty to one's organization, Minina believes one has to train personnel so well that work flows smoothly even when the captain is absent. "Unfortunately in India, managers don't want to delegate, as they don't have the confidence in themselves to delegate. And so they don't get the best out of people," he observes.

Finely focussed on allowing younger people to grow, Minina asserts: "Managers must not be caught under a banyan tree (which grows from top to bottom). You must allow your number two to grow. There is no use hanging on till one's shoes are worn and torn!" In keeping with his philosophy, Minina functions now as director cum consultant on need-be basis. The OBE came as a complete surprise. "It is such a great pleasure. I was thrilled, and I've still not recovered," he smiles gently, adding that he had not realized what a long procedure it (the award) is, from recommendation to recognition. The honor for Minina finds a mention in the Group's worldwide magazine *Corus World* in its Spring 2002 issue.

Terming himself a "staunch Parsi," Minina believes the "younger generation are a tremendous wealth for our community." Daughter Anahita Darius Pundole is assistant professor of gynecology at the LTMMC (Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College), Sion, son Hormuzdyar is an electrical engineer working in Atlanta, wife Rhoda is also a doctor, now retired who was professor and head of physiology at the LTMMC. "We do a lot of charity work," says Minina softly, believing in the dictum that the left hand should not know what the right is giving.

Brushing aside doomsday prophets regarding the future of the Zoroastrians, Minina asserts emphatically: "Ours is a great community — without question we will survive and the youth will do much better than we have."

Conserving Bahrot, excavating Sanjan

A concerted archeological effort could reveal more Parsi history in India

Arnavaz S. Mama

With the ceremonial *aachoo-michhoo* on January 21, 2002, the Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee president Rohinton Daviervalva and his wife Bapsy inaugurated the archeological project to dig for Parsi history in and around Sanjan. The project, sponsored by the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) with the support of the Indian Archaeological Society (IAS) and the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), seeks to conserve the Bahrot caves and excavate the mound at Sanjan, suspected to be an early dakhma. Over a month of digging has yielded some coins, pottery and other artifacts which need to be studied by experts, notes WZCF president Dr Homi Dhalla in a press release.

Prominent Indian archeologists Dr S. P. Gupta and Dr K. N. Dikshit, chairman and general secretary respectively of the IAS, had specially come from Delhi for the occasion. Also present was Prof V. N. Misra, a specialist in prehistory who was the former director of the Deccan College, Poona, Dr Kurush Behizade from Kerman University and Prof Rustom Fuzaylov from the University of Khujand in Tajikistan. In his inaugural address Dhalla stated that the project aimed to help ascertain the date of Zoroastrian settlement in Sanjan which has so far remained a subject of controversy. He hoped that the results will shed new light on early Zoroastrian history on Indian soil. Dhalla names Roxanne Nanji, Rohini

Pande, Kurush Dalal and Abhijeet Dandekar as the four young archeologists who will be conducting the excavation. It may be noted that it was Dr Roxana Irani who had researched the subject from around 1986 to 1992 for her doctoral thesis (see "Surface evidence," *Parsiana*, April 1994), but was disappointed that she had not found a berth on the new team.

The WZCF had earlier acquired a no objection certificate for the project from the Director of Archaeology and Museums of Maharashtra State and the certified approval of the director general of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), copies of which have been sent by Dhalla to *Parsiana*.

The possibilities were initially explored at a meet at the Asiatic Society's Durbar Hall on November 10, 2001, when influential sections of the community responded to the joint invitation from Dhalla and Asiatic Society vice president Dr Mani Kamerkar to meet

The Daviervalvas inaugurating the project with Dhalla (2nd from right); remains of the Sanjan dakhma (below right); the main cave at Bahrot; "walking" mango tree at Sanjan



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leading archeologists and conservators of India including Gupta, Misra and ASI director R. C. Agrawal.

Reminding the audience that the Bahrot caves, 17 km away from Sanjan, had been home to the Iranshah for 12 years circa 1400 AC when Mohammed Tughlaq's general Alaf Khan overran Sanjan, Dhalla had voiced his concern that cracks and falling boulders could eradicate an important page in the already scanty Zoroastrian history. The Bahrot caves include the 40 x 25 ft main cave, three smaller ancillary ones and an underground water tank. Occasionally white-washed by Zoroastrian youths and pilgrims who organize jashans there, Dhalla projected a series of amateur slides to demonstrate their precarious condition.

"There is a small niche but we don't know (for sure) where Iranshah was kept," added Kamekar noting that the low ceiling was developing large cracks. There is also a deep hole in one cave and stories speak of a tunnel to Sanjan, she recalled, urging the specialists to throw more light through excavation there as well as at the mound dating to the 11th or 12th century in Sanjan which she said is on a plot belonging to Bombay's Jashan Committee. "To this day the date of our arrival in India is a source of controversy," she said, hoping these excavations could help ascertain the same with some authority as the oldest extant dakhma, the one in Bharuch was believed to have been established sometime in the late 12th/early 13th century.

Gupta, who had worked on archeological sites in Mongolia, China and Iran in 1963, said he had felt even then that a "large part of (that) culture and civilization tallied with that of... India's Parsi population," that the Parsis were "cut off from this great heritage." He suggested that the project excavate the site, "unfold layer after layer of Parsi history... rewrite history with concrete evidence." He hoped to present the entire project to a forthcoming international conference with the aim of the area being adopted by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

Assessing the job on a 10-year time frame costing several crore rupees, Gupta told the gathering, "We'll do our part of the job but you must start dreaming of what it must become — a place where people from all over the world can come to see and enjoy the origin of the Parsi community in India!" He urged the community to start fund-raising while the ASI specialists complete a survey of the fauna and flora, the climatic and geological conditions. After sifting through centuries of debris "(we will) grout every crack to stop seepage," he assured the audience, adding that Zoroastrian industrialists like the Tatas would surely subscribe to the funds considering that they had contributed Rs 1.5 crores to the conservation of the Taj Mahal at Agra.

Agreeing with Gupta, Agrawal further noted the need for thorough documentation because "not a single piece of evidence should be lost." The process of photography and detailed description for record is not difficult but time consuming and requires concerted effort, he added. Once the significance and historicity is established there need be no difficulty in the entire area being granted heritage status, he maintained, adding that "the motivation, financial, moral and physical support must come from the community."

The following morning (November 11, 2001) Agrawal, Misra, Dhalla and a few others reached the caves from Bardi after a three-hour walk. After the experts had viewed the caves and the site firsthand, a holistic ap-

continued on page 213

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An Exciting Escapade

Forced to flee China in the throes of World War II, harrowing experiences were faced by those returning to India

Dinshaw D. Naterwalla

This is a true life drama. During World War II we were in China and what happened between September and October 1941 when I was a child, I recall from memory and the sketchy information fed by my father Dossabhai.

A passenger ship belonging to the P&O (The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company) was partially converted into a mobile hospital and anchored in the bay of Shameen near Hong-kong (where my brother Phiroz and I were born), in the province of Canton in South China. Shameen had been ceded to the British Government by China by a special treaty years ago. Here small groups of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, British and Asian nationals lived together in peace for years. Perhaps this was the ship's last voyage, for it picked up more passengers fleeing from Canton, Shanghai, Kowloon and its adjoining areas.

It was a godsend for my parents, for the situation had gone from bad to worse with frequent air raids, sporadic fires in buildings due to Japanese bombing, constant running for the shelters with very small children, poor conditions of the roads, curfews, blackouts and shortages of food. Life had become so unbearable that many people had already left, in whatever transport available. Besides, the political scenario was unstable, with a great tussle going on between the revolutionary leader Mao, who wanted to

introduce Communism in China (though still in its infancy) and Chiang Kai-shek who advocated nationalism. Before such a fluid situation could turn into civil war, Japan wanted to overthrow both powers and pursue its expansionist policy.

My father was very worried. Just



Dinshaw Naterwalla (as infant) with his parents in Canton

seven years back he had come to the little town of Shameen to work as an accountant with a reputed cloth merchant, M/s Vasania and Company. After two years he had sent for my mother Perinbanoo and they were happy in the flat allotted to them by the employer, when Japan declared war on China. Within a short time, Japan had captured northern parts of the country and was now attacking from the south. Its superior naval fleet was achieving success in the North China Sea, had overrun Formosa and some of the tiny islands, and the fall of China was certain

within a month.

Two days before the departure of the ship, Father received an urgent message from one of his friends that Japanese soldiers had landed in the vicinity of Shameen as they suspected that British spies were operating in this area and a few Parsi families were also on their list. Japan's diplomatic relations with the French and British had further deteriorated so the soldiers were sent to investigate.

It was a shocking, baseless suspicion. My father was not involved in anything, though he had a large circle of

friends with whom he used to discuss war and politics and organize functions like weddings, navjote ceremonies, etc. After receiving this alarming news, he immediately ran to his best friend Jal, staying with his wife and two little daughters just a few blocks away. Jal was always ready to help, and admired the British immensely, though basically he had no hatred for the Japanese. Among the other Parsis Father knew in Shameen were the Pavris, Dhabers, Basanias, Shroffs, and a Mr Bhamgara who was a good astrologer, in touch with Chinese politicians and had a large circle of business friends. Apart from this, Bhamgara was very fluent in Chinese, and had a Chinese wife and four children.

This is the story Bhamgara disclosed to Father of what happened after we left Shameen. A group of Japanese soldiers descended on his premises with a long list of British spies, in which were included the names of Jal, his own name, and Father's name. Jal was immediately arrested and taken away as a British spy and though there was no proof he was detained for months in a Chinese prison and ultimately executed in the cruelest way, because he refused to 'confess' he was a British spy. Bhamgara eluded the Japanese soldiers for three years, was arrested once, but ran away from prison with the help of an Indian soldier. His family was harassed considerably till the Communists took over and they were allowed to go free. When he returned to Bombay after many years, my parents invited him with his family for dinner which was when we pieced together the full details of Jal's story and of our escape.

When Jal first heard of the impending investigation by Japanese soldiers, there was a confident smile on his face. No bunch of dwarfish Japanese was going to nab them. Impossible, when they had the world's most efficient British and French army to protect them. Fortunately, that had not convinced Fa-



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ther, who pleaded with him that he was going back to Bombay with his family in a ship anchored here, and this was the last chance for both to get away as no other ship would come after this. But the arrogant fellow refused to budge, in spite of his wife's desperate pleas and the tears of his children.

Greatly disappointed that Jal wasn't leaving with us, Father said his farewells to his other friends while we packed and unpacked so many things, not knowing what to take and what not to,

as we were leaving the whole house behind. In a hurry we selected a few rare things like exquisite vases, tea sets, Chinese garas, etc and left much behind as we had a very small cabin on the ship. Before leaving we said a few words of prayer and there were tears in our eyes.

Our three Chinese servants, Achee, Ayeen and Ango, all very hard-working and loyal and poor, who had taught us children our first Chinese words (I still remember their rain song even at this age), were left behind with a sad heart. But on the day of our departure, as we were locking the door, we again saw Ayeen (so attached to the family that Father had once joked that we would take her to India), waiting on the last step. Having decided to go with us all the way to India, she had brought her bag with her and when Mother came upon it behind the staircase, told us that she was going to her friend's place in search of a new job. Saying this she picked up her bag and some of our bags also and started walking along with us towards the pier.

We could get no transport on the main road and walked quite a distance with poor Ayeen carrying the bulk of the load. It was still dark, as we had to be at the pier by 6.30 a.m. and suddenly my brother and I felt very sleepy. What happened after that we are not aware, but learnt later from Father that we had to pass three different posts manned by British and French soldiers where he must have shown our passports and documents. How we passed through curfew bound areas without detection was a miracle, with the Japanese (their features so similar to the Chinese) on the



Phiroz Naterwalla as a child

lookout for anyone escaping from this region.

When I opened my eyes I found to my great astonishment that we were entering the dock which had a huge ship afloat, a ladder hanging from its side and people rushing towards it. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, all were fleeing Shameen. At the barricade for the strict final check we had to wait in a long line and Ayeen, who was still with us, began crying when the ticket checker and guard detained her for not having a ticket. We could hear her

voice in Chinese, "Massa Massa, please take with you," as we boarded the ship up the ladder. The last we saw her was from the cabin window. She was waving her hand and crying, holding her bag in her hand. My parents were also visibly moved as they tried to busy themselves arranging our luggage in the cabin. When we looked out once again our best servant had quietly disappeared. With the final hooter the ship lifted anchor for the gruelling voyage of 4,000 miles to India.

Our first day on the ship turned out to be peaceful, though fear was still lurking in the minds of my parents and the other passengers of Japanese spies aboard, and of aerial bombing from Japanese planes. Our close survey of the ship revealed it to be quite big with upper and lower decks, and people were even sitting on the cargo it carried in a separate boat attached to it.



The Bhamgara family in Canton

Three days later when we saw planes circling above our ship, there was great panic among the passengers. But they flew away without causing any damage and later we learnt from the captain that as this ship was partly converted into a mobile hospital during the war and luckily still retained the two red cross signs on its two sides, it had been spared by the bombers. But now we were about to face new hazards—the magnetic mines floating in the sea dropped by Japanese fighter planes during their raids. It was a real test of skill for the captain to evade them and though sailing along the coast was less dangerous than attempting the deep sea, the threat was always there. Besides, many ships were now painted with anti magnetic solutions on the front and at the back, so that the impact could be avoided. Perhaps our ship was painted the same way, we thought, because it managed to dodge a few mines during our trip. Other lurking hazards were the Japanese gunboats waiting in secret hide-outs close to the coast to pounce on incoming and out-going ships. As we were sailing on we saw a number of these gunboats from a distance, but none of them opened fire on us because of the blessed red markings on either side of the ship. So the sign of Jesus' cross really saved us!

One week on board had already passed quickly, with my parents still paranoid about Japanese spies. On the seventh day when my brother opened the door of our cabin we saw a monkey sitting on the railing outside, smoking a cigar. We rarely saw animals in Shameen and this one had a long chain tied around his neck and some people were watching his tricks. For a few days we were entertained by this creature owned by one of the kitchen assistants. He was an Indian but unfortunately we could hardly see his face as it was always screened by the newspaper he was reading. One day as usual we opened the door in the morning but the monkey was not there. Later Father was told that the poor animal fell ill and died, which made us very sad. They made a beautiful coffin for him and threw him into the water.

Another entertainment on board was the disco cabin. When the door was opened, no light could be seen within (it was designed for war days), but if you closed the door the light came on. Another interesting thing to watch was the washing of the decks every day by the



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crew, though sometimes we had to close the door of our cabin for a long time to prevent water from seeping in and watched from the round windows.

Our last hazards were encountered in the Gulf of Tonkin, very near Penang, where pirates used to attack ships but fortunately in wartime no pirates were in sight though we saw some of their empty ships with flags of skull and bones fluttering high on the masts.

On the 10th day we had reached far south in the China Sea and were poised to enter the Strait of Malacca, close to Singapore. From there our ship took a sharp turn towards the Bay of Bengal and now we were entering Indian waters and passing Andaman and Nicobar islands where no Japanese soldiers or spies could touch us. Between Penang and the Bay of Tonkin it rained and the sea was very rough and my brother and I fell sick and vomited a lot as did many other passengers. By the grace of God we had crossed almost three-quarters of the distance from Canton, but war was still raging in the far China Sea between the British and the Japanese for the final victory. But that was on the other side and now we were far off from the war zone. After crossing the Andaman we reached Calcutta harbor, which was Father's first destination.

He was very anxious to meet his uncle and aunt after a long time but there were rumors and great panic in the city that Japanese forces were

poised to attack from Burma and Assam, and joining hands with the Azad Hind Forces created by Subhas Chandra Bose to achieve independence for India. Many people were fleeing the eastern states to stay in the western regions of India which were more safe. Japan's strategy was to direct their superior naval fleet into the Bay of Bengal and with the help of a German submarine stationed deep into the Arabian Sea attack the southern peninsula. But for some reason this plan was abandoned and their naval fleet turned round in an abortive attempt to conquer Australia instead, and the rest is history.

After staying in Calcutta for a couple of weeks in great anxiety and tension, we got to Bombay with much difficulty by an overcrowded train. Safe and sound at last in the arms of our beloved grandparents who had been waiting anxiously for days to receive us, we thanked God for rescuing us. We reached Bombay around October and barely two months later came the news of Pearl Harbor being attacked by the Japanese. This miraculous escape, and poor Ayeen's forlorn face will remain in our hearts for a long time to come.

After fleeing China in 1941 the author Dinshaw Naterwalla took up residence in Bombay. On completion of his education he joined the legal firm of Mulla and Mulla where he has been serving as accounts assistant.

LOOKING AT DISEASES WITH...

continued from page 108

Wadia describes multiple sclerosis: The cells of the nervous system are connected by wires called axon which, like normal electric wires covered by the rubber insulation, are sheathed in a substance called myelene. This myelene disintegrates in multiple sclerosis so that the muscles stop receiving the messages and hence cease to function causing paralysis. In the optic nerve it causes blindness. This happens in more than one area, the episodes increasing with time, though at the initial stages recovery is possible.

In myasthenia gravis the patient has difficulty in swallowing, suffers from double vision and paralysis of the limbs, describes Wadia. It could lead to arrest of respiration unless he is put swiftly on a respirator. Though the disease can be fatal, it is treatable and Wadia fondly

recalls a poor man treated free of charge at Jaslok Hospital who was able to walk away after weeks of treatment. After two or three years he returned to acquaint Wadia and the Hospital with the knowledge that he was a gardener in Ichal Karanj where he had successfully nurtured certain species of hybrid roses. He now sought their permission to name them: Dr Noshir Wadia, Piroja (Wadia's wife) and Jaslok. The roses have since been registered with the Maharashtra Rose Society as also the International Rose Society, smiles Wadia.

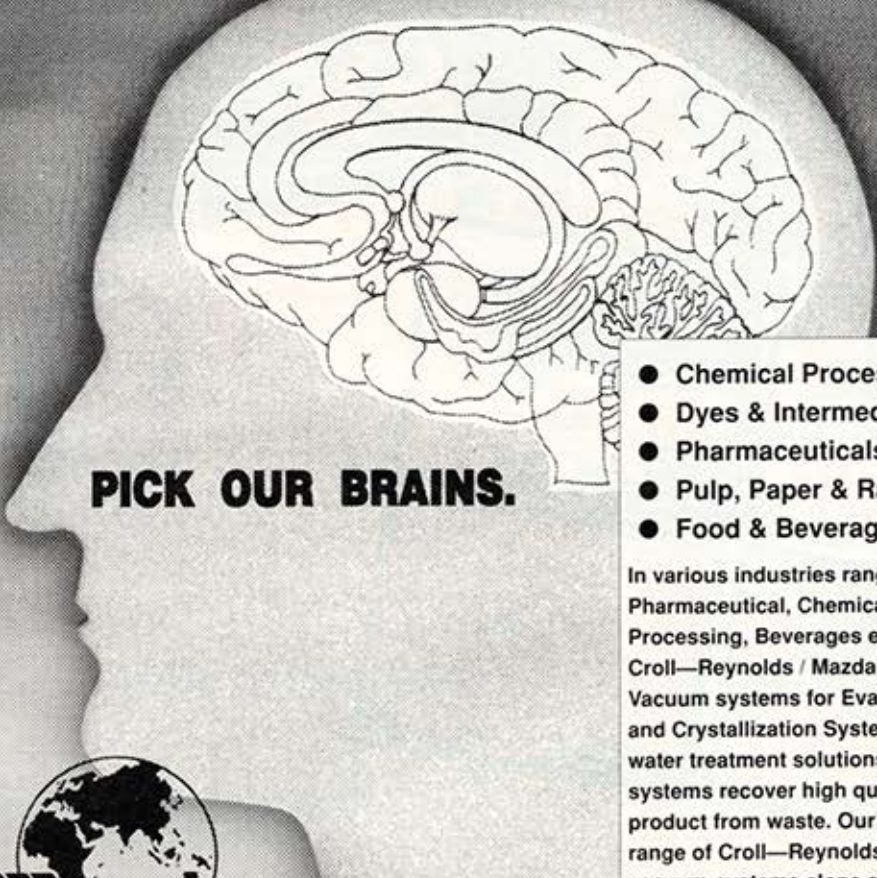
Unlike asthma and gastric ulcers which can be directly connected with psychological disturbances, such impact is rare in neurological disease unless the patient is extremely stressed with the blood pressure escalating, says Wadia. Epilepsy and multiple sclerosis can hardly be triggered by psychological factors, he adds.

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Impressive images

Parinaz M. Gandhi

After promoting MTV, creative director Cyrus Oshidar is now focussing on popularizing the new children's channel Nickelodeon



On a rare occasion he may look you in the eye. Most of the time the vice president and creative director of MTV looks over your head as you address your queries to him. "My job here is to make people laugh and to build loyalty to MTV," declares Cyrus Oshidar, his sights still set on... Unable to contain your curiosity, you turn around and find your competitor — a television unit relaying MTV programs.

He may not be one of the greatest fans of the kind of music offered on

MTV, his personal favorites being jazz, blues, African, old Indian cinema songs, "but this is the kind of music that people seem to want and this is what they get," he shrugs his shoulders pointing to one of the current Bollywood songs being repeatedly played on the channel for their target group in the 18-35 age bracket. "MTV is one of the most successful music channels and the number one youth music channel having won 60 odd international awards," he announces. Among the 50 plus MTV

channels across the globe, MTV India is the fourth most successful channel, he adds.

Having nurtured MTV India since the onus of creating and crafting local programs was shouldered by the channel five years ago Oshidar prides himself on contributing to its attention-drawing icons like Gaseous Clay, the flatulent boxer, Poga, the human Rubic

Oshidar with some of the icons he has created for MTV

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cube and the venomous MTV hating old lift man that give the brand its distinctive image. Oshidar does in the process offend the sensibilities of middle-aged women, he relates nonchalantly. "Why do people watch MTV? Because they think it's 'cool.' And my job here is to make it stay 'cool,'" the 38-year-old entertainer explains simplistically. "I get to do everything I dreamt of as a kid and get paid for it!" Several such punch lines delivered in the course of our interview on February 1, 2002 force one to pause and ascertain whether they are meant for publication or to provide special effects. That he is unmindful of his own image he keeps reiterating, but he is rather protective of the MTV's star status.

Walking into the MTV office at the Filmcenter in Bombay's Tardeo area, one encounters an easygoing, upbeat, boisterous staff. And this was supposed to be their busy period! In the first three months of a year they are preoccupied with planning their schedule and presentation for the months to follow after which the going is smooth, mentions Oshidar. The informal atmosphere apparently brings out the best in the staff working under managing director Alex Kuruvilla.

In the coming months their team faces the additional challenge of working on different programs for the newly introduced channel Nickelodeon whose target group is children aged nine-12 years characterized by their short attention spans and fads. The goal set for them by their parent company Viacom, reportedly the second largest media conglomerate globally, is to make "Nick (as the new channel is dubbed) as popular as MTV." Oshidar is happy that there is not an iota of violence on this channel and through game shows, live shows and other gizmos topics like environment will become meaningful to the preteens.

"Hindi movies is what drives everything in this country," sadly observes Oshidar referring to the routine formula movies "stuck in vicious circles of stupidity." He does though see "a flicker of hope with movies such as *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Lagaan*." He reserves his comments on *Kaho Na Pyar Hai* for the simple reason that his daughters Shayaan (seven) and Sahirah (four) enjoyed it and delight in constantly comparing their father's real life physique and

antics to the screen image of the hero of the film Hrithik Roshan! Yet he acknowledges that "despite all its lunacy," he gets his "inspiration from this country and its people for writing my silly promotions." Having lived in England for 15 years with his parents Dinyar and

"I get to do everything I dreamt of as a kid and get paid for it!"

Dolly as also his brother Shiraz, he found it "dry and devoid of emotion. In contrast, here we've got every variety. You can't for a minute be bored." While Shiraz opted to stay on in London, working for the Royal Society of Chartered Surveyors, Cyrus did not see a future there.

Delhi born Cyrus' early schooling was at different places as his father, an international banker with Grindlays Bank was constantly on the move. For his secondary education, Cyrus was sent to Ooty's Lawrence School, Lovedale after which he went to Dulwich College in London to study international trade and development, of which "I am glad to say I understood little then and I continue to know nothing even today," Cyrus is unabashed. After a stint at the London School of Economics he worked for a while at BCCI but quit the job to pursue an advertising career in Bombay and be closer to his childhood sweetheart Simeen Poonegar. For nine years he was in the advertising field, training with Saatchi and Saatchi and later working with O & M, before he moved on to MTV. While his father has never been able to appreciate or value the nature of his son's job at MTV, Cyrus says artist wife Simeen "is happy for me. She thinks it's a great release for me; for all the garbage from my head to come out!" Signs of restlessness have started surfacing though and Cyrus says he "wants a break to come back with a fresh perspective."

Among the assignments he is presently preoccupied with is the programming he is doing for Doordarshan and All India Radio at the behest of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) World Service Trust to create awareness on AIDS. Barely three-four percent of the disease is transmitted through blood and infected syringes, as compared to 89 percent which is transmitted

through sexual intercourse, and yet the government has "ridiculous rules" about not showing a naked condom on TV, points out Oshidar. Considering this work to be his "national duty" Oshidar obviously feels strongly about it and refers to "the steadfast narrow-mindedness which is destroying populations like in Africa leaving behind only grandparents and children." When the "support generation, the one which is working and economically viable collapses," he fears what will become of the nation.

A similar rigidity among the Zoroastrians, he believes will "drag the community down. Instead of developing and promoting each other, we find problems. As a small community we need to join forces." He is disillusioned with the Bombay Parsi Punchayet knowing that his paying guest, from whom he hopes to recover his premises, has a housing application pending with the Punchayet for the last nearly five decades. "We need to be with it in a global India; not be buried in mountains of bureaucracy," he adds.

Having read his views on the community in Sooni Taraporevala's *Parsis — The Zoroastrians of India — A Photographic Journey* wherein he is featured in the "Generation Next" section, we tried telling him that we won't waste his time with similar questions. A disappointed Oshidar tried to fake offence at such an approach so we allowed him his say: "The community needs one big enema. It is one thing to propagate your religious customs and way of life but it can never be done so as to (belittle) others. I'm very happy to be a Parsi. I think we are incredible as a community but this does not mean that we are better than any other community. How can you be? I would never propagate that to my daughters. They would be free to marry whomsoever they choose." The reluctance to accept children of inter-community marriages makes him question: "Do you want the race or the religion? Make up your mind!"

The obsession with dakhmenashini, vultures and the proposed aviary which he is convinced can never be viable has now prompted him to see the humor in the situation. He is wondering whether he should try his hand at one of his ingenious promotions on this subject. Along the lines of "Mr Vulture, meet Ms Vulture...Now may we have some baby vultures?" Specializing in voice-

continued on page 173

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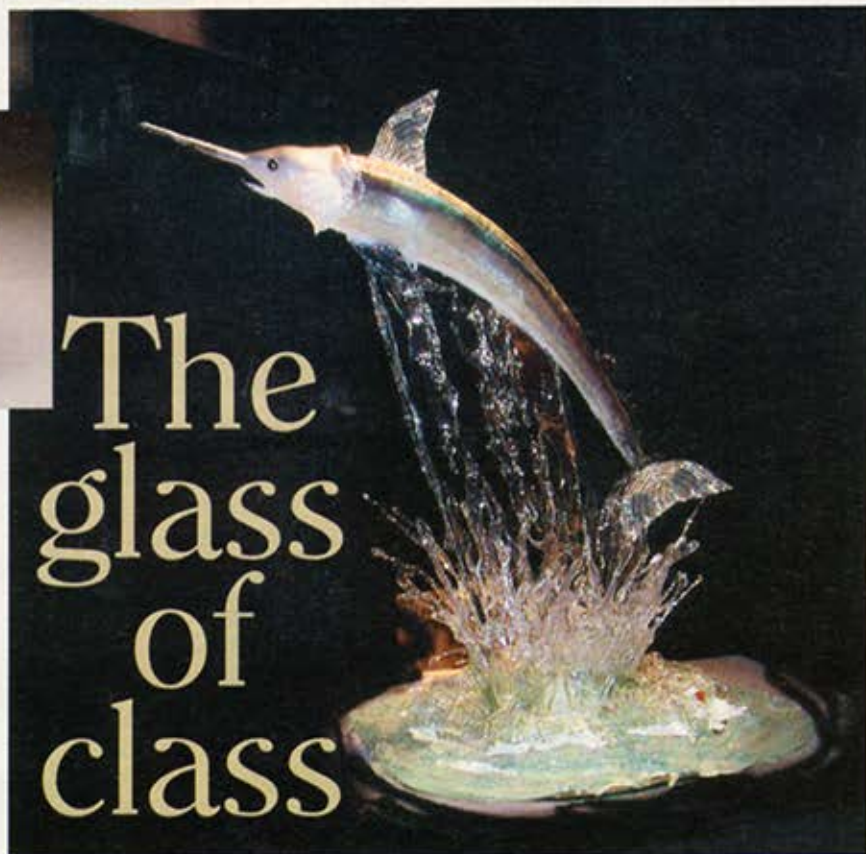
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Sooni Taraporevala

Adi Unwalla's first exhibition of glass sculpture reflects his fascination with nature

Adi Unwalla's life has taken some wonderful twists and turns, much like the hard glass he sculpts so seemingly effortlessly. Until the age of 60 (he is 72 now) he pursued his artistic interests only as a dedicated hobby; he was a businessman, owned factories, was a commodore of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club (RBYC) and a dedicated sailor.

"In 1987, my karma took me to the US for a serious medical reason," he

recounts. "It was there that I stumbled upon the name of the Pilchuck Glass School. I enrolled for a summer session. That was the turning point — a restructuring of my entire life. I retired from my mundane businesses, disposed of my industrial ventures and took the plunge — opened a studio, endeavoring to become a glass artist."

Thirteen years after he so bravely reinvented himself, his glass pieces are in various distinguished homes: the Birlas, the Jindals, the Godrejs, the



Mistris, the Chaglas, the Singhianias; and he had glowing testimonials from world famous glass artists like Elio Quariso, Murano's Maestro Vetraro — the Italian title for the Grand Master of Glass.

"I've been going to the Pilchuck Glass School near Seattle every summer and I've attended 13 summer sessions," Unwalla says. "It's a beautiful place, lovely campus. It was there that I met Murano's Grand Master. He was teaching in another class. He saw my work and liked it very much. We got friendly and I asked him if he could write a few words about my work for my first exhibition. I didn't have anything to offer in my bio data (before) the exhibition — everything was nil. Never had any exhibitions, no awards, never studied art, no formal education in art. He wrote a very nice piece and it was too flattering so I had to tone it down a little," he laughs.

This is what Quariso wrote: "Adi's way of communicating with nature and movement in glass impresses me greatly. He leaves behind in his wake beautiful works of art. His compositions are so alive with energy and at the same time so real that they convey a sense of calm. One feels almost religious when you touch his works. Even as Murano's Maestro Vetraro, this indeed gives quite a new experience."

"You see," says Unwalla, "I used to do a lot of art work but only as a hobby. I had businesses, a paper converting factory, a foundry running in the name of Tubeco Industries and Unval Industries Private Limited. In the foundry I did bronze sculpting, because I was into bronze works then. I thought I'd do glass works because there was a furnace. I tried it out and everything shattered. But I think I was too ambitious. It was a six-foot big piece — naturally without proper methods and know-how everything



Unwalla at work Photo: Sooni Taraporevala

broke," he smiles.

Would it be very complicated for him to explain the procedure from the beginning to the end of a particular piece? "Very complicated. Because, you won't believe this, but I myself wouldn't even know. A piece evolves while I'm making it. If I think this has to be fused or slumped on top of this," he points to one of his pieces, "I'll do it. Whether it will come out right or not is a different question. The whole thing is an evolution process. And the processes are different for different pieces."

"I used to do architectural glass as well. Now I avoid it. The few people who have my window panels simply love them. My favorite friends who have a lot of my glass in their

Mountain Goats on Rock (alongside) and Jacana on Lotus Pond (below)



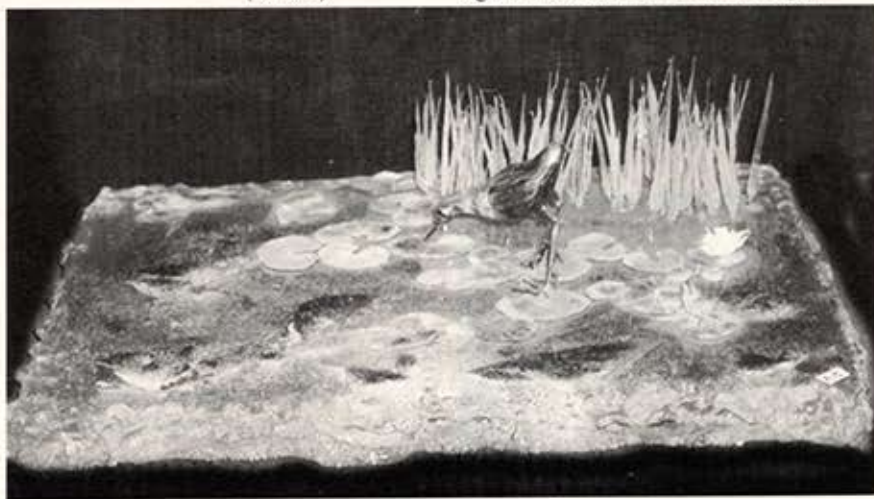
Previous page (clockwise from top left): Bamboo Lamp, Black-tipped herons, Ganesh on Lotus Pond, Swordfish Splash, Coral Reef, Birdy Berry and bee and Surf Vase

houses have my iris windows and bamboo windows, wall murals, etc. And they tell me that they love looking at them because in the morning they look different, in the evening light they look different. That kind of appreciation is the final satisfaction for me.

"Studio glass is made in kilns, or with torch working. You see I do a lot of work in many different ways. The techniques are all different and not many glass artists do that. I was just lucky to go every year and learn from different masters, just for the fun of learning a different technique. And then I started incorporating all these different techniques in creating one piece."

"First I started with simple glass fusing. Putting one glass on top of the other and putting it in the kiln and fusing it at a very high temperature, but going very slowly otherwise it cracks, coming down very slow. Next I started bending it in the kiln — curving, fusing, making different parts and fusing it together again. Then I went on to flame working which is with a torch, with which you sculpt freehand on the flame. And two types of glass are used in the flame — the first is borosilicate, the same as Corningware, hard, doesn't break so easily but it's also difficult to fuse. And soft glass which is leaded glass which breaks very easily in the flame but fuses very well."

Unwalla showed his work for the first time at the Cymroza Art Gallery from December 3 to 8, 2001. Though his exhibition was on for only four days, and there was no publicity machine advertising his 68 pieces on view, it was a great success from the word go.



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advertising his 68 pieces on view, it was a great success from the word go.

"The show was called *Ode to Nature*. Some people accuse me of being very realistic, not that I'm realistic in everything. I do modern work, I do stylized things. But I love to do nature in a natural, realistic way — it gives me great pleasure and satisfaction. I had so many of those pieces which I liked, and had kept to myself and not sold. I decided to have an exhibition so I could make place to do many more things. I have a lot on my plate and in my thoughts. I want to do figurative sculpture as well, especially the Nataraja, the Buddha, or a ballet dance series.

At the Cymroza, in all their splendor were nature's creations so lovingly and expertly created that it was hard to imagine that glass could be so flexible; a heron, dolphins, coral reefs, a school of fish, a whale, swans, a jacana on the lotus pond ("it's a bird that walks on leaves which are floating and it has got toes which are so long. That is how it spreads its weight"), a tortoise called Oliver, munching on his lunch, a cabbage leaf. Then there was the frog called Prince Charming, birds — a woodpecker — "there are so many different types of woodpeckers, this one was an Indian woodpecker. I like to gather a lot of information on the subject I am sculpting and then sometimes even name them and talk to them during the process," Unwalla laughs. "These crows on a tree were all sitting in a line and there was one fellow down there and he was crowing up to them, so I called it *The summing up of the jury*." Unwalla also exhibited gorgeous bowls and vases and a humongous glass panel that replicated a large wave rising majestically out of the ocean.

A true artist, his reward is the work itself, not the success or sales that follow. He had not even priced his work himself. He had left that to his son and to the Gallery. All he wanted from the show was for his pieces to be appreciated, and to be sent away regrettably.

His creations depicting Zarathushtra and the asho farohar are very popular among the community and he is flooded with orders. The profit earned from these sales of religious work though are invariably given away to charities and to causes dear to his heart. The spastics, blind, cancer-afflicted find in him a ready donor.

"I am deeply religious and non-religious at the same time," maintains

Unwalla who is happy to wear the sudreh-kusti and say his prayers daily although elaborate rituals and ceremonies do not appeal to him. Born in Bombay and educated at the city's St Xavier's School and College from where he graduated in science, Unwalla continues to maintain that his views on the issues dividing the community are "non controversial."

When asked about his previous avatar as a devoted yachtsman, which is how most of Bombay remembers him, he laughs modestly: "I was never a champion in that respect. I only won a lowly gold medal in the Asian regatta which was held here. It was my sons who were gold and silver medalists in Asia. The youngest Jiji was World Junior Champion in Canada. And Fali and Jiji were Asian silver medalists and won the silver medal in the World Championship in Canada as well." Fali who is in Bombay is also an artist, states the father. An interior designer by profession he was responsible for his father's glass exhibition setting and the stage sets for choreographer-dancer Shiamak Davar's highly rated *Yes* shows were entirely his creation.

For 14 years Unwalla was secretary of the RBYC. "I'm now a trustee of the Yacht Club. And I sail very little now. But I want to sail more." He refers to the pet ambition that he has harbored since 1975 when he was having a new sailing boat designed to make a voyage cruise from Iran to the shores of India. "The intention was to re-enact the voyage of our ancestors across the Indian ocean," says Unwalla. This dream never materialized but as luck would have it, it is once again revived by his very good friend Capt Soli Contractor, a great sailor, who at the moment is undertaking intensive research on various aspects of the adventure viz. the type of vessel to be built, the provisions carried on that voyage, etc. "We hope and pray that this dream will materialize and that we will one day be able to relive the great lost chapter of the Zoroastrians," states Unwalla.

He has two studios — a small one in his Cuffe Parade home (where Zubin Mehta's family lived before him) and a bigger studio across the harbor in Mandwa where he creates his larger pieces.

As unique as his glass sculptures, Unwalla must be the only glass artist in the world who gets into a boat and sails to work!

IMPRESSIVE IMAGES

continued from page 166

overs, when Oshidar intonates this dialog it instantly evokes smiles.

Describing himself as one of those rare Zoroastrians who never wears his sudreh during the day and will never retire to bed without it, Oshidar refers to his desperate search to locate a copy of *Parsis and Sport* by H. D. Darukhanawala, published in 1935: "Preferably two copies; I'll keep two of anything if I love it. I get hours of amusement watching it, reading it. It is set in a time which we no longer have."

Happy as he is in the audio-visual medium with the other Zoroastrian MTV icons Cyrus Broacha, Cyrus Sahukar and Shenaz Treasuryvala, would he encourage others from the community to join this field? "I would encourage anyone, not necessarily from the community," specifies Oshidar, "if he/she is forward looking and open-minded to join. The television medium offers tremendous opportunities and responsibilities to disseminate information which is socially relevant and correct."

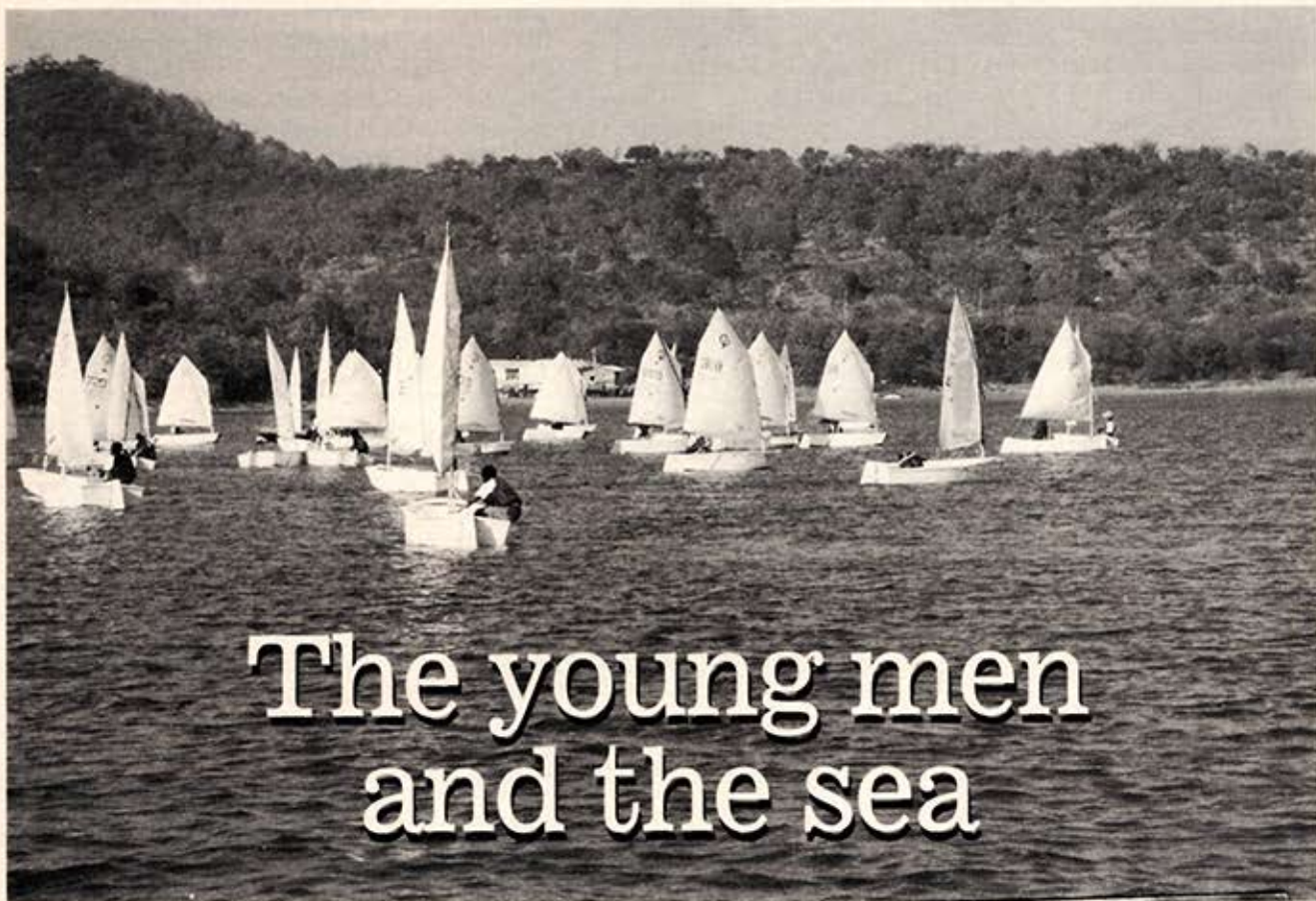
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The young men and the sea

Driving past the fragrant flowers, the sound of music and wedding/navjote festivity at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba, one soon arrives at the secluded jetty of the Naval Sailing Club (NSC) at the southern most tip of Bombay island, on the eastern shore. Landlubbers looking out over the quiet waters of the harbor can espy small sails dotting the seascape. The scattered flotilla soon hoves into view and the little sailors on board jump out into the water and haul their Optimists (eight-foot sailing dinghies) up the gentle slope of the jetty on to the land.

Small hands using big sponges dry out the water from the inside of their *Mistral*, *Tornado*, *Shamal*, *Twister*, etc. They detach the single sail and stow away the sailing gear neatly in the Sailing Box provided. The youngsters, aged between eight and 15, are all participants of the Joint Optimist Sailing Program initiated by the over 150-year-old Royal Bombay Yacht Club (RBYC) in December 1999. And coordinating the Optimist Program and teaching the children are Cyrus Heerjee and Sheri

At the helm of the Optimist Sailing Program, Cyrus Heerjee and Sheri Bamboat seek to popularize sailing among the young

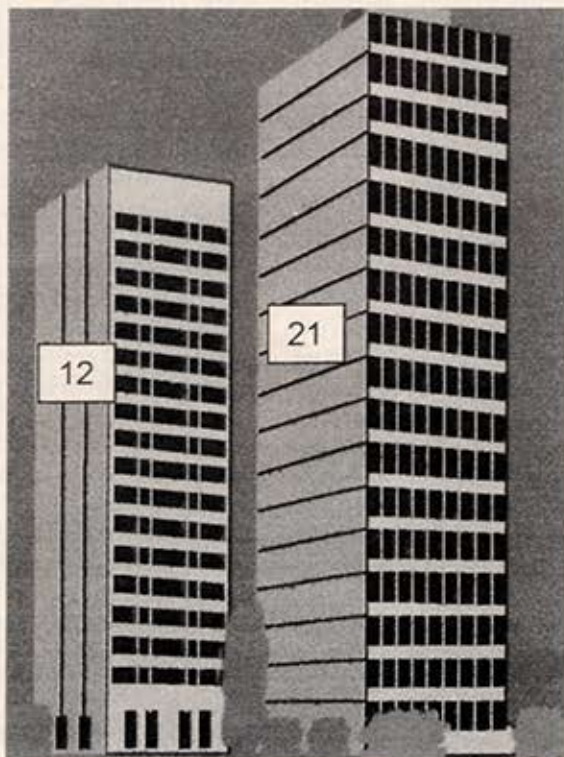
Hilla P. Guzder

Bamboat, whose love for the sea has seen them participate in sailing events and competitions for over 25 years, including a voyage of adventure over the stormy waters of the Arabian Sea to Muscat and back in a 21-foot sailing boat, with wind, waves, a passing whale and porpoises for company!

Ten-year-old Xerxes Bamboat and 11-year-old Viraf Heerjee are now following in fathers' footsteps. Their nascent navigational skills saw them stand first and second respectively in the under-12 age group, and second and fifth overall at the second Senators National Inland Optimists sailing championship. Held in December 2001 in the pictur-

esque setting of the Khadakvasla lake at the National Defence Academy in Poona, the championship witnessed the participation of 43 young yachtsmen (including girls) from all over India.

"Though the oldest competitor was 15, Xerxes and Viraf were among the top 10, as good as the best," commends Cyrus. "Masters of their own little tub," as Sheri puts it, the children sail mainly for their own enjoyment, winning at competitions being a corollary. "Sailing is all about getting the feel of the boat's motion, the knack of judging whether your boat is covering the distance at optimum speed. You have to be focussed, you have to concentrate at all times and be aware of everything around you — the force and direction of the wind, the tide, the positions of the other boats or you will find yourself obstructed," elaborates Cyrus. The massed start means the children have to cross the (imaginary) starting line at best speed. "You have to time it correctly. If you're too fast, you get called back. Good judgment and a good start are most important," he adds.



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"Xerxes is light, agile and bold on the water," opines Sheri. "Being among the youngest, even by a few months, can make a difference as far as maturity levels go." "I was most excited (at winning)," bubbles Xerxes, who had his first whiff of surf and sun as a baby in a carrycot when Sheri and his wife Hamshad decided to put to sea one fine day when he was but 40 days old! "When I was eight Dad taught me to sail, to luff (push the tiller and turn the boat into the wind) and bear away (pull the tiller, so that the boat turns into a different course)," recounts the budding seafarer. The problem is, laughs Sheri, that if the child happens to be sitting on the wrong side of the tiller, push becomes pull and pull becomes push!

It was in Goa, travelling back and forth along the shore that Cyrus taught Viraf the basics of sailing around two years ago. "The mouth of the Zuari river is very clean. You can stand in the water and coach the children. In Bombay if you did that you'd probably die of several diseases," laughs Cyrus as *Parsiana* watched flotsam drift past the jetty. "At first I was not very keen to learn, but Dad persuaded me to try it. Now I love it," declares Viraf. A few months after "learning the ropes" (literally, as each line or piece of rope is given a different name!) Viraf participated in his first nationals in Bombay in May 2000. Last summer he sailed in Madras, with his boat being transported all the way to that city on a truck. "You have to bear your own expenses for events and competitions," notes Cyrus, adding that as a hobby sailing is neither an expensive nor an exclusive sport.

The Optimist Program is promoted by the three civilian sailing clubs in Bombay — the RBYC, The Colaba Sailing Club (CSC) and The Bombay Sailing Association (BSA). "We want to popularize sailing," maintains Sheri. "The more kids you have on the water, the more they compete for positions and the level of sailing improves." Safety precautions are securely in place, with life jackets being compulsory, and the children having to pass a swimming test conducted by the Western Naval Command Sports Office and the officer in charge at the NSC being the final authority about wind strength and weather conditions. A powered rescue boat accompanies the young mariners.

Cyrus is currently the commodore (president) of the CSC, and Sheri, a

committee member. At the RBYC Cyrus is the sailing secretary and Sheri the captain of boats (looking after maintenance of the vessels) while at the BSA, Cyrus is honorary secretary while Sheri is commodore and captain of boats! All offices are honorary and for two-year terms, states Cyrus. With full-time jobs, weekends devoted to sailing and teaching, not to mention administration, their lives, fore and aft and port and starboard, revolve around the sailing scene! The CSC website (www.colabasailingclub.com created by Vinay Gupta, a regular in the sailing circuit of Bombay now settled in New Zealand, is maintained by Gupta from there as well, with information sent to him from here!) shows Bejon Madon as vice commodore, Jimmy Bendorawalla as captain of boats and Naushad Davar as committee member, among others. "Madon spends much time and energy on matters regarding the CSC and teaches newcomers (over the age of 15) as well," reports Cyrus, adding that in February 2002 it was Bendorawalla who convincingly won the race to Marvel Manori in the Seabird class of boats in rough weather. Other Parsis whose sailing skills have carried them onto the national and international scene are Farokh Tarapore, Homi Motiwalla, the Unwallas (father Adi and sons Fali, Jimmy, Pesi and Jiji), Soli Contractor, Tehmasp Mogul, Zarir Karanjia, Cyrus Cama, etc, mentions Cyrus. Some like architect Farokh Hyderabadwala and chemical engineering consultant Jamshed Adrianwalla, have decided to become helmsmen well into their 60s!

Cyrus' aquatic affinity probably started, he jests, with his birth on *Avan roz*. Childhood in Calicut, with its long maritime tradition, saw his fascination increase. In 1972, a friend from school (St Mary's, ISC in Bombay) paid all of one rupee to hire a four-seater boat and took him along for the ride. It took just a month for Cyrus to become a qualified helmsman, participating thereafter in races and competitions and garnering a cupboard full of cups and trophies.

In sync with his surname, Sheri's "craze" was making models of boats! "Ever since I was a child I would make these little boats and float them in the tub at home, using wood, matchsticks or anything else I could lay my hands on," he narrates. Cyrus' hobby, he adds, was making and flying, in the garden of his house at Apollo Reclamation, models of aeroplanes! As a collegian at

Elphinstone while doing his BSc, an ex-Cathedralite friend unexpectedly invited him one day in 1975 to join him on board — Sheri's first sail and first race as crew! By the time he returned home at six in the evening, his family was frantic as no one knew where he was! Seeking to sail more, Sheri would hire a boat from the CSC for three rupees an afternoon and take his friends along, making sure they contributed something for the cruise as well, he laughingly recounts. It was Cyrus, his neighbor (at that time), friend and senior, who taught him the techniques of yachting and Sheri officiated as his crew for two years till one day, seeing there were not enough competitors for a race, "he kicked me out on my own!" Winner of several championships, Sheri says: "I have a healthy respect for the sea. I never sail without my sudreh-kusti and God by my side."

In 1986, their expedition to Muscat saw Jehangir S. Jehangir (popularly known as JJ, a very keen yachtsman who passed away in 2000 after an illness) skipper one boat while Cyrus captained the other. "Flying the CSC burgee (flag)... this was the first non-coastal Arabian Sea crossing in an open boat," states the CSC website. Using sextants for navigation, both Seabirds managed to stay together most of the time. "It took us 15 days on the outward voyage as we were sailing either with no wind or in storms," narrates Cyrus. "On such stormy occasions, all we could do was bring the sails down, drift with the storm, bail out the water and steer the boats over the waves to prevent them capsizing." A small canvas canopy in the cockpit (an area near the stern in small decked vessels) provided the culinary amenities. "We had to sit and cook, standing was impossible." Fighting the elements provided a great sense of achievement, particularly so when for a few hours the Seabirds lost sight of each other! "I had taken a compass direction of where they were last seen and we managed to find each other," Cyrus continues. "Sixty miles south of Muscat we found a small cove shown on the chart and took shelter from the storm." The return took but eight days as they were sailing with the wind, he explains, the navigation being so accurate that the buildings of Cuffe Parade hove into view at the entrance of Bombay harbor exactly as expected.

After a 19-year stint with Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company as a



Alongside: Joyful sailors with their Optimists; (2nd row) Father-son duos — Cyrus (left and inset) and Viraf Heerjee; Sheri (top inset) and Xerxes Bamboat



Above (from left): Natalia Dalal, Jauzinah Borzu and Ginwalla

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supervisor on the shop floor in the office furniture plant, Cyrus switched jobs in '93 to save time and travel from his residence in south Bombay to Vikhroli in the north. "Jamshyd Godrej (chairman and managing director of Godrej and Boyce) is a great sailing enthusiast who has a 40-foot yacht. He gives much support, both corporate (sponsorship of championships and trophies) and personal, to encourage yachting," maintains Cyrus. The Naoroji Pirojsha Godrej Memorial Boating Station for the Sea Cadet Corps (at the Training Ship *Jawahar* alongside the NSC jetty) has been donated by the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation in memory of Jamshyd's father, the late Naoroji (Naval) who also loved sailing, as does Kerse Naoroji (also earlier with Godrej and Boyce), he opines. Cyrus' present employers, Tolani Shipping Company Limited where he is administrative officer, are also very much a part of the sailing scenario, sponsoring the Tolani Mid Season Championship, the Tolani Round Robin Championship as well as part sponsorship of the National Inland Optimist Championship, etc.

Materials manager for G. R. Engineering Works Limited which fabri-

cates heavy equipment for the petrochemicals industry, Sheri joined the company fresh from college and has been with it for 21 years. Not unexpectedly, G. R. Engineering are sailing supporters too! Good with his hands, Sheri makes masts, pulley blocks, assembles boat parts and can fit out a Seabird, if required! "It helps to pay for my hobby," he chuckles. Life partner Hamshad also sails regularly with him.

"My grandfather Framroze Golwalla had built the famous Golwalla Bath at Backbay — the first cosmopolitan Olympic size pool in Bombay," recounts Cyrus' wife Dilnavaz. Her father Khurshed used to run the pool and the family lived in a house overlooking the sea, watching the boats go by. One New Year's eve, she joined a yachting cruise to Khanderi, 15 miles off Alibag, home to a lighthouse and an old Kanoji Angre (Maratha) fort, a popular camping spot for club sailors. On the return, the boatman ferrying her across the water was Cyrus and they soon found their lives anchored in matrimony! While Viraf is into sailing hook, line and sinker, younger brother Shahan, at six-and-a-half, evinces little interest, preferring wrestling instead!



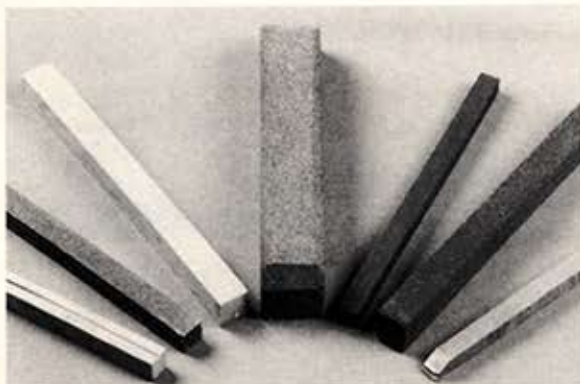
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Timing it right

Zubin Ginwalla of Baroda has brought "great honor for the country and the community by winning a silver medal in the men's 10,000 m relay in the 9th Asian Roller Skating Championships at Taiwan. This is the first time that India has achieved this victory of an international level in speed skating...justifying the confidence which his well-wishers placed in him," writes Shavak Patel, erstwhile president of the Baroda Parsi Panchayat, in a communication to *Parsiana*. Roller skaters from China, Japan, Korea, Iran, etc participated in the meet in October 2001.

A month prior to the Taiwan meet, 20-year-old Ginwalla had skated in the World Championships in France. Though unable to pick up a medal, the exposure proved to be invaluable as an international coach fine tuned their technique and gave the Indian team, consisting of 20 boys and girls, juniors (up

to 17 years) and seniors, tips that proved fruitful at the subsequent international outing, asserts Ginwalla. "My favorite event is the 300 m time trial," he says. "It is speed I like, I am more of a sprinter as I can generate power quickly." In a sport not popularly pursued in India, Ginwalla has to import from the USA his body suit, helmet and roller skates, shoes, frame, wheels, bearings, et al.

With a tally of 59 medals and trophies so far at the district, state, national and now international level, Ginwalla had also been selected as standby in the Indian team for the 8th Asian Roller Skating Championships in '99 at Shanghai, but did not get the opportunity to represent his country. In the same year he had stood first in his event at the nationals, securing second place the following year. "In races with a massed start, one must be taught well how to get ahead in the pack," he observes, adding that Vipul Patel, his coach in Baroda, also officiates as coach for the Indian team.

It was grandfather Patel who kindled his interest in the sport. "At first I joined it for fun and slowly started competing," he describes. Speed and stamina are built up by three to four hours of daily training plus fitness sessions at

the gym.

Currently a second year BCom student at M. S. University, Baroda, Ginwalla plans to do his MBA after graduation. In 1999, in recognition of his skating skills the Government of Gujarat sports ministry had awarded him a cash prize; the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India presented him a citation and trophy at its Mhow meeting the same year; the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Baroda has honored him with the Behram N. Cama Memorial trophy for excellence in sports for five consecutive years, notes his bio data.

Committed to karate

As a child Jauzinah Borzu of Dahanu suffered from asthma. "Being a doctor I decided I should make her take up either swimming, karate or yoga, all of which entail breathing exercises which are very helpful for improving lung function. At this time I consulted her horoscope which predicted her creating records in a fighting sport," writes her father Dr Danesh B. Irani from Dahanu. And so karate it was.

Beginning her training at age two-and-a-half, Jauzinah evinced such keen interest that less than four years later, in February 2001 she became "India's

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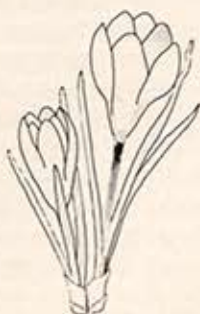
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youngest Shotokan girl black belt" through the Japan Karate Association of India (JKAI), states Irani. Jauzinah and her brother Jamshed, her senior by five years and also into karate, receive daily two-hour training from Sensei Suresh Mali, third degree black belt. Jamshed provides his sibling additional coaching prior to each tournament.

In January 2002 at the 19th National Karate Championship of the JKAI in Calcutta, Jauzinah struck gold twice in the under-nine individual and team kata. On February 2, at the state level meet organized by the Maharashtra Karate Association, she once again stood first — from competitors in all the styles of karate in the under-nine individual kata.

In 2000-2001, Jauzinah won two golds at state level tournaments organized by the JKAI in the Shotokan style in kumite and kata in the below-seven age group. At the XVIII JKAI national level tournament, the under-seven age group was cancelled but Jauzinah showed her skills by participating in the under-nine group and bagging gold in the kumite and silver in the kata. The tournament saw girls from 18 states take part, her father informs *Parsiana*. Keen to become a karate instructor,

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Jauzinah's immediate goal is to represent India and win at the 2002 Shoto World Cup in Japan. "Today thanks to the avoidance of allergies and her karate breathing exercises, Jauzinah has practically overcome her asthma," writes Irani. Adds Porushesh H. Debara, honorary treasurer of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India, writing from Agra: "Jauzinah comes from a very illustrious family of Dahanu Road. Her parents Dr Danesh and Daisy Irani have been a guiding spirit behind the achievements of this girl. Her grandfather Boman Barjor Irani is a leading horticulturist of Dahanu Road... and is also involved in many social and charitable activities, including running of one school and two colleges."

Outclassing 19 competitors in several rounds in the girls under-eight kata, Natalia Dalal secured silver at the Third World Gojukai Karate-Do Tournament and Technical Seminar in Perth, Australia in November 2001. In a narrow finish, Natalia lost to her Japanese opponent by a whisker — a mere 0.1 margin. In the boys under-eight kumite, Zarvaan Merchant also won silver for India.

Natalia and Zarvaan were part of a

76-strong contingent, the second largest group at the tournament behind the South Africans. The squad was led by Kyoshi Vispy Kapadia, head of the All India Gojukai Karate-Do (see "Kapadia's karate kingdom," *Parsiana*, May 2001). Sensei Neville Nariman and karateka Faraz Merchant were part of a three-man team in the synchronized kata, an event they competed in for the first time, bagging the bronze medal. Senseis Gev Karai and Adil Pavri were among the referees invited to officiate at the meet. Among the winners at the India-Malaysia Goodwill Tournament held in Kuala Lumpur thereafter were Natalia, Zarvaan, Faraz, Shahen Sidhwa and Tehemtan Fatakia, according to karate sources.

SPOTLIGHT

Former national champion and currently athletics coach **Adille Sumariwalla** was awarded the Dadoji Konddeo award for coaches for the year '98-'99 at a function in Poona in July 2001. "Adille happens to be the only person from Maharashtra to have been pre-



Sumariwalla (left) receiving the award from Governor Dr P. C. Alexander (right)

sented the Shiv Chhatrapati, the Arjuna and the Dadoji Konddeo awards so far," states a communication from Shriram Shinde of *Pune Mid Day*. A unique feature, Shinde mentions, was that Sumariwalla's student Rachita Mistry received at the same time the Shiv Chhatrapati award for being one of Maharashtra's best athletes. Sumariwalla is currently director of corporate affairs and projects in the Mid Day group of publications.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

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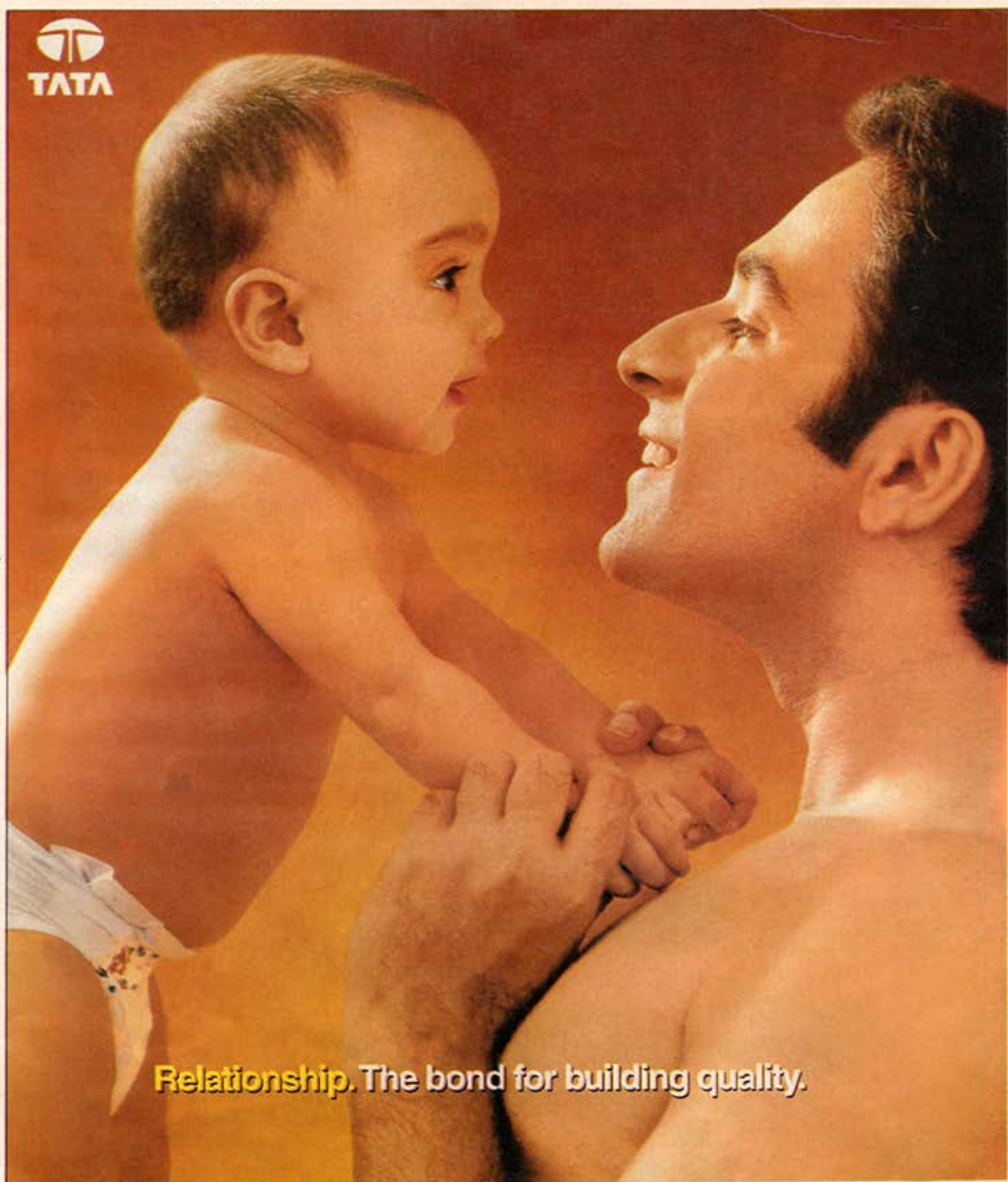


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Dr Katy Dalal

Even reluctant cooks would be tempted to experiment with these recipes

The nine recipes listed here have been reprinted from Dr Katy Dalal's *Delicious Encounters — Innovative Recipes, Parsi, Indian, Western* printed in 2000. The author suggested these dishes when *Parsiana* specified that our readers may be interested in trying out something new this Navroz. Currently she is involved with the launch of her third cookery book: *A Tribute to Indian Cuisine: Pulaos and Biryanis*, slated for release on March 16, 2002.

DRUMS OF HEAVEN

Preparation time: 10 mins

Marinate overnight

Cooking time: 30 mins

Serves: 7

Chicken wings (24 — large)

Mustard powder (1 tbsp)

Soya bean sauce (4 tbsp)

Brown sugar (2 tbsp)

Honey (½ cup)

Ginger-garlic paste (1 tbsp)

Sesame seeds (½ cup)

Poppy seeds (½ cup)

Black pepper (1 tsp — freshly ground)

Oil

Cut the wing tip and reserve only the largest wing portion. Wash and with the help of a knife turn the meat from the bottom of the wing upwards so as to

resemble a drumstick.

Put ginger-garlic paste, pepper, salt to taste, soya bean sauce, brown sugar, mustard powder and honey in a bowl. Mix well and toss the wings into the mixture and marinate overnight.

Splash a little oil on the drumsticks. Mix the poppy and sesame seeds together. Coat the drumsticks in the mixture, set them out in a baking pan and cook at 350°F for half an hour or till soft. Taste for salt. Serve with drinks.

If you don't have an oven cook over a stove.

YOGHURT SAUCE

Preparation time: 30 mins

No cooking

Serves: 12-15

Yoghurt (500 g — thick)

Sugar (½ cup)

Spring onions (3 — finely chopped)

Parsley (2 tbsp — finely chopped)

Mint (1 tbsp — finely chopped)

Green chilies (4 — seeded and finely

chopped)

Gherkins (4 — finely chopped)

Olives [10 — sliced (optional)]

Salt

Whisk the sugar and yoghurt in a glass bowl. Add all the chopped herbs and mix well. Add a sprinkling of salt. Chill and serve.

APPLE AND YOGHURT SALAD

Preparation time: 10 mins

Serves: 6

Red apples (5 — cored, chopped and

sprinkled with the juice of a sour lime)

Red or green cabbage (200 g)

Salted cashew nuts (100 g — chopped)

Walnuts (100 g — chopped)

Red raisins (200 g)

Salt

For the dressing

Yoghurt (300 g — thick and slightly sweet)

Spring onions (2 tbsp — minced)

Coriander (2 tbsp — minced)

Ginger (1 tsp — freshly grated)

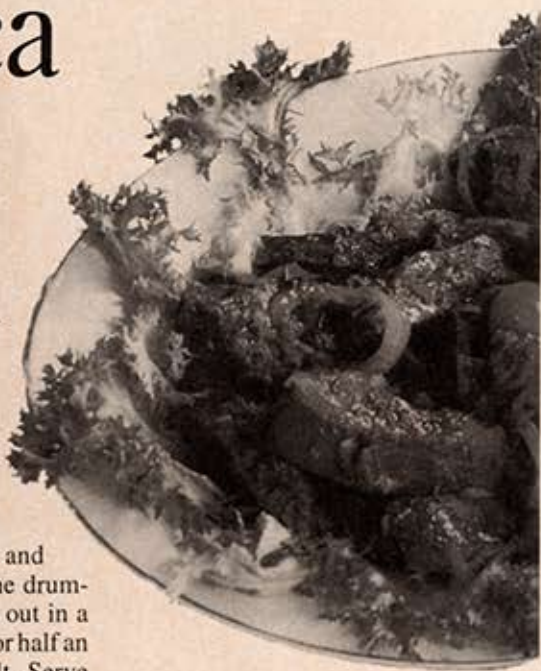
Cumin powder (1 tsp — roasted)

Black pepper powder (½ tsp)

Salt

Place the apples, cabbage, cashew nuts, walnuts and raisins in a large bowl. Whisk the yoghurt, add all the dressing ingredients into it and mix well. Taste for salt. Pour the yoghurt mixture over the apples and chill before serving.

Sweet, sour and hot pork (left) and Grilled liver with orange slices (above)



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BUTTER WITH CHICKEN

Salted butter (300 g)
Chicken (350 g — boiled, finely chopped)
Lime juice (2 tbsp)
Pepper (1 tbsp — coarsely ground)
Tabasco sauce (1 tbsp)
Parsley (1 tbsp — finely chopped)

HAM BUTTER

Salted butter (300 g)
Ham (350 g — finely chopped)
Pineapple (250 g — canned, finely chopped)
Paprika or mustard powder (1 pinch)

BROCCOLI WITH LEMON AND BUTTER BAKE

Preparation time: 10 mins
Cooking time: 7 mins
Serves: 4-6
Broccoli florets (1 kg)
Eggs (2 — hard boiled)
Fresh breadcrumbs (1 cup)
Rashers back bacon (2-4 — optional)

Sour limes (2 — juice)

Butter
Pepper powder
Salt

Prepare the florets by cutting off the coarse lower stalks. Boil in salted water till stalks are tender.

Fry the bacon and crumble when crisp. Set aside. Boil the eggs, grate and mix into the bacon.

Place the broccoli in a baking dish. Heat two tablespoons butter and the lime juice and pour over the broccoli.

Place two tablespoons butter and breadcrumbs in a frying pan and stir until golden brown.

Cover the broccoli with the bacon and egg crumble and cover with the buttered breadcrumbs. Place for seven minutes in a hot oven just before serving.

GRILLED LIVER WITH ORANGE SLICES

Preparation time: 20 mins
Cooking time: 20 mins
Serves: 8-10
Goat's liver (2)
Soya bean sauce (1 tbsp)
Tomato sauce (2 tbsp)
Black pepper powder (½ tsp)
Ginger-garlic paste (1 tsp)

Oil
Oranges (2-3)
Salt to taste

Remove the skin from the liver and cut into 1½" strips. Wash and salt. Mix in the ginger-garlic paste and set aside.

Take a skillet or frying pan, place half a cup of oil in it and heat. Drop in the liver strips and turn the pan from side to side. Add the black pepper, soya bean sauce and tomato sauce and cook the liver over a low flame in its own juice. Add a little water only if necessary.

Serve with plenty of finger chips and green lettuce leaves surrounded by skinned orange slices.

SWEET, SOUR AND HOT PORK

Preparation time: 40 mins
Cooking time: 40 mins
Serves: 8-10
Good English pork (1½ kg)
Ginger-garlic paste (2 tbsp)
Salt
Grind together in sugarcane vinegar
Kashmiri chilies (15)
Fresh turmeric (tiny piece)
Black pepper corns (6)
Cloves (¼ tsp)
Black mustard seeds (1 tsp)



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Cinnamon (1 tsp)
Garlic (1 pod)
Cumin seeds (1 tbsp)
Sugarcane vinegar (2 cups)
Jaggery (75 g)

Wash the pork and remove the rind. Leave the fat on the flesh. Cut into one-inch bits. Wash, salt and marinate in the ginger-garlic paste for two hours.

Grind the masala in sugarcane vinegar. When soft to the touch, smear all over the pork pieces.

Place with two-three cups water and the jaggery in a pressure cooker and cook till soft in its own fat.

Serve with fried potatoes, diced capsicum, baby tomatoes and gotli bread.

CAULIFLOWER-NO-PULAO

Preparation time: 15 mins

Cooking time: 40 mins

Serves 4-6

Basmati rice (300 g)
White cauliflower (300 g)
French beans (50 g — julienned)
Carrots (50 g — julienned)
Broccoli (50 g — sliced)
Ginger and garlic (25 g each — chopped)
Green chilies (3 — finely chopped)

Spring onion (1 bunch — julienned)
Soya bean sauce (2 tbsp)
Aji-no-moto (1 tbsp)
Black pepper powder (½ tbsp)
Salt

Ghee

Cut the cauliflower into florets and parboil them in salted water. Drain. In a wok fry the florets in two tablespoons ghee and set aside. Fry the other vegetables separately, too. Add salt sparingly.

Boil the rice in plenty of water and drain in a colander when done. Spread out on a thali so that the grains separate. Heat two tablespoons of ghee in the wok and put in the chopped spring onions, ginger, garlic and green chilies, fry for two minutes and then add the rice. Sprinkle aji-no-moto, soya bean sauce and the pepper powder. Toss in the fried vegetables and stir well. Serve at once.

BEETROOT PICKLE

Cooking time: 45 mins

Serves 10-12

Beetroots (1½ kgs — small)
Sugar (750 g)
Water (1 liter)

Sugarcane vinegar (2 tea cups)
Cornflour (125 g)
Salt (1 dtsp)
Cinnamon, clove, black pepper powder (1 tsp)

Wash the beetroots and cook in a pressure cooker for half an hour till soft. Skin and slice them.

Place the sugar, vinegar and water in a heavy bottomed pan over a medium flame. When the sugar has melted after 10 minutes, mix the cornflour in one cup water and add it to the boiling sugar mixture and stir nonstop till you get a smooth sauce. Add the beetroot slices, sprinkle salt and spice powder and cook in the boiling syrup for five to seven minutes. Cool, bottle and chill.

Dr Katy P. Dalal, a PhD in archeology from Poona University, is now pursuing catering as a full-time profession. The popular gourmet is also the author of *Jamva Chaloji — Parsi Delicacies for all occasions and Delicious Encounters —*



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The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute has published the papers presented at its third international scholars' meet

Arnavaz S. Mama

The arrival of Parsis in India was "one of the earliest known instances of official asylum being granted to foreign political refugees," retired Supreme Court judge Sujata Manohar had noted in her inaugural address to the scholarly Third International Congress, hosted by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) ere proceeding to the many similarities and cross-fertilization of Indian and Iranian cultures that characterized the first and second millennia AC.

The proceedings of the Congress (Bombay, January 6-9, 2000) with the theme "Indo-Persian Cultures: Their character and impact on civilization," were published by the KRCOI in October 2001. Containing the 33 papers presented at the Congress by 16 national and 17 international scholars, the 386-page publication also records the main speeches at the inaugural and valedictory sessions. The papers may roughly be classified, according to their basic themes, into philosophy/theology, scriptures, religion, history, language and literature and socio/economic influences though several papers hyphenate two or more of these categories. Some of the papers were presented in absentia and two contributions were received later.

KRCOI president Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy had welcomed the delegates to this "clearing house of ideas," and presented shawls, flowers and mementos on behalf of the Institute to outstanding contributors — scholastic and financial. These included Dasturs (Dr) Hormazdyar Mirza and (Dr) Kaikhusroo Jamsapasa who have been long-time mentors of the Institute as had noted its dynamic trustee-secretary Homai Modi; Iranian philanthropist Mehraban Zartoshty whose family has provided the funds to enable the KRCOI to reprint rare books, and who ceremonially released the third in the series, *The Laws of the Ancient Persians* by Sohrab Jamshedji Bulsara; the venerable Ratamai

Peshotan Peer who has spent a lifetime in the religious education of Zoroastrian youths in Bombay; and that indomitable octogenarian Behram Rustomji, formerly of Karachi now living with his daughter in Bombay, who continues to participate in the various essay competitions held by the KRCOI.

Religious philosophy

"What is the human spirit looking for in religious belief? The self is seeking a religious vision by which one can live without the feeling of pointlessness," noted nuclear physicist turned philosopher Prof Kaikhusroo Irani in his paper on "Early Enlightenment in ancient Indo-Iranian thought." Describing the fundamental principle of the Enlightenment that shaped intellectual and social consciousness in 18th and 19th century Europe as the "non-acceptance of the Irrational," Irani characterized religious vision as "an internal act of the believer" based on intuition. Irani argued that the *Gathas* of Zarathushtra and the *Upanishads* of India had preceded the philosophers of the Enlightenment by approximately three millennia. Zarathushtra had presented the world as a "field of moral conflict capable of being improved... One who does not grasp this cannot be a Zoroastrian," he emphasized. This same transformation through individual insight is the forte of the *Upanishads*, he noted.

Vice president of the Centre for Ancient Iranian Studies at Boston Keki Bhote too spoke about the *Gathas* and the *Upanishads*. He presented the hymns of Zarathushtra as a legacy that the *Upanishads* inherited and contrasted the latter with the *Vedas*: "The *Vedas* look outward in awe of the physical world. The *Upanishads* look inward to the awe-inspiring powers of human consciousness." He also pointed out the divergence between the *Gathas* and the *Upanishads*. "The concept of 'dharma' — obligation and the discharge of one's

duties to oneself and others — is enjoined. But the *Upanishads* do not stress service to society, the hallmark of Zoroastrian ethics. This inward-looking individualism has atrophied the social outlook in India to this day."

President of the Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniques Prof Philippe Gignoux turned to the *Denkard III* in his paper "On the notion of Good Measure (*payman*) and other related philosophical concepts." He provided the theological underpinning of the code of "the golden mean" by which many a Zoroastrian household has lived: "The establishment of the sovereignty of the good men is based on Good Measure, on the pure Law. Even a little of excess and deficiency shakes that which is in the human world." Gignoux explained the sovereignty of bad men as an excess or a deficiency, resulting in the destruction of all that is good. As an example Gignoux noted, "The man who takes justice to one who has no need, possesses the costume of excess. He who does not help the man in need, possesses the costume of deficiency. Both of these costumes are the Law of demons and the adversary of Justice. Contrariwise one who comes to the man in need and does not come to another who has no need, possesses the costume of Good Measure."

In "The Zoroastrian view of ecology," Avestan scholar Dr Homi Dhallal notes, "Among the first prayers taught to Parsi children is the Confession of Faith (*Jasa me avanghe Mazda*), which emphasizes the principle of non-violence toward all living creatures. These values are embedded in the Zoroastrian psyche: man is a trustee of nature; he should not violate that trust."

The dualism of light, spirit and goodness versus matter, darkness and evil — Manichaeism as taught by prophet Mani — abjured sex and procreation as completely linked to matter and all evil. It was believed that the good and evil got



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mixed in the world because of events precipitated by the evil principle and salvation was thought to occur through their separation, noted Dr Jamsheed Choksy, director of the Middle Eastern Studies Program at Indiana University. Examining the "Dualism of the feminine in Manichaeism: the Mother of Life and the Demoness of Concupiscence," Choksy writes: "The Mother of Life thus became an important feminine symbol — one which embodied both creation and protection of all entities that were good. She also represented loyalty and steadfastness by serving as a redeeming divinity... the Mother of Life, like the Father of Greatness, did not create the First Man or the other deities through any physical or sexual process... Her creations were summoned forth in absolute chastity and purity; i.e. creation by speech rather than actions, from piety rather than sexuality... complete abstinence from sex, marriage and procreation, had been prescribed as a prerequisite for salvation from the cycle of rebirth..."

"In stark contrast to the Mother of Life, stood the demonic female... Az (who) was feared as the diabolic feminine manifestation of lust and avarice... a prime mover in the (devil's) attempts

"Islam took close to 300 years to take firm root in Iran"

to imprison the soul within matter and thus prevent salvation."

For the sake of the continuation of the human race and Manichaeism, the lay community (not the elect) could have sex, marry and bear offspring but were required to abstain from all material acts, including sex, on one day each week. Choksy sees here the influence of the emerging cult of the mother of Jesus as Virgin Mary.

While Dr M. A. Mehendale of Poona's Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute presented a philological interpretation of four Gathic passages, the paper of Dr Sam Kerr of Sydney integrated human rationality and self knowledge with the concept of consciousness in Zarathushtra's teachings.

History of ritual

The Zoroastrian religion in its history and ritual were dealt with by JamaspAsa, archeologist Dr Katy Dalal, practising mobed and Avesta-Pahlavi lecturer

Ervad (Dr) Rooyintan Peer, and Ervad (Dr) Ramyar Karanjia, principal of the Athornan Boarding Madressa. Discouraging on "Fire in Zoroastrianism," JamaspAsa noted, "Traditionally, (the early Zoroastrian) man established his own hearth fire when he established his own home and household," offering to it "a portion of the sacrificial animal" along with dry wood and sweet smelling herbs. JamaspAsa notes: "The three holy fires mentioned in the Khshnuman of Adar, the dedicatory formula in the *Avesta* in honor of divine beings, are the Fire of Khvarnah — dedicated to Iranian glory: the fire of Kavay Haosravah (Kai Khusro), of the enclosure of Haosravah, on Mount Asnavant, and of the Enclosure of Caecista dedicated to the Kayanian glory. The third fire is the Fire of Mount Raevant, also dedicated to Kayanian glory. In the Pahlavi version of the *Atas Niyayis*, the names of the three holiest fires become Farnbag, Gusnasp and Burzinmihir..."

"During the Sasanian period the two other fires Farnbag and Gusnasp, thus far resident in Pars and Media, gained prominence and popularity. The Parthian partiality towards Burzinmihir for all the long years of Parthian dominance, had endowed Burzinmihir with a strong

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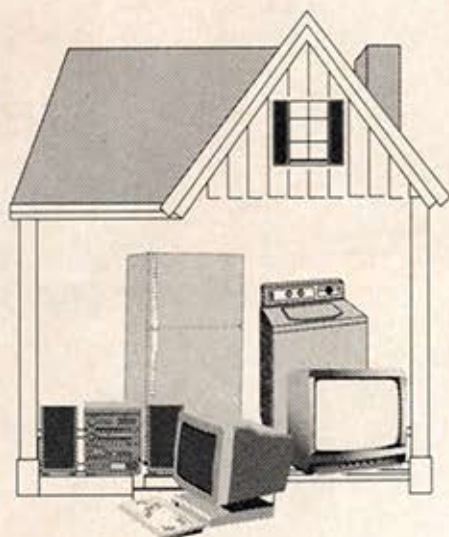


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From left: (1st row) The scholars with KRCOI trustees Justice (ret'd) Dinshaw Mehta and Modi (standing, 3rd from left and center) and Jamshed Guzder with Nani Palkhivala; (2nd row) Jejeebhoy with Zartoshty, JamaspAsa, Mirza and Dhalla, Peer and Bajan; (3rd row) Freddie Mehta (at mike), Modi, Irani, Havewalla and Cereti and Kamerkar with Gorekar; (4th row) Havewalla, Upadhyaya, Nawaz Mody with Phalippou, some implements for the ijashni ceremony; (5th row) Hintze, Aoki and Desai



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Clockwise from top left: Borujerdi; Dhunjisha; Ms Mehendale with Mehendale; Waghmar with Bhote; Mazumder and Rajgor

following and the priests of Pars and Media could not break the deep rooted reverence the people had for this fire, ever mindful of Burzinmihir's role in the legends of Zarathushtra and Vistaspa. Nevertheless, a bid was made to downplay the dominance of this fire and give Farnbag and Gusnasp some of the limelight. It is assumed that it was at

this time that the three fires were linked to the three classes of Iranian society and Burzinmihir was assigned to the lowest social level."

Unlike the swoop of Alexander that terminated the Achaemenid empire, "Islam took close to 300 years to take firm root in Iran," says the Dastur. With the coming of the Mongols conditions de-

teriorated further and the Zoroastrians withdrew into the deserts around Yazd and Kerman, taking the surviving fires of Farnbag and Istakhr (which had been enthroned by the Sasanians in the temple of Anahita and was said to be dedicated to Anahid the Lady) to the village of Sharifabad where "these two fires remain till this day, although at the beginning of this century, they were amalgamated into one fire."

Referring to the 16 fires that comprise an atash behram fire JamaspAsa describes how they were purified by holding a perforated ladle full of fuel over the flames. It is interesting to note that the fire from a burning corpse — one of the constituents of an atash behram fire — needs to be purified 91 times while that from the home of a Zoroastrian needs 184 consecutive purifications. Even the fire from lightning needs 90 purifications as versus that from the home of a shepherd which needs only 33!

Discoursing on "The sacred white bull — varasijaji — and his position in the life of every Parsi Zoroastrian" Dalal describes the importance of the nirang produced in the course of long prayers over the bull's urine (gaomez) accompanied by the mandatory rituals. This

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resulting fluid is one of the basic elements in other purificatory and pav mahal ceremonies. "Actually we have no literary evidence in our ancient books for a white varasaji — but then white is the color of the Zoroastrian faith," notes Dalal, elucidating how the animal must be free of bodily defects and in perfect health before his tail hair and his urine can be utilized.

Identified with the star Sirius in the constellation of Canis Major, the advent of "The rain-maker Tishtrya," one of three divinities presiding over water (the other two being Avan-Ardvisura Anahita — and Haurvatat/Khordad), was avidly awaited each year over the Iranian sky as the agrarian economy was dependent on the monsoon. According to Rooyintan Peer's rendition of the *Tir Yasht*, the way it rises could denote to the astronomers of ancient Iran whether the ensuing year is one of fertility or famine. While Tishtrya brings water his opponent Apaosha brings drought. The tussle between them is part of the *Yasht* wherein the worship of Tishtrya is cited as humankind's duty to strengthen the rain god. "This aspect is very significant and echoes the concepts of ecology and environment in the

The fire from a burning corpse — one of the constituents of an atash behram fire — needs to be purified 91 times while that from the home of a Zoroastrian needs 184 consecutive purifications

matter. It tries to show that ultimately the cycle of rainfall (lies) in the hands of the people, and how they co-ordinate with the forces of Nature," notes Peer.

Karanjia's "Notes on the *baj-dharna* (*Dron Yasht*) ritual" discusses the importance of the ceremony which is known to most Zoroastrians as part of the quartet of prayers recited on death anniversaries but which also forms a component of other larger ceremonies like the visperad and the videvdat wherein the *dron* (or *darun* — the saltless, flat bread) is required. Karanjia notes that "the practice of performing the *baj-dharna* ritual goes back at least

to the Sasanian times."

The scriptures

Dr Carlo Cereti, a research fellow at the Kommission für Iranistik der OAW and lecturer at the University at Wien, and Dr Almut Hintze, trustee and research associate of the Ancient India and Iran Trust at Cambridge, UK, discuss the more scholastic aspect of Zoroastrian sacred literature. "On the manuscript tradition of the *Bundahishn*" Cereti compares and contrasts six manuscripts in an effort to ascertain the coherence, structure and integrity of the original thesis. Hintze looks at the arrangement of the Avestan *Yasna* and the position of the *Yasna Haptanghaiti* (YH) numbered after the first *Gatha* Ahunvaity and followed by the remaining four and argues that "the YH is the liturgical center of the entire ceremony, and probably has always had this function... cross-references between different *Gathas* indicate that the actual sequence of the hymns is not fortuitous, but has come to us in the way it was originally intended. If this is so, however, the question arises as to how this arrangement of the *Gathas* relates to the YH (now better known as the *Haptan Yasht*), which

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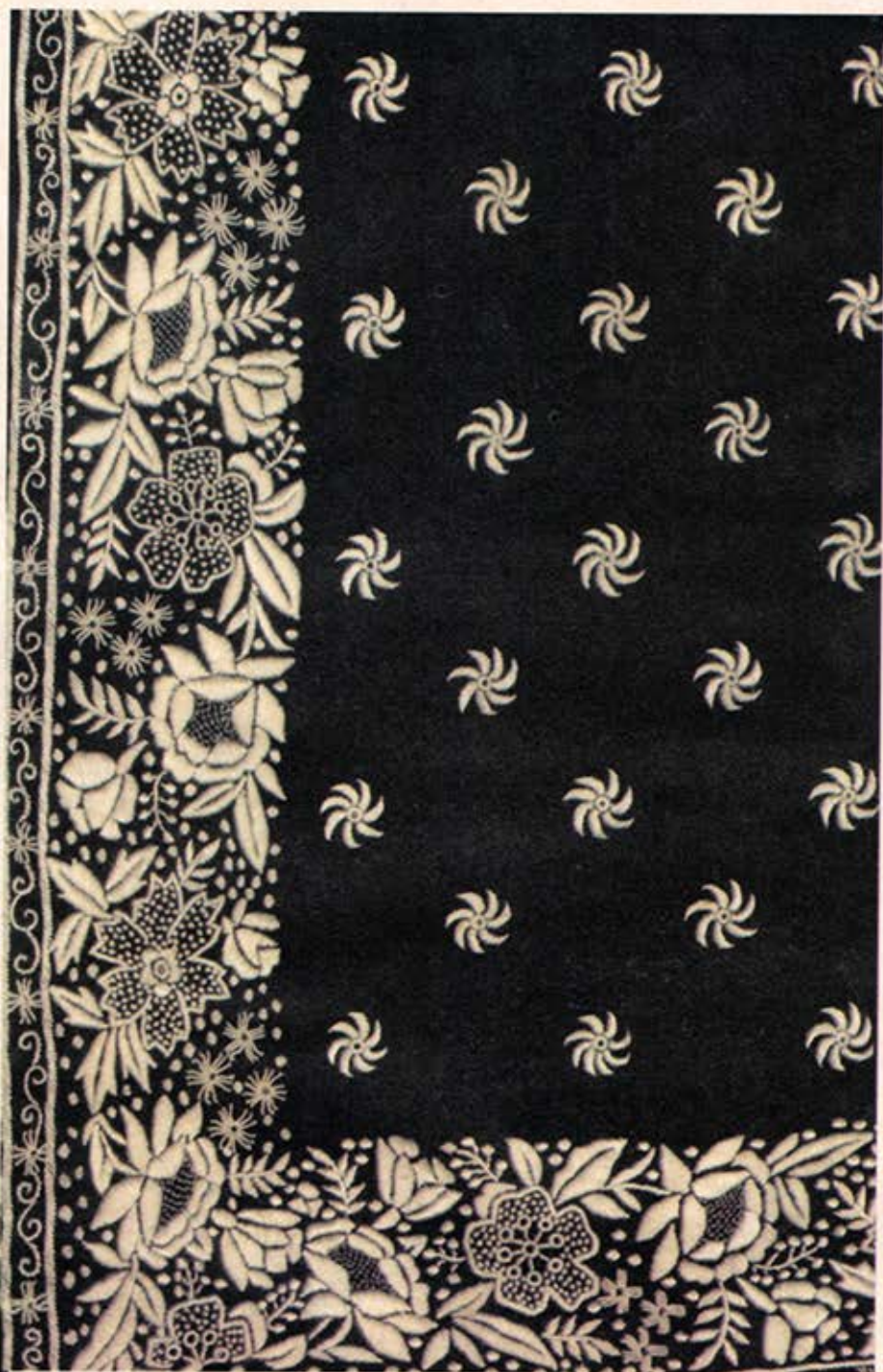
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is placed in their midst." Hintze noted that the compositional structure of this central, Old Avestan, part of the *Yasna* has often disconcerted scholars, who have found it difficult to account for the presence of what was deemed to be a later text. The YH seems to interrupt the flow of these most exalted and sacred utterances. As a result of Johanna Narten's ground-breaking work, however, Hintze argued that it has become clear that the YH and the *Gathas* are best considered as texts which complement each other. The divergences between them have been explained on the basis of their different literary genres: While the *Gathas* are poetic hymns, the YH is liturgical rhythmic prose. There is no evidence contradicting the assumption that the YH was composed at the same time as the *Gathas*, and presumably by the same author. If so, i.e. "if the YH and the *Gathas* originate from... Zarathushtra, then it appears less surprising that, in the liturgical arrangement of the texts, the YH is inserted into the *Gathas*," noted Hintze.

Historical vignettes

In the historical purview Aspi Moddie's paper, "Toynbee and the historical les-

"Actually we have no literary evidence in our ancient books for a white varasijai — but then white is the color of the Zoroastrian faith"

sons of the Sasanian state-church" refers to the "evolution from sustaining tolerance (of the Achamenians) to the self-destructive intolerance" of the Sasanians.

"Toynbee compares the success and failure of the Sasanian state-church, Zoroastrianism, with the coercive policies of the Maccabees in Judaism. Both failed to survive. Sasanian Zoroastrianism he says, 'was never able to make (its) forcibly established church secure against raids on the part of Nestorian Christianity and other non-Zoroastrian faiths from beyond the frontiers,'" notes Moddie, a management expert with a flair for history.

Scholar-translator Farrokh Vajifdar's

"Kirdir, founder of Sasanian orthodoxy" revisits the priest who oversaw several coronations, acquiring almost a Rasputin-like influence on the royal Sasanian family. Attributing the current knowledge of the historical Kirdir, Mobedan-mobed enjoying supreme judiciary status, to Gignoux and Prof Oktor Skjaervo, Vajifdar noted that with the ascension of Bahram II to the throne, persecutions began with the imprisonment and death of Mani, the founder of the eclectic faith known as Manichaeism. "We should note that nothing less than forcible conversions to Mazdaism were being performed amongst Jews, Buddhists/Shamans, Brahmans/Hindus, Nazareans, Christians, Baptists and Manichaeans. Idol-temples were destroyed and heresies and heterodoxies were extirpated — this, says Kirdir, wrought havoc among Ahriman and his demonic horde, and in turn brought great satisfaction to the Mazdaean religion and its priesthood, to the fires, the waters and to the cattle. With pride he reminds us that he piously performed many religious services (were these full-scale Yasna ceremonies?) and encouraged close-kin marriages."

"Neo-Zoroastrian Hellenism in 15th



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Century Byzantine Empire: The Case of George Gemistos Plethon" traces the life of Plethon who according to Dr Michael Stausberg, research fellow at the University of Uppsala, was born in Constantinople in the second half of the 14th century and died nearly a century later in 1454. Plethon's work dealt with finding "a universally accepted path to truth." In his search for teachers from the past he chose none from the Judeo-Christian tradition

but a number of Greek philosophers and a couple of Brahmins whose ideas harmonized together. "First in Plethon's list of wise men stands 'the most ancient of the lawgivers and wise men who is known to us,' Zoroaster, who, according to Plethon, in a supreme way, had emerged as the interpreter of the gods and most other things among the

Medes, the Persians and other ancient nations of Asia... In his appendix, Plethon explicitly states that one should follow Zoroaster's teachings because they alone hold out the prospect of purest blissful happiness due to every human being. All the other teachings, on the contrary, that deviate from the teachings of Zoroaster and his followers from Plato down to Plethon, also swerve from blissful happiness, and the more they deviate from it the more they approach unhappiness, ignorance and deepest darkness."

Though Plethon is "considered as the founder of a neo-Zoroastrian, Hellenic religion," his religion is "quite a private affair," notes Stausberg. "There are no traces of any attempts on Plethon's side to spread the religion."

In "Samba and the Hinduized Magi: fiction or history?" linguist and *Gathas* translator Prof (Dr) Helmut Humbach notes, "one could hypothesize that it was at the time of Alexander the Great that the first Persian Magi were invited to come to Multan to establish there a Sun sanctuary with a sort of an astronomical observatory. As a consequence the Samba legend would reflect a sequence of scenes at the margin of world historical events."

"The Persian language slowly took the place of Sanskrit as a cementing force and it held its own until it became effete and was given a violent jerk by the English language"

In his "Note on Parsi Islamology" Burzine Waghmar examines the three *Ahd namehs*—two in Arabic and one in Persian—which the Zoroastrians claim were granted by Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law Ali, giving the community the rights enjoyed by other "people of the book" viz the Jews and Christians. Questioning their veracity Waghmar, who is working towards a doctorate in Iranian and Central Asian Studies at

SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), London, says that the Arabic *Ahd nameh* is written in a script which came into being much after the time of Ali. Apart from stylistic weaknesses Waghmar argues that the date of the Arabic *Ahd nameh* in 660 AC places it just a year before Ali's murder. "The period between the Battle of Siffin in 657 AC and his assassination in

661 AC was the most turbulent period of Ali's career as he was engaged in preserving unity as the caliph among dissenting tribal factions, both of Shi'i and Sunni allegiance. It is all too unlikely that Ali would have expended time during a period of civil war, an era in which the future of the nascent Islamic community was at stake, towards fulfilling socio-legal formalities." Quoting Abu Yusuf, Waghmar writes, "Due to a lack of a Quranic precedent for treating them as one of the scriptuaries, (Caliph) Umar was in a fix as to 'how to treat these people who are neither Arabs nor People of the Book.' However, they were grudgingly accepted based on a tradition preserved by 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf that the prophet had accepted tribute from the Mazdeans of Hajar. Also, in a missive to Mundhir b. Sawa, the ruler of Bahrain, he had permitted them to practice their religion upon payment of the *jizya* (poll tax), and had declared, 'treat them as you treat the people of the book,' with the caveat that meat slaughtered by them or marriage to their women was forbidden for Muslims."

"The grimmest commentary on the irrelevance of these *Ahd namehs* is evident in the observations of European



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researchers and travelers," states Waghmar, arguing that unlike Jews and Christians who became rich and even briefly flourished in Moorish Spain and (Ottoman Turkey), the hazardous survival of the Zoroastrians remains "a sombre testimony of their fidelity" to their faith.

The possible reflections of Zoroastrian time reckoning in poet Jalal al-Din Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* (the spiritual couplets) were explored by Dr Gernot Windfuhr, Michigan University's professor of Iranian studies.

"The role of Azar Kayvan in Zoroastrian and Islamic Mysticism" by Takeshi Aoki, a student of Islamic Zoroastrianism at Tokyo University, examined the role of one whom he estimates "an eccentric Zoroastrian priest." Kayvan may have performed Zoroastrian ceremonies but had no rapport with other Zoroastrian priests, noted Aoki adding that Kayvan's philosophy treads the path of the Sufi mystics rather than Zarathushtra.

In contrast to Aoki's abstruse subject, Dr Eric Phalippou's "An Indian conquest: the tale of M'selle Menant" takes a dispassionate look at the middle

"Gold and silver coins of the Sasanians circulated within Indian borders and were legal tender for centuries"

aged French lady who spent nearly eight months in the city and province of Bombay 100 years ago and authored *The Parsis* depicting her as a victim of gentle manipulation.

With quiet humor Phalippou, who received his doctorate from Sorbonne University, delves behind the controversy regarding the pioneering of female education between Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawala, the first girl sent against great odds to be educated in a school by her mother Bai Meherbai in 1841 and Manackji Kharshedji's founding of the Alexandra Girls' English Institution in 1859. It is Kharshedji who is credited as pioneer of English education for girls by Menant. Phalippou indicates the pressures on Menant through her Parsi host Behramji Malabari who introduced her to K. R.

Cama, Kharshedji's son-in-law. It is significant too that Menant's book and articles were translated by M. Murzban who was married to Cama's daughter Freny, one of five young women admitted to the Grant Medical College of Bombay at the age of 20. After her initial medical graduation Freny Cama had proceeded to Paris with her lawyer husband Murzban to garner further knowledge at the Institute Pasteur, returning to India to provide the Cama Hospital with her new knowledge of vaccines. That is when the couple met Menant. Phalippou's paper abounds with such vignettes of recent Parsi history.

Dr Kalpana Desai, director of Bombay's Prince of Wales Museum further developed the theme she has been working on — the impact of the Parsis on the development of Bombay.

Linguistic impact

The many presentations on language and literature examined the impact of translated Indian literary pieces into Persian and vice versa. Persian's long innings as an official language of India (from early 13th century until the defeat

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and externment of the last Mogul Emperor Zafar Shah by the British in 1857) led to large-scale borrowing of the Persian vocabulary by the Indian languages and the birth of the gentle hybrid, Urdu. It also led to an exchange of proper nouns and the movement of scholars and litterateurs between the courts of Iran and India leading to "intellectual development, enlightenment and refinement," as notes Prof Nizamuddin Gorekar of St Xavier's College, Bombay.

"The bilateral relations of Iran and India go back to the prehistorical period and the ethnic, racial and linguistic similarity and unification of these two Aryan nations could be observed within the texts of (the) *Vedas* and (the) *Avesta* which reveal similar thoughts and myths," noted Abdulhadi Borujerdi, consul-general of Iran in Bombay. "Through India, glimmers of this cultural light reached other parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. Thereafter India's gates were opened (on her) western borders to let Islamic scientists and the educated elite find their way to the people of Asia and Farsi became the common language of all Asian Muslims," he added.

Dr G. D. Shukla, retired head of the postgraduate department of history at Gujarat's Sardar Patel University, made a historical appraisal of Persian literature during the Mughal rule in India. "The installation of Mughal rule in India was earmarked by two distinct phenomena. Sanskrit had more or less spent its force and modern Indian languages were then too weak to be effective... In due course of time, the Persian language slowly and steadily took the place of Sanskrit as a cementing force of the country and it held its own until it became effete and was given a violent jerk by the English language. The Hindus and the Muslims, during the period under study, vied with each other to learn this language and its literature. India thus produced Persian literature in all its branches and varieties which can be compared well with the literature of Persia. The Persian language contributed innumerable words to the vocabulary not merely of Hindi and Urdu but also of Bengali, Marathi and

Gujarati languages," he noted.

Dr Kulsum Abul Bashir Mazumder of Dhaka University and Dr Umme Salma further elaborated this influence of Persian on Bengali language and literature. Professor and chair of the Centre for Persian and Central Asian Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University Dr Sabar Havewalla related how King Noshervan-e-Adil sent his scholarly and wise physician Borzuyeh to

**"The Old Testament
speaks of not a
single non-Jew with
reverence, but Cyrus
is spoken of as
God's Anointed"**

India to seek a herb for immortality. Borzuyeh could find no herb but he found a couplet of the *Panchatantra*. (One who reads, appreciates and follows this *Nitishastra* regularly, becomes undefeatable. Even

Lord Indra cannot defeat such a person.) He translated the *Panchatantra* into Sasanian Pahlavi under the name *Kartak Va Damanak* which not only enthralled generations of Iranians but found its way to the west in the guise of *The Arabian Nights* and *Aesop's Fables*. Later, when Emperor Akbar set his scholarly courtier Abul Fazl to the task of writing a fresh version of the *Panchatantra* in simple Persian to be understood by all readers, there emerged the *Eyar-e-Danish*. This was part of Akbar's project of translating Sanskrit masterpieces into simple Persian, noted Havewalla.

Avesta Pahlavi scholar and practising mobed Ervad Parvez Bajan discoursed on the influences of Ferdowsi and the *Shah Nameh* on the Iranian nation. "His poem became like *Divine Comedy*, not merely a record of life but a critical insight in all elemental forces that sway it. The simplicity and majesty of Ferdowsi's style, eschewing Arabic elements led to the rejuvenation of the Persian language; the magnanimity, gentleness, generosity, spirituality and lofty patriotism of the poet rubbed off on generations of his readers."

Dr S. A. Upadhyaya, a director of Bombay's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan briefly surveyed the contributions of Gujarati writers to Persian literature.

Trade and currency

"Persia's trade with T'ang China (618-907 AC)" was discussed in considerable detail by Dr Soonu Dhunjisha, a reader in history at Bombay's S. N. D.

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T. College of Arts, Canton had a special office for the registry of ships, the control of exports and the collection of duties to cope with the large ships of Persian, Arab and Indian merchants, noted Dhunjisha. Not only were embossed vessels of gold and silver, clear glass in indigo and pale green, imported from Persia but Persian artisans and their Chinese counterparts produced Iranian style ceramics, textiles and a wealth of other crafts and artefacts. Persian exports set the style in China for clothes, food, music and household objects at the time, noted Dhunjisha.

Numismatics specialist Dr Dilip Rajgor spoke about the Sasanian elements in Gujarat numismatics. "Gold and silver coins of the Sasanians circulated within Indian borders and were legal tender for centuries." Moreover, these coins became the prototype for successive currency in western India for over 700 years, he noted.

Valedictory observations

Taking off from Manohar's inaugural remark about the Parsi boat people, noted economist Dr Freddie Mehta, presiding over the valedictory session, referred to the case of Cyrus who went to war to

"It is the tolerance of the Hindus who have never attacked our religion in spirit or in word"

liberate the Jews. "The *Old Testament* speaks of not a single non-Jew with reverence, but Cyrus is spoken of as God's Anointed." Recalling Hitler's Aryan pretensions he wondered "what would have happened if somebody had caught hold of Adolf Hitler in 1929, just before he ran amuck, and told him 'please, are you aware that you are proclaiming that as an Aryan your duty is to wipe out the Jews.' This is interesting because the letter which the Jews wrote to Cyrus says this: 'O great Aryan, we call upon you to liberate us because you are a great Aryan.' Hitler murdered the Jews whereas Cyrus looked upon liberating the Jews as an act of Aryanism because Arya means 'noble.'" Paying tribute to the tolerance taught by Hinduism, Mehta noted, "Many of us Parsis cannot but recognize that it is this toler-

ance that has kept our temples alive. It is the tolerance of the Hindus who have never attacked our religion in spirit or in word. They have not really interfered with us in any way."

In his address at the inaugural function the late chairman of the House of Godrej Sohrab Godrej had noted, "To me it comes as no surprise that Mahatma Gandhi thought highly of the Parsis, particularly of their philanthropy. How many in the century just past can claim to have lived up to the Zoroastrian dictum of good thoughts, good words and good deeds more than the Father of the Nation?" Developing the theme at the valedictory the late veteran Gandhian Dr Usha Mehta observed, "Mahatma Gandhi perhaps was one of the greatest apostles of peace and one of the greatest communicators and integrators who accepted and practised the virtue of non-violence... His non-violence was not merely a negative concept. It was not merely absence of violence, but it stood for love. Love that is pristine and pure. Love that stands for spitelessness and hatelessness. He tried to see that all communities received his love and affection."

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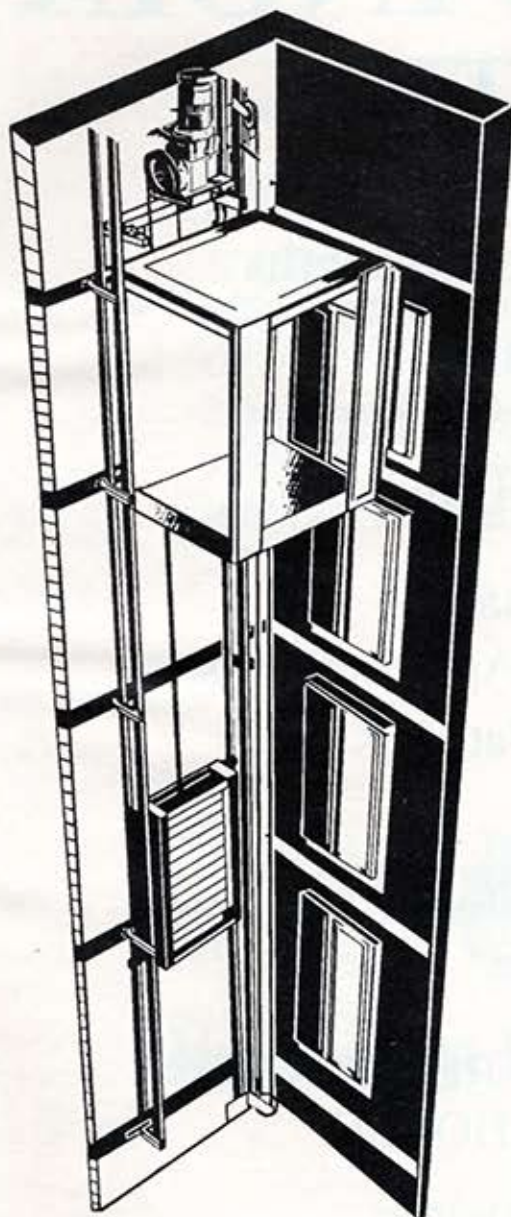
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cussed at the Congress had lent it a somewhat rambling air. As Irani noted in his concluding remarks, "I thought that we could be focussing on the Indo-Iranian influence upon the world, but instead most of the focus turned out to be either a focus on India or on Iran or the influence of one on the other. And when you talk of the influence of one on the other the most natural thing is language. And so we get a large number of very interesting papers on linguistic influences. This is what had happened at the last conference."

In his vote of thanks on behalf of the foreign scholars Cereti said, "It is always an emotion for us to come to meet the community, to discuss with them, even if many times we have different views. And it is an emotion because coming here from Europe we meet a sort of miracle which is what you are. We meet a history. We meet ideas which have survived the fall of the Sasanid empire and we come from afar and we meet something which is a part of our history, our philosophy, our ideas... it is us! So far apart, but it is us! And it is something which has survived only because it came to India and it found a world which was more tolerant than what it was at that time in other parts of the world." On behalf of the Indian scholars Havewalla noted, "Conferences teach us how to be patient, listen to each other and communicate. And this conference gives me great pleasure because without talking of national integration and international understanding, we do observe both of them with the utmost sincerity." With floral tributes, mementoes and effusive thanks to all those who had had anything to do with the organizing of the Congress — especially Firoze and Katy Dalal who had not only provided lunch over the four days but also hosted a dinner at the Ripon Club — Modi declared the Congress closed.

Statement of Ownership

& Other Particulars about Parsiana: Form IV (See Rule 8)

Place of Publication: Mumbai

Periodicity of Publication: 12 issues in a year Printer,

Publisher, Editor: Jehangir R. Patel Nationality: Indian

Address: 300 Perin Nariman Street, Mumbai 400001

Proprietor: Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin

Nariman Street, Mumbai 400001

Shareholders holding more than one percent of the total

capital: Jehangir R. Patel, Veera J. Patel and Simin J.

Patel, address same as above.

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Sd. (Jehangir R. Patel) 1 March 2002

CONSERVING BAHROT...

continued from page 157

proach was recommended, states Dhalla. Tackling the damage caused by seepage of rain water and the restoration of the caves would need to be undertaken by experts in cave archeology, notes Dhalla. A five-km long path would need to be cleared in the jungle and a railing installed just outside the caves to secure pilgrims from the sheer drop into the valley. Once the restoration is complete some form of security to protect the site from vandals would also be considered, writes Dhalla.

Archeologists and historians from all over the country came to know of this Parsi heritage site when Dhalla was invited to present a slide show and commentary on Bahrot at the All India Conference of Indian History, Prehistory and Archaeology at Baroda on November 23, 2001. A week later conservation architect Pankaj Joshi and his colleagues had spent a full day at the caves to prepare a preliminary report, noted Dhalla.

At the Asiatic Society meet Misra had described himself as a great admirer of the Parsi community ("There is only one Parsi to 10,000 Hindus, but in terms of contribution? It is unparalleled!") and had expressed "great satisfaction to be of some help to the community I consider ideal." He recalled that the Dorab Tata Trust had provided munificent help for the Umran excavations near Patna. Former Bombay municipal commissioner Jamsheed Kanga noted that if the Trust is approached with a proper project report it would probably help. Gupta noted that the ICHR had agreed to present a grant of Rs 10,000 as seed money. Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman and noted businessman Jamshed Guzder offered a personal donation of Rs 50,000. Community contributions favoring "WZCF — Bahrot Project" may be forwarded to the WZCF, Zoroastrian Association Industrial Institute Building, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, Bombay 400007. Donations will be eligible for claiming deduction under section 80-G (5) of the Income Tax Act 1961, assures Dhalla.

Those desirous of proceeding to Bahrot may contact Homi Mehta (in Bombay on Tel 2665322) for boarding and lodging at Bordi and the arrangement of guides to lead them to the caves.

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"A tendency to lose the roots"

The original tenets of the faith are being forgotten by contemporary Zoroastrians and Christians, says Italian orientalist Dr Carlo Cereti

Arnavaz S. Mama

He knows Avestan, Pahlavi and Sanskrit, Sogdian and Parthian. Not Bactrian which has only recently been introduced to academia by Prof Simms Williams. Not Khotenese which needs a strong Saka background and has only recently come to light, mainly from Buddhist sources. Not Hindi: "My Hindi is only enough for taxi drivers!" Dr Carlo Cereti modestly circumscribes his linguistic attainments.

Coming, as he says, from a family of chemists and legal experts, Cereti displays a non-genetic fixation on matters oriental, primarily Middle Persian languages and literatures. Currently a research fellow in Iranian studies at Wien University, Cereti's MA thesis on Iranian and Central Asian religions had been prepared under the tutorship of scholar Prof Gernardo Gnoli at the University of Naples; his doctoral dissertation on the *Bahman Yasht* had been accepted by the Ministero dell' Università at Rome. Since then he has been conducting courses on Zoroastrian religious literature at Rome University's La Sapienza institute, as notes his bio data in the souvenir published by the KRCOI (K. R. Cama Oriental Institute) at the Third International Congress (see "A clearing house of ideas" page 192).

At this scholars' meet he had reassessed the main surviving manuscript sources of the *Bundahishn*, a cosmological commentary derived from Avestan texts. Discussing the relative merits of the Iranian and Indian versions of the *Bundahishn*, Cereti explained that the Indian one is shorter, omitting Zurvanite passages found in the Iranian manuscripts. "Sometimes the Indian one makes better sense; sometimes the Iranian one. My idea is that the Iranian version is closer to the (lost) original. Eventually it is a guess — nothing

more!" exclaims the genial scholar. He maintains that the more "densely speculative" *Bundahishn* gives a better idea of what Sasanian theology was like than the *Dinkard* which is "not as dense."

In his vote of thanks to the KRCOI at the valedictory session of the Congress the gentle Italian recalled how he had first come to India when he was "more than 20 years younger and more than 20 kg lighter." He noted nostalgically how KRCOI trustee-secretary Homai Modi had "in-

troduced me to books, to manuscripts." With equal measures of joy and gratitude he recalled Dastur (Dr) Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa's parting gift at the end of that trip — a copy of all the publications of the KRCOI.

Since then, as Cereti told *Parsiana*, he has been coming to India every two years with two destinations in focus — the KRCOI Library in Bombay, and South India to study Persian crosses and bronze leaves with inscriptions in Pahlavi, Judeo-Persian and Arabic in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Recalling the Sasanian trade relations with the Raja of Quilon — "the Iranian sea trade route extended up to Ceylon and beyond" — Cereti said that these crosses show that Nestorian Christians came from Iran, bringing with them the Middle Persian culture of the time. The Pahlavi language continued in use as late as 11th century AC. These crosses also indicate that "the first settlers were merchants (and that) the *Kisseh-e-Sanjan* was written later to justify (Zoroastrian presence in India)," he adds. (It is interesting to note that Maharashtra Governor Dr P. C. Alexander had suggested research into these same crosses in his inaugural address to the Second International Congress hosted by the KRCOI in 1995.) Cereti also referred to the *Skanda Purana* — recount of a Persian

settlement of Achaemenian/Mauryan vintage on the coast of Maharashtra. "It speaks of similar ingress (of merchantmen) due to a shipwreck," he notes.

In response to *Parsiana's* query Cereti traced the direction of European research on Zoroastrianism. He noted that scholars like Jean Kellens, Helmut Humbach, Almut Hintze and others who stem from Indo-European studies study the *Gathas* in comparison with Sanskrit literature and the European tradition. The other tendency is to go to them via the Middle and Old Iranian languages like William Henning and Mary Boyce "who devoted herself completely to Zoroastrianism." Italian and French scholars like Philippe Gignoux, Frantz Grenet, Dr Antonio Panaino study the sacred texts in the context of culture with particular interest in religion and history. "In recent years, students in Italy and France are more interested in contemporary Zoroastrianism not only in the traditional way of religion and rituals but of a community interesting in itself as part of Bombay society, including its literature, paintings, etc."

While Cereti said he enjoyed meeting the community at the Congress he observed uneasily "that there is a large part of the community accepting a New Age phase, forgetting the tenets of Zoroastrianism and having a very confused religious idea." He concedes that the same phenomenon is apparent in Europe vis-à-vis Christianity — "a tendency to lose the roots."

Pained at the prospect of losing valuable manuscripts because the Indian climate is basically unfriendly to them, Cereti stresses the need to catalogue and reproduce them on CD Rom. The lack of a single source for all Zoroastrian manuscripts means that scholars need to track them to various sources. He recalls a trip two years ago to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona which has a small uncatalogued

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Cereti: a passion for manuscripts



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Preserve the beliefs

Cultural changes may not undermine a community if its belief system is maintained, comments
Dr Almut Hintze

Arnavaz S. Mama

"The *Avesta* was guarded by the priesthood over millennia. Only those texts which had a ritual function survived. Three-fourths (of Zoroastrian sacred literature) was lost. The higher liturgies constitute the major part of the extant *Avesta*," says Dr Almut Hintze emphasizing the oral tradition of early literature.

The tall, slender Hintze lectures part-time at the London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and pursues research at Clare Hall, Cambridge. Simultaneously functioning as the Heisenberg scholar of the German National Research Council in Bonn, Hintze had spoken to *Parsiana* during a lunch break at the Third International Congress hosted by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) (see "A clearing house of ideas," page 192).

The thrust of her paper at this conference was that the order in which the Yasna, the Visperad and the Vendidad ceremonies are performed and the liturgies which are recited (with the exception of later additions at the beginning and at the end of the ceremonies) was as arranged from ancient times, perhaps by Zarathushtra himself. These include the first *Gatha*, *Ahuna Vaiti*, followed by the *Yasna Haptangaiti* (YH — also known as the *Haptan Yasht*) and the rest of the *Gathas*. Though YH, a prose composition, has not generally been considered as a part of Zarathushtra's original message, the soft-spoken Hintze argues that it forms the kernel of these ceremonies. Martin Haug, the 19th century scholar who first differentiated the *Gathas* from the rest of the Avestan prayers, said that only the *Gathas* were composed by Zarathushtra. "Perhaps the YH was not mentioned by Haug since YH was only a liturgical (prose) text and hence overlooked," says Hintze adding that the seminal work on the YH

by Erlangen University's Johanna Narten had found nothing therein to contradict the *Gathas* in text, meter or language.

Having entered the field of Zoroastrian studies via comparative philology studying Greek, Sanskrit and the Iranian languages at Oxford, Hintze earned her PhD degree from Erlangen University with a thesis on the *Zamyad Yasht*.



Hintze: "the Zoroastrian world view is universal"

Reconstructing earlier rituals on the basis of the *Vedas* (the *Rig Veda*, according to Hintze is of the same vintage as the *Gathas* i.e. about 1500 to 1200 BC) Hintze notes that the Gods were then "invited to come down from their heavenly abode, to the seat prepared for them and be physically present in the ceremony...As Zarathushtra was a priest himself, it is logical to assume that as he brought in new ideas he also devised new forms of worship and that with Zarathushtra began the worship of Ahura Mazda. We find in the YH that Ahura Mazda is present in the sacred fire... the most beautiful of his shapes... There is no evidence that this was the principle before Zarathushtra," says Hintze.

The *Zamyad Yasht* recounts the mythological history of Iran and speaks of the *khwarena* (aura) which linked Zoroastrian kings to Ahura Mazda. It was worshipped as a divine attribute in ancient times. "As long as human beings have the *khwarena*, they are propitious," notes Hintze.

During a two-month research stint in India in early 1989 which Hintze spent searching for old Avestan manuscripts in private and public collections in Bombay and Gujarat, she rediscovered the "lost" manuscript F1 dated 1571 which is the ancestor manuscript of all other extant Yasht manuscripts, notes her bio data published by the KRCOI at the time of the Congress.

Hintze amplifies how she had spent two to three weeks in Navsari, Surat and Udvada and has fond memories of the Parsi householders who welcomed her and showed her around. "I would like to go back," she smiled wistfully. In Bombay and Gujarat she had found that books had been kept well but the manuscripts needed restoration by specialists.

Defining Zoroastrianism as "clearly monotheistic," Hintze is convinced that Zarathushtra recognized only one God — Ahura Mazda. "The core of Zarathushtra's teaching is that good and evil have nothing in common," that the dualism is purely ethical in nature. "The Zoroastrian world view is universal," she maintains and though its "self-contained philosophical and theological system" remained confined to India and Iran, it had its impact on Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Apart from her published doctoral thesis *Der Zamyad Yasht* in 1994 which contains the Avestan texts with a translation, commentary and glossary in German and a short English translation, Hintze says she has worked on a series of 15 articles on the Saoshyants, written a text book on Zoroastrianism for Penguin and has been getting involved with the Pahlavi and Pazand translations of the *Avesta*, particularly the Avesta-Pahlavi versions of the 19th fargard of the *Videvdad*. Her future plan, as noted in January 2000 was to pursue the central tenets of the faith from the *Gathas* through the Pahlavi texts to later literature and beliefs.

Commending the generosity of Mehraban and the late Faridoun Zartoshky whose munificent donation has funded her series of lectures on Zoroastrianism at SOAS, she comments on the interest among students for this ancient religion. While there are "always some Zoroastrians who attend the SOAS lectures," Hintze has often been invited to speak to the community at London's Zoroastrian House. She says she finds the community's attitude to life positive and energetic. "There is eagerness for knowledge and education." As for the community's propensity to argue, she cautions, "It is good to have discussions as long as it does not become destructive."

And what about some of the people of Central Asia, liberated from the Soviet yoke, who claim Zoroastrian an-

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cestry? "It is important to talk to them, hear what they have to say, find out which way they were Zoroastrians. Then the community must decide (whether or not accept them) as people feel."

Commenting on the cultural changes apparent between the Zoroastrians of the subcontinent and their scions now settled in the West, Hintze observes, "It is important that (these changes) be only outward, that the beliefs are preserved..."

"A TENDENCY TO LOSE THE..."

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collection of Zoroastrian manuscripts in Avestan, Pahlavi and Persian, unknown to European scholars. There are similar small collections with private individuals in Surat. "It would be nice to know where they are." At the European research institute ISIAO there is a project to acquire copies of all manuscripts and 100 important manuscripts have already been reproduced so that "if there is a fire or something, the main items are preserved." Noting that manuscripts were available in Iran up to the beginning of the 20th century, Cereti adds ruefully, "Now not a single one can be found easily... It is so easy to lose a tradition."



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3rd AVESTA WORLD CONFERENCE — TAJIKISTAN — SEPTEMBER 2001

Government of Tajikistan celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Republic after Independence from Ex-USSR by holding for the Third time within 10 years, the AVESTA WORLD CONFERENCE, in Dushanbe. This was organised at a very high Official Level by the Academy of Sciences. Zoroastrian College President DAME DR. PROF. MEHER MASTER-MOOS was invited as the Official Guest of the Government, along with nine Scholars one each from nine countries including Prof. Dr. Gerd Gropp from Germany. Zoroastrian College President took a delegation that included Ervad Bahadur Aspi Nalladaroo of Banaji Atash Behram and three ladies from India and Iran.

Tajikistan is a small mountainous country with a population of about 6 millions. Tajik people take pride that their Ancestors were the original Aryan peoples; and during the Kyanian Dynasty, Asho Spitama Zarathushtra first spread the "Paegam" in the Court of the Kyanian Monarch King Vishtasp in this geographical region to their Ancestors. They are proud of their "Kyani Tokhum". About half the present population is of old Tajik Kyanian Stock. The Official language of the country is presently Persian - Tajik Dari. These geographical regions were the Zoroastrian Kingdoms of Bactria, Soghdian and Khorassan, even during Achaemenian epoch. After the downfall of the last Zoroastrian Sassanian Empire in Iran, Zoroastrians migrated from the lower lying areas around Shiraz - Tehran to the High Mountains where for centuries they were safe from Islam. After the Bukhara Caliphate was established, Islam penetrated in these regions, but the staunch Zoroastrian strong holds of the Maghavs in high mountains continued to survive, right upto the communist era. During the 20th last century for 80 years, under Russian Communist domination, this geographical area was carved into the New Republics with new names and new territorial boundaries, named Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzia, Kazakhstan; and ALL RELIGIONS WERE BANNED. Buildings that were places of Worship of the Christians, Zoroastrians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews were converted into bazaars and offices.

Since 1991, after Independence, Tajikistan Government is the only country in the World that has made the great efforts to revive the Ancient Faith of the people. Tajikistan follows the Indian Secular Constitution and gives freedom of Religion to all persons; and does not call itself an Islamic Republic.

Since 1991, the Tajikistan Government has officially called Three World Avesta Conferences as part of the Government Official Celebrations. The 1st World Avesta Conference was held in September 1992 as part of the 1st Republic Anniversary Celebrations. The 2nd World Avesta

Conference was held in September 1996 as part of the 5th Republic Anniversary Celebrations; and last year the 3rd World Avesta Conference was held in 2001 as part of the 10th Republic Anniversary Celebrations. Zoroastrian College delegations were invited to all three Avesta Conferences. At the last conference, two important books were released - The Entire Avesta in Persian language translation written in Cyrillic Russian Tajik Script by Prof. Jamshed Parvonakhan so that school, college children and people can read and understand the meaning of Avesta easily. This would help to revive the Ancient Faith. The book of the discovery of the "NAVROZE SCROLLS" in the mountain of the Maghavs - Kuh-e-Mogh, by Prof. Irach Bashiri, was also published by Government of Tajikistan Academy of Sciences.

The Tajik people are proud of their Persian Culture; of Firdausi is the Tajik National Poet and Shahnameh is studied in schools; of Avi Sina Father of Medicine, Rudaki, of Persian poetry and grammar and other great Khorassani Scholars. The Opera of "Rustom and Sohrab" was performed at the 10th Republic Celebrations. Also, the play on the Life of Asho Spitama Zarathushtra during the celebrations. In 1994, with UNESCO support, the 1000th Anniversary Celebrations of Firdausi Shahnameh was held in Penjikant, Tajikistan.

Since 1992, Tajik delegations are coming to India through Zoroastrian College. Since then they are asking support of Zoroastrians of India and World Wide to help them to revive Zoroastrian Religion in its original homeland. They want Persian speaking Mobeds from India and other countries to come to Tajikistan and consecrate Agiaries and teach Zoroastrian Religion to the people. In 1994, Ervad Dr. Peshotan Peer and Mobedan Mobed Jehangirji Turel were invited to the Shahnameh Conference, but due to the War conditions then prevailing, they could not go. As Indian Mobeds do not know Persian language, the Tajiks invited Persian-speaking Irani Mobeds; and Mobed Jamshedi Kamran has been visiting Tajikistan for performing the Navjotes of Tajik people and teaching the Zoroastrian Religion in Persian language there. At present Zoroastrians from Tajikistan whose Navjotes have been performed are coming to India to study our Religion properly so that they can themselves teach their own original Religion to their own people on returning home. Also, Zoroastrian College has a Collaboration Project presently under way to prepare the book of the entire Avesta written in Cyrillic Tajik Script for the benefit of the persons in Ex-USSR who are of Zoroastrian Ancestry and who want to now avail of their Constitutional Rights to pray in their own Faith. Prof. Dr. Rustom Fuzaylov, Head of English Department of the Tajikistan Technological University is presently in India for this Project work

BOOKS ON TAJIKISTAN ARE AVAILABLE AT ABOVE ADDRESS INCLUDING AVESTA CONFERENCE BOOKS, NAVROZE SCROLLS, ZOROASTRIANS WORLDWIDE AT THE MILLENNIUM, IN SEARCH OF DIVINE LIGHT etc.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT THE ZOROASTRIAN REVIVAL PROJECT OF MAZDAYASNIE MONASTERIE? PLEASE CONTACT ABOVE ADDRESS



Photo captions: 1] President Emomali Rakhmonov with Dr. MMM and other invited Guests at the 10th Republic Anniversary Celebrations. 2] Dr. MMM presenting the Mazdayasnie Monasterie Avesta Conference Book to Prof. Dr. Jamshedi Parvonakhan, with Ervad Bahadur Aspi Nalladaroo reciting the Atash Niyaesh 3] Madame Maisara Kolonova, President Tajik Friendship Society with Prof. Akhror Mukhtarov and Dr. MMM

Is the Zarathushtrian Religion Universal? by Roni K. Khan. Published in 2001 by H. J. Giara, Dhunmai Building, 667, Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Bombay 400014 (Tel: 4166204). Pp: xiii+85. Price: Rs 100.

Roni Khan's book is appropriately "dedicated to the sacred memory of the countless generations of our righteous forbears whose faith and fortitude... (have) made it possible for us, the Parsi/Irani Zarathushtrians of today, to exist as a living race with a living religion."

The book is obviously a labor of love. The kind of book that one opens with expectations and closes with profit. Faithful to Milton's description of a good book as "the precious life blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured on purpose to a life beyond life." Deep feeling and sound thinking expressed in felicitous language make this book persuasive and also pleasant to read.

The tenets of orthodoxy are expounded from a fresh viewpoint. The Preface starts by emphasizing that the word 'orthodoxy' has no sinister connotations but really means "straight or right doctrine." And the author rightly stresses that "our business should be only with issues and not with personalities." Rightly also he insists that "it is the Zarathushtrian religion alone which has been able to sustain the Parsi people," and that we are the "faithful carrier of a unique and tolerant culture."

The community today faces two major problems — one of quantity, the other of quality. In the first place the number of Zoroastrians (particularly in India) is getting less and less. In the second place this diminishing number is regrettably (with notable exceptions) becoming less and less "Zoroastrian." The label remains, the substance is wearing thin.



Khan: concern for the faith

To my knowledge Rusi Besania, one of our long-standing Parsi writers, has been writing in Gujarati since the late 1980s. I remember his first work, *Shahnamana Sunder Prakrano*, chapters from the *Shah Nameh*, well written except for a few spelling (*jodni*) mistakes. By now Besania has written over 20 books in Gujarati, some of them memorial volumes, like *Vyara-Songadh Parsi Jarthosti Anjuman Dar-e-Meher*.

According to Khan, it is now truly a question of survival. The message of the book is simple, and the author summarizes it thus: "There are quarters in the world today where the Parsi race and the Zarathushtrian religion are simultaneously becoming unrecognizable. What both Alexander and the Arabs tried but failed to do, we may yet accomplish by our own hand — God forbid!"

"We are talking survival. The message is already writ in large letters on the wall. A few more calculated shoves by heterodox hands and we will go over the brink. This is the ultimate message of this book, albeit between the lines."

The approach of the book is the approach of the new millennium. Witness some of the headings: "Proof Of The Pudding," "Diversity In Nature," "The Ace Turns Into a Joker."

If one wants to understand certain aspects of our religion and to see a paladin of orthodoxy strive with fer-

vor and felicity to explain and expound in simple language its eternal truths, one has only to buy the book, and spend an hour or two reading it.

Well written and well produced, *Is the Zarathushtrian Religion Universal?* deserves to be read by as many Zarathushtrians as are really concerned for their faith today.

NADIR MODI

Prayerful prescriptions

Jarthosti Jindagi Jivvani Jadibuttio by Rusi Faramroz Besania. Published in 2001 by the chairman and trustees of the World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust Fund, Shanti, 5th floor, 6, Banaji Street, Fort, Bombay 400001. Pp: 98. Price: Not mentioned.

To my knowledge Rusi Besania, one of

review would be useful to all Zarathushtri readers for, living up to its name, it explains how a Zoroastrian can conduct

his life under the guidance of the religion's potent prayers. But the import of the manthra is only for those who practise the religion faithfully. By praying the 101 names of Dadar Ahura Mazda or any other *Nyaish* or *Yashts* as suggested by the author, or by having sincere faith in the Avesta prayers given to us by the Paigambar Saheb, the devotee can cure himself of deep-seated worries or illnesses. Of this there is ample proof.

From page one to 98 the work under review is written in simple language. Sanskritized words have been avoided so there is no need for a *shabda-kosh* (Gujarati dictionary) by your side. Which brings to mind the oft-repeated word, *ankhyo* for 'ankho' the eyes.

Ankhyo is now obsolete, used only by the working class and villagers of Gujarat. The correct word is *ankh* (singular), *ankho* (plural).

In our present days of stress and strain, the book proves to be a ready reference. Besania deserves our sincere thanks for sharing with us his knowledge of the number of *Yathas* or *Ashems* or which *Yasht* or *Nyaish* is to be prayed on which days and under what circumstances. That a prayer or manthra is the best remedy for the ills of today does not require any scientific theory to prove



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it. It is a matter of faith.

HORMAZDYAR S. DALAL

Scholastic supremacy

A respected scholar and prolific author who is credited with writing over 70 odd books besides innumerable essays, articles and research papers, Dr Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi had a distinctive style of preparation. With his illegible handwriting he would ask his daughters to keep paper and pencil handy to record his flashes of inspiration. When he had to do his own writing, he would never sit down to pen his thoughts but wrote on blank sheets kept on a high stand or scribbling block while standing, reports Marzban J. Giara in his book *Shams-ul-Ulama Dr Sir Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi*.

Not surprisingly this 88-page book has 12 pages devoted to his life sketch as against 20 pages summarizing the different essays and books he had authored in his 79-year life spanning 1854-1933. His expertise on varied subjects be it the Zoroastrian religion or scriptures, the customs of the Parsis, Tibetans, Germans, Arabs, the tribes of India, folklore, beliefs and superstitions among Persians and Indians, freemasonry and Hindu mythology made him a valued contributor to the journals of the Royal Asiatic Society of which he was honorary member and the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute (KRCOI) where he was president and secretary at different times.

"He was for many years secretary of the Parsi Punchayet in Bombay, a post that gave direction to his main line of study," noted an obituary write-up in the *Times* of London of March 29, 1933. "He was preeminent among those followers of the Zoroastrian faith who are learned in its origins, literature and teaching. There were no students of Iranian culture in any part of the world who did not admire his scholarship and place reliance on his informed judg-

ment," added the write-up referring to the academic distinctions that were conferred on Modi by Indian and European universities: Officier d'Academie Francaise in 1902, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in 1925, the LLD degree from the Bombay University in 1931. The Government of India made him an honorary correspondent of the Archaeo-

logical Society in 1914 and bestowed on him the title of Shams-ul-Ulama. He was made a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire in 1917 and knighted in 1930.

When the Bombay University conferred on him its highest honor of LLD in 1931, Sir Ernest Hotson, the governor as chancellor of the University, referred to Modi as "the mainstay of both the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Soci-

ety and the Bombay Anthropological Society, not to mention other learned societies in Bombay. He has long been world famous as a scholar of the Sanskrit, Persian and above all, Avesta tongues and he is unquestionably the greatest living authority on the ancient history and customs of the Parsis..."

Despite his large family of five sons and six daughters born from his two marriages (to Aimai and following her demise to her sister Shirinbai), he was wont to travelling alone on his innumerable sojourns abroad. But he always felt that "God was my companion and guide and by his grace I have returned enjoying my journey and richer in knowledge." Considering that Giara has sourced his knowledge from eight other works, some more quotes by Modi would have educated the reader.

In G. Natesan's book *Famous Parsees* written in 1930 he writes, "Few hard-working travellers would have been at pains of visiting out of the way places and remote nooks and corners as Jivanji did to gather together the scattered threads of history and to unravel the tangled skeins of literary controversies. Everything he saw gave him fresh food for reflection, every person he met, every place he visited he subjected to his scholarly scrutiny and in that way from day to day his knowledge grew. Such unwearied energy, such immer-

sion in work even during holiday tours, such moral earnestness and such extraordinary versatility of his scholarly tastes and output as was evident in his lectures and addresses filled his friends in Europe and other parts of the world with admiration."

That the spacious hall on the ground floor of the KRCOI is named after Modi may be well known; that his portrait adorns the Durbar Hall of the Asiatic Library, the hall of the Atash Behram in Navsari and the Anjuman Atash Behram in Bombay may also be familiar but that he was supposed to be the moving spirit behind the erection of the Memorial Column (Stambh) at Sanjan in 1920 one comes to learn on reading Giara's book. Besides serving as treasurer and secretary of the Jarthosti Dharma Sambandhi Kelavni Apnari Mandali he was associated with the Gnyan Prasarak Mandali, Jarthosti Dharmani Khol Karnari Mandali, Mullan Feroze Madressa, Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha and the Parsi Lekhak Mandal.

Bringing to life the persona, his family and institutions with which the savant was connected are the 36 pages of photographs which add value to this book priced at Rs 150 and published by Din Publications, 306, M. B. House, 3rd floor, 79, Janmabhoomi Marg, Bombay 400001, Tel: 2846521/22. Dedicating this book to the scholar, Giara who is the author of such works as the *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples*, the *Zoroastrian Pilgrims Guide* and *Parsi Statues* notes, "May his life inspire the present and future generations to serve their fellowmen." A humble scholar constantly in pursuit of wisdom, Modi had once acknowledged, "We have so much to know and learn in this world that what we know is inconsequential." PARINAZ M. GANDHI

Learning the letters

Having authored different books in Gujarati like *Parimal* and *Ramya Katha Shabdoni*, Bejon N. Desai has realized that "very many enthusiastic Gujaratis, mainly Parsis, Jains and Vaishnavas are now in a hurry to learn the language of their forefathers i.e. Gujarati. They now want their children also to learn Gujarati whether they are in India or abroad." This primer, *Learning Gujarati through English* is hence "specially written and published in English language only so that most of the young and adult learners abroad can make use

SHAMS-UL-ULAMA
DR. SIR ERVAD JIVANJI JAMSHEDJI MODI
Rt., C.I.E., R.A., F.R.D., L.L.D.



Marzban J. Giara



Giara:
chronicling a
savant

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of it in a facile manner," notes the author in his introduction.

The practice of transliterating or transcribing prayers and scriptures in the Roman script has, according to the author, "not at all served the purpose of learning in a proper manner, simply because the Roman script does not lend itself to the correct phonetic pronunciation so vital for the proper recital or reading and understanding of the contents."

Those who are keen to learn how the Gujarati script is to be written using vertical, horizontal and slanting lines, curves, circles and hooks will find here lucid explanations for each alphabet with its corresponding usage and phonetic sound. In fact 110 of the 138 pages in this book are devoted to this exercise. "Your book *Learning Gujarati through English* is really intended to teach (the) Gujarati alphabet," M. A. Mehendale of Poona's Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute is quoted in the book. If the Devnagiri

Learning Gujarati through English



Bejan Desai

script is already known, learning the Gujarati script is easy in which case the pupil may progress to the lessons which start with one letter words like *baa* and *maa* (meaning mother), gradually proceed to five letter words like *masaledaar* (spicy) and *chamakdaar* (glittering) and end with one page of math sums.

For those conversant with the spoken Gujarati word but

fumbling with the written language this book would be ideal but those hoping to comprehend and participate in Gujarati discussions may continue to be at a loss for words. The two practice sessions in sentence formation may not suffice to gauge the trainee's prowess in sentence formation but they do well reflect Desai's spiritual leanings and philosophy of life. "Brother Bejan is a man of that true scholarship which blends knowledge with qualities of character and both with the spirit of reverence and

devotion," Dada Jashan P. Vaswani is quoted in the book. Principal emeritus of the Boys' Town Public School in Nasik, Desai's earlier works include *Avestan Scripture* transcribed in Devnagiri script, *Homage Unto Aasho Zarathushtra*, *Thus spake the*



Desai: Gujarati made easy

Master and biographies of Sir Jivanji Modi and industrialist J. N. Marshall.

The book priced at Rs 150 was published in 2001 by Navaz Publication (De Sai, 111 Shivgiri Colony, Desou-

za Marg, College Road, Nasik 422005, Tel: 577821) and is dedicated to Desai's gurus who taught him Vedic Sanskrit and Prakrit — the late Swami Gangeshwarandji Udasin and the late Hari-vallabh Bhayani. Referring to the contents of the book as constituting "very unusual, interesting material worth knowing during one's lifetime," Dr Sam Bhacca, president of the Surat Parsee Panchayat commented, "The book has the indelible mark of your authorship."

P. M. G.

*"Whoso unto the Righteous acteth just, —
Whether as 'Self-Reliant' he be known,
Whether 'Co-worker' named, or 'Friend' addressed, —*

*And whoso fosters zealously all Life,
He doth assure himself a place within
The Realm of Asa and of Vohu Man.'"*

(Yasna 33.3 translation by I. J. Taraporewala)



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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 18 and 33 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 25 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 23 and 49 years, averaging at 29 years.

There were only 19 births in the first month of the new year as per the data received by *Parsiana* versus 86 Zoroastrians who were consigned to the Bombay Doongerwadi. Heart disease claimed 33 victims of whom 17 were over the age of 80. Lung disease/pneumonia and cancer took a toll of nine and eight lives respectively. Five patients each succumbed to old age/general debility and kidney failure whereas four each fell prey to traumatic haemorrhage and shock and brain disease. Three and two patients respectively succumbed to sep-

ticemia and Parkinson's disease. There were 12 isolated cases registered in January. They were: respiratory tract infection, gastro-intestinal bleed, pyrexia (very high fever), malnutrition, nervous disorder, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, anemia, liver disease, depression and hypoproteinemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma). A still-born baby and two youths (16 and 18 years) were also lost to the community. The eldest to breathe her last was a 101-year-old lady. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for January 2002, in Bombay, was 76 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.

of Poona and *Pirzad Navroz Ginwala* of Ahmedabad; January 20
Farzana Pervez Mistry of Thana and *Mahiyar Darayus Keravala*; January 20
Farangiz Dinyar Tirandaz and *Aspi Vistasp Crawford*; January 21
Meherangiz Adi Patel and *Oorvaksh Farrokh Naterwala*; January 21
Persis Jimmy Chesson and *Ruzbeh Phiroze Patel*; January 21
Urvakshi Kersi Mistry and *Burzin Sam Mehta*; January 22
Yasmin Adi Sagar and *Shavak Jasi Kapadia*; January 24
Anahita Behram Khandhadia and *Bomi Homi Patel*; January 24
Pinky Parvez Irani and *Adil Jimmy Anklesaria*; January 26
Meher Dara Mistry and *Fram Dorab Warden*; January 26
Anahita Farokh Daruwalla and *Khorezad Homi Dordi*; January 27
Monaz Kersi Wadia and *Kerman Kersi Kapadia*; January 27
Ferzin Tehmul Gabba of Jamshedpur and *Vispi Dara Karbhari*; January 27
Hufrish Sam Bharucha and *Percy Kershasp Birdy*; January 28
Persis Adal Sutaria and *Cyrus Jimmy Dubash*; January 28
Azmin Jamshed Driver and *Jehangir Sohrab Farooq*; January 28
Meher Dara Daruwalla and *Keki Jal Guard*; January 28
Zubina Farokh Doctor of Ahmedabad and *Khushru Jal Tavadia*; January 31

DIED
Boman Pashutan Irani (81), residing at 212, Rajneelam Bldg, Dr Rajabali Patel Rd, Breach Candy, 400026; January 2
Sheryar Rustom Mavandadi (79), 11, Engineer Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; January 2
Shirinbai Hormuzji Irani (101), Mubarak Manzil, H. K. Marg, Dahanu Rd, Dist Thana, 401602; January 3
Savak Maneckji Mistry (89), E/6, Daswani Co-op Hsg Soc, Four Bglws, Andheri (W),

AHMEDABAD

BORN

A boy, *Danesh*, to *Pearl* and *Farhad Tarapore* on September 14, 2001

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Hufriya*, to *Daliah* and *Porus Kermani*; January 1, 2002

A girl to *Razvin* and *Hemavand Namdarian*; January 3

A girl, *Freya*, to *Perces* and *Hormuz Balsara*, sister to *Ardashir* and late *Hoshang*; January 11

A boy, *Jehangir*, to *Nilufer* and *Meher Hakim*, brother to *Benaiza*; January 15

A girl to *Khorsheed* and *Firdosh Anklesaria*; January 17

A boy to *Aneesha* and *Rustom Mistry*; January 17

A girl, *Mahikaa*, to *Mehr* and *Arjun Rampal*; January 17

A boy to *Dilkhus* and *Burgess Cooper*; January 18

A girl, *Zeena*, to *Taira* and *Mehernosh Khambatta*; January 19

A boy to *Sanaya* and *Zal Sethna*; January 19

A boy to *Pearl* and *Zubin Hilloo*; January 21

A girl to *Beroz* and *Khushru Siganporia*; January 21

A boy to *Arnavaz* and *Meher Master*; January 22

A boy to *Ayesha* and *Darius Soonawalla*; January 22

A girl to *Sona* and *Zubin Daruwalla*; January 23

A boy to *Mehernaz* and *Firoze Merchant*; January 24

A girl, *Vahishta*, to *Shiraz* and *Percy Fitter*; January 25

A girl to *Meher* and *Anosh Munshi*; January 25

A girl, *Meher*, to *Monaz* and *Aspi Lord*; January 31

MARRIED

Ruhangiz Dinyar Kabir and *Behram Gustasp Sethna*; January 3

Nazneen Minoo Chinoy and *Homyar Rohinton Bhabha*; January 4

Anahita Hoshang Elavia and *Pedman Faramarz Dadnam*; January 4

Ooravis Homi Colah and *Jehangir Jimmy Panthaki*; January 5

Rosanna Percy Pastakia of Thana and *Sarosh Bomi Patel*; January 5

Khoshed Soli Bulsara and *Hoshi Keki Kanga*; January 7

Persis Behramgore

Pochkhanavala and *Percy*

Keki Wadia; January 7
Tanaz Bahadur Nava of Vasai and *Farhad Noshir Davar*; January 8

Hilla Ardeshir Vazifdar and *Adil Dinshaw Dumasia*; January 8

Pinaz Homi Talati and *Xerxes Percy Master*; January 11

Yasmine Dhanjishaw Davar and *Dinyar Homi Ragina*; January 14

Yasmin Faredoon Patel and *Cyrus Jimi Pavri*; January 15

Azarmidokht Daryush Parestani and *Kaikhushroo Behram Radmanesh* of New York; January 15

Shiraz Peshotan Olpadwalla and *Percy Jehanbux Badhniwalla*; January 17

Berose Jimmy Batty and *Vizak Jehanbux Badhniwalla*; January 17

Perveen Noshir Italia and *Mehernosh Erach Avari*; January 18

Kashmira Parvez Gandhi and *Firdosh Homi Bhatena*; January 18

Kainaaz Dadi Khandhadia and *Fardaad Aspi Choksey*; January 19

Ambrose Pervaze Dubash and *Hormazd Pheroze Commissariat*; January 20

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Perin Keki Udvadia (85), 302,
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 Bandra, 400050; January 3
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 15, Swami Gyanjivandas Rd,
 Near Dadar Rly Stn (E),
 400014; January 4
Jehanbux Dinshawji Fataki
 (80), F. S. Parukh Dharams-
 halla, Hughes Rd, 400007;
 January 4
Khorshed Minocher Subedar
 (83), Ascension Hse, 3, Born
 Rd, Bandra (W), 400050;
 January 4
Freny Ratanji Balsara (80),
 Jehangir Mans, Hughes Rd,
 400007; January 5
Behram Jamshedji
Vaghaiwala (93), 2, Rustom
 Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla,
 400027; January 5
Dolat Gustad Sidhwa (65),
 Ahura Apts, Near Parsi
 Agiary, Mota Parsiwad,
 Valsad, 396001; January 6
Percy Jamshed Vatcha (50),
 27/7, Old Khareghat Clny,
 Hughes Rd, 400007; January 6
Meheran Eruch Mullanfiroze

(80), 12/5, Gamadia Clny,
 Tardeo, 400007; January 7

Keki Jalejar Pastakia (86),
 4/404, Aibani Classic, Capt

Sawant Marg, Jogeshwari
 (W), 400102; January 7

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2001*	2002	This issue	2001*	2002	This issue	2001*	2002
BIRTHS									
Boys	8	96	8	2	8	—	1	33	—
Girls	11	98	11	—	7	—	4	29	4
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	37	251	37	1	16	—	—	11	—
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	18	—	—	1	—	—	1	—
Females married out	—	14	—	—	1	—	1	4	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	43	432	43	4	64	4	1	44	—
Females	43	454	43	6	39	6	2	31	1
CREMATED									
Males	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2001 (January 2001- March 2002 issues)

○Running totals for 2002 (March 2002 issue)

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.

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Aloo Kaikhusroo Daruwalla (84), Cama Bldg, 739, Rd no 5, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 8
Chandan Byramji Morris (85), 11/B, Flower Queen, Veera Desai Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 8
Minoo Savaksha Pardiwalla (65), Milan Cottage, Dhanu-karwadi, Gokhale Rd, Kandivli (W), 400067; January 8
Najoo Hormusji Parvez (93), B/1, Harbour Heights, Colaba, 400005; January 8
Dara Pestonji Siodia (83), 54/55, Chateau Siodia, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; January 8
Perin Ardeshir Antia (82), Room no 20, Irani Dharam-shalla Bldg, Gamdevi, 400007; January 9
Pestonji Ratanshaw Bhathena (83), B/10, Godrej Baug, Off Nepean Sea Rd, 400036; January 9
Dhun Noshir Dastur (77), 13, Seth Jamshedji Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; January 9
Gool Jehangirji Choksey (87),

F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; January 10
Mani Savakshaw Bhathena (78), Vakil Bldg, 683/A, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 11
Daulat Cawas Dubash (82), 202, Krishna Apts, Four Bglws, Andheri (W), 400058; January 11
Perin Khushroo Dinshaw (69), A/10, Mazdock Apts, Seven Bglws, Andheri (W), 400061; January 12
Baby of Amy Rohinton Ichaporia (stillborn), 4, Parakh Bldg, Gilder Lane, Opp Navjivan Soc, 400007; January 12
Hormusji Nanabhoy Mistry (83), 42, Shroff Hse, Sleater Rd, 400007; January 12
Goolamai Darabshaw Patel (77), X-84/11, Godrej Station Side Clny, Vikhroli (E), 400079; January 12
Dara Pirojshaw Siodia (76), Dinshaw Hse, 732, J. Vima-dalal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 12
Gool Kersasp Gandhi (77), 8/3/1, Sakarbai Bldg, 22/C,

Nawab Tank Rd, Mazagaon, 400010; January 13
Homai Burjorji
Bhiwandiwalla (80), P/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; January 14
Shireen Erich Mehta (84), 302, Samudra Setu, Saher Agiary Lane, B. Desai Rd, 400026; January 15
Manekshaw Fardoon Mullan (86), Engineer Bldg, 259, Princess St, 400002; January 15
Perviz Mahiar Dastoor (71), B/3, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 16
Cawas Framroz Mogul (81), 12, Papa Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 16
Adi Cawasji Bastawala (66), House no 6, National Library Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; January 17
Minoo Pherojsha Dubash (85), 2/A, Sherbanoo, 111, M. Karve Rd, 400020; January 17
Sheroo Jal Kapadia (86), Shalimar, 216, Marine Drive, 400020; January 17

Dara Bomansha Khan (72), Tirupati Apts, B. Desai Rd, 400026; January 18
Perin Nadirshah Nadirshah (77), 33/189, Petit Bldg, Opp Grant Rd Stn (E), 400007; January 18
Roshan Mino Pavri (80), 584, Jilubai Wadia Bldg, Lady Jehangir Rd, Matunga, 400019; January 18
Adi Faramroze Vakil (87), 1/A, Somerset Place, Sophia College Lane, Breach Candy, 400026; January 18
Jehangir Dhunjibhoy Sethna (76), West View, 616, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 19
Manek Meherji Bhathena (67), A/171, Jolly Maker Apts No 1, Cuffe Parade, 400005; January 21
Tehemton Jamshedji Dadinath (42), G-6/19-20, Jesal Park, Bhayander (E), Dist Thana, 401105; January 21
Daulat Fulad Demehri (70), 23, Khudabaksha Bldg, Mazagaon, 400010; January 21
Farzad Kersi Ghadiyali (16), Kudiyaana Bldg, 679, Katrak

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Rd, Wadala, 400031;
January 21
Minoo Pestonji Kalyaniwalla (83), B/13, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 21
Tehmina Peshotan Antia (88), 701, Devkripa, Mogul Lane, Off Sitladevi Temple Rd, Mahim, 400016; January 22
Behram Boman Baria (66), 3, Anjuman Bldg, Kalyan (W), 421301; January 22
Rusi Savakshaw Contractor (80), 7/5, Wadia Bldg, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; January 22
Minoo Jamshedji Dhalla (72), Dina Manzil, 792, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 22
Katy Bomansha Kotwal (67), 11/A, Daruwala Bldg, South Low Level, Nana Chowk, 400007; January 22
Nariman Jehangir Merchant (84), 76/8, West View, Rd no 25, Gandhi Market, Sion (W), 400022; January 22
Villa Rustom Mistry (86), 785/C, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 22
Daulat Homi Seervai (80),

Mehernaz, Cuffe Parade, 400005; January 22
Roda Firoz Aria (84), Gulab-simmovihar, 759, Rd no 7, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 23
Nergish Jal Driver (77), 7, Phalguni Sarojini Rd, Santacruz (W), 400054; January 23
Dhunjishaw Burjorji Ratnagar (81), A/5, Tardeo Chmbs, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; January 23
Jangoo Minocher Godrej (67), Sir Dorab Tata Bldg no 2, Tata Clny, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 24
Adi Dinshawji Elavia (75), 201, Ganga Bldg, Ambadi Rd, Vasai (W), Thana, 402202; January 25
Roshan Gustad Dastoor (67), West View, 616, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 26
Banoo Homi Echaporja (91), Dina Manzil, 792, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 26
Mahrookh Khodabux Irani (51), Gangadevi Bldg,

Uranwala St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 26
Rustom Ardeshir Irani (87), 6-B, Girnar Apts, Nergish Dutt Rd, 55, Pali Hill, Bandra, 400050; January 26
Themy Hirjee Kotwal (89), Khorshed Mhl, 725, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 26
Homai Naoroji Machliwala (71), C/1-1, Avabai Petit Chawl, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 26
Roshan Bomanshaw Baam (63), Family Hse, 794, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 27
Tehmina Dhunjisha Daruwala (88), Irani Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; January 27
Behram Dhunjisha Mehta (68), P. A. Wadia Bldg, 688, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; January 27
Shirin Behram Mistry (79), Taher Bldg, Jalbhai St, Charni Rd Jn, 400004; January 27
Mehroo Dali Bomanji (79), D-2, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; January 28

Jehangir Hormusji Gandhi (91), B, Ginwalla Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; January 28
Jal Nusserwanji Patel (85), Hendre Bldg, 8, Sleater Rd, 400007; January 28
Dara Nasarvanji Vaghchhipawalla (70), 3/1, Seth Nusserwanji Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; January 28
Phiroze Ardeshir Baria (77), D-7, Malinee Apts, Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; January 29
Burjor Jehangir Suntook (84), Mody Mans, Mereweather Rd, Apollo Recl, 400001; January 29
Perin Behram Bhabha (79), 423, Samundra Mahal, Dr Annie Besant Rd, Worli, 400018; January 30
Ashish Adil Irani (18), B/54, Navyug Niwas, Dr D. B. Marg, 400007; January 30
Sawaksha Jalejar Mistry (72), H/14, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; January 30
Ardeshir Mancherji Heeramanek (84), Napean Ter, Napean Sea Rd, 400036;



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January 31
Pestonji Jehangirji Karkaria (91), 61, Amit, Ghagh Marg, Prabhadevi, 400025;
 January 31
Roda Bomansha Mehta (69), 29, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; January 31
Fali Rustomji Mistry (76), P/26, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; January 31

CALCUTTA

BORN
 A boy, *Rohan*, to *Jasmin* and *Sourav Mazumder*, November 29, 2001

MARRIED
Miranda Martin and *Ronnie Tarapore*; December 21

DIED
Kersasp Mahiar Dastur, husband of late *Silloo* and father of *Maki*; January 19, 2002

SURAT

MARRIED
Zinobia Vajifdar, daughter of *Saker* and *Aspi*, and *Cyrus Dotivala*, son of *Yasmin* and *Jamshed*;

December 2, 2001

DIED
Dinamai Faramji Ambapardiwala (76), Village Amba, Taluka Mandvi, Dist Surat, 394160; January 2, 2002

Putalamai Hormaszaji Patel (86), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 9

Jalejar D. Dotiwala (84), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; January 10
Mehernose Maneckshaw Patel (38), Parsiwad, Village Kudiya, Taluka Olpad, Dist Surat, 394540; January 20
Rohinton Nariman Bhathena (50), Pader Mohallo, Village Bhatha, Dist Surat, 394510; January 21

Minoo Hosangji Chiniwala (85), Kelani Vakhari, Lalgate, 395003; January 23
Villamai Darabshaw Dalal (79), Adagra St, Nanpura, 395001; January 24

Dosanmai Dadabhai Bhangara (85), Rani Talao, Bibini-wadi, Sayedpura, 395003; January 27

UDVADA

DIED
Kaikobad Phirozeji Dastur (76), husband of late *Bakhtawar* and father of *Khushroo* and *Zenobia* Peshotan Sidhwa; January 25

CANADA

Ontario

BORN
 A girl, *Taina*, to *Farida* and *Yezdi Guard*, sister to *Zehann* and *Farishya* in Oakville; January 4
 A girl, *Yasna*, to *Armin* and *Nauzer Mistry*, sister to *Yazad* in Mississauga; January 8

NEW ZEALAND

BORN
 A girl, *Tanya*, to *Hufrish* and *Jal Mehta* in Auckland; January 7
 A girl, *Karishma*, to *Khushnooma* and *Cyrus Khambatta* in Auckland; January 29

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED
Framroze B. Anklesaria,

father of *Gaive*; December 16, 2001

USA

California

DIED
Aban Phiroze Patel; November 17

Florida

MARRIED
Jahaneen Byramjee, daughter of *Mahakhurshid* and *Khushrooh*, and *Shaun Johnsen*, son of *Dianne* and *John* in Tampa; September 22

Texas

BORN
 A boy, *Zarius*, to *Shazneen* and *Porus Buharivala* in Kingwood; November 26

DIED
Dolly Framroze Nowrosji, mother of *Ruby Bejun Anklesaria* and *Yasmin Sheroy Haveliwala* in Houston; January 11, 2002

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

AN APPEAL



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Satarawala's salient touch

Arnavaz S. Mama

Died: Kershasp Tehmurasp Satarawala 85, former governor of the Punjab and Goa, and India's ambassador to Mexico, in Poona on August 20, 2001, in his sleep.

"As the senior-most among the IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers, he was looked up to with great affection by his colleagues in the service.

As a human being he represented everything that was noble and correct. I will always cherish very pleasant memories of my long friendship with this great and good man." Maharashtra governor Dr P.C. Alexander's ful-



Satarawala: embodied altruism

some praise presaged the tributes showered on the former civil servant, governor and ambassador at a remembrance meeting convened by Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna at Delhi's India International Centre on August 28, 2001.

"We meet this evening, as family and friends, to remember and rejoice in the life well spent of Padma Bhushan Satarawala," noted Sethna. "Everything Kersi touched he adorned — wherever he went he was looked up to and admired for his ability and at the same time respected and loved for his humanity, his innate goodness, his care and concern for his fellow men... Few are aware of his great concern for, and his efforts in binding together and encouraging, talent wherever it was found."

To chief vigilance commissioner N. Vittal, Satarawala "was not an ordinary bureaucrat. He had the capacity to rise above the details... not to look at any file merely as a case to be disposed of (but to) look at the larger implications of any decisions that could be taken.

"His affection was universal and he was one person who was not at all status conscious... As advisor to the governor of Gujarat in 1974, the ease with which he moved around with the public and

won the affection of the people, especially while inspecting scarcity work or work relating to rural development was indeed remarkable...

"I still remember the day in 1974 when I took a batch of the latest recruits of the IAS to him when he was advisor to the governor. He had a look at the young recruits and his first comment was: 'Do you people realize that you will be retiring in the 21st century?' That was the first time I have heard anyone look 30 years ahead and articulate the fact that the century was coming to an end though it was still a quarter century away."

Born in Satara on February 15, 1916, the eldest of Tehmurasp and Meherbai's four children, Kershasp arrived by carriage to his paternal home in Mahabaleshwar where his father had a pharmacy. A boarding student at Panchgani's Billimoria High School, Satarawala obtained his BA (Hons) in economics from Poona's Wadia College but opted to pursue his master's degree in political science at the Government College in Lahore because he had read that that institution had the best tutors for the ICS (Indian Civil Service) exam in all of India, informs his wife Frainy. Though he stood 10th at the all-India level, his appointment to the civil service was deferred to accommodate two Muslim candidates. "The British promised that if he joined the army, after the war he could join the ICS with 1941 seniority. That is what happened," writes Frainy.

Kershasp and Frainy (née Bilimoria), whose father later became Bombay's police commissioner, were married in Belgaum in December 1947. In those riot-ridden days Major Satarawala, then a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, Quetta holding the World War II campaign medals, the Burma Star, the India Medal and the War Medal was in charge of the Humayun's Tomb Camp in Delhi whence thousands of Muslims bound for Pakistan boarded the trains at Nizamuddin Station and Lady Mountbatten made regular visits.

As a civil servant he was first posted as assistant collector, Ahmedabad, and then, Surat. There were a number of Parsis in the Gujarat of those days, owning large tracts of land and functioning as patels in the villages, informs Frainy. Posted as collector of the Dangs (1949-52) Satarawala "loved his work so much, he often said he'd be willing to work without pay!" she recalls.

But Delhi beckoned. He became chief controller of imports and exports when Lal Bahadur Shastri was the minister for commerce. He headed the Indian delegation to ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission on Asia and the Pacific) meetings in Bangkok, was managing director, and later, chairman, of Indian Airlines Corporation, secretary to the Gujarat Government's Department of Industries, Mines and Power. On three separate occasions (1971-72, 1974-75 and 1980), when Gujarat came under President's rule, Satarawala was appointed advisor to the governor — a function he also discharged in Orissa (1973-74) and Jammu and Kashmir (1977).

The Zoroastrian member of the National Minorities Commission (1981-83) his expertise was simultaneously channelled into the organization of ASIAD — the IX Asian Games held in Delhi — as coordinator and vice chairman in 1981-82. Working from 8 a.m. to the wee hours of the morning he drove himself and his team to ensure the success of the Games, and earned the Padma Bhushan, remembered Frainy.

During a year's stint as lieutenant governor of Goa, Diu and Daman, the heads of 40 countries congregated for the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meet) in Goa. Satarawala's personal attention to detail had led then UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to remark: "Governor, you are everywhere!" recalled Frainy. He introduced each of the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) personnel at the Old Goa pier to visiting dignitaries, Chief Justice of India Sam Bharucha had noted at the Delhi memorial meet,



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Frainy related to *Parsiana*. (Despite the official duties Satarawala had found the time to write to *Parsiana* regarding the dakhma and agiary in Diu, answering queries, providing material from ASI publications.) The affection he inspired was reflected in newspaper headlines "Good Governor goes" and "Can't he stay longer?" remembered Frainy.

"He would have loved to stay on — he loved Goa — but it was the Punjab after Operation Blue Star in 1984 June. He could not refuse. He was (required) to soothe the feelings of the people. It was most difficult. He needed time," she added.

His last posting was as Ambassador to Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador where he studied and spoke Spanish at the age of 70 plus and was conferred the Order of the Aztec.

He continued soldiering for the environment after his retirement as vice president of the Bombay Natural History Society during the Society's painful transition years after the demise of renowned ornithologist Dr Salim Ali. As J. C. Daniel, the Society's honorary secretary, noted in his letter of condolence to Frainy, "Despite his problems of age and ill-health, he made many trips from (Poona) to (Bombay) to help us... He embodied the spirit of altruism." Daniel wrote that his first encounter with Satarawala had been during India's first major ecological project — to save the habitat of the Asiatic lion in Gujarat's Gir National Park. Satarawala was then advisor to the governor but "always found time for selfless service for the cause of conservation... (and) was greatly instrumental in saving this wonderful species."

He was a founder member of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage) and his enthusiasm for the preservation and restoration of India's heritage spilled over into a series of letters to *Parsiana* on the progress of the restoration of the Wadia-built frigate *HMS Trincomalee* in Plymouth, England, providing contacts and material to enable us to do a cover story on the project.

For five years he served as secretary-general of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI). President emeritus of the FPAI Avabai Wadia records in her memoirs, *The light is ours*, "At a meeting of the government Central Council of Health and Family Planning which I attended, the advisor to the

governor of Gujarat, Satarawala, spoke in such thoughtful and knowledgeable terms on the importance of population and family planning that I felt that, if only we could have someone like that, we could really progress. I knew his high post of advisor was constitutionally for a limited period, and I approached him with some trepidation, since what we could offer was nowhere near as elevated as he was used to. But he was a man of strong convictions and showed an interest in working with us. After a year when he fulfilled his other commitments, he joined us in June 1976. This proved to be a milestone in advancing our work and prestige, for he was highly able and commanded great respect from all who met him.

"On two occasions, however, the Central Government recalled Satarawala for important duties. On the first occasion it was to help organize the general election in Kashmir and on the second to help in organizing the prestigious Asian Games which India hosted. When a third occasion arose in July 1981, Satarawala had to resign his post with us as the Government appointed him as a member of the Minorities Commission and later as the governor of Goa."

Despite his preoccupations, being on the directorial board of very many companies, Satarawala continued his lifelong love affair with the twin hill-stations of Mahableshwar and Panchgani. He knew all about their flora and fauna. That is where he had intended to retire, though he never thought he ever would, reminisces Frainy. He had made a deposit on their Poona house "on an off-chance," but in the later years that became the base from which he made his frequent enjoyable trips to visit his daughters and their families — Phiroza and Vijay Singh in Simla, Drs Anita and Amir Samaan in England, Ferida who runs the foodline Yum-Yum and radiologist Dr Avnish Chopra in Delhi. His seven grandchildren Ayesha, Nalin, Jai, Mark, Michael, Naval and Avnish and two great-grandchildren Tasha and Reyhan were the light of his eyes.

His passion for classical music never waned. His LP (long playing) record collection even during the war years numbered 900-1,000 which he delighted in playing on his handcranked gramophone, recalls Frainy. Satarawala slipped away in his sleep after telling Frainy,

"I am so sleepy." "At 9 p.m. we were at a concert. By 1 a.m. he was no more," Frainy adds sadly.

Once he retired, he refused any invitation to be chief guest, never pulled rank, joined the queues at the post office as a rank and file Indian. At the Delhi meet journalist Inder Malhotra recalled the commotion he had witnessed at the Bombay airport because Satarawala insisted on standing in the queue! Frainy said he enjoyed sharing a cup of tea with any plumber or carpenter who worked in their home. "According to our religion you do not work for rewards," Satarawala had maintained.

Although his parents and brother Jangoo had been consigned to the dakhma in Poona, Kersi's urn of ashes rests in the Mahableshwar aramgh because of the unhappy conditions at Doongerwadi now, says Frainy, adding, "Kersi passed away the way he lived — with dignity."

Satarawala is survived by his wife Frainy and their three daughters Phiroza Singh, Anita Samaan and Ferida Chopra, and sister Thrity Irani.

The conscientious counsel

Died: Pheroz Pochaji (P. P.) Khambatta, 94, senior counsel, Bombay High Court and Supreme Court of India and former trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), on September 29, 2001 in Bombay following cardio-respiratory failure.



Khambatta: role model

"He was that rare combination of a superb lawyer and a perfect gentleman and he embodied the finest qualities of both," remarked M. S. Sanghavi, president of the Bombay Bar Association

(BBA) at a condolence meeting convened in honor of Khambatta on October 22, 2001. Having worked with Khambatta, Sanghavi remembered him as being "unfailingly courteous at all times."

"He sat at the first table in the library and was pointed out to every new entrant to the profession as the role model to emulate both in advocacy and in conduct," recalled Rafiq Dada, vice president of the BBA, adding, "Whenever a major trial was going on, and there was seldom one in which he was not briefed, the entire junior Bar as-



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sembled to watch the master at work. He considered it his call to duty when asked to serve the government and he did so with immaculate fairness as a prosecutor and with equally remarkable success." Dada referred to an instance when as a "nervous junior" he had been briefed against Khambatta, then at the "height of his prowess." The junior dared to canvass a proposition and "the invariably fair" Khambatta conceded the position, leaving an indelible impression on the young Dada.

A dedicated member of the Bar, he was almost always the first to arrive in court and the last to leave, mentions his son Kersie, a practising advocate in New Zealand. Equally proficient in the civil, criminal, matrimonial, company and labor law he was much sought after throughout the country and had traveled as far as Kashmir to represent clients. And yet the deserving will vouch for his free advice and his appearances in court without charging his fees.

"His example will always be an inspiration to me," acknowledged Freny Ponda who admitted having "benefited greatly by his guidance." Having fought against him in a couple of cases she declared, "It was education to watch him in action. Today at the Bar where aggressive advocacy prevails, his example showed that emphatic assertion too could bring home a point." To his many juniors he was both helpful and kind, she noticed.

"My association with PP as he was fondly known to all of us began from the day I joined the legal profession. He was always available to solve the difficulties of us juniors — something which is very rare today," reiterated Dara Zaiwalla.

After his education at St Xavier's High School, Elphinstone College and his law studies, he had joined the chambers of Jehangir Vakil, qualifying as an advocate on the Original Side (OS) at a time when the OS was a very tough exam which few were able to pass. Setting up his independent practice, his office at Beaumont Chambers at Flora Fountain and then in the High Court Annex was always full of people, with several clients waiting their turn outside for his valued advice.

Among the many who respected his legal acumen were Kerban and Nani Marshall who noted in their condolence letter, "We had the occasion to meet him many years ago when we were

embroiled in a long unpleasant litigation... (We) recall him as being a kind person who gave us a patient hearing and presented the case in its proper perspective before the court on behalf of the government."

Pesi Kapadia who had the "good fortune to be associated with (PP)" in the course of his company's labor matters wrote: "I was charmed by his soft-spoken, suave manners and the wide span of his knowledge and experience. He was one of the few lawyers who did not restrict their professional work to one field of law and I was frankly surprised that he was not at all averse to appearing before the industrial and labor courts."

The BPP as also many Parsi charities had consulted him when faced with legal problems. So, when "persuaded by friends and well-wishers to offer myself as a candidate," he stood for election as a BPP trustee in 1972. In his manifesto he had stated that he "can legitimately claim to be well acquainted with the complex questions our community has to face...I belong to no party, group or faction...As an ordinary orthodox Zoroastrian I believe I shall be able to bring to bear on the deliberations of our Punchayet the ordinary man's point of view, his aspirations, his problems and difficulties." Among the issues he hoped to address were provision of cheap rental housing, a change in the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, an appointment of a council of elders to guide the youth and improving the condition of moheds. But his desire and motivation to serve the community was short-lived for within three years he submitted his resignation. According to *The Bombay Samachar* of November 2, 1975, his advice was invariably ignored by his co-trustees although he was a senior counsel.

His successor Eruch Desai on the BPP board and presently senior partner of Mulla and Mulla states, "As a trustee he was a man of unimpeachable integrity." Referring to Khambatta as "a tenacious fighter in the courts of law" and commending his "great advocacy," Desai revealed how he was impressed with his mastery over all aspects of law. The "great humanist" will also be remembered by Desai for being "always smiling and cheerful."

Although his wife Thrity's paralytic stroke 30 years ago (she predeceased him by two years) was a continuing

source of concern, he retained his equanimity. His love for animals, particularly dogs and horses was strong, notwithstanding the fact that riding accidents had on two occasions nearly cost him his life, states his daughter Hilla Guzder.

His mental faculties were intact till the end and Burjor Antia, partner of Mulla and Mulla, remembers meeting Khambatta when he was 92, still active, going to the bank or the post office. Referring to the faith he inspired in his peers in the legal fraternity, in his clients and the government who appointed him special prosecutor, Antia mentioned, "When I joined the legal profession in 1962, I was told that there were only two people in this profession who had no enemies. One was Khambatta and the other was C. N. Daji. Very noble, kind and courteous, he was never seen shouting at a single individual." Recommendations from people like H. N. Seervai and Khambatta the court always accepted, observed Antia. Considering him "my standing counsel" Antia remembers briefing him on important community matters, one such being the issue of the Punchayet granting voting rights to women. Even at the age of 85 Antia had briefed him on an issue concerning a senior member of the medical fraternity.

According to a communiqué from Gautam Patel, honorary secretary of the BBA, the first photograph of a legal stalwart that they had placed on their website (www.bombaybar.com) was that of Khambatta.

The respected jurist is survived by his son Kersie and daughters Dolly Sagar, Hilla Guzder and Rashna Bharucha.

PARINAZ M. GANDHI

Errata

To our regret two inadvertent errors have flawed "The night of the judges"



(*Parsiana*, February). Perin Bharucha (not Engineer, left) was felicitated by Pansy Mehta, The

Chief Justice of India, Justice Sam Bharucha is due to retire on May 6, 2002 (not 2001).

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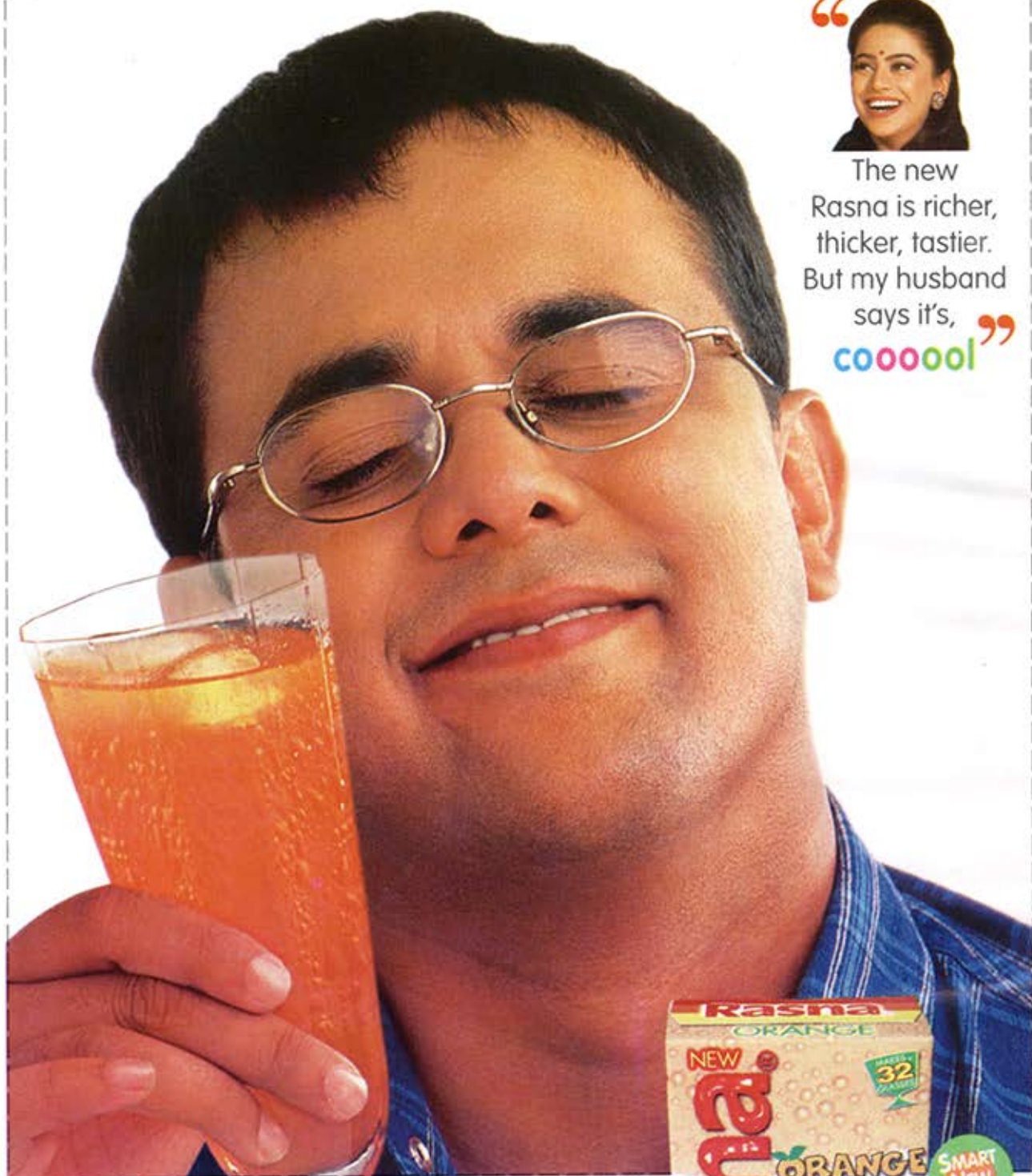
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