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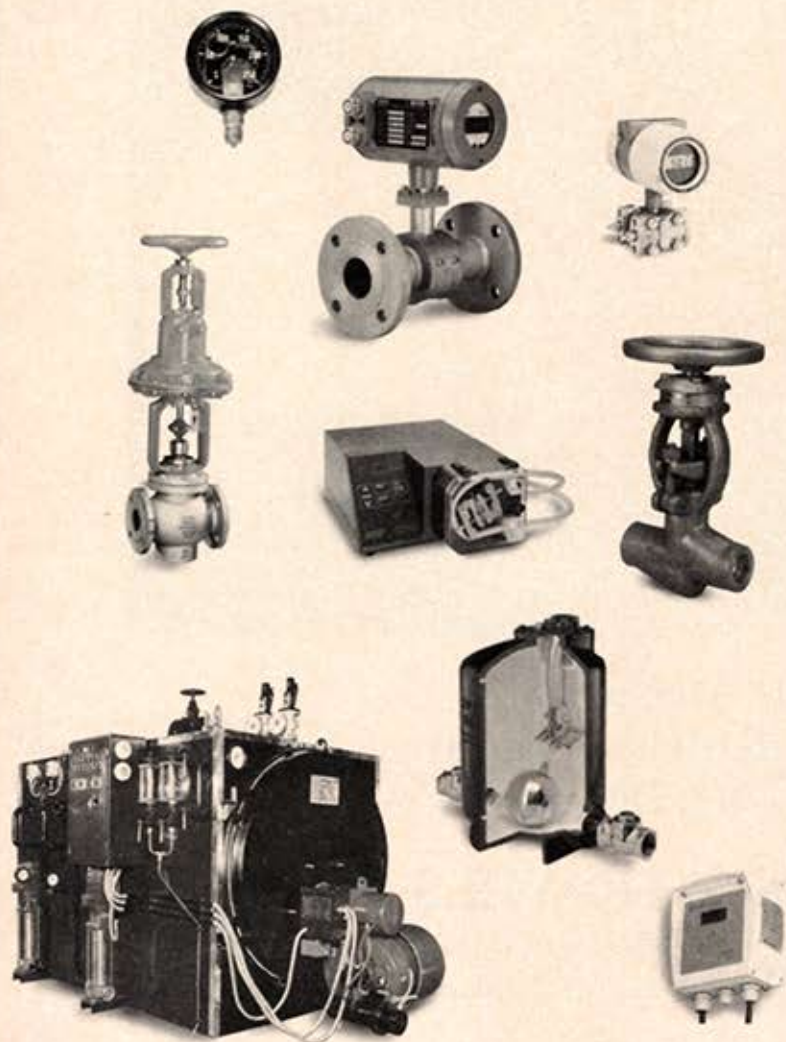


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"Giving back"

It was most gratifying to read in "Giving back" (*Parsiana*, June 2002) that Dr Phil Hansotia has succeeded after so many years of effort in providing financial and other assistance to the medical school in Nagpur where he obtained his initial training. Hansotia's selfless perseverance should inspire other alumni as well as current students to give back something to the educational institution and community that nurtured them.

However, what most caught my attention in the article was the reference to Hansotia having pursued his lovely wife, Marilyn, by switching partners during a double date. In 1962, Hansotia's sister, Nina, did exactly the same thing to me when we were students at Stanford University. As a result, we have been married for 38 years, and I am faced with taking grandchildren to Disneyland, on cruises and eventually even on my kayaking, camping and fishing trips.

It may very well be that Hansotia's brother, Nash, employed an identical or similar scheme to pursue his loving and faithful wife, Hooty, who today must not only take grandchildren to amusement parks, but shuttle between her home in Missouri and her new high plains ranch in Arizona.

Don't you think it is time that a system were devised to warn people about what can happen when they double date with Parsis?

MIKE MYERS
California, USA

"Be wary of 'worshippers'"

With reference to "Be wary of 'worshippers'" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 2002), I am pained to read about the views attributed to Dr Meher Master-Moos and Zoroastrian College who are doing marathon work in spreading the true teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra.

My association with Master-Moos for more than 20 years has brought confidence and a ray of hope that Zoroastrianism will grow to its pristine glory. Her work in Tajikistan and other CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) republics will bear good fruit in the very near future. Let us support her and our Zoroastrian College.

Here in Russia and Ukraine I have met many groups who have accepted Zoroastrianism. They have their own teachers, few priests, do their own navjote ceremony, make their own kustis, have recently published the *Avesta* in Russian script, maintain the Fasli calendar and have a quarterly magazine concerning Zoroastrian subjects. After initiation into Zoroastrianism they stop other modes of worship and they constantly encourage other non members to join them by convincing them with books, lecture classes, general talks, communal prayers, etc. Pavel Globa is one of the important persons who is spreading Zoroastrianism in CIS countries.

He informs me that his family in his great-grandfather's time were Iranian Zoroastrians and for a long time they have had with them sacred scriptures on our religion, especially on Zervanism, astrology, etc. He also initiates other members into the fold, including selected priests and leaders. They will be soon constructing a fire-temple in St. Petersburg and their numbers are fast

increasing. Yes, in our sense they may not be Zoroastrians as their forefathers were not Zoroastrians, but they say that Prophet Zarathushtra was from the Russian steppes and they have in them the ancient Aryan origin. In Byelorussia, Zartosht Ataollahi, an Iranian person, has started the Pasargad Cultural Foundation for spreading the Zoroastrian religion and its activities.

The Parsis should learn a lesson from these individuals who with all the problems of not being recognized as a community, dearth of books, scarcity of priests, etc are so strong in their beliefs and faith in our religion. When told that in India they will not be accepted in the fire-temples, they said that they may never become Parsis, but as they have accepted and realized Lord Zarathushtra, they are faithful Zoroastrians. They also state that Lord Zarathushtra has taught the importance of following the right path and they have accepted the path of goodness i.e. to be good Zoroastrians.

Let us not stop any individual who sincerely wants to believe, learn, follow and spread Zoroastrianism. Instead let us give a helping hand by encouraging these genuine groups in Tajikistan, Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and other CIS countries.

BURZIN E. ATASHBAND
Ukraine

"Our responsibility is to safeguard our religious institutions from untoward instances which are brought to our notice from time to time... right to enter our fire-temple without proving his Zoroastrian antecedents... just because some institutions based abroad accept the bonafides of the so called Zoroastrian College does not mean that we should lower our scholarship standard..."

Thus spoke our Vada Dasturs Dr K. JamaspAsa and Dr F. M. Kotwal in a letter to *Parsiana* ("Be wary of 'worshippers,'" Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 2002) over the Karani Agiary Master-Moos controversy. What they said set me thinking...

How does one identify a Parsi? There is no ID card, nor a certificate from authorities who have initiated one in our *dharam* (religion). Parsis don't anymore adhere to typical Parsi features due to intercaste marriages. Also, the navjotes of children born to Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers are performed without



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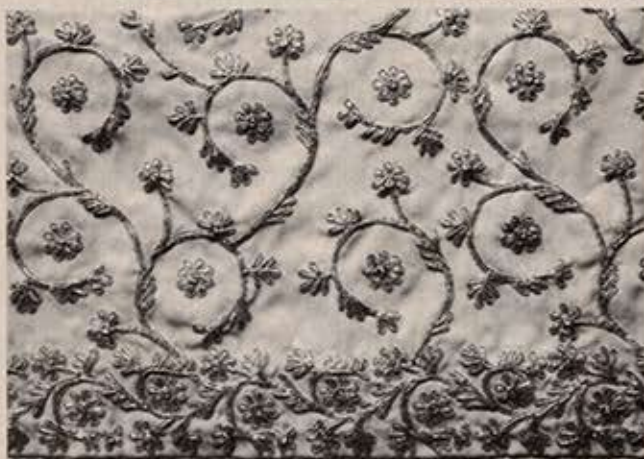
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any ruckus, and adopted children are admitted into our community. How then can you stop these children from belonging to the community? It is a totally impossible task in the present scenario.

Walk into any agiary and you will find our *dharampitas* (mobeds) lazing on the benches on the verandahs of the agiary. If you ask them to do any ritual during their siesta time, be prepared to find them reluctantly shuffle and condescendingly get up to wear the white, turned off-white, habit in order to enter the sacred sanctum to pray for our well being. Do such prayers reach the Almighty?

This is no time for mundane controversies. It's time we accepted this as a problem that needs to be immediately addressed. In-depth training in religion, a crash course in personality development and in interpersonal relationships within the community is the need of the hour. Restoring the dignity of the mobed is a crucial step for the growth of and well being of our community. Is this just an idealist's dream?

RODA D. HAKIM

Baroda

"Why deny prayers?"

Roda Hakim's letter ("Why deny

prayers?" Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 2002) about the stress our people have to go through if they opt for a different method of disposal is sad as well as very true. Parsis are an enlightened *kaum* (community), modern, educated, fun-loving, charitable and amenable to change within the parameters of our ideology. Then how is it that such a member suddenly becomes an outcaste if he opts for cremation or another method of disposal? The priests, even if they are willing, do not perform the *geh sarna* ceremonies, either because they are afraid to do so or for the fear of sanctions against them.

Does such a person not have the right to benefit from the mantras of our powerful ceremonies which guide and protect his soul to the land of light and peace? Who has the right to proclaim and enforce this cruel and inhuman diktat? The priests? The orthodox?

To let the body of the dead person rot and stink, or try out some experimental method of solar rays or herbal powders, etc in the dakhma, is nothing short of callous inhumanity and utter disrespect to the deceased. For God's sake let the person decide how he wishes to meet his Maker. A just and nobility-personified

Prophet Zarathushtra is not going to say, "Look here, you cannot come in here because you did not enter through the stinking dakhma." And what about those who live abroad and in places even in our own country where there are no dakhmas?

The dakhma system is outdated and not at all appropriate in today's times and conditions which we should accept in all magnanimity as Parsi Zarathushtris.

GOOLOO MEHTA

"The Calcutta confluence"

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet chief executive officer B. T. Dastur reels off figures for Parsi students sent abroad for higher studies ("The Calcutta confluence," *Parsiana*, April 2002). I wonder why he does not glorify the assistance given to students for higher education in India.

When we went abroad for higher education in engineering and technology in the early 1950s, there were hardly any postgraduate institutions in India. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur was just founded. Today, there are seven IITs (Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras and Roorkee) apart from IT-BHU (Insti-

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Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna rightly sounded a note of dissent to Dastur's remarks stating that "72 out of every 75 children going abroad will not come back." (This means a 96 percent loss to the community due to emigration.) My experience at IIT, Bombay, indicates that the migration figure may be close to 99 percent which I believe is the primary cause for the dwindling numbers in our community since Independence. The Americans are just too keen to tap and trap the cream of talent from India which is detrimental to the progress of our community and country here.

Khurshed Bhesania of Jamshedpur countered Sethna by saying that "it doesn't matter where they are. We are investing in them as Parsis." What purpose does any financial investment serve if it leads to shrinking numbers here? Besides, it leads to a dearth of eligible talented bachelors in the marriage market which may also be a cause for increasing mixed marriages here.

These are not the only two detrimental factors. Just take a look at the marriages and births reported from USA and Canada in the same issue of *Parsiana* (Milestones, April 2002). For USA all the four marriages/births reported are mixed marriages or products of mixed marriages. For Canada the figure is seven out of 10. At this rate the community there may lose its identity in a few generations. Also, no religious items like sudreh, sukhad, loban, sapats, topis and kustis are available there so they have to procure these from India. By no yardstick can this state of affairs be called an investment in the community in USA and elsewhere.

Instead of offering gifts and soft loans for going abroad, the money could be utilized for temporary financial assistance for those returning from abroad with higher qualifications until they find a regular suitable job here. Those com-

pleting their doctoral program in India could also be similarly assisted. Those very keen to study abroad should go on foreign scholarships or can borrow hard loans up to Rs 10 lakhs from nationalized banks and other organizations.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

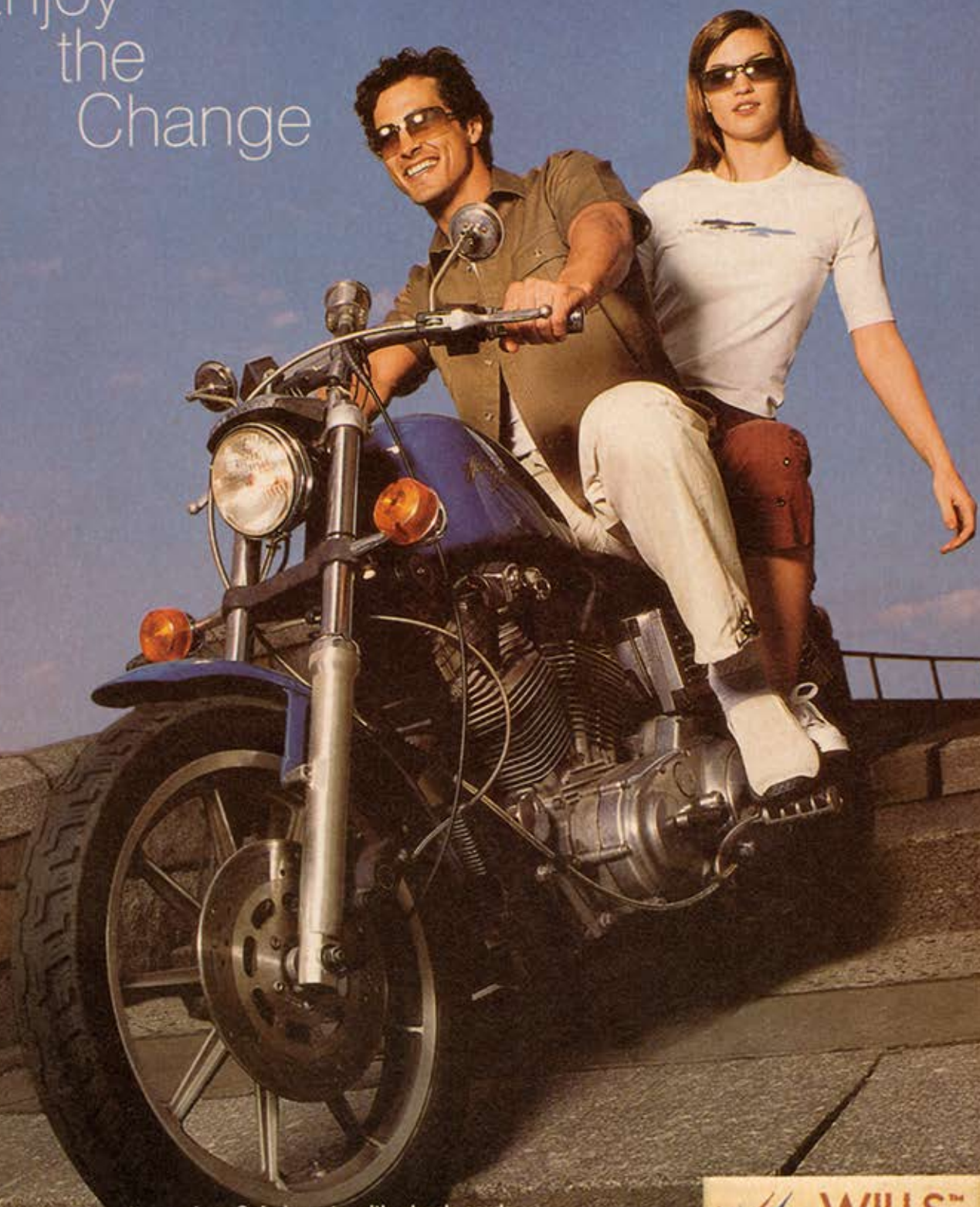
"An avoidable divide"

Armin Wandrewala's thoughts ("An avoidable divide," *Parsiana*, January 2002) deserve both commendation and comment. In these exasperatingly troubled times for "our minuscule community" — there are communities likewise situated well beyond the confines of Bombay — her observations are timely. She has not, however, really grasped the basis of this divide.

The clamorers are far from espousing the Zoroastrian cause; they are merely and tediously promoting varieties of Parsiism which have little to do with Zoroastrianism and even less with the founder's teachings. In fact, they go as far as to mock our Preceptor and his system whilst falsely and abundantly using his august name to cloak what may best be described as *dhongidox*. Indeed, they are not in the least concerned with investigating and promulgating the unique doctrines which had astonished and captivated the sages of the ancient, mediaeval and modern worlds.

Of course nobody can afford the destructive luxuries of factionalism and schism, but the differences are plainly not based on ideological differences — to do this one must have clear notions of what and where such differences lie. A very long while back *Parsiana* had published the general result of an enquiry conducted by a Bombay University professor into Parsi perceptions of their religion. The findings were less than salutary. If anything, things have since gotten worse, as witness the disgraceful events reported recently in your journal. It is not eccentricity but massive egos which have fuelled the dissensions in our ranks, and had these been confined to Bombay, this writer would have shrugged and not bothered to pen this response. As it is, each time Bombay sneezes, London servilely catches its cold: London has irresponsibly signed over its Parsi brain-pans to be filled in at will by self-serving preachers and prelates with their unfounded pretensions to scholarship and learning! To acquire and maintain an ideology one has really

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to have gotten to grips with it.

Wandrewala's list of admirable qualities, serialized as "our major strengths," require drastic amendment when speaking of the *dhongidox*. Many correspondents have for long pointed out several instances of double standards and double-dealing which we are certain she would not define as integrity. All it needs to spark off public controversy is for some well-intentioned soul to actually study our religious system and to impart his/her findings. It has the added bonus of attracting the wrath of the unrighteous who believe themselves exempt from our ethical triad of good thoughts, words and works.

Well indeed has she qualified the orthodox and reformists as "so-called." In any religious or philosophic system, the adherence to its founder's tenets is considered "orthodox." Thus, for example, Jews who follow the *Torah*, Christians, the *New Testament*, Muslims, the *Koran*, are all quite sensibly regarded as orthodox. Those who diverge from these basic teachings are branded as reformists. It was so, in a general way, with the Platonists and the Aristotelians. It is observably the converse with the majority of Parsis who

call themselves Zoroastrians: the two are not synonymous despite their conceit, and the "Gatha-onlyists" who thus should be, if anything, ultra-orthodox, finish up being labeled "reformists!" *Oondha* (converse)-Parsio?

Concerning "inter-caste" marriages we must maintain a cautious reserve, for in the UK we can properly speak of inter-faith marriage, caste not having reared its ugly head here to date. We have hitherto refrained from indulging our disgust at a pretend priest's opinions on identity conflicts among the children of inter-faith unions. Why the self-important priesthood should go unchallenged when blatantly interfering in social matters on spurious religious grounds is something our plaintiffs should remain answerable for as long as their ignorance lasts.

The dakhma divide is built on forms of unreason and stubbornness, for the *Vendidad* takes a firm line drawn on hygienic and socioeconomic considerations. The undersigned adheres to the ancient system, but emphatically not where it becomes impractical or presents real health hazards. The sagacious compilers of those ancient regulations would have been uniformly horrified had they seen what it has resulted in on Bombay's Malabar Hill! Nowhere had they envisaged anything but *khwarshed nigerishnih* — exposure to the sun and the elements; certainly *dalman-khwarishnih* (vulture fodder) was secondary to their careful directions for the effective disposal of human cadavers. UK priests have over the ages said prayers over those whose remains have been cremated or inhumed without undue fuss or open disrespect to their families. Wandrewala is quite right when she suggests tempering doctrinal absolutes with temporal needs; the priests, egged on by a raucous rabble, seem to have forgotten this basic truth of a progressive religion. The aviary project is solely calculated to give its proponents more mileage than common sense warrants, but such types are unstoppable in their contrived religiosity, avidity for attention, and bogus knowledge of the breeding and feeding habits of Bombay city raptors.

Specifically on the subject of "bastards" — a hitherto unrecorded Zoroastrian good word — our communities at large may have missed, or quietly forgotten, the directive indicated in our *Vendidad's* chapter XV.15-16 and its Pahlavi version. The latter bluntly states:

"If doubt exists, there shall be rejoicing!" The Pahlavi *Rivayat of Emed-i-Ashavahishtan*, answering Question 42 on children born out of wedlock, instructs that the father should not fail in his duty to have the child's initiation performed by the age of 15; if he fails, then he becomes *margarzan* — meriting death! It is evident that the Mazdaean priesthood of post-Sasanian Iran took a sober-mindedly responsible attitude towards children from exogamous or even illicit unions; what contradictory text can the self-righteous Ervad Marzban Hathiram possibly be following for his antisocial outburst?

There is in fact no "doubt as to whether or not Zoroastrianism ever permitted/encouraged proselytism." A recently published article states the case for, strictly using our religious texts (from which we pray before the sacred flame, either indoors or publicly within fire-temples), and the later commentarial literature, all of which enjoined acceptance of converts without a single one militating against it. Furthermore, why is Wandrewala so very cautious in promulgating the *Vendidad*? It never was intended originally to be a liturgical text — its variegated contents argue against

BILMAT ZERAMICZ

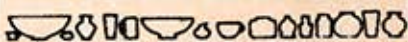
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such use. Let us not hasten, however, to dismiss this valuable *nask* whose guiding principles do still remind us of the rural milieu for which it was composed: they were right for the times and the agrarian Mazdaeans for whom it was intended. Conceptually they retain validity; practically, today they cannot.

Lastly, but not least, she has entered a plea of not losing our identity. Should she not here be addressing our ignorant priesthood who have shown themselves to be no different from imams with their indiscriminate use of Arabic terms to express Zoroastrian ideas, and whose arrogance and contempt towards the religion of Zarathushtra Spitama could be better accounted for by a change of turban color?

We wish everyone, regardless of sex, color, creed and race to join us in truth and wisdom on the long, difficult, yet attainable path to Ahura Mazda.

FARROKH VAJIFDAR

London, UK

"Missing monajats"

That my letter "Missing monajats" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 2001) could evoke a response from a German scholar, Beate Schmerbeck

who is preparing a PhD thesis on monajats (*Parsiana*, March 2002) speaks volumes for the different aspects connected with our Zarathushti religion and the wide reach of *Parsiana*.

Would any of your readers please explain the fascination we find mainly amongst English and German scholars to research, study and write on our religion?

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Options to dakhmenashini

In my interaction with many senior Zoroastrians in Bangalore, I got the impression that many of them detest and are against dakhmenashini as it exists today due to the complete absence of vultures and rapid urbanization near and around the dakhma. In spite of this opinion, several of them showed their desire to opt for dakhmenashini for no reason other than their wish to be consigned next to their near and dear ones who were earlier consigned in the dakhma.

None of these Zoroastrians were aware of the fact that the non-biodegradable remains like bones, teeth, skin, hair, etc of their dear ones are no longer there as these are periodically collected and buried deep in the ground next to the dakhma in the astodan.



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It has come to the notice of Zoroastrians of Bangalore that in February 2002, four to five volunteers from outside Bangalore were recruited to clean the dakhma and collect the non-biodegradable parts of the corpses and bury these in the ground just outside the dakhma.

Many Zoroastrians opting for dakhmenashini are unaware of the fact that corpses which are embalmed for reasons of preservation or transposition are not consumed by any carrion birds, big or small, or even disintegrated by maggots due to the embalming fluid which consists of formaline and lead oxide, and hence remain in a state of decay and putrefaction.

Many Zoroastrians who have in good faith opted for dakhmenashini, in the belief of rapid consumption by vultures, feel betrayed and cheated that the major part of the carcass is ultimately buried in the ground which is the very antithesis of dakhmenashini which specifically forbids defiling the earth with parts of a human body. To obviate this line of thinking our prelates call such a process as *sukko naso* (dry putrefaction) which is permitted to defile the earth!

The practice of dakhmenashini as it exists today has completely failed and its ill effects cannot be mitigated by spending crores of rupees in trying to implement unscientific, impractical and non-starter methods.

Can we not offer a dignified burial or cremation to our dear and departed ones? Burial will consume a large part of available land and a burial ground is very expensive to maintain. The only logical solution under the present circumstances is to undertake the disposal of corpses in an electric crematorium which is cheap, quick, hygienic and environment-friendly.

Our anxiety to continue a defunct system for the dead, at the cost of doing some real good for the living, will never be excused by posterity.

Dr M. D. DISAWALLA
Bangalore

Vadodara scholarships

Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara invites applications from Parsi or Irani Zoroastrian students for two scholarships for the academic year 2002-03.

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The Dr Rustom B. Cama scholarship of Rs 5,000 would be awarded to a student who has obtained admission to the First Year MBBS course in the current academic year in any medical college after securing at least 80 percent marks or an equivalent grade at the Std XII examination.

Application forms may be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope (4" x 9") to The Secretary, Shree Parsi Panchayat, Hira Baug, Post Office Road, Fatehgunj, Vadodara 390002. The last date for receipt of filled applications forms is September 30, 2002.

JAL PATEL
President, Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara

BUZY donating

The Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth (BUZY) was promoted as the youth wing of the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara several years ago. Since then BUZY has registered itself as an independent body with the charity commissioner.

Over the years BUZY has conducted several useful programs locally and at the national level, the latest event being the Heart Meet where at least six couples found their soul mates.

In March 2002, under the leadership of Cyrus Cooper, BUZY magnanimously donated a sum of Rs 14,50,000 to Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara. This amount will form a corpus towards 'BUZY Educational Fund,' to be utilized to encourage and promote excellence among promising students in academics and entrepreneurship.

We trust youngsters across the country will emulate them for bettering facilities for the members of the community.

DARA A. HAKIM

Trustee, Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara

Agiary restored

The trustees of the J. D. Amaria Soda-waterwala Agiary at Marine Lines,

Bombay, are pleased to inform all Zoroastrians that after prolonged litigation lasting for over a decade, we have been able to regain possession of the fire-temple.

A new priest Ervad Parvez Karanjia has been appointed as panthaky at the Sodawaterwala Agiary. He is a navar martab and is fully qualified to perform all ceremonies such as baj, afringan, farokshi, jashan, ijashni, vendidad, navjote and wedding, as also funeral rites, all ceremonies for the dead including muktad.

This fire-temple has been a source of solace and profuse religious inspiration to many worshipers and distinguished priests including the late Ervad Nadirsha Aibara who had served the holy fire for many years.

Unfortunately, the litigation has taken its toll on the finances of the Agiary and the Trust is undergoing a serious financial crisis. As a matter of fact some of the trustees have made financial advances personally in order to conclude the litigation which was forced upon the trustees, due to the recalcitrant attitude of the past panthaky.

The Agiary is now in a very dilapidated condition and requires heavy re-

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pairs, renovation, extensive plastering, painting and tiling work. Even the old electrical wiring has to be redone and the broken wooden doors and windows have to be repaired.

We thus make a fervent appeal to all religious minded Parsi and Irani Zoroastrians, all charity trusts and philanthropists to come forward and extend their help by giving generous and substantial donations for this worthy cause at the earliest, as the cost of repairs are daily escalating.

All donations will be gratefully accepted and may be sent by cross and order cheques/demand drafts in favor of "J. D. Amaria (Sodawaterwala) Agiary Trust — Central Bank of India, Bori Bunder Branch, S. B. A/c No. 2683," Dr Nelie R. Noble, C/o A. F. Khan, Administrator, Lady Hirabai C. Jehangir Health Unit, J. N. Gamadia Building No 18, Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, Bombay 400007 or Mehli P. Colah, Deputy Chief Executive and Financial Controller, Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 204, Dr D. N. Road, Bombay 400001. The flame of faith may sometimes flicker but it never fades in a Zoroastrian heart. So long as the flame burns, so long shall the flames in our fire-temples blaze to the everlasting glory of Ahura Mazda.

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Art of kusti weaving

The art of kusti weaving forms an integral part of not only our religious ritual, but even of our identity.

Tangible help is rendered by our BPP (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) senior trustee Minoo Shroff in importing Australian wool at below-market rates, and by trustee Dinshaw Tamboly, who offers

financial assistance to the weavers, mainly in Gujarat — Navsari, Vansda, Surat and their environs — to keep that art alive, by making it profitable to the women.

The BPP distributed the following quantities of Australian wool: 3,289 packets of 125 g each in 2000-01, and 3,361 packets of 125 g each in 2001-02. Each packet enables an average weaving of five kustis. On an average, a weaver makes 10-12 kustis per month. Thus, 16,445 and 16,805 kustis were woven in 2000-01 and 2001-02 respectively.

Given the tangible help from our two trustees, we should see this religious tradition continue and not fear the advent of mill-woven kustis.

Mehrwan Irani, vice president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, Bombay, confirmed that kusti weaving continued to be an art in the Zoroastrian pockets of Iran. He dispelled the rumor that the art was extinct and kusti weaving was mechanized.

May this art perpetuate. May those who support it directly/obliquely live long, and may every Zoroastrian perform his/her basic duty to wear a sudreh and kusti to preserve our religious heritage and identity!

B. T. DASTUR

Chief executive, Bombay Parsi Punchayet

Old and lonely

During our youth, all of us seem to dream about our future. A future which is bright, and about an old age which will be spent amidst the comforts of our family. But, let us imagine how our last days would be if we were abandoned by our own children and left to die in an old people's home! This is the state of most senior citizens who lie on the beds of these homes today. They too, just like us, had dreams, but alas destiny had

something else in store for them.

I came to understand their plight during my visit to the old people's home, F. S. Parukh Dharamshala at Khareghat Colony. It was all thanks to Diana Marfatia and her team that we students of the Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) 2002 got an opportunity to visit the home and to learn what reality is!

Our group was asked to comfort the old women living there. Before the visit, my concept of an old people's home was rather different — somewhat like the pavilion at Cusrow Baug, where senior citizens would play cards and chit chat during the evenings. However on entering the home that flowery picture disappeared forever. My eyes moistened on seeing mostly sick and suffering old Zoroastrians, some who could not hear and speak and others who were almost blind! It was indeed a very depressing sight!

Though I was scared at first, I somehow gained courage and began a conversation with Kumi aunty who shared with me the saga of her life. The only person who comes and meets her is one of her three kids. She told me that she is living only because she has God by her side, to give her company, and to speak to her!

Hilla aunty was very happy to see a young face. We spoke about many things, about her family, about her life before stepping into the home. A life full of travel and excitement! She not only told me about herself but also advised me not to marry a Bombay girl.

Shirin aunty and Nergis aunty were no less enthusiastic. They sang happy songs of the good old days bringing tears to my eyes!

It was so sad to even imagine how these gentle beings must be feeling. Lonely and waiting for death, without

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any one by their side! Though the home was clean and beautifully maintained, there was something missing — love!

Soon the time arrived for me to say good-bye. I felt really sorry to even leave them and let them rot in loneliness. After all, we too someday will grow old and would want our loved ones by our side!

That very night a vision appeared in my dreams saying, "Remember, if you children desert your parents and make them cry, then someday your own children will leave you in tears and will wait for you to die!"

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excellent.

Having found such good facilities, we were disappointed to observe that only three rooms were occupied in the Nursing Home section. We would like to urge Parsi couples to avail of the facilities of the Parsee General Hospital.

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Bilimora beckons

Parsis who desire to have a holiday at affordable rates should visit Bilimora and see for themselves the institutions their ancestors built nearly a century ago. We have historical links with Gujarat. It is our duty to visit our places of pilgrimage and to renew our ties with the villages and towns where our ancestors flourished.

Situated between Valsad and Navsari on the Western Railway, at one time there were 2,000 Parsis residing in Bilimora. Presently the Parsis there are about 150. The Bilimora Parsi Zarthushti Anjuman Trust Funds (established in 1837) manages the Gabba Adarian founded in 1899, The Tata Baug Dharamshala, Rustom Baug and the dakhmas. Bilimora has only one mobed, Ervad Percy Gustadji Panthaki, a 26-year-old eligible bachelor who looks

after the Adarian and the N. J. Wadia dadgah.

The Tata Baug Parsi Dharamshala has been recently renovated. It has a big spacious hall and kitchen on the ground floor. On the first floor are four rooms, each with attached bath and toilet. There is also a dormitory with five beds. Vispi Hormusji Kika and his wife Viloo manage the Dharamshala and provide sumptuous and tasty meals. The charges are very nominal at Rs 50 per head per day for lodging and Rs 170 per head per day for full day's meals. The Dharamshala is located at Bazaar Street, Bilimora, 396321, tel (02634) 88092, about one kilometer west of Bilimora station. State Transport buses and autorickshaws are easily available.

Mancherji Tata, a resident of Bilimora, built this Tata Baug in memory of his late father Shapoorji Koooverji at his own expense on March 9, 1912 at a cost of Rs 39,200 (including furniture) and entrusted it to the Bilimora Anjuman for use as a dharamshala by all Zarathushtis.

The J. B. Petit Library and the bunder on Ambika river are within a few minutes' walking distance from Tata Baug. The Petit Library founded 120 years ago has rare books on Parsi history.

Next to Tata Baug is Rustom Baug, a spacious hall which is let out for use on festive occasions. The late Rustamji Merwanji (who died in Bombay on *roz* Adar, *mah* Amardad, 1234 AY) built Rustom Baug in memory of his late father Merwanji Limjibhai at a cost of Rs 6,000. It was inaugurated on July 10, 1844.

The Mancherji and Ratanji Tata High School was built in 1916 at a total cost of Rs 42,000 of which Mancherji Shapurji Tata and Ruttonji Shapurji Tata donated one half and the rest together with the site was graciously contributed by the government of Maharaja Gaekwad. In addition to this donation Mancherji and Ruttonji contributed a liberal sum of Rs 25,000 for converting Bilimora Anglo Vernacular School into a high school and maintaining it as such, and Rs 20,000 for suitable furniture.

Close to the Tata School is the Mengusi Hospital founded in 1957 and run by the Bilimora Nagarpalika, known as the Burjorji Nusserwanji Mengusi Sarwajanik Hospital and Manekbai and Goolbai Mengusi Sarwajanik Maternity Home. Munchersha Mengusi (Billimoria) contributed generously a sum of one

continued on page 41

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Events and Personalities

New marriage registrar

Parsi Zoroastrians of West Bengal "have finally got someone at hand to register their marriages," noted a write-up in the *Hindustan Times* of March 21, 2002. By an order signed by the chief justice of the High Court of Calcutta, Adi Bapuji Rabadi, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Association (PZA) of Calcutta and vice chairman of the West Bengal Minorities Commission was appointed marriage registrar for the Parsis of West Bengal under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936, according to a communication from PZA honorary joint secretary Dinshaw Surty.

Earlier Parsi couples who were blessed with an ashirwad ceremony and sought to emigrate found that the immigration authorities would not recognize this marriage, compelling them to register with the registrar of Parsi marriages in Bombay, losing much precious time to obtain a legal sanction to their union.

"Now for a fee of two rupees per marriage, I can issue the certificate in a day," Rabadi was quoted in *The Times of India* of March 25, 2002. To be governed under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, it is imperative to register all marriages with the Parsi registrar. All unregistered Parsi couples should approach him either at the Minorities Commission office at Bhawani Bhavan or at his residence, urged Rabadi. First appointed as a member of the State Minorities Commission in 1996 and now officiating as vice chairman in his second term on the Commission, Rabadi explained that before 1996 there were no Parsi representatives to press for a

registrar. The chairman of the Commission K. M. Yusuf had reportedly taken up the matter with the state government at the behest of Rabadi.

In a community of 1,000 Parsis eight to 10 marriages are held every year in Calcutta, pointed out Rabadi adding that "marriage will never again be a problem for Calcutta Parsis." (At the time of going to press, *Parsiana* learnt of Rabadi's demise on July 24, 2002).



Rabadi: brought respite

Mayor's memento

On the sesquicentennial celebration of the Surat Municipal Corporation 90-year-old Dr Ratan R. Marshall was honored as an outstanding citizen of the city. While the mayor of Surat Ajay Choksy presented him a memento and a shawl, the chairperson of the cultural committee Darshna Jardosh referred to Marshall's contribution in the fields of literature, history, theater, culture and social work.

With his thesis on "History of Gujarati Journalism" Marshall became the first recipient to earn a PhD from the Bombay University in the section of Gujarati literature. Two years back the South Gujarat University had conferred on him the honorary degree of doctor of letters.

Referring to the history of Surat and the role played by Parsis in shaping it, Marshall recalled the contributions of luminaries like Fardunji Marzban, Bhimji Hadvaid, Byramjee Malabari, Lovji Wadia, Ardeshir Kotwal and Sorabji Adajania. In years past there were nearly one lakh Parsis in Surat, many of whom migrated to Bombay



Marshall: rare enthusiasm and grit

along with the British, pointed out Marshall. Today there are barely 3,500 Parsis remaining in Surat.

Having served the Surat Parsi Panchayat for 66 years, he is presently retained as special officer, mentions a press release. During his years as secretary of the Panchayat, he garnered experience in administering large funds and officiated as the secretary of the maternity home, general hospital, an infirmary, primary and secondary schools for boys and girls, technical and industrial institutes for boys and women, orphanages for boys and girls.

Marshall who had closely witnessed the Gandhian era and admitted to being "tremendously influenced by it," was disillusioned with people who could forget a struggle so fast. Having served on the advisory committee of the police, small savings, district development and rationing committees, Marshall had played a prominent part in the centenary celebration of the Surat Municipal Corporation. Amidst thunderous applause the enthusiastic nonagenarian invited the mayor to grace his birth centenary celebration in the coming decade. A former treasurer of the Parvatibai Leprosy Hospital near Surat at the request of the collector, Marshall continues to be its trustee to this day.

Gujarat Gaurav

His commitment and involvement in relief work activities over the last five years earned Surat businessman Burzin N. Chiniwala the Henry Jean Dunant International Award for Red Cross Development Work and the prestigious Gujarat Gaurav-2002 award. The awards were conferred on him by the governor of Gujarat Sunder Singh Bhandari on May 1, 2002 (Gujarat statehood day) at Gandhinagar's Ambedkar Hall in the

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Chiniwala (inset)
receiving award
from Bhandari

been active with relief measures during the cyclones in Orissa, Kandla and Andhra, the earthquake in Kutch-Bhuj, the Kargil war, the floods of 1997-98, the organization of health camps and first-aid training classes, mentions the press release.

Chiniwala was selected as the recipient of the Dunant Award jointly by the Commonwealth Association for Education for Adults (UNESCO affiliated NGO), The Asian Institute for Human Rights Education Global Open University (Milan) and the International Association of Educators for World Peace, mentions the press release. The Gujarat Gaurav was in recognition of his meritorious social work in the Surat region.

Smart scoring

Even as the community keeps deliberating on the need for reservation of seats for Zoroastrian students in its academic institutions, there are some outstanding students who have been consistently showing brilliant results at competitive examinations.

Farzana Behram Wadia from Poddar College with 89.83 percent at the Maharashtra state HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examination scored

the highest among the commerce students from Bombay. Arnaz Jimmy Parakh cleared the Bombay University's BCom examination with an impressive 80.86 percent, scoring 100 percent in accounting and auditing, 99 percent in computer systems and applications, and 90 percent in direct and indirect taxation. Poona's Sanaea Gaeve Dinshaw stood first in third year BCom from St Vincent's College of Commerce.

Wadia's achievement at the HSC examination won her the state board's recognition and a Saraswati Award and gold medal from the Rashtrawadi Congress Party. A consistently brilliant student, at the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination two years earlier she scored 90.13 percent ranking 23rd at the board, first in the F North Ward, first amongst all Parsi students and first in her J. B. Vachha High School for Parsi Girls, it was reported. Every year in School she had always stood first.

She enjoys the distinction of being the only student from Bombay who was declared the Dr Homi Bhabha Young Scientist in both the junior (1995-96) and senior (1998-99) category, winning gold medals at these competitions orga-

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nized by the Greater Bombay Science Teachers' Association. Wadia had received the Best Student Award in the Creative Science Workshop organized by the Nehru Science Centre and stood sixth in the merit list in the Bombay National Talent Search Examination held by the Brihan Mumbai Teachers' Association. Besides academics Wadia excels in extracurricular activities too. She was the carrom champion in School, participated in the inter-school volley ball tournaments and has won prizes in elocution, painting, music and prayer competitions at different times.

Twenty-year-old Parakh scored the highest in the University in two subjects — accounts and computers, she mentions. She stood 11th among the successful students from Bombay's H. R. College. Presently doing a one-year postgraduate diploma course at the Event Management Development Institute, she sees a future for herself in this field. She assists her friends who operate in the name of Ultimate Entertainment, serving as an instructor for their theater workshops. "I love compering shows," says Parakh who is honing her skills at the Xavier Institute of Communications. Having studied at St Agnes High School,

she obtained 83 percent marks in the SSC examination and 81 percent at the HSC examination. She lists public speaking and Indian music as her hobbies.

Dinshaw has been topping her class for the last three years and has been conferred the Best Student of the Year Award. President of the student council of St Vincent's College she was the first lady University representative of her College, mentions a press release. At the ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) examination when she scored 89.16 percent, she was awarded a ZOSTA (Zoroastrian Student Teacher Association) medal. Dinshaw has experience working in the accounts department of a financial company.

With the intention of encouraging "young achievers who are intelligent and capable of hard work to not let money or fees deter them," Rashid Minocher of Bangalore cites the example of Sam, the youngest of his five children, who completed his two-year MBA degree course from the Northeastern University in Boston last year, placed effectively among the top two percent of nationwide business school graduates for the year 2001.

As writes Rashid, "The funds required



Above: Wadia (left) and Parakh
Alongside: Dinshaw



for just the first year of a two-year MBA course was \$41,000 (Rs 19 lakhs), enough to deter the bravest heart... Employing a step-by-step approach he succeeded in obtaining (grants and loans) of Rs 65,000 through the Parsi Punchayet and other Parsi educational trusts in Bombay. This covered his travel costs. Selling his personal effects, he put together funds for procuring \$2,000 which he was required to put up front in cash when registering at College. Contrary to all negative forecasts of immediate campus employment, he impressed well enough to secure a 20-hour/week assistantship before classes even commenced. This gave him



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a total waiver on his tuition fee of \$25,000 and, in addition, a monthly cash stipend which met the rent for his accommodation at the campus itself with a bit left over for food, books, etc."

Upon his graduation he was nominated and elected to the Business Schools of America Honor Society — Beta Gamma Sigma, for "outstanding scholastic achievement" as reads his citation. "His F-1 student visa permitted him to work as an intern for one year beyond his graduation. He obtained placement with the logistics division of one of the world's largest multinational corporations in the field of transportation. The company has now sponsored and obtained for him H-1B visa status for the next three years."

Rashid has information on loan possibilities within USA with a low interest rate (six to eight percent) repayable over 20 years, the sole requirement being a counter guarantee from a US resident who is creditworthy. Those interested can contact him at 32, Cunningham Road, Bangalore 560052, Tel: (O)2250323, (R) 2256296, 2088157.

Shimmering artworks

Four years after her last solo exhibition at Gallery Chemould, Simeen Cyrus Oshidar's recent paintings were on view at the same venue from April 11 to May 4, 2002. Nine months of painstaking effort resulted in 12 of her paintings being exhibited, the bigger canvases sized 36"x48" and the smaller ones, 36"x30". Having explored with different mediums at different stages of her art evolution, the current exhibition shows many of her oil paintings bearing sequins.

Drawing heavily from civilizations

as diverse as Egyptian, Vedic and Zoroastrian — the circular form is the common thread running through her work, depicting the cyclical nature of life, be it the swollen womb, the yolk of the egg or the white moon. Intrigued by the subject of creation Oshidar conveyed in an interview in *The Brief*, "I find mythology, and more so, the personification of elements, to be fantastic visuals." The artistic landscape dominated by human form showcases imagery, open to viewer interpretation, and is highlighted by the lack of subtitles. "I started by picking up from the visual of a flat disc," says the alumna of the Baroda School of Art. As Oshidar had conveyed to fellow artist Mehli Gobhai, "I use the symbolism of hair a lot. I find it a strong symbol of femininity, its fluidity, its strength, its adaptability. It has varied textures; it is mysterious, dark and deep..."

Among her visuals which leave a lasting impression are a river of light flowing through a monumental female form; a sequinned halo around the head of a sensuous woman; or the upside down visual of an angel.

"This picture emerged after the September 11 (tragedy)," says the artist. "The newspapers carried this visual of an African American falling to his death. Though very painful, the frame also seemed peaceful because the man had accepted the eventuality/ inevitability of death. My painting brings a ray of hope to the bleak scenario." The pair of wings attached to the man's body not only suggests that

he is an angel, but also conveys the message that he, in accepting his end, will rise upward and onward.

Six of her exhibits have already found takers. Oshidar's favorite though was the visual of a man portrayed almost as a mute spectator to the drama unfold-



Oshidar with her 30"x36" oil and sequins painting



Danseuse Khambatta receiving certificate from Mulla



ing within him. Quite stark in presentation, with his torso asunder, it reveals the cosmic play of sky and earth, personified by two sequinned blue and green forms. "This painting highlights that creation is not only happening all the time, but also happening within us," says a philosophical Oshidar.

Thirty-nine year-old Oshidar has had four solo exhibitions since the first one in 1991 and has participated in nearly a dozen group exhibitions supporting innumerable causes like the victims of

the Gujarat riots, Akanksha, Artists against Communalism, Child Relief and You...

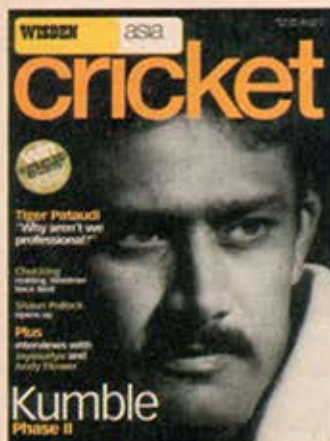
Dazzling dance

Making her presence felt on the stage during her maiden solo dance performance, Kathak Rang Pravesh, was 15-year-old danseuse Khushnawaz Mahiyar Khambatta. Impressing the audience with her crisp footwork, grace and style during her nearly two-hour program on May 17, 2002 at Bombay's Tejpal Auditorium, she was able to demonstrate the finer nuances of Kathak, the classical dance style of North India.

For the past six years Khambatta has been honing her dance skills under the guidance of her guru Hosi Mulla who runs the Indian dance academy ManGalam, jointly with Mahendra Boricha. Mulla, in turn, had received his Kathak training from Gopi Krishna and Vijay Kumar Shrestha and earlier he performed with troupes like Yogendra Desai's Kala Bhavan and Asha Parekh's

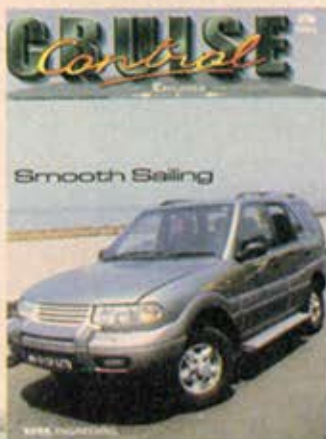


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Chauladevi and Anarkali and others. Under the auspices of his own group called Sarjan he has performed many dance programs and choreographed ballets in India and abroad. Having designed costumes for several shows, for Khambatta's performance too the costumes had been designed by Mulla and Boricha.

After the paeans in honor of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Saraswati, Khambatta brought forth the dazzle of Holi and described the colors and moods of the different seasons. The *chakkars* or the circular turns associated with Kathak are included in every performance and Khambatta took 27 consecutive *chakkars* to the delight of the audience. The highlight of the post-intermission session was the thali dance when she balanced herself on a plate while maintaining the rhythm of the dance. Her controlled footwork when she could replicate the percussion sounds through the ghungroos she was wearing was highly appreciated by the audience. A blister on her foot just three days prior to the performance necessitated a bandage on the day of the performance, mentions her mother Mahawaz. But absorbed as she was in her dance Khambatta seemed to have forgotten the pain and inconvenience. The songs soulfully rendered by Soli Kapadia added a special magic to the evening.

A standard X student of Bombay's J. B. Vachha High School for Girls, besides dancing, Khambatta's other interests are singing and trekking. Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Jamshed Guzder and co-trustee Rustom Tirandaz who were present for the dance show acclaimed her performance. At a subsequent community event she won recognition from Guzder and the Nowroz Baug Play Centre.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 28

lakh rupees in memory of his father Burjorji and mother Manekbai and wife Goolbai. The government of Bombay built this Hospital at a cost of Rs 4,25,000.

The Bilimora Zoroastrian Club Building was built by Ruttonji Shapurji Tata at his own expense and presented to the Club on December 25, 1921. In the same compound there is a Seth Dhunjishah Dadabhai Gabba Building which, with the surrounding 39,950 sq ft of land and trees valued at Rs 21,000, was gifted to the Bilimora Zoroastrian Club by Gabba on May 23, 1920.

The Anjuman has sold a portion of the land surrounding the dakhmas. It plans to build a compound wall around the dakhmas. The dakhma and sagdi were built in 1880.

From Bilimora, one can plan a trip to Gandevi (eight km away) and Chikhli (10 km) both of which have agiaries or to Vandsa or to the Saputara hill station.

MARZBAN GIARA

Signal serial

Humata Hukhta Hvarshtha is the only program for Parsis which was able to

complete 52 episodes in spite of acute financial difficulties. It is befitting that the World Zoroastrian Organisation recognized the efforts of the able director Cyrus Dastoor and his efficient band of assistants.

On April 28 a pleasant surprise awaited me when I opened my television. The same program was on in full swing, but on a different channel Alfa Zee.

The episode on May 26, 2002 of Gustad Padshah and Lord Zoroaster performed by schoolchildren was in my opinion the most unique. This is what religious minded Parsis and the other communities like Hindus, Muslims, Christians want to see.

DINSHAW D. NATERWALLA

The songs of Zarathushtra

Zarathushtra wrote beautiful songs/ Teaching us how to live in unity/ And through a progressive mentality/ Get rid of what leads us to the path of wrong. The Lord of wisdom was his inspiration/ He also contemplated nature and creation/ In his untiring search for happiness/ Found the greatest treasure of righteousness.

He asked a lot of questions/ Looking for

a divine orientation The Wise one in his/ her dominion/ Noticed his struggle for wisdom/ Long ago on a historical occasion/ There was a wonderful conversation/ Ahura Mazda: What can I do for you?/ Zarathushtra: I want to find Spenta Mainyu.../ Ahura Mazda: It is achieved through righteousness.../ Which I created to promote truth and happiness.

The leader of the world was born/ As Zarathushtra he was known/ He elected to rehabilitate the entire world/ In a mission to praise his friendly Lord.

Zarathushtra made an important plan/ It was to spread the Gathic songs/ All over the surface of terrestrial lands/ In order to destroy the house of wrong.

Putting in its place a new foundation/ To build a school of good mind/ Where good thoughts, good words and good actions/ Are the main steps to reach the divine.

The Gathic seeds are being cultivated/ Strongly the roots and leaves are growing/ With the sacred help of the "all-knowing"/ Soon infinite fruits with its seeds will be spreading.

The beauty of Zarathushtra's words/ Is that they were meant for the whole world/ In his teachings, universal was his goal/ Every person should meet their Gathic

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soul.

Finally.../This is just the author's impression/From a learning experience/Obtained from an ancient orientation/That was Zarathushtra's legacy of benevolence!

Dr JOSÉ LUIS ABREU

Zarathushtrian Group and Spenta University
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Enduring all things

People in society today seem unable, or disinclined, to put up with the misfortunes which have always afflicted humanity. It is true that some of these misfortunes can be avoided by a rearrangement of the manner in which society operates primarily in the West; they can be cured by reform. But the overwhelming majority cannot.

There are things such as an unhappy marriage, or ungrateful children/family members, frustrated ambition, unsuitable work, incurable disease, or loneliness and the dreadful effects of old age in limiting personal choice and mobility. This last condition, in fact, may demonstrate how difficult it sometimes is to distinguish between afflictions over which there is virtually no human control and those which are the consequence of avoidable choices.

The same medical advances that have enabled us to remove some types of physical pain have also, combined with environmental improvements, produced a lengthening of the average lifespan. But for many, there are no clear religious or philosophical goals that are considered the purpose of life — let alone an extended one — and the additional years would seem to contribute little either to human wisdom or to personal development. They are spent, indeed, in conditions of growing bodily discomfort and emotional loneliness.

Without an identifiable purpose, life in decrepitude can be a burden that few would rationally choose, but very many as a matter of record are seemingly glad to endure. Sometimes, of course, their condition is involuntary — forced upon them by well-meaning relatives who urge every medical means of keeping loved ones alive.

"Ethical considerations," as defined and practiced, are not much help, since they are evidently devised by committees whose ethical criteria appear to be supplied by an inclination to do whatever alleviates human bodily suffering rather than by reference to any objective or traditional corpus of philosophical or



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religious thought.

The Zoroastrian religion teaches acceptance of personal misfortune, rather than blaming others, and the conversion of affliction into the raw material of spiritual formation. Zoroaster told his followers to love their enemies, to walk the other mile, to forgive the brother who sins against you and to endure the sufferings of the present life.

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

Roni, the *ratheshtar*

When noted scholar, author and orator Roni K. Khan passed away suddenly on August 2, 2002 the news sent a shock wave not only among community members in India but all over the world. Friends from the UK (including the president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe), USA and Canada started sending condolence messages. I had known Khan for about a decade and both of us shared a common interest in religious research and writing. Both of us also shared a common interest in good food. I remember travelling with him a few years ago from Nasik to Bombay and polishing off between the two of us four double omelets at the Igatpuri railway

station. I also have happy memories of a dinner we both had at a restaurant in Colaba on the eve of a historic Parsi public meeting that was to take place in Bombay. Both of us were exhausted after weeks of planning and the running around. We ate like there was no tomorrow and he generously picked up the bill on agreement that the next time we repeat the celebration it would be on my account. Sadly there was never a next time.

Khan's scholarly articles in *Jam-e-Jamshed* and other publications were always a joy to read. When his book *Is the Zarathushtrian Religion Universal?* was published last year, he insisted that only I should review it in *Jamé*, which of course I did with pleasure.

While researching and writing he would go into great detail, often burning the midnight oil. And the finished product would always be a work of art. Khan was such a wonderful wordsmith that he could blend the heavy pedantry of scholarship with the simplicity of words. He was doubtlessly a gifted man and he used his skills wisely, effectively and for the good of the community.

He was a true *ratheshtar* (soldier) and whether it was the controversial issue of conversion, intermarriage, dakhmenashini he would wield his pen to demolish the lie and restore the truth. And he always wrote with such grace and felicity of the pen. He could make his adversary see the lightning without feeling the bolt.

When one group was playing havoc with the religious sentiments of the Parsi community, it was Khan who originally thought of organizing the historic all vada dasturs meeting at the Framji Cawasji Hall in Bombay. He worked tirelessly for this historic meeting, often ringing me up past midnight and going into minute details. I would often feel stressed but I knew that this was a price one had to pay for working with a perfectionist.

Khan held the late Behramshah Pithavala in great esteem. His spirit survives in the works of scholarship that he has left behind for posterity. Khan was a good friend of mine. But more important than that is the fact that he was a true friend of our community and a great friend of our religion.

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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A royal visit

Arnavaz S. Mama

British Zoroastrians welcome the first ever royal visitors to Zoroastrian house

It is a parallel of sorts. The Achaemenian King Cyrus came to be the Anointed of the Lord in the *Old Testament* for having freed the Jews from their Babylonian captivity and helped them rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. The British monarchy remains gratefully etched in Zoroastrian memory for shielding their emissary Manekji Limji Hataria and nudging the Iranian Shah Naseruddin Qajar, on a state visit to London, into listening to Parsi petitions for the amelioration of their Iranian brethren. *Aapri* Victoria, working through her ministers and ambassadors, is believed to have facilitated the abolition of the Jazia Tax on Zoroastrians in Iran... Certainly, Sir Dinshaw Petit received the glad tidings in August 1882 through the British Embassy in Tehran.

Thus the Zoroastrians of the UK, as faithful subjects of Victoria's fourth successor to the British throne, celebrated the golden jubilee of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. The thanksgiving jashan had been held on June 1, 2002, the actual 50th anniversary of the Queen's succession, followed by the world launch of *A Zoroastrian Tapestry—Art, Religion & Culture*, a 762+ page illustrated volume on the religion, art, history and culture of the Zoroastrian people edited by Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree.

June 26, 2002 however became the more historic occasion when the Queen's personal emissaries, her son Prince Edward and his wife Sophie, the Earl and Countess

ess of Wessex, chose to visit the new Zoroastrian Centre at Harrow.

Auspiciously bedecked with lime decorations (chowk) outside the main door, festooned with garlands and the Union Jack, the former Alexandra Cinema provided the backdrop to the line up of ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) office bearers, trustees and past presidents — and their wives — as flag waving children welcomed the royal couple. To the resounding bars of Richard Strauss' *Thus Spake Zarathushtra*, former ZTFE president Beroze Mody dabbed vermilion tilas on both their foreheads and showered welcoming grains of rice in the Parsi tradition followed by Mahnaz Khosraviani and Ashraf Falahati sprinkling their hands with rose water, presenting a mirror to their smiling faces and a tidbit to sweeten the tongue in the Iranian ceremony of welcome.

The youthful ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, matching the Prince in age and

felicity of tongue, led in the entourage, explaining customs and traditions and introducing outstanding community members lined up en route. Accompanying the Countess was Shehnaz Mistry while the Mayor and Mayoress of Harrow were similarly escorted by ZTFE vice president Farokh Sorab and his wife Jesmin respectively.

The procession wended its way into the Centre to the accompaniment of the Farsi song *Khan Ashem Vohu* and *Bagu Yatha Ahu* and was greeted with vociferous clapping on entering the Zartoshty Brothers Hall

where nearly 700 persons were gathered to welcome the royal couple. Among them were local members of academia like Profs John Hinnells and David Bivar, Drs

Sarah Stewart, Rashna Writer and Almut Hintze, members of the Inter Faith Network in Britain, notably its deputy director Dr Harriet Crabtree, Helen Bayne, head of the Golden Jubilee Office at Buckingham Palace, India's attorney general Soli Sorabjee, managing director of Godrej Soaps Nadir Godrej, art historian and editor Pheroza Godrej and others.

When the dignitaries had taken their seats in the pit of the former cinema (split level flooring is a feature of the art deco heritage construction of the Centre) the mobeds, standing in a row, lit the fire in the sparkling *afarganyu* before them on the stage, intoning a prayer for the continued well being of Queen Elizabeth, the House of Windsor and the country of Great Britain which was later briefly explained in English by former ZTFE president Ervad Zal Sethna. While the audience covered their heads as traditionally required, Mistry whipped out a black satin skull cap and placed it firmly on the Prince's head. If Edward was taken aback, he did not



Seated (from left) Kersey Jasavala, N. Godrej, Mistry, Countess, Prince and Mayor

Photo: Kee Photographics

Above: New Zoroastrian Centre at Harrow

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(From left) 1. D. Mistry, Prince and Countess; 2. Mody welcoming the Prince; 3. Prince greeting Shahrokh and Simin Shahrokh, Rusi and Roshan Dalal; 4. B. Avari presenting memento to Countess; 5. Munshi and Sorab presenting gara to Countess; 6. Iranian representatives presenting bracelet to Countess; 7. J. Sorab, Prince and P. Godrej; 8 & 9 Countess with Billimoria and Sarosh; 10. Sodhi with Prince; 11. Deboo, Shahrokh Shahrokh and Jila; 12. N. Avari presenting scroll to Prince

Photos: Kee Photographics

continued on page 143

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The regal ranks

An unprecedented number of Parsis are currently distinguishing themselves in the armed forces

Parinaz M. Gandhi

There is reason to feel secure. Among those at the helm of India's defence forces are some Parsis who are currently holding senior positions. Flying high in the Indian skies are five Zoroastrians — Air Marshals Teshter J. Master, Manek B. Madon and Adi R. Gandhi, with Air Vice Marshals Ramyar K. Batha and Fali H. Major. The earth bound can root for the success of Lieutenant General Rostum K. Nanavatty and Major General Arun D. Nargolwala who keep a vigil on the land boundaries. Riding the crest on the naval front is Rear Admiral Rustom F. Contractor.

"It is perhaps for the first time in the history of our defence forces that we have so many senior Parsi...general, flag and air rank officers...at one time," observed Major who was instrumental in helping *Parsiana* establish contacts with these respected individuals. Since it would not have been possible to meet all of them at their respective postings we requested them to send us their life profile to serve as an inspiration and encouragement to others contemplating a career in the armed forces.

Over the years, there are several Parsis who have made their mark in a free India. In the first 20 years after India's independence, Parsis who had reached the pinnacle in the different arms of the defence services were Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw as the head of the army, Air Marshal Aspi Engineer as chief of air staff and Admiral Jal Cursetjee as chief of naval staff. Two decades later shone out Lt Gen Adi Sethna as vice chief of the army staff and Air Marshall Edul Dhatigara as vice chief of the air staff. Among the others to reach the rank of lieutenant general were Jangoo Satarawalla and Faridoon Billimoria (see "The Gallant Decades," *Parsiana*, March 1991).

The three Parsis currently serving as air marshals had been commissioned as

fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 1963 and had carried out extensive missions during the Indo-Pakistan wars in 1965 and 1971.

Prior to his current assignment as air officer commanding-in-chief, training command, IAF, Master was inspector general of the IAF at the Air headquarters. Besides his staff appointments at Air headquarters and air commands he was posted to the ministry of defence production as planning officer (air) where he was intimately involved with various aviation projects. He was the defence and air attache at the embassy of India in Washington from April 1992-March 1995. On his return from the USA he was appointed commandant of the prestigious College of Defence Management, Secunderabad.

Fifty-nine-year-old Master who has an MSc in defence studies from the Madras University, had served as instructor at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He has flown 2,500 hours comprising 4,000 missions on various types of fighter aircraft and is a founder member of the premier fighter flying establishment of the IAF for tactics development and training of combat leaders. For his contribution to the IAF he was awarded the Ati Vishist Seva Medal (AVSM) in 1992. The Param Vishist Seva Medal (PVSM), which recognizes an individual's lifetime achievements and distinguished service of the most exceptional order, was conferred this year by the President of India.

Born to Khorshed and Jall Master in Bombay, Teshter's father was a manager at the Sassoon and Alliance Silk Mills for over 30 years. After studying at the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, he proceeded to Poona's N. Wadia College and Bombay's St Xavier's College although he had stood first in merit for entry to the 21st National Defence Academy (NDA)

course. His brother Jehangir and he joined the IAF together in 1961 but his brother retired after 20 years of helicopter flying. Teshter's wife Daphne is an educationist and their two children Teshter Jr and Tina, presently in the USA, are executives in the management field. Travel, music, reading and good cuisine are a family passion.

Prior to his present posting as air officer commanding-in-chief of the eastern air command, Madon was senior air staff officer at the western air command, one of the front-line operational commands of the IAF. Commodore commandant of a front-line MiG-21 squadron, Madon has flown almost all types of fighter aircraft in the inventory of the IAF and has approximately 5,000 flying hours to his credit. A qualified flying instructor as also a fighter combat leader, Madon has served as senior directing staff at the premier Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment.

An alumnus of the College of Defence Management, College of Air Warfare, National Defence College and Administrative Staff College of India, Madon later served as commandant of the Air Force Academy in Hyderabad, the alma mater of some of the finest pilots in the world. At the ministry of defence he was appointed project manager, Aircraft Project Management Organisation.

Twice he was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal for his professionalism and acts of gallantry. In the senior rank he was awarded the AVSM for service of a very high order, and in 2002, the PVSM. Wife Yasmin, a teacher by profession, has written, directed and acted in Hindi and English plays and has served as president of the Air Force Wives' Welfare Association at Hasimara and Hyderabad. Their daughter Farnaz and son Kaizad are settled in Australia.

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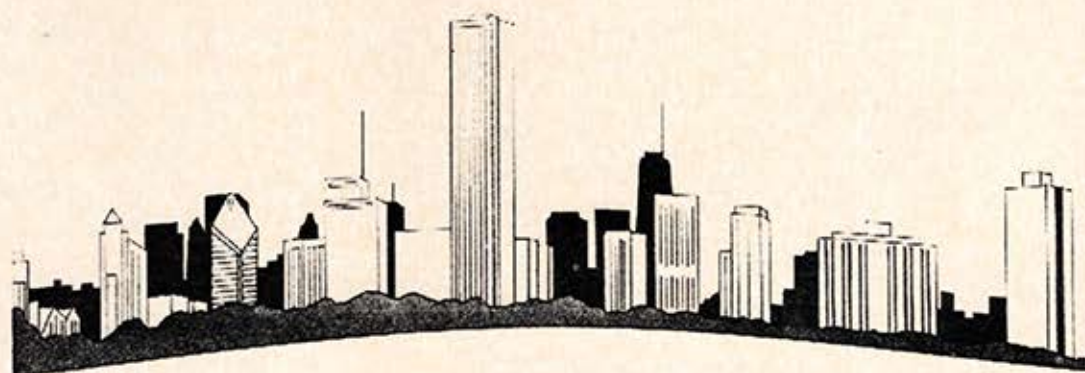
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(From left) Top row:
Nanavatty, Master,
Madon and Ghandhi
Second row:
Nargolwala, Contractor
and Major

over as air officer commanding-in-chief of the western air command. Prior to that he was senior air staff officer at the western air command at New Delhi. During his 39-year tenure of service Ghandhi has served as chairman of the AF sports control board and in the office of director personnel (officers) dealing with manpower management of the entire officer cadre of the IAF. Before taking charge as commandant of the College of Air Warfare at Secunderabad, the premier think tank of the Air Force, Ghandhi had gained experience as the directing staff (air) at the Army College of Combat, Mhow and as director of Air Staff Inspection.

Ghandhi has flown over 5,500 sorties on fighter aircraft during his service career and as a young flying officer fighting the 1965 war he was the youngest pilot to be awarded the Vir Chakra for having shot down a Pakistani F-86 Sabre aircraft from his Hunter. A fighter combat leader (directing staff) he has served two tenures at the Tactics and Combat Development Establishment and is a master green pilot, the highest professional grading and command examiner of long standing. The AVSM was conferred on him in 1994 and he was also presented the three star category for safe and accident free flying.

From a young age Ghandhi wanted to join the armed forces and being a keen swimmer he enrolled for the Sea Cadet Corps where he had reached the rank of leading seaman. However when he was in his final year at Bombay's Campion School in 1960 he was taken to see the IAF air show off Marine Drive. After seeing all the aircraft streaking across the Bombay skyline he decided the Air Force was a better option to the Navy!

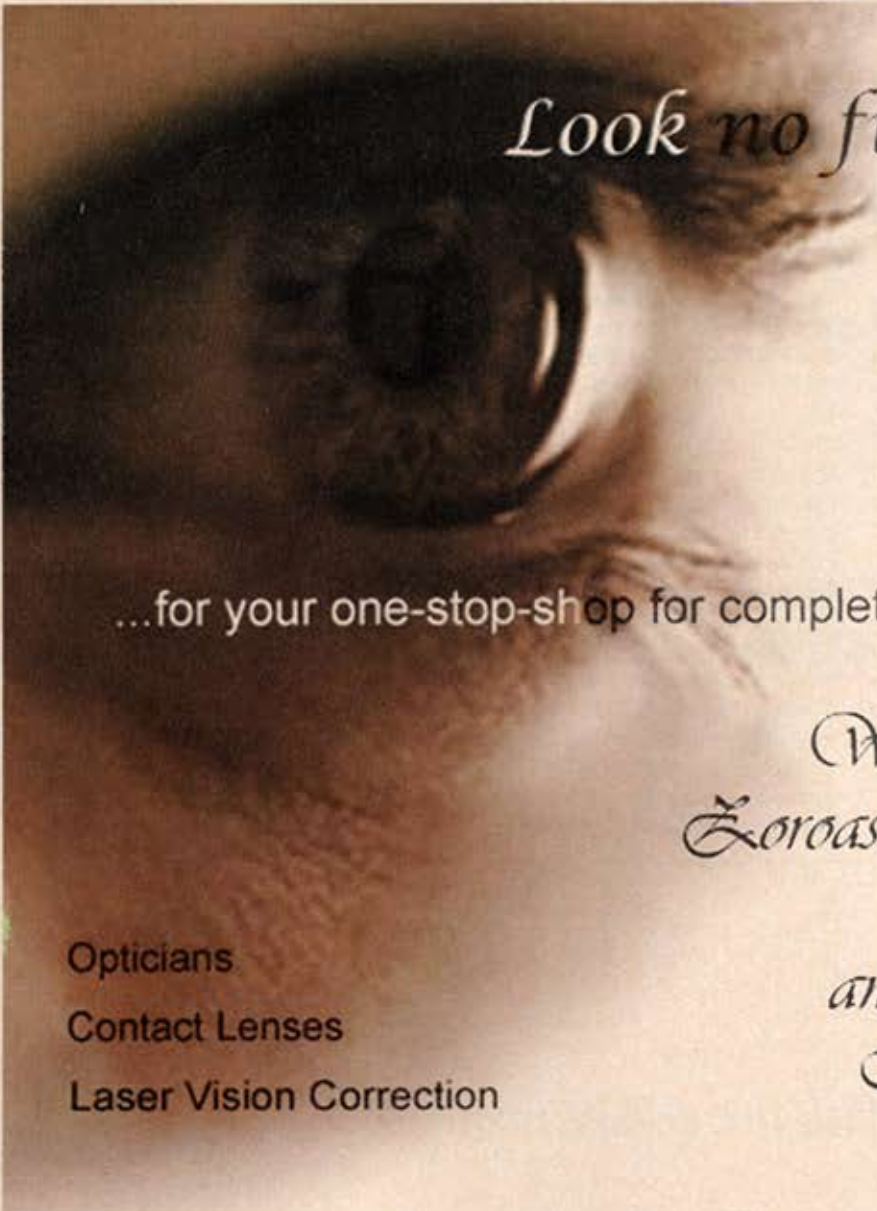
Son of Dolly and Rustomji Ghandhi, the love for adventure was inborn in Adi. His father who owned the famous Friend's Cabin restaurant in Bombay had, along with Rattan Shroff and Keki Kharas set off on a cycle tour around the world in the 1930s, taking nine years to cover 50,000 miles. Adi's wife Matilda had served with the UN Peace Force along with an Indian Army Field Hospital in the Congo as an army officer in 1963. They have two daughters, Meher who is settled in Sydney and Shanaz who is pursuing her PhD in genetics at the City College, New York.

Both the air vice marshals currently function as assistant chief of air staff and both are based at the Air Force headquarters, Vayu Bhavan in New Delhi. Batha's recent appointments include engineering and planning functions at operational command and Air

headquarters. Having joined the IAF under the University entry scheme in 1964, Batha underwent training as aeronautical engineer at the Air Force Technical College before he took up service as technical officer in fighter squadrons and discharged middle and directional level duties. He was awarded the Vishist Seva Medal for distinguished service in 1996.

Son of Homai and Keki Batha, Ramyar was born in Dhanbad in 1944 and studied at the Batha High School, Panchgani initially before proceeding to the Patna Higher Secondary School whence he matriculated. After his Inter Science from Patna's Science College he did his BSc Engineering in electronics and communications from BIT Sindri. He is married to Behroze and they have two daughters Anahita and Farnaza.

With over 8,000 hours of accident free flying to his credit Major enjoys the distinction of raising, forming and commanding the very first MI-17 squadron of the IAF in 1985 and inducted this helicopter for operations in the Siachen glacier. Since he was commissioned in the IAF in 1967 he has flown most types of helicopters in the IAF and was even instrumental in forming the first MI-8 flight in Air headquarters command



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The listing below shows the comparative ranks conferred by the army/navy/air force on officers decorated with stars

	Army	Navy	Air Force
*****	Field Marshal	Admiral of the Fleet	Marshal of the Air Force
****	General	Admiral	Air Chief Marshal
***	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	Air Marshal
**	Major General	Rear Admiral	Air Vice Marshal
*	Brigadier	Commander	Air Commander

squadron in 1983 for VVIP duties.

Among the other assignments Major has handled are as air officer commanding of an Air Force selection board, air officer commanding of Air Force station Leh, director operations (transport and helicopters) at the Air headquarters. Before he won the AVSM in 2002 Major was conferred the Shaurya Chakra in 1992 and the Vayu Sena Medal (gallantry) in 1991. Born in Secunderabad to Homi Major, Fali's early education was at Wesley High School. He graduated from the National Defence College and did his higher command course from the College of Combat, Mhow. Fali and his wife Zarin have two married children: daughter Tooshna Homi Gandhi and son Zubin.

The responsibility for military and

counter terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir presently rests with Nanavatty who has taken over as general officer commanding-in-chief, northern command. Earlier too he had served as general officer commanding the 19 Infantry Division in Operation Rakshak in Jammu and Kashmir. As general officer commanding or commander he had conducted difficult operations in the terrains of the Siachen Glacier, Sri Lanka, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and South Assam.

Besides serving as chief of staff at the western and northern command headquarters, some of Nanavatty's important staff appointments in the past were as director commando cell in Army headquarters, in the directorate general of military operations, Indian Army liai-

son officer at the British Army's School of Infantry, Warminster, UK and as colonel general staff in the Army headquarters in the directorate general of perspective planning.

Among the awards conferred on Nanavatty are the PVSM, AVSM and the Uttam Yudh Seva Medal which recognized his distinguished services rendered in command of a brigade in Operation Meghdoot in Siachen.

Born to Dhan and Kaikhushru Nanavatty at Karwar in Karnataka, Rostum's schooling was at the Rajkumar College, Rajkot after which he studied at Bombay's St Xavier's College. His father was the inspector general of police of the states of Bombay, Maharashtra and Nagaland. Having joined the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun as a gentleman cadet of the 31st regular course, Rostum earned the Sword of Honour for being the best all round cadet and the Rajputana Rifles Gold Medal for tactics and leadership.

Nanavatty's wife Suniti is a teacher and an active social worker. Their elder son Rushad is studying for a postgraduate degree in international relations while Veer is studying architecture. An avid

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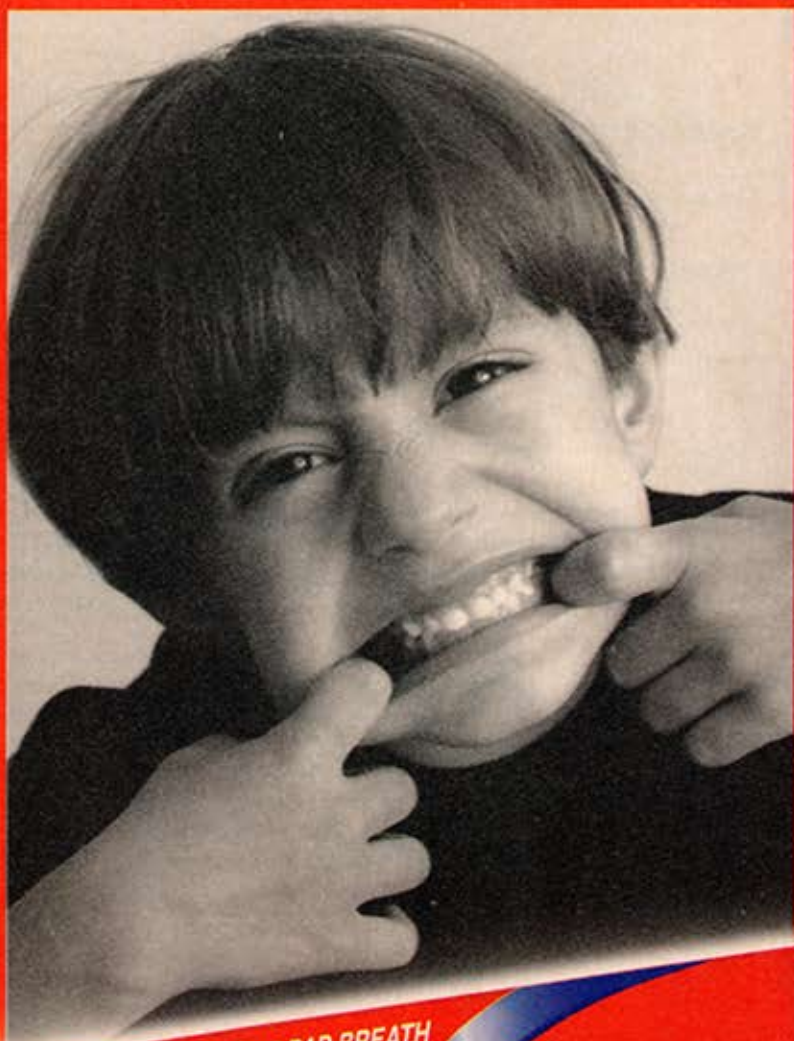
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football player who enjoys adventure sports, Nanavatty was once a keen shikari but is now interested in wildlife conservation and environmental issues.

Chief of staff of a corps in an operational area in Jammu and Kashmir, Nargolwala had earlier commanded a brigade in Nagaland and a division in Rajasthan. Holding a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in defence science, he was commissioned in the Indian Army in 1965 in the corps of engineers and has over the years held many distinguished command, staff and instructional appointments. Fifty-seven-year-old Nargolwala has represented the Army and Air Force as defence advisor at the embassy in Tehran. He has been instructor at the Commando Wing, College of Military Engineering, Poona and the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He is married and has two sons.

The onerous task of coordinating the precise anchoring of about 69 warships including 24 naval warships from overseas and the Indian Navy during the International Fleet Review — 2001 off the Gateway of India as the 'master of the fleet' fell on Contractor. At that time

he was commanding officer of *INS Viraat*, India's flagship, his last command at sea. Presently he is assistant chief of naval staff (information warfare and operations) at the Naval headquarters, New Delhi.

He has held staff and command appointments at the Naval headquarters, New Delhi, headquarters, eastern naval command, Visakhapatnam, as naval officer-in-charge, Port Blair and at the Naval Academy, Goa. He has served both aircraft carriers *Vikrant* and *Viraat*. He was sent to Masan in South Korea to oversee the building of India's first offshore patrol vessel *INS Sukanya* which he then commissioned and brought back to India as her first commanding officer. He has also commanded the Navy's guided missile destroyers *INS Rajput* and *INS Ranvijay*.

When a super cyclone hit Paradip port in October 1999 it was Contractor's "foresight and meticulous planning" of the relief operation code named "Operation Sahajya" from the eastern naval command in Visakhapatnam which brought timely aid to those in distress and made possible the reopening of the wrecked port within four days.

For exceptional devotion to duty which is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service, Contractor was conferred the Nao Sena Medal in 2002. Fifty-three-year-old Contractor is the sixth Parsi to attain the rank of rear admiral.

Born in Jabalpur to Hilla and Faramroze Contractor, Rustom attended St Francis De' Sales High School and Hislop College at Nagpur before joining the NDA at Khadakvasla as a naval cadet in 1968. At the entrance examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission and subsequently the Services Selection Board, Contractor had stood first in order of merit. He specialized in navigation and direction from the Navigation School in Cochin and spent a year at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London. Married to Thrity, they have one son and a daughter.

There is no knowing whether the feat of the present eight senior officers in the armed forces will be repeated in the coming decades. Having conducted themselves honorably, one can only hope that the coming generation will gain from the lives of these officers and gentlemen.



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The Surat impasse

The long simmering differences between the Surat Parsi Panchayat trustees and its critics have resulted in overt acts of hostility

Parinaz M. Gandhi

The impasse between the trustees of the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) and the members of the opposition who were seeking to oust those in power had in the past resulted in defamatory circulars, court cases, protest meetings and even a rally. But a new fury was witnessed in the first week of April 2002 when the trustees were mobbed on two occasions at the Panchayat office and even the intervention of the police had to be sought. The opponents were insistent that president Dr Sam Bhacca submit his resignation and the chief executive Sohrab Katpitia's services be terminated with immediate effect.

Pressing for greater transparency and accountability from the trustees, especially Bhacca who has been president for the last 16 years and Katpitia who has been with the Panchayat for the past 50 years, the opposition members have been demanding elections for the last several years. They have even gone to court on this issue and as the charity commissioner was not in favor of elections, they have appealed against his ruling. The SPP, in fact, is governed by the 1841 trust deed of the Parsee Surat Charity Fund (PSCF) whereby the right to appoint and remove trustees on the Surat board vests entirely with the Bombay based Fund.

On April 1, 2002 the vociferous and virulent opposition gheraoed the office of the SPP to show their displeasure with Bhacca and Katpitia. While Bhacca subsequently issued a clarification in the Press that his resignation had been sought under duress and he still continues as president, Katpitia insists that he has got no official communication from the Panchayat terminating his services. An-

other agitation followed on April 4 when four of the eight trustees — Jamshed Dotiwala, Noshir Dabhoiwala, Dr Dhanjishaw Dumasia and Hormazadiar Patel — signed a petition requesting Bhacca to step down as president to

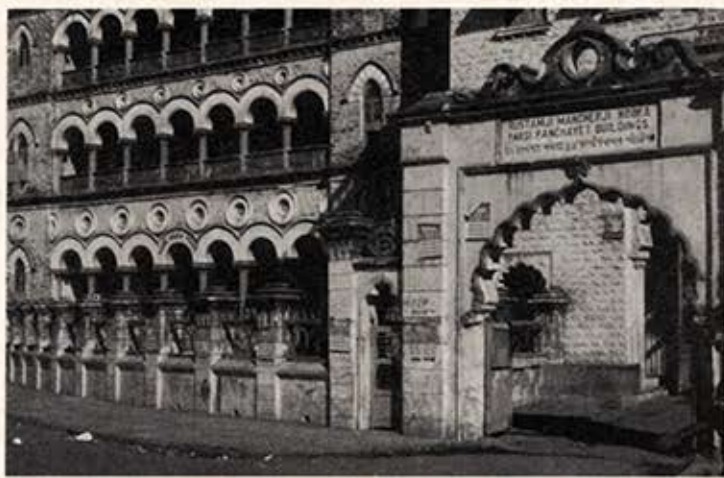
resigned and serious allegations have been made against its president...and his colleagues on board have asked him to resign. The trustees however leave the matter to the conscience of Dr Bhacca," read a letter sent to Bhacca by PSCF trustees on May 2, 2002.

For the present the PSCF "has decided to go slow...issue an indirect warning to Bhacca. We'll watch the situation with great care," conveyed Burjor Antia. Along with Antia the others serving as co-trustees of the PSCF are Rustam Khusrokhan, Firoze K. Vakil, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Dr Daraius T. Mody, Dosan R. Limboowalla and Burjor N. Vakeel. Until now the PSCF

was wont to play a neutral role. When appointments of new trustees had to be made, recommendations would come from Surat and after verifying the information they would officially announce the nomination of the new trustee whose tenure of office would last until life or until he/she chose to resign. An occasion for removal of a trustee had never arisen.

"The hallmark of a good trust is accountability, integrity and openness," maintains Antia, disappointed that differences of opinion between warring factions should result in a showdown at the Panchayat. He believes that trustees are bound to "deliver the goods and make people happy; not have vested interests... If someone were to make allegations against me, I'd immediately resign... file a suit for defamation against that person..."

The many sins of omission and commission said to have been perpetrated during Bhacca's regime have resulted in a "deterioration in (the) standard of Panchayat run organizations," noted a



The headquarters of the Surat Panchayat

appease the community. Bhacca maintained that since his appointment came from the PSCF he was bound to submit his resignation only to the parent body and not to anyone else demanding it. Following the unpleasant developments Dr Khushro Laskari and Dr Sheroo Sopariwala opted to resign from the trust board. Dr Minoo Parabia, Homai Shethna and Darius Master are the three new trustees appointed on the board. Dr Homi Dudhwala was absent at the time of the April 4 agitation. Had Bhacca resigned, Dumasia as senior trustee would have been at the helm of affairs which would have pleased the agitators since Dumasia has been one of the key spokesmen for the opposition fighting from within the Panchayat.

"The trustees (of the PSCF) were shocked and saddened to read and hear about the present position prevailing in (the) Surat Panchayat. Two trustees have

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circular issued by the members of the Surat Parsi Yuva Sangh (SPYS) in May 2002. The circular titled "Know the true face of the president of the SPP, know the irregularities and malpractice — the outcome of dictatorial regime in the working of the SPP," mentions that the "standard of education which once upon a time was at parity with any convent school has lost its reputation. Though the School is in a Parsi locality, Parsis have to send their children to far off schools. Only 10 Parsi girls study in Patel Girls School which shows a whopping overdraft of Rs 51 lakhs." Additionally the Surat Parsi General Hospital "appears to be (a) warehouse of junk. On an average eight to 10 patients are admitted per month and the Hospital runs in a loss of Rs 24 lakhs per annum," states the circular, continuing that housing, "which is the core problem of the Parsis, has been totally ignored despite (the SPP) having ample land and funds. Projects are incomplete since the last 20 years. The Surat Parsi Orphanage is in no better shape."

At a specially convened board meeting of the Panchayat on June 1 to meet the Parsiana representatives (Arnavaz Mama and the writer), the trustees in

attendance were Bhacca, Parabia, Shethna and Master. Those whose presence was missed were Dumasia, Dotiwala, Patel, Dudhwala and Dabhoiwala. Parsiana visited the community institutions caught in a vicious circle of inability to justify better facilities at higher costs because of poor patronage. Special officer, 91-year-old Dr Ratan Marshall explained how declining numbers, shift in residence and duplication of services (like those offered by the orphanage and infirmary) in nearby towns has resulted in the downfall of these majestic institutions.

The Panchayat managed schools are losing out on Parsi children in the absence of a permanent principal to manage the institution, asserts Dumasia. He alleges that one of the watchmen had physically struck an inmate of the Nariman Home, that there was a fraud in the xerox department, and that he found that no minutes have been recorded for one year.

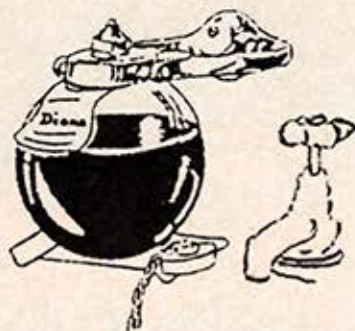
Dumasia maintains that he was planning to resign from the board in 1994 but "maaraa saahébé (he is a disciple of Minocher Godrej Pundole) kahyutahmé nikaltaa nahi (do not quit) because you will be chairman and serve the people." Last year Dumasia fought the trustees

by listing the board's alleged malpractices and taking the case up to the vigilance commissioner who ordered that the charity commissioner conduct a necessary enquiry into the workings of the Panchayat. His assumed role of a vigilant prefect is resented by trustees like Dabhoiwala who do not approve of Dumasia accessing the records available to him as a trustee and then passing on the information to the opposition.

Dumasia, who doubts the moral and ethical character of some of his co-trustees and of the Panchayat staff members, insists that all his battles are an act of "samaaj séva (social service)... We have fought verbally. We have not hit him (Bhacca)," insists Dumasia referring to the early April episodes. "É loko é lokonaa karam thi tuti gayaa (Bhacca and Katpitia's deeds brought their downfall)," he added.

In all their legal attempts to implicate the Panchayat they have been unsuccessful so they are now using intimidatory tactics, alleges Bhacca. And considering that most of the legal battles on behalf of the Panchayat were fought by Katpitia who felt that "the institution is greater than the individuals," he feels miffed that after 50 years of service, the

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last five of which were in an honorary capacity, he was reportedly shown such disdain. Bhacca too was pressurizing 74-year-old Katpitia to step down on the instigation of Dumasia who otherwise threatened to continue with his *toofan* (fights), claims Katpitia.

"*Saalo chitki né bethelo chhè. Jato nathi* (He is sticking to the seat; refusing to move out)" were some of the comments he had to take in his stride. Referring to the slow acts of mental torture he suffered, the animosity created at the work place and within his family, Katpitia says he feels humiliated. He is particularly aggrieved that Bhacca, who hitherto considered Katpitia his buffer, redirecting all the salvos aimed at him by saying, "Katpitia né malo (meet Katpitia)," did not once defend him. In fact at the second *gherao* on April 4, one of the opposition members feigned to ask of Bhacca how long he had been president. Refusing to rise to the bait Bhacca kept silent on this issue despite persistent enquiries from the mobsters. Finally one of them, unable to resist a dig at Bhacca, pretended to give a reply on Bhacca's behalf, "*Jaraa Katpitia né poochhvo parsé* (I will have to consult Katpitia)," a phrase purportedly repeated by Bhacca whenever he sought to dis-

miss a difficult issue facing him.

Katpitia's considerable knowledge on all laws, be it the Bombay Public Trust Act, Rent Act, Tenancy Act, Labor laws, Agricultural Ceiling Act, Town Planning Act, Income Tax laws... reportedly enabled him to diffuse many tense moments not only for the SPP but also the Bombay Parsi Panchayat which used his expertise to set their accounts in order. "Should I not remain faithful to the Panchayat by giving knowledge of the laws I know?" he asks rhetorically. Having started as an assistant accountant, he gradually rose to become chief executive officer. His alleged high-handed, curt and dismissive attitude has often been faulted as also his predilection to visit the Muslim dargahs. But this does not make him any less a Zoroastrian, insists Katpitia who always covers his head with a *topi* and is as regular with his Zoroastrian rituals. "The target (of attack) is Bhacca, not Katpitia," he conveys the observation made to him. But Bhacca does not realize that Katpitia is an important pillar, he points out.

In response to the opposition's allegation that he tends to be secretive, Katpitia notes, "Had we told them, what work would they have allowed us to do?" When offering free education to

Parsi students at the Panchayat managed schools, the SPP decided to take deposits from non-Parsis and raised more than one and a half crores of rupees. But this move was challenged by the opposition. When the Panchayat sought to make the Parsi General Hospital cosmopolitan so that better patronage would mean an improvement in facilities for the Parsi patients, the opposition filed a suit and there the matter languishes, he stated. Referring to the impossibility of maintaining a well equipped Maternity Hospital exclusively for Parsis (the Parsi General Hospital and the Maternity Hospital on the same complex are so designed that whilst they have separate entrances, the interconnecting corridors facilitate sharing of services), Katpitia gives the figures: There must be barely 1,500 Parsi females in Surat of whom 700/800 must be over 60 and another component of children below 15. How many Parsi deliveries can you then expect in this city and in this Hospital?

Among the community institutions in Surat which require greater patronage is the Hospital which until 1985 had 80-85 percent occupancy but had only six patients when *Parsiana* went there on June 2, 2002. According to Bhacca, the per patient cost at the Hospital works out

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to Rs 546 per day. Dr J. S. Shah who has been the RMO (resident medical officer) there since 1972 explained how earlier patients used to come from Amalner in Maharashtra and Bulsar for medical treatment here. But as medical facilities improved in the villages and the population of Parsis moved to the outskirts, they preferred using these services in their immediate vicinity. Presently attached to the Hospital are two physicians, four general surgeons, one orthopedic surgeon, one ENT surgeon, one ophthalmic surgeon, one dermatologist and two obstetricians/gynecologists. On an average there are 10/12 deliveries a year now in its maternity wing as against 20/25 in 1985, states Shah.

Having built up the corpus of the Panchayat, having fought hard to get the maximum price for the Panchayat on land deals which were considered hopeless, Katpitia says he is willing to face the entire board of trustees to clarify his stand on issues where mismanagement and financial irregularities are alleged.

"Trustees *badhaa bē paisē sukhi chhē* (are all financially comfortable)," stated Dabhoiwala, annoyed with Dumasia for assuming that everyone is out to make

personal financial profit from different deals. Even in the case of purchase of grains for their central kitchen which feeds the inmates of the Nariman Home, the Parsi General Hospital and the Maternity Hospital as also the orphanages and the *atah behram*, or the land transactions which are in the eye of the storm, Dumasia believes only he is "*kharo* (honest), *beeja badhhaa jothaa* (all others are liars)," adds Dabhoiwala. Having given Rs 16 lakh in donation, having worked tirelessly for the last two and a half years with his late wife to improve the face of the Doongerwadi in Surat, Dabhoiwala feels offended when people like Dumasia cast aspersions on his motives with statements like "*Safēd kapdaa vaalaaē nakhod variu* (the man in white — Dabhoiwala's sartorial preference — has brought ruin)." What has been Dumasia's contribution? he would like to know. When he fights the Panchayat he expects the Panchayat to finance his legal costs! noted Dabhoiwala.

Dumasia claims that he supports the needy and deserving boys at the Parsi Orphanage by taking them to the *atah behram* every Sunday, sometimes in his Ford; lecturing to them on the Zoroastrian religion...taking them to Udvada

and Navsari at the expense of the Panchayat. "I can speak for five hours on Zoroastrianism," he mentions. Since 1995 he has been complaining in writing to Bhacca and keeping track of every letter which bears a number, he reports. "I alone would fight. Katpitia told me, 'I will see you in court,' so I took the fight to the streets."

At the board meeting on May 25 when the new trustees too were in attendance, "*Bhacca nē thapko aapyo* (he was reprimanded)," adds Dumasia with satisfaction. Anticipating Parabia's co-operation, Dumasia stated, "*Hamaaro banēno vichar saathē chaalsē. Lokoni samaaj sēva maa chhaiyē* (We will work in tandem for the benefit of the community)."

Having attended some of the board meetings since his appointment, Parabia was happy with his co-trustees. "I don't doubt their intentions. They were trying to salvage the maximum from the land transaction, worth crores, in the Laxmi Dyeing case (when acting on the advice of their lawyers the trustees tried to 'fight for the price, not the land' which already had a third party inducted on the premises originally leased for business)." And although Parabia was one of those



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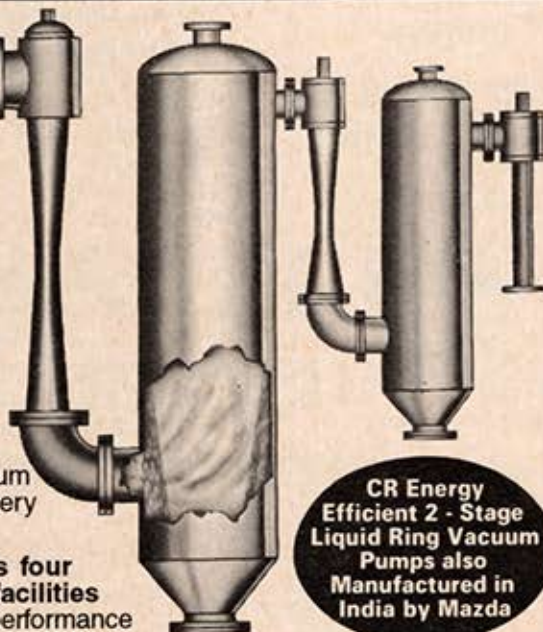
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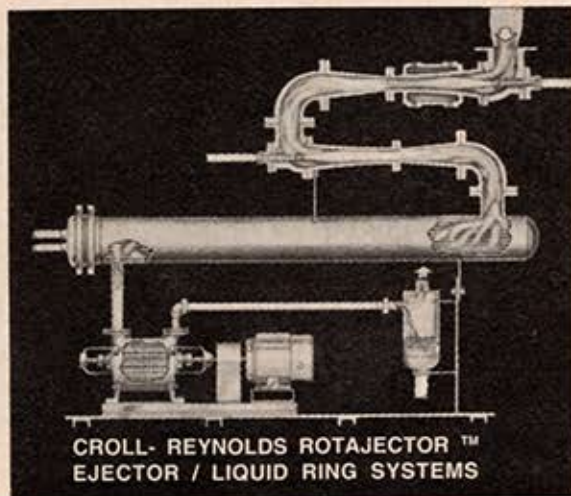
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who earlier insisted that there should be greater transparency from the trustees, he admitted that he would not be inclined to make the land deal public until the transaction is completed. He does however advocate calling a public meeting three times in a year to inform the community of the developments in the Panchayat. The community would then "trust them and their decisions," he feels. "If you say 'it is none of your business' it gives wrong signals... I have informed the youth that the trustees are reliable," says Parabia. "The trustees now say 'We were under great pressure.' But they never came out with their problems. They could have talked to (noted criminal lawyer) Shethna. She would have been of great help," says Parabia. "Now (because of the new openness) there remains no opposition," he adds but clarifies, "They may go against me. They are the tail twisters. They may twist my tail if I don't do something right. But they are also honest people who would have the good of the community at heart." With the appointment of the three new trustees whose names were agreed upon by the sitting trustees as also the opposition members, he was hopeful that the Panchayat may be able to advance its

various schemes.

The recent provocation for the *gherao* came from the team of Zoroastrian cricketers who represent Surat at the Parsi Pentangular matches every year, believes Bhacca. They had decided they would go on a particular date to Secunderabad-Hyderabad but Bhacca insisted that respecting the sentiments of the hosts, they should go two days earlier. The travel costs were to be borne by the Panchayat but when the boys reportedly presented some travel agent's bill which included extra costs for cancellation and repurchase of tickets, Bhacca refused to sanction the additional service charge on the grounds that the young boys were capable of going to the railway office personally to save the travel agent's commission, Bhacca relates the incident. This reportedly led to a raucous agitation outside his residence, so Bhacca says he filed a police complaint and a police van came and carried away some of the youths to the police station. This reportedly angered the men who subsequently tried to meet Bhacca in person but were turned away each time. They finally became abusive at the time of the *gherao*, and as seen on a video recording of the proceedings, used

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obnoxious language showing scant respect for age and chanted slogans like "Bhacca né maaro dhakka (push Bhacca out)" along with their usual refrain "Bhacca né Katpitia maliné paisaa khai gayaa (Bhacca and Katpitia have together usurped money)."

"A trust can't sell land without the charity commissioner's permission," emphasizes Bhacca. He then gave the details of the Doongerwadi property: "We have 150 acres (around 7,26,100 sq yards) of land around the Doongerwadi. We are permitted 37 acres (around 1,79,100 sq yards)." A part of their surplus land, 70,000 sq yards, they decided to sell when the semi government Agriculture Produce Market Committee offered to buy it for their proposed vegetable and fruit market at nine crores of rupees. Parabia, Eruch Lakdawala and Noshir Daboo of the Jarthosti Dharma and Samaj Seva Samiti led the opposition saying the trustees were underselling the property (see "Landing in trouble," *Parsiana*, August 2000). Unable to find a buyer who could fetch them a higher price, the opposition lawyer then suggested that the land could be acquired by the government, alleges

Bhacca. And now the Panchayat is trying to fend off an acquisition order!

When the government reportedly asked Bhacca how much land it required for disposing its dead, to save the maximum possible for the community, he stated that in the event of dakhmenashini not being operational in the absence of vultures, they may require considerable land for burial. The SPYS circular promptly dubbed this an "anti religious statement." Bhacca was also taken to task for stating in a television interview on May 4 that "90 percent of the Parsis visit Udvada to have liquor." Bhacca's alleged tendency to laugh off all allegations made against him and his colleagues, infuriates people like Katpitia who was indignant that, at the board meeting when Bhacca as president was reportedly given a "thapko," he chose to swallow it.

In earlier times when Parsis numbered nearly 10,000 in Surat they used to let out houses to other communities. Today, although 1,200 or one-third of the Zoroastrian population is housed in community flats, the demand for subsidized accommodation keeps increasing, states Bhacca. When the opposition takes



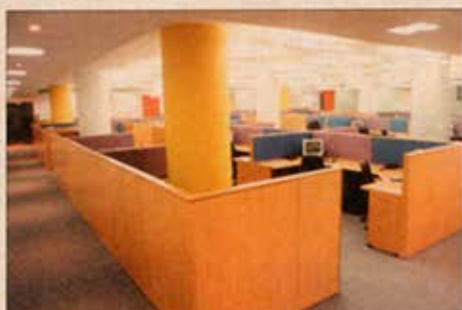
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all land deals to court it means 32 flats which could have been allotted in the Zartoshty Brothers building and 24 flats in Dhan-Parin Sadan are lying vacant because the Panchayat cannot proceed with the allotments, explains Bhacca. He is particularly pained that most of the vociferous opponents themselves stay in Panchayat owned buildings.

One of the circulars of the SPYS declares: "One who dares to lift his head against (Bhacca) would face: stop/non payment of financial dues/bills; would be deprived of all financial assistance given to the needy, viz Behram *roz na paisaa*; would be sacked from his/her job; would be charged with criminal/civil offence; would at any time receive a police raid; would receive threats over telephone in the most abusive language."

The trustees fault the opposition members for allegedly making a hoax call to nonagenarian Marshall saying that his only son in Ahmedabad had met with an accident. When he recycles old envelopes he is labeled "*saalaa kanjus* (miser)." Although he prefers not to take sides in this community tug-of-war, Marshall is convinced that the Surat community does not need elections. "*Saaro vargh nahi avse* (it is not the

cream of society who will hold power)," he predicts having been with the Panchayat for 66 years. In a population of 3,500 Zoroastrians, assuming that 1,500 may take an interest in the polls, there is no need to spend on elections when the money can be better utilized, he believes. How happy are the Parsis in Bombay despite their elections? he questions, referring to the latest disgruntled opposition group starting the Alert Zoroastrians Association, purportedly to make the trustees in Bombay accountable.

The suit praying for elections in Surat is pending in court since the charity commissioner ruled that the method of governance as per the 1841 trust requires no change. The 1841 trust deed of the PSCF was formed after the fire in Surat in 1837 when a large sum of money was collected for the relief of the poor inhabitants and placed in the hands of M/s Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Sons and Company of Bombay. After paying diverse sums of money in the purchase of grain, clothes, building materials and other necessities, from the balance amount of Rs 1,10,300 it was decided to form two permanent funds for the Hindus and the Parsis. The fund for the Parsis, named PSCF, was

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invested in the names of Nowrojee Jamsetjee, Framjee Cowasjee, Bomanjee Hormasjee, Cursetjee Cowasjee, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Jejeebhoy Dadabhoj and Cursetjee Jamsetjee. To this was added a contribution of Rs 23,732 and 35 reas from the "Parsis and others in China," and a sum of Rs 13,347 and 16 reas from the Panchayat of the Surat Parsis. Under the trust deed it is considered lawful for the PSCF trustees to "determine such difference of opinion between the members of the said Panchayat or to determine who shall form such Panchayat to exercise the powers herein before contained or to nominate and appoint from time to time any seven or more respectable resident Parsi inhabitants of Surat to pay and apply the interest, dividend and annual income of the said trust funds in the place and stead of the said Panchayat and from time to time thereafter to remove any one or more of such persons and any other or others in their or his place or stead from time to time appoint and to revoke such appointment and to reappoint the Panchayat to act as aforesaid as the said trustees or the majority of them for the time being shall from time to time think fit and expedient..." The substitutes nominated were to be persons "being

Parsi merchants or householders resident at Surat or Bombay of substance, character and respectability..."

Even if a segment of the Surat population may doubt their credentials, the SPP trustees are happy that their donors repose full faith in their management. Among their major donors, as listed by Bhacca, are the Variavas of Blaze, the Zartoshty brothers, the Gandhys of Allahabad who are expected to forward Rs 90 lakhs, the Dorabjees of Poona who will pass on 50 percent of the proceeds of their land deal... The corpus of the SPP which was Rs 41,659,807.88 in 1985 before Bhacca took over as president had risen to Rs 171,308,346.58 in end March 2001, and their investments have increased from Rs 30,893,217.15 in 1985 to Rs 156,730,984.53, according to their audited statement of accounts.

"Continuity, consistency, credibility" is the motto of the SPP as displayed on their letterheads. Despite the obstacles strewn in their path the trustees are trudging along for as Marshall philosophically declared, "In any institution, those who work the most have to suffer."



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Programming a future

Into its 16th year, the Holiday Programme for Youth continues to provide fresh initiatives, including plans for a full length play

Arnavaz S. Mama and Hilla P. Guzder

"The Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY) has generated 12 marriages. That is why the organizers have invited an obstetrician to be the chief guest!" joked famed gynecologist Dr Rustam Soonawalla at the inaugural of the annual event at The Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parssee Charitable (BJPC) Institution on May 2, 2002. The month-long program of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) aims to generate camaraderie among Zoroastrian teenagers who have just finished their secondary school examinations, to widen their intellectual horizons, to inculcate self-discipline and a sense of purpose.

"Discipline yourself. That's what we lack in this country. It is the crux for success, not only high honors and high marks," advised Soonawalla. Disparaging his own academic achievements, the doctor stressed on such character attributes as honesty, integrity and accountability, and highlighted the value of sports as it "teaches one how to win and how to lose because you cannot always be a winner." And a short prayer to "the superpower which guides you" can make a critical difference in one's performance, vouched Soonawalla.

Guest of honor Vispi Balaporia, academic advisor to Jai Hind College, felt that the youth of today had a variety of opportunities to choose from. The month-long initiation at the HPY would enable them to clarify their goals and be more aware of what is available to them. Sounding a note of warning to those who get carried away by a single idea, she noted, "Sometimes we don't get what we set our heart on and we are disappointed. Don't have a closed mind. Examine other opportunities. Sometimes we look so longingly at the closed door that we fail to see the one that's open." She also emphasized the moral

imperatives that should circumscribe the competitive spirit: "Competition is good if it makes you strive for excellence but not if it makes you so self-centered as to think only of your getting ahead."

"Graduation is only a passport for an

of relief after the board exams and the freedom to rest and enjoy that eventually leads to boredom. The HPY fills the gap with direction and motivation, an opportunity to make more friends and "enter college as bold and mature individuals." With its combination of lectures, religion, career counseling, sports and social service the HPY provides an ideal ground for the youths from segregated schools to get to know the opposite sex, she noted. "Savor each day at HPY, participate, get involved, come out as balanced individuals," Mehta told the youths, several of whom had just emerged from her purview in school.

A product of the academic experience of former BPP trustee and ex vice chancellor of Bombay University Dr Mehroo Bengalee, and the administrative and nurturing acumen of former BPP chief executive, ex-IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer Rustom Anklesaria, the HPY has grown in strength and capacity since its inception in 1986, largely due to the enthusiasm and organizing skill of Diana Marfatia who has been coordinating the program for well over a decade. Providing significant background support is a dedicated BPP team led by senior executive Sheroo Master.

Shroff felt reassured by the enthusiasm he witnessed among the 193 participants (108 boys and 85 girls) and their parents. While the majority were from Bombay, several teenagers hailed from Zoroastrian settlements in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Vapi, Porbander, Surat, Baroda, Palghar, Dahanu, Deolali, Poona and Panchgani, representing 20 of the participating 67 schools. The BPP arranges the boarding and lodging for outstation students. With the participants paying only a nominal registration fee of Rs 350, the month-long program is



Organizing team: creative and spontaneous Photos: C. C. Gandevia

interview, nothing else," senior BPP trustee Minoo Shroff who chaired the inaugural function told the youths at the doorstep of their college careers. He urged them to study the lives of achievers and see for themselves that apart from a few academic highs, they were well-rounded activists. Remarking that a lot of advice will come their way, often unsolicited and unfocused, he urged the youths to "Listen to the elders, but remember it's your decision and your life."

If they cultivate the will to succeed together with a sense of humility, shun overconfidence and not take themselves too seriously, they will "see the light at the end of the tunnel," he predicted.

Freny Mehta, principal of The Alexandra Girls' English Institution, commented on the students' collective sigh

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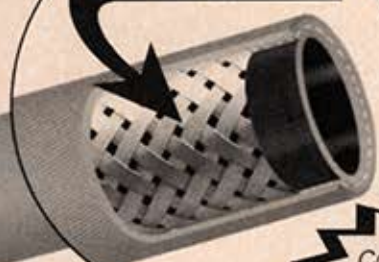
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heavily subsidized by the Panchayet, looking upon it not as an expenditure but as an investment for the future of the community, as noted Marfatia. The BJPC Institution, where Marfatia is principal, has supported the program through the free use of its premises for the past seven years. "Ensure regularity and good behavior," she advised the gathered youths. "What you gain depends on what you put in."

Two past HPY participants, Khushnuma Mullaferoze and Mehrab Modi spoke briefly of their experience of the program where they spent over 12 hours each day readying for sports, dramatics, et al. "We learnt to compete in the true spirit: we learnt to accept defeat; we learnt to win but continue to strive harder..."

With HPY sporting many a 'first' each year, this year's program saw a girl win for the first time the Best Sports-person award. Rehnaz Karanjia stood at the top of the podium not only for taking part in the entire gamut of sports (cricket, football, basketball, swimming, arm wrestling, bowling, chess, etc), but for helping her team to win as well. For the first time too an impromptu HPY throwball team participated in the All-Parsis throwball tournament in Bombay, going through two rounds to reach the

quarterfinals. The abundance of all-round talent included national level basketball player Darayus Mehta (son of BPP trustee Dinshaw Mehta), state level swimmer Aresh Daruwalla (see "Splashing success," *Parsiana*, July-August 1997) and Zeenia Bharucha, an international level throwball player.

The energetic efforts of HPYites in the blood donation drive this year secured an unsurpassed 184 bottles, announced Marfatia at the valedictory function on May 30 at the BJPC Institution, with the Blood Bank so taken by surprise that they did not have enough bottles in hand to collect the blood! Trustee Dinshaw Mehta expressed his appreciation of the youngsters' efforts with a Rs 5,000 donation towards prizes. Community consciousness was reinforced with the navjote of a Parsi child, the cleaning of four agiaris, visits to the F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla (old people's home), etc.

With HPY mixing the sober (talks on career options, religion, counselling, etc) with the spectacular (fashion show, personality contest, antakshari, etc), and around 200 teenagers pitted against each other in a series of caliber competitions, the prize distribution witnessed noisy

acclaim. Lads in jackets and ties, lasses in skirts getting annually shorter and heels getting higher sprinted to the stage to receive the fruits of their month-long labor from the hands of the guest of honor Dr Zarir Udwadia, eminent cardiologist, and chief guest Keki Mistry, managing director of HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation).

"This is my second visit to your program. Ten years ago I was invited to speak as a 'young achiever.' Today I am guest of honor. I see nothing special to justify my promotion!" quipped Udwadia. "I must confess I am a bit jealous — you have done more exciting things in the last month than I have!" Addressing the vexing question put by parents to their children — "So, what do you want to be when you grow up?" — Udwadia termed himself "one of the lucky few who knew from a young age what I wanted to do." If undecided, "follow your heart, talent and inclination. Be a ballerina, an MTV host or an astronaut. But do not do things which you dislike or despise, or you will live life without passion." Udwadia expressed his belief that today's youngsters "born in the dying years of the 20th century, with their gaze firmly fixed on the 21st cen-

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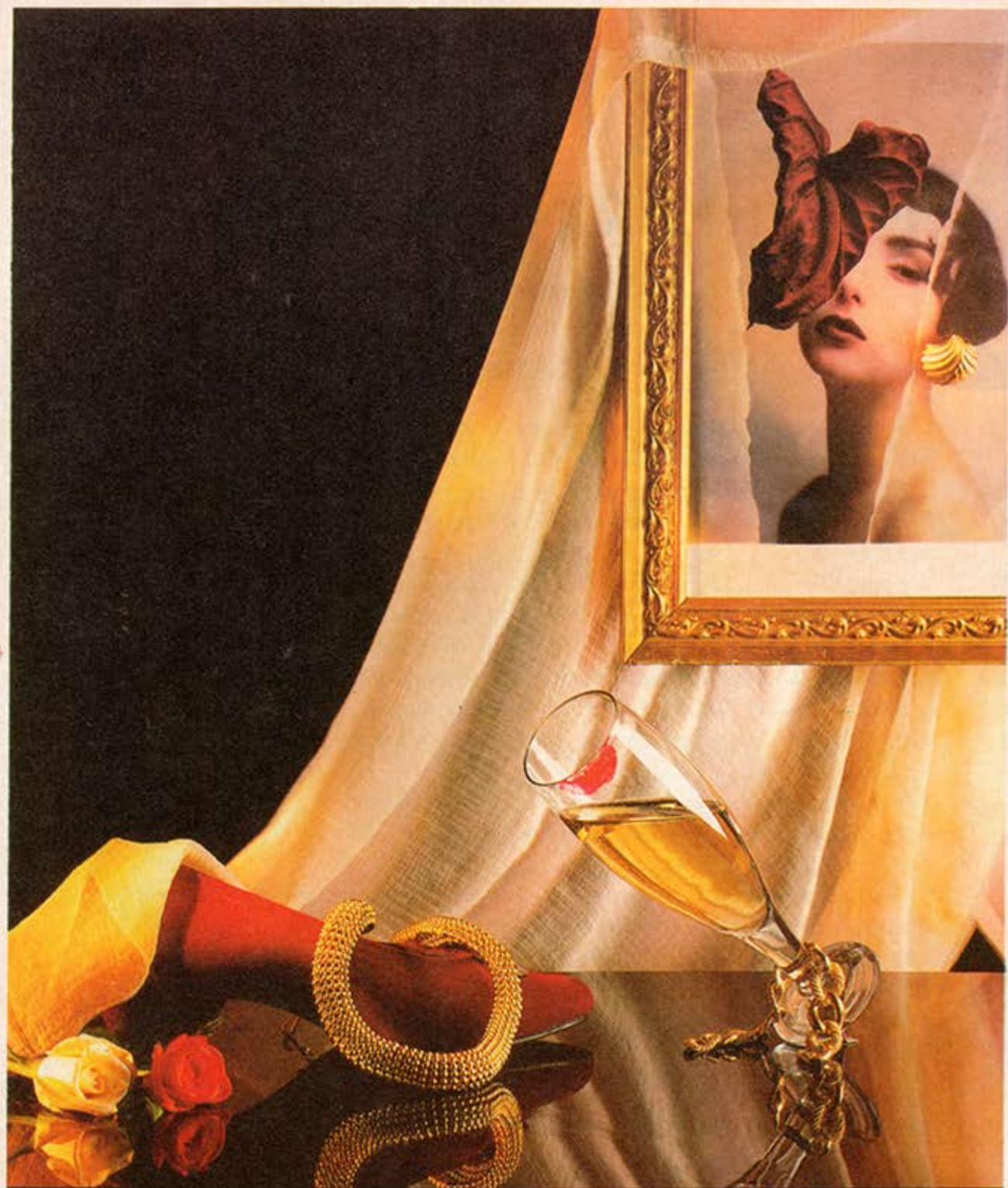
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From left, 1st row: Mistry, Soonawalla, Udwadia, Marfatia, M. Shroff
2nd row: Freny Mehta (at mike) alongside BPP trustees, officials and invitees at the inaugural



From left, 3rd row: Bhujwala; Pochkhanawala; Balaporia; Mistree, Zaiwala, Udwadia, Mondegar, Ragina. 4th row: Karanjia; Xerxes Khambatta; Dastur, Marfatia, Dinshaw Tamboly, Guzder, Rustom Tirandaz; Homai Modi, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Gandhi. 5th row: Ronisha Chinoy, Dadinath; Scherezade Shroff; Rustomjee Jeejeebhoy felicitated by Gandhi, Rustom Jeejeebhoy and S. Shroff. Alongside: Zeenia Bharucha; Rhia Marshall

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tury, have an open mind and a free spirit" and an abundance of energy and intelligence. "You are our blessing and our future," he said. "You show us God is not yet tired of man." Udwadia's prescription of life included emphasis on the religious and the spiritual. "As a doctor I see our hold on life is very fragile, very tenuous. There is a higher power that guides our destinies and molds our fate."

"We are living in times of great change," stated Mistry. "Information technology has breached all barriers and connected the world as never before. Wonderful opportunities and challenges await you." Urging the teenagers to have a purpose in life, Mistry believed that one must aim high, as the greater danger, in Michelangelo's words, is that our aim is too low and that we've reached it! Do not be embarrassed or intimidated by failures, do not accept them or stand on the sidelines fearful, he exhorted. "One cannot be an expert in everything — be a leader, a captain in your area of expertise. Depression should find no refuge in you either in your professional or personal life," he asserted.

The fabric of society revolves around integrity and ethics, declared Mistry. While contemplating any course of action, the question to ask oneself, in the words of H. D. Parekh, founder chairman of HDFC whom Mistry termed his guru, is: "Will it cause any embarrassment or shame if it becomes known?" There is no pillow as soft as a clear conscience, noted Mistry. Family, friends and colleagues are indispensable — it is a fallacy to think that "you have made it alone. Give credit to those who make things happen."

Endorsing Mistry's views that students should not get over elated by success or disheartened by disappointments, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder recommended the virtues of "select reading, chaste writing, and erudite conferencing."

With a battery of 11 ex HPYites assisting Marfatia this year in organizing the kaleidoscope of activities, she commended them for sacrificing a month of their summer holidays coping with "noisy, chaotic youngsters" and putting them through the paces of events. Special felicitations were awarded to Khorram Siodia, in-charge of indoor and outdoor sports for the past eight years; Fabian Panthaki "whose brainchild, the literary events,

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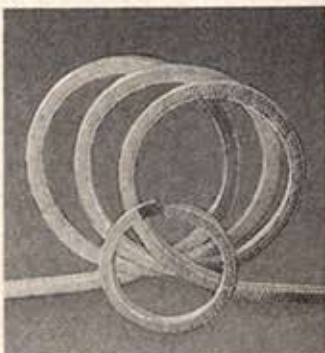
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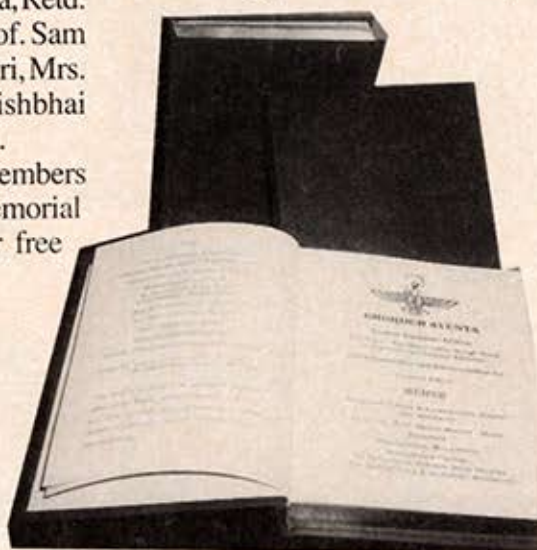
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keep getting better and better;" Vinifer Gandhi, master of ceremonies for the valedictory function and "my right-hand man this year" in the absence of HPY stalwart Priya Bhujwalla, and Kaynaz Dadinath who has been an organizer for two years.

Seeking to keep boredom at bay, HPY organizers spend six months prior to the program working out the nitty gritty and introducing fresh approaches and initiatives. This year HPY's new baby was impromptu acting — "Whose line is it anyway?" — on the style of the popular television show. With several rounds demanding wit and instant creativity, the finals were judged by well-known theater personalities Boman Irani and Kunal Vijaykar. The tough but ever-popular JAM (Just-a-Minute), a literary speaking event which requires great alertness and language skills, had Brian Dias as JAM master for the finals. "They do brilliantly," commends Marfatia. The customary intellectual booster doses included a debate on the currently hot topic "India is equally responsible for the Kashmir issue."

Receiving top billing as the showstopper of the HPY month was the fashion

show competition, with Oorvask Cooper and Scherzade Shroff voted the best models and Kaiyan Mistree (who was also adjudged the best Literary All-rounder) and Meher Modi the best catwalkers. Well-known models Karl Patel and Jennifer Kotwal officiated as the judges. The prestigious title of Mr HPY 2002 was claimed by Rishad Bhungara, among the most diminutive in size compared to several well-built contemporaries all round! Shenaya Pochkhanawala was adjudged Ms HPY 2002. Peshotan Kapadia and Mehernawaz Mondegari claimed the runners-up titles respectively, with T. Maheshwari (Miss India Asia Pacific) and Nikhila Palat (a former Miss India finalist) judging the contest. While Mondegari and Mistree topped their groups as well, Hormuz Ragina and Farhad Zaiwala were the winners in the other two groups.

In her vote of thanks, Gandhi extolled the BPP trustees for being "silent and constant supporters," and thanked BPP chief executive Behram Dastur, deputy chief executive Mehli Colah, senior executive Sheroo Master, as well as BPP office assistants Bakhtawar Dastoor and Persi Mistry for taking much

of the load behind the scenes. She commended the panel speakers, judges, trustees of The BJPC Institution and a long list of well-wishers and donors of gifts who contributed to HPY's success. The "exquisite, irreplaceable Dee (Marfatia)" received a standing ovation for her indefatigable efforts over HPY's 16 years.

"I never thought I would ever take part in the amount of activities that I took part in at HPY... It doubled my confidence and I think my stage fright has been minimized," Natasha Irani who passed out from Poona's prestigious St Mary's School told *Parsiana*. "I have learnt much more about life and my fantastic religion," asserted Mistree, while Best Sportsman Karanjia summarized the program in the two-word lingo of youth — "totally awesome!"

Scheduled for December 8, 2002 is a follow-up event and bigger challenge — a full length play, featuring the best theatrical talents of past and present HPYites at the Sophia Bhabha Auditorium. A professional director is slated to spend a month taking the select few through a series of workshops. Further details on this event will be available on e-mail: hpyhome@hotmail.com

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Academics to the fore

Of the 11 recipients conferred the Federation's awards for excellence, five have shone in the academic field

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"We suffer from modesty," commented Keki Gandhi, joint honorary secretary of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, at the function on June 15, 2002 to honor the 11 recipients who were conferred the Federation's awards for excellence. "Individuals, anjumans and punchayets are not coming forward with nominations," he added. Although the Federation has instituted awards in 12 fields of endeavor, the recipients recognized this year showed brilliance in only select fields: five in academia, three in sports, and one each in the military, professional competence and youth categories. There were no takers for the other awards, each of which carries a trophy, citation and a gift of Rs 1,000.

All the 11 recipients were present at the simple presentation ceremony at the Indian Merchants' Chamber to receive their awards at the hands of the donors/dignitaries. Six of the awardees were recognized for achieving excellence in the year 2001 while the remaining five were conferred this honor for the preceding six years.

Air Marshal Manek B. Madon's prowess in the military field in 2001 earned him the Lt Col Adi B. Tarapore Memorial Award which was presented to him by Lt Gen Adi Sethna, vice president (north zone) of the Federation. Air officer commanding in chief of the Eastern Air Command, Madon has served the Indian Air Force since 1963 when he was commissioned as a pilot in the fighter stream. Presently commodore commandant of a frontline MiG-21 squadron Scorpions, Madon had actively participated in the Indo-Pak wars in 1965 and 1971. Decorated with the Vayu Sena Medal, the Ati Vishist Seva Medal and the Param Vishist Seva Medal, Madon is a qualified flying instructor as also fighter combat leader who has served as senior directing staff with the Tactics and Combat Develop-

ment Establishment and as commandant of the Air Force Academy in Hyderabad.

In the sphere of professional competence, Keki Minoo Mistry was conferred the Nargis Adi Gandhi Memorial Award at the hands of senior Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Minoo Shroff. The Award recognized his outstanding performance in 2000, the year he was appointed managing director of Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC). A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and a member of the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants, Mistry had joined HDFC as assistant manager in 1981 and has since grown with the company. Today HDFC boasts 110 branches, a market capitalization of over Rs 8,400 crores, an asset base of Rs 21,000 crores and profit after tax of nearly Rs 500 crores for the financial year ended March 31, 2001. Mistry, according to the citation, has been actively involved in negotiations with joint venture partners and in the formation of HDFC group companies like HDFC Bank, HDFC Asset Management Company, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited. He has undertaken consultancy assignments for the Commonwealth Development Corporation, Mauritius Housing Company and the Asian Development Bank.

All the three sports awardees were young girls who were recognized for their accomplishments in 2001. Jauzinah Danesh Borzu, who is reportedly the youngest girl at the age of six to pass her sho-dan (first degree black belt), was presented her belt at the XVIII All India Tournament of the Japan Karate Association of India in 2001. Since the girls under seven event was cancelled at that tournament she competed with girls under nine where she was declared runner-up in the kata and won the kumite. The young student of St Mary's School,

Dahanu maintained this position at the next national meet, mentions the citation. BPP trustee Dadi Engineer presented her the Jiji D. Irani Memorial Award.

Winning a gold in the XIII Maharashtra State Roller Skating Championship in Poona in 2001 in the girls above 14 years in artistic free and figure skating, Zeenia Khushru Patel was declared the overall champion in her age group in artistic skating, states her citation. A student of Bombay's J. B. Petit High School, Patel has been receiving rigorous training from national and Canadian tutors since the age of 11. At the XLVI National School Games in 2000 Patel won a bronze in artistic roller skating in the girls under 17 group. The Dr Dadi Balsara Award was presented to her by Nariman Mogrelia, Federation vice president (south zone).

Participating in the Maharashtra State Judo Competition in Nanded in 2001, Zeenia Shahrookh Tafti won a bronze in her category. Learning judo for the last three years, Tafti won a bronze in the below 57 kg category at the inter-school competition in Bombay in 2001 and helped her school, The Alexandra Girls' English Institution win the girls championship, notes the citation. The Manijeh and Noshirwan Cama Memorial Award was presented to her by Aloo Cama.

The youngsters recognized for their brilliance in academic studies were Danesh Sarosh Tarapore who received the Dhunjishaw R. Gheyara Memorial Award for 2001 from BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly and Darayus Parvez Bajan who received the same award for the year 1998 from BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder. Binaifer Sarosh Patel's excellence as a student won her the Dhunjishaw R. Gheyara Memorial Award for 1999. She received her memento from Engineer.

In the final year bachelor of engineering course in computer science and

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(From left) 1st row: Mistry, Shroff, Madon, Sethna, Basla and Irani; 2nd row: Cama, Desai, Bajan, Z. Patel and Mogrelia; 3rd row: B. Patel, Engineer, Tarapore, Tamboly, Pastakia and Guzder; 4th row: Borzu, Tafti, Gandhi and Sheroo Master
Photos: Varghese Fernandez



engineering, Tarapore stood first from the Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathawada University, Nanded in 2001, mentions the citation. He was first among 10 students selected from all over India for admission to the MTech program in information technology at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay where he was awarded the Ramarao Nilekani Fellowship along with a full tuition waiver. At the G level examination of the National Centre for Software Technology held in January 2001, Tarapore scored 98 percent.

Three years after qualifying as a cost accountant in 1995 when he stood 25th, Bajan passed the chartered accountant and chartered secretary examinations. Thereafter the qualified navar-martab chose to do his MA in Avesta-Pahlavi, studying at the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Zarthoshti Madressa. Having passed the examination in the first division he was conferred the BPP's Seth Kharshedji Fardunji Parukh Gold Medal. Presently



assistant manager, finance, in the Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank, Bajan also performs priestly duties at the Mevawalla Agiary in Byculla.

For standing first in the Gujarat University at the Third Year BCom examination in May 1999, Patel was awarded a gold medal and prizes by the University and the H. A. College of Commerce where she was studying. Her principal commended her for being "a sincere, hard working, intelligent, regular and most outstanding student with an extremely bright academic career." Patel has also

performed creditably in extracurricular activities, winning prizes in beauty, personality and fashion shows.

Two other academicians to receive awards in the sphere of education were Zarine Hoshedar Basla who was presented the Mazda Education Foundation Award for 2001 by Federation vice president (west zone) Eruch Irani, and Dolly Rustom Desai who was conferred the Mehernosh N. Cama Memorial Award for 1995 by Aloo Cama.

Principal for the last eight years at Bombay's Maneckji Cooper Education Trust School, the outstanding achievements of the institution earned the School the National Udyog Excellence Award and Basla the Jewel of India Award



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from the International Institute of Education and Management in 2001. Inculcating in her students the love for learning, her School also won the finals of the Limca Book of Records Quiz in Calcutta in 2001 and her students have additionally excelled in competitions in English, math and science, states the citation. Encouraging her students to be involved in public causes and contributing herself to the betterment of the city, Basla has won acclaim from the I Love Bombay Committee and the Special Executive Magistrates' Society for Education.

Erstwhile principal of Navsari's Set Rustomjee Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy High School from 1977-2001 and presently in charge of the Bai Avabai Balmandir at Navsari, Desai was the recipient of the Gujarat State Best Teacher Award in 1995 and the Chandoria Foundation International Certificate of Honour in 1999 for her meritorious services in the field of education and culture, notes her citation. She was also awarded the Devoted Teacher Silver Medal by the Shivaji Foundation Society, Rajasthan for guiding her students at the First All Gujarat Pratibha Khoj Pariksha 2000. Desai has variously served as member of the SSC Board Squad, president of the Rashtriya Bhasha Prachar Samiti,

Wardha and advisor to the Maharashtra State Bureau Text Book Production and Curriculum Research.

Winning the Jamshed and Shirin Guzder Award as the best youth for 1996 was Khushroo Ardeshar Pastakia who received his award from Guzder. At the Third Senior National Strength Building championship for men and women in 1996, Pastakia broke the national record by registering a total of 140 kg — 70 kg press behind neck and 70 kg bicep curl. The same year he also won the Gujarat State Power Lifting and Bench Press Championships in the 100 kg class. At the Gujarat State Weight Lifting Championship (above 99 kg category) he has held the title from 1993 to 2002, notes the citation. A postgraduate in commerce, Pastakia's string of qualifications include LLB, CA and MBA. Also keen on trekking and expeditions, Pastakia successfully completed the Babeli-Manala-Chanderkhani Pass Route as a member of the National Himalayan Trekking Expedition in 1996, the same year he graduated in commerce from the South Gujarat University.



The prize winners and a section of the audience

The awardees who have excelled in their respective fields need to be thanked for serving as an inspiration to those around them, said Gandhi. He was also appreciative of the sponsors of the different awards who had donated the sums and commended the efforts of Delhi's Farokh Rustomji who was instrumental in getting the trophies readied and Adil Nargolwala for ferrying them to Bombay. On behalf of the Federation he expressed gratitude to the BPP secretariat for organizing the function and their perseverance in scanning reports in the media to shortlist prospective awardees, the achievers who inspire confidence in the community.

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A helping hand

The tragic events in Gujarat prompted the author to cite examples of Parsi charity that crossed the bounds of religion, caste and creed

Dr Homi Dhalla

It pains us to see that the state of Gujarat, where the Parsis had migrated and seamlessly settled in with the locals, is a communal tinderbox today. In a few months the carnage has claimed more than 1,000 lives, destroyed over 10,000 homes and businesses and rendered lakhs of workers jobless. The calibrated violence, aimed at the Muslim community, tore the very fabric of our pluralistic society. As the numbers swelled in relief camps, they were faced with appalling conditions: shortage of food, water and medical facilities. To assuage the suffering of victims, it is paramount that measures be taken to put an end to this carnage, rehabilitate the homeless and punish the guilty. The tragic events in Gujarat remind me of a few incidents from Parsi history, which inculcate lessons in national integration and convey the mature way in which our forefathers interacted with members of other communities irrespective of caste, color and religion.

An open heart and hand

The one quality, which distinguishes Parsis from others, is their inherent philanthropic nature. A name that immediately comes to my mind is that of the great philanthropist, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (1783-1859). In 1837, when a great fire devastated Surat destroying about 20,000 houses and a large number of temples, bazaars and shops, Jejeebhoy chartered a ship for Surat. It was loaded with rice, dal, hundreds of bales of cloth and other useful items to be distributed to all communities. He traveled to Surat to personally ensure that all needy persons were being helped without distinction. Almost 10 years later, in 1846, he helped out the Irish when their country faced the potato famine, and later the French when floods ravaged their country. He showed that true philanthropy extended beyond the

parameters of one's community or country, and reached out to those in need irrespective of their religion or race. He went on to contribute money for an art school, a hospital, as well as many other public services in Bombay and Poona. Sir Cowasji Jehangir (1853-1934) also gifted magnanimously, and his endowments include among other things a Convocation Hall, the Sir C. J. Hall, a hospital as well as drinking water fountains.

The political arena

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917) was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress (INC) and his contribution earned him the adoration of the masses who affectionately called him the Grand Old Man (GOM) of India.

Although he was a Parsi, Naoroji looked upon himself as an Indian first. As president of the INC, during his presidential address in 1893 he said: "Whether I am a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian." These telling words are most relevant today when assertion of one's religion and drawing of one's identity from this assertion has become primary.

Another great patriot who devoted his life to the INC and to the Bombay Municipal Corporation was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915), architect of the Municipal Act of 1872. His love for India may be gauged by his words: "To my mind, a Parsi is a better and truer Parsi, as a Mohammedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mohammedan or a Hindu, the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil..."

At a time when temples and mosques are being destroyed in Gujarat with such

inhuman ferocity, an interesting example comes to my mind from the life of that great visionary Jamsetji Tata (1839-1904) who laid the industrial foundation of the country. Though a staunch Zoroastrian, his forward-thinking spirit is evident in a letter he wrote to his son from abroad in 1902, five years before the site of the steel plant was finally located. He asked his son to "be sure there is plenty of space for lawns, playgrounds and parks. Earmark areas for Hindu temples, Mohammedan mosques and Christian churches."

The deep concern Jamsetji had for the progress of his country is recorded by his son Dorab. On February 8, 1911, Dorab laid the foundation stone of the Lonavla dam and thus commenced this vital hydroelectric project. On this occasion he recalled the lofty aims of his father: "To my father, the acquisition of wealth was only a secondary object in life; it was always subordinate to the constant desire in his heart to improve the industrial and intellectual condition of the people of this country."

The fountainhead of progress

The three stalwarts, who made Parsi philanthropy a byword in India through constructing schools, libraries, hospitals, university buildings, etc were Jejeebhoy, Cowasji Jehangir and Sir Dinshaw Petit (1823-1901). When a public meeting was called in Bombay on September 17, 1862 for the needy textile workers of Lancashire, the Parsis donated more than any other community for the cause. The three hospitals in Bombay till 1886 were all built by Parsis. Out of the nine hospitals in Bombay in 1909, six had been established or built by large donations from Parsis. In 1932, Dorab Tata established a fund for research in blood diseases which led to research projects in Paris, New York and Copenhagen.



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Jamsetji Tata's vision of higher education was progressive. He wished to contribute towards "real universities, which will give fresh impulse to learning, to research, to criticism, which will inspire reverence and impart strength and self-reliance to future generations." In September 1898, he announced a donation of Rs 30 lakhs from his private estate to establish a science university. With the inauguration of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore in 1911, Jamsetji's dream was finally realized. Dr Homi Bhabha and other scientists have studied at this Institute, and their efforts paved the way for significant contributions in the scientific field for the nation as well as other researchers.

The N. M. Wadia Charities, founded in 1909 by an illustrious scion of the family of Lowjee Nusserwanjee Wadia, the shipbuilder, is a totally cosmopolitan trust which today has a corpus of about two crore rupees. Its aims include poverty relief, education, medical aid and assistance for natural calamities. It has over the years donated amounts to relief funds all over the world: Oxfam (Oxford Famine Relief Fund), Iran Earthquake Fund, Holland Flood Relief Fund, Japan Flood Relief Fund, La Croix Rouge, Belgique, among others.

Thus, drawing from lessons in Parsi history, we realize that the munificence and vision of many of our forefathers has helped enrich the lives of people from different communities and walks of life. Their contributions emphasize the importance of placing the progress and welfare of the nation above personal or political gains. One can only hope that in times of crisis as faced by Gujarat and the nation today we can remember the lives of those who gave generously to build a strong and pluralistic India; who strengthened the pillars of the country even as they were firmly rooted in their traditions.



Founder president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation and a scholar of Zoroastrianism, Dr Homi Dhalla has represented the community at various international conferences and interfaith meets.

Among the community projects he is involved in are the conservation of Bahrot caves, the Sanjan excavation, documentation of Parsi history and the introduction of solar concentrators at Bombay's Doongerwadi.



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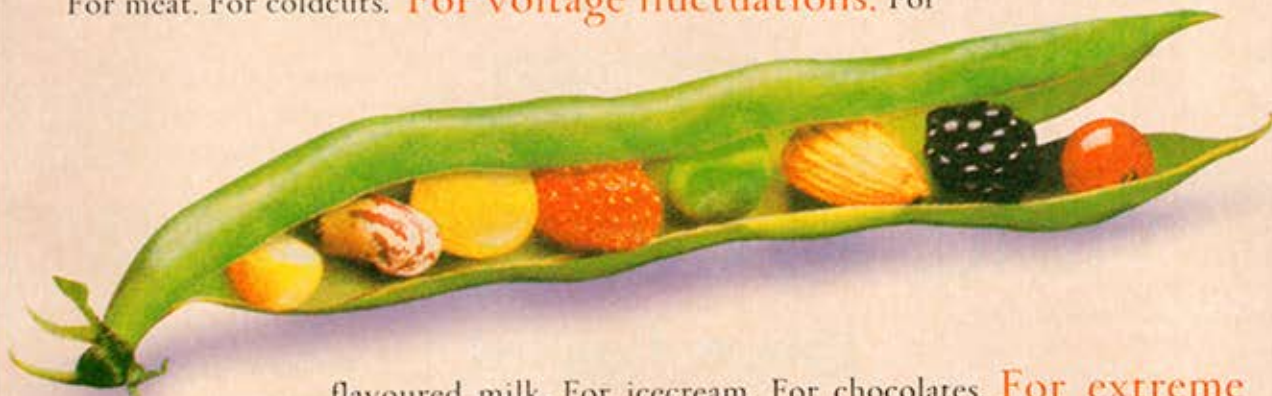
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Democratic ideals versus autocratic diktats

Where do Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians stand in an age of fundamentalism? asks the author

Aspi D. Moddie

Living in these harsh days between two fundamentalisms in India, a slowly reforming one in Iran, and a 'Bible belt' one in the USA, most Zoroastrians would seem to think that they are above and beyond such violent oppressive aberrations. They have for centuries been a sensible pragmatic minority, and have both survived and succeeded without threatening others with any form of jihad. None of us is threatening the destruction of the Rajabai Tower in Bombay. Yet we need to ponder on the implications of fundamentalism for important external and internal reasons.

First the external. We are not in isolation. We and our children are part of a wider society in which we have our being, whether in the Indian subcontinent, Iran, USA or elsewhere. These societies impinge on our lives, even in the semi-seclusion of the Bombay baugs. The Parsis of Bombay then, and of Ahmedabad and Baroda now, have respectively felt the terrible fires of fundamentalism in 1992-93 and in 2002. Besides, they cannot be unrealistically isolationist. They have a high civic tradition of being involved in the societies in which they live; unhappily not as much now in more lumpy days as in earlier more genteel ones. In non-political, philanthropic, intellectual, social and creative spheres they still play a widespread role, even without the Dadabhai Naorojis, Pherozeshah Mehtas and Homi Bhabhas. They have always been significant in many fields, disproportionate to their insignificant numbers. That old tradition of 'sugar in the milk' must not die. As the smallest minority — a tribe threatened with demographic extinction — in nations of minorities in India, USA, UK and Australia, the tenets of Zoroastrianism compel us to play that role, to make *ushta té* (happiness unto others) meaningful in the wider world we live in.

Second, there are important internal

reasons too. If we are very largely non-fundamentalist, do we know what in Zoroastrianism makes us so? In contrast, if some of us exhibit fundamentalist traits in internal conflicts, do we examine how far these are truly Zoroastrian, apart from not being humane and rational, and not promoting *ushta té*? One way or the other, we need to understand better our place in wider social developments, and why we are what we are in this age of Huntingdon's *Clash of Civilizations*; be conscious of those tectonic 'faults' or fragile boundaries which cause religious groups to quake and destroy.

In contrast to Semitic religions, Zoroastrianism is non-prescriptive. It does not have prescribed commandments to do or not to do. Three thousand five hundred years ago Zarathushtra taught man to use his Vohuman, the higher mind, in making a responsible choice in the eternal conflict between good and evil:

"Hearken with your ears to these Best Counsels, Reflect upon them with illumined judgment, Let each choose his creed, with that freedom of choice each must have at great events (*Gathas*, verse 30.2)."

Each such thoughtful Vohumanic choice is a great event for the individual, the family and society. In days when ruler, prophet and cleric laid down faith, belief and ritual, Zarathushtra left it to our conscience, our Vohuman — a democratic choice beyond the edict of kings or the 'fatwa' of religious clerics. He pointed out that the karpans and usigo "gave the world up to violence," and the kavis, the rulers, "grow strong with raid and rapine (read narcotic jihad now)," caring not that the world should strive and progress through truth's law.

In fairness to Prophet Mohammed, Group Captain M. Kamal Uddin of the Bangladesh Air Force has reminded us that Muslim soldiers on the field of

Badar were given Rules of Engagement, which were clear and humane: not to harm the old, women and children, nor priests; not to harm working men (i.e. non-combatants), nor to cut trees or damage crops; not to plunder or mutilate dead bodies, etc. All of which is quite contrary to recent jehadic practices taught by fanatical mullahs and tribal war lords.

Far from fanatic rigidities, Zarathushtra taught that man's life was a progress from imperfection to an ultimate state of perfection or *huveretat*. This perfection is to be achieved through Vohuman, the Good Mind, together with *frasho-kereti*, translated by Mary Boyce as "healing renewal." This process of seeking perfection with healing renewal through stages of imperfection implies the examination of change and the evolution to higher states.

In *Among The Believers*, V. S. Naipaul offered the simplest explanation for recent Islamic fundamentalism: It lay in Islam's difficulty in coping with modernizing change and resulted in frustration, anger and aggression. It is perhaps the best historical and social explanation for the recent phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalist jihad in which clerical, military and tribal leaders have exploited the uneducated, poor masses. In his later book, *Beyond Belief*, Naipaul cogently and sequentially sums up the autocracy in Khomeini's Iran in the words of Mehrdad: "Why do you think the religious people lay such stress on rules? They are the rule-makers. If you deny the rules, you deny the rule-maker. If you put the rule-maker away, you deny the leader (Khomeini in this case; Bin Laden and mullahs in others). If you oppose the leader you are against the Holy Prophet. If you are against the Holy Prophet, you are against the Holy Book, and the Holy Book comes from God. Someone against God must be killed. But who does the killing? Only

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the rule-maker. Not God." The absolute logic of harsh dictatorial killing.

Zarathushtra's teaching has, in contrast, taught Zoroastrians to cope with change for a happier life of *ushta té*, through the perfecting processes of *huveretat*. And all this through the democratic Vohuman of individuals.

Unlike the strong recent Islamic fundamentalist discrimination against women — witness the regressive, inhuman treatment of women by the Taliban regime — Zarathushtra taught that all people, men and women, are equal. This equality goes with the underlying pursuit of happiness, not the enforced hair-shirt or *burkha*, and with the application of Vohuman, the higher mind, by all, in all problems of existence. Not the imposed views of uneducated and bigoted clerics.

So Zoroastrianism is a conditioning of open minds striving towards happiness and perfection, by means of rationality, science, the pursuit of truth in a changing world. In Ha 45.9 of the *Gathas*, this pursuit is given practical shape:

"through His Sovereign Authority prosper our/peasantry, our workmen, and our herds./And through the holy law of truth, establish the/Rule of the Good Mind (Vohuman) among the people."

For "peasantry and workmen" in our time read all economic activities; for "herds" read all natural resources and technologies. Prosper with open, examining minds — no 'fatwas' of obsolete clerics — and make the world a better place. It is shocking to read of fundamentalist Muslim clerics in Uttar Pradesh, India, preaching against polio vaccinations for children on the fallacious misrepresentation that this was the state's dreaded sterilization policy, thereby denying Muslim children freedom from this terrible disease. If obscurantism can give children a living hell, killing fanaticism is only a small next step.

Every religion has a fundamentalist element. Even in the USA, elements of the *Bible* belt have been known to be violent, to burn clinics on the issue of abortion. So far, Zoroastrians have been spared physical violence by Zoroastrians. But have our extreme elements been free from violent thoughts and expressions, from fanatic exclusivity in the sphere of inter-faith marriages (the term 'mixed' is unscientific in this age of biological science and the genome);

in the abusive "bastardization" of the children of such marriages by contemporary karpans and kavis presuming to exercise "the insolence of power;" by rigid practices in the disposal of the dead in changing or changed circumstances; and not least, by discrimination in priestly services of the navjote between rich and poor inter-faith families? Are our lay trustees free from that same "insolence of power" in schemes for housing, health and education?

By and large, the Zoroastrian community everywhere has been liberal, due to liberal assimilation and education policies in earlier modernizing generations since the reformists of the 19th century. Hence we have known none of Huntingdon's "clash of civilizations" in our hearts, unlike other Asian communities. But we need to be on our guard. Those liberal ideals of Zarathushtra can always be in peril, internally and externally. In Zoroastrian belief Ahriman has a long life, and always needs to be contended with, within and without. And if the achievement of *huveretat* is an endless process, there is no place for final fatwas, no matter from what self-righteous source.

A management consultant, Aspi Moddie is a former Indian Administrative Service officer who early in his career opted for the private

sector. His voice was evident at the Fourth and Fifth World Zoroastrian Congresses. His book, *Zarathushtra's "Frasho-Kereti": Renewal in Our Time* was published in 1996.



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Parsis at the post

Besides India, Iran, Pakistan and UK
have issued stamps with a Zoroastrian flavor

Hilla P. Guzder

"Stamps, especially commemorative issues, are like signposts, reflecting historical landmarks in the progress of a community or a country," says chartered accountant Noshir M. Lam, forwarding to *Parsiana* his collection of stamps and first day covers which feature Zoroastrians or Zoroastrian institutions and achievements. While the government of India has issued 21 such stamps over the past 50 years, Iran, Pakistan and Great Britain are the other countries who have issued stamps with a Zoroastrian flavor.

The imagery on the stamp, the tones and techniques, the design and composition provide perspectives not just on history, but geography, science, industry and the lives of great men as well, believes Lam. While the value of a stamp undoubtedly goes up with its antiquity, stamps which have a flaw or mistake in printing also go up in value. There may be mistakes in perforation, he elucidates, or a head may be mistakenly printed in reverse. Such mistakes, far from detracting from the stamp's value, make it a rarity and of interest to the connoisseur!

Besides stamp collecting, which he has made one of the passions of his septuagenarian life, Lam has been a regular contributor of articles to financial journals and is the author of two books — *Comprehensive Handbook for NRIs*, and *Mauritius — International Business and Tax Strategies* which is co-authored with Mayur Nayak and Mitil Chokshi.

In 1971, on the 2,500th anniversary of the charter of Cyrus the Great, the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a stamp in the denomination of 5 R (rials), followed 19 years later with two stamps in denominations of 100 R and 200 R on the occasion of the Ferdowsi International Congress in 1990.

The Indian government too commemorated the 2,500th anniversary of

Cyrus' charter with a 20 paise (p) stamp released on October 12, 1971, in black/brown, with no watermark and 13 perforations along its edges. "Not all stamps have watermarks," elaborates Lam, though the watermark obviously makes the stamp difficult to duplicate, just as in currency notes.

Pakistan issued its first — and thus far its only — stamp commemorating a Zoroastrian on January 7, 1988 on the birth centenary of Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta (1886-1986). In a three-rupee denomination, the stamp features Mehta's visage against a picture of the Karachi Municipal Corporation of which he was the president for 13 consecutive years.

As part of the British Millennium series, a 19 pence stamp honoring Freddie Mercury was released on June 1, 1999 in the UK to honor the lead singer of the rock group "Queen" who was born in Zanzibar as Farok Bulsara and whose boyhood was spent in Bombay's Dadar Parsi Colony. The Farok became Freddie during his schooling at St Peter's in Panchgani and he later changed his surname to one more commensurate with rock culture, becoming virtually an icon to fans all over the world. The Mercury stamp was issued as part of a set of four.

The Indian stamps cover achievers/achievements in business/industry (six), philanthropy (two), politics/statecraft (eight), science (three) and individual contributors (two). With the Tatas even today among the heavyweights of Indian industry, it is no surprise to note that the Tata group's founder, Jamsetji Tata, has featured twice ('58 and '65), J. R. D. Tata, the father of civil aviation in India, also twice ('82 and '94) and institutions which bear the Tata name — the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC) and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) have one stamp each, i.e. a total of six stamps incorporating the Tata

name. Commemorating 50 years of the steel industry (1908-1958), the 15 naiye paise (np) stamp honoring Jamsetji Tata is in orange red with watermark, with the special cancellation bearing the date March 1, 1958. The first day cover shows the interior of the steel mills with blast furnaces. Jamsetji features again on a 15 p stamp and though the occasion is not mentioned, it carries the dates of his lifespan (1839-1904), with the imagery showing a line of electricity pylons and molten iron, probably denoting the Tata group's pioneering role in electricity generation and industrial progress. The special cancellation date on the first day cover is January 7, 1965.

The philatelic beacon denoting Indian civil aviation's half century (1932-82) came in the form of a Rs 3.25 p stamp showing J. R. D. Tata, all in white, standing afore his red Puss Moth on a pure white background. Released on October 15, 1982, the first day cover depicts the progression from propeller to jet aviation with Air India's distinctive red and Indian Airlines' orange logos on the respective aircrafts. J. R. D. Tata (1904-1993) featured again on a two-rupee stamp released on November 29, 1994, the year after his death, with both stamp and first day cover carrying symbols of progress and industry.

The two-rupee white/beige stamp of the TMC released on February 28, 1991 depicts the hospital building, with the first day cover portraying the evil effects of smoking and its concomitant — cancer. The TIFR stamp has an inset photo of India's foremost nuclear scientist, Dr Homi Bhabha, set against an azure background of sea and sky and an aerial view of TIFR's beautiful complex. Released on February 9, 1996 in a two-rupee denomination, the date on the stamp reads 1945-1995, while the first day cover is illustrated with a pelletron accelerator and a giant metrewave radio telescope, a pointer to

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From left, 1st row: Cama, Jejeebhoy, Ardaseer Wadia; 2nd row: Jamsetji Tata (first and second), D. N. Wadia; 3rd row: J. R. D. Tata (first and second), Bhabha; 4th row: Naoroji (first and second), Godrej centenary; 5th row: Tata Memorial Centre, A. D. Shroff (left in 2nd row), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research; 6th row: Charter of Cyrus the Great; Freddie Mercury (first from left), Pandey School; 7th row: Jamshed Mehta





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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

India's nuclear progress. Bhabha (1906-1966) had earlier been featured in the year of his death on a 15 p stamp, showing Bhabha's pensive profile against the backdrop of a nuclear reactor, with the first day cover bearing a Bombay GPO (General Post Office) date of August 4, 1966.

Just over a year after the first Jamsetji Tata stamp, Indian Posts and Telegraph honored India's first knight and baronet, *Rajiv (below) and Sanjay Gandhi*

Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (1783-1859) on the occasion of his death centenary in 1959. A pioneer of trade with China and philanthropist par excellence, the Ashokan watermarked, 15 np stamp features a bust of the baronet, while the first day cover incorporates drawings of his main munificences — the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution, the Poona Bund, Sir J. J. Hospital, the Mahim Causeway and the Sir J. J. School of Art.

Two political stalwarts were the next to be honored in 1962 and 1963 respectively. Madam Bhikaji Cama (1861-1936), intrepid crusader for India's freedom and unfurler of India's first flag, was remembered on her birth centenary with a 15 np stamp and first day cover issued, aptly enough, on Republic Day (January 26) 1962. The Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), was honored thrice — with a 15 np stamp released on September 4, 1963; in 1985 on the occasion of the centenary of the Indian National Congress (INC) with a small visage of Naoroji pictured alongside other Congress stalwarts, in a block of four one-rupee stamps in the orange, white and green colors of the Indian flag; and in 1993 in a six-rupee stamp commemorating the centenary of his election to the British House of Commons.

India's other Parsi political stalwart, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915) was enshrined on a one-rupee stamp and first day cover showing Pherozeshah in Parsi attire as late as 1996, on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary celebrations. Earlier a small portrait of Pherozeshah had featured alongside Naoroji and other Congress leaders on the set of stamps on the Congress centenary.

With a Parsi father, the assassinated Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi (1944-1991) featured on a one-rupee stamp titled "Rajiv Gandhi: A life for India" released on August 29, 1991. His brother Sanjay's first death anniversary was marked by a 35 p stamp and cover portraying Sanjay (1946-1980) amidst the people of India, released in Bombay on June 23, 1981.

Master ship-builder Ardaseer Cursetjee Wadia (1808-1877) and his multi-masted, sturdy sailing ships were portrayed on a 20 p stamp and first day cover, first franked with the date May 27, 1969.

Besides the Tatas, the only business group to have a philatelic testimonial to achievement is the House of Godrej. The three-rupee stamp without watermark issued on the Godrej centenary and released on July 11, 1998 carries two oval insets of founder Ardeshir and consolidator Pirojsha Godrej set amidst a background of Godrej factories and products. The first day cover illustrates the Godrej commitment to social causes with a picture of the students of its Udayachal School.

In the scientific field, geologist Dr D. N. Wadia (1883-1969) is depicted on a one rupee stamp, released on October 23, 1984 with the Himalayan Institute of Geology in the background.

Jal Cooper (1905-1972), popularly perceived to be the father of Indian philately with several books on the subject, was featured on a 10-rupee stamp issued on December 15, 1997. One of a set of four released to mark 50 years of Independence and the Post Office Theme on the occasion of the World Philatelic Exhibition — Indepex 1997, the stamp depicts Cooper alongside a set of rare "cancellations" used on postal mails in the 19th century and onwards in the Bombay, Calcutta and Madras post offices and a cancellation used in 1871-72 in Aden cantonment which was, according to the Indian Posts and Telegraphs brochure, "annexed to British India in 1839."

The most recent of the "Parsi" stamps is the one of eminent economist A. D. Shroff in a three-rupee denomination, issued as one of a set of four to mark

"India's march towards progress and development." The first day cover bears the stamping date of October 9, 1999.

Two Parsi schools, one madressa, one association, one agiary and one individual have been commemorated with special covers and cancellations. A special cover marking the centenary (1891-1991) of the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution and Junior College prominently displays the Institution crest and a small oval portrait of the school's founder Byramjee Jeejeebhoy, with youth activities all around. The special cancellation of March 16, 1992 incorporates the school's magnificent heritage building.

The Bai Ruttonbai F. D. Panday Girls' High School also brought out a special cover to mark its centenary (1898-1998), with portraits of the School's founder, Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, first baronet, his wife Lady Sakerbai and their young daughter Bai Ruttonbai Framji Panday in whose memory this school for girls was founded. The special cancellation of September 11, 1998 incorporates the School crest.

The special cover of Dadar's Athor-nan Boarding Madressa in celebration of its platinum jubilee depicts the Madressa building, an afarganiu with fire and two cow-headed, crossed maces alongside, with the special cancellation of December 22, 1995 incorporating the afarganiu.

On the religious theme too, the platinum jubilee special cover of The Bombay Parsee Association shows the asho farohar, afarganiu, *Khordeh Avesta* and Humata, Hukta, Huvareshtha within a circle with the date 1920. The special cancellation of August 22, 1996 has the asho farohar on it.

The special cover of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta portrays in an oval frame a resplendent Mehta with his trademark pugree, and a small crest of the University of Bombay with which he was associated for long years. The special cancellation of February 24, 1996 includes a drawing of the University's Rajabai Clock Tower.

The most recent of the special covers is the one marking the 150th anniversary of the Seth Nusserwanji Hirji Karani Agiary (1847-1997) at Cusrow Baug, which displays a drawing of the Agiary, with the cancellation of February 7, 1997 depicting an afarganiu with flame.





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Of fire-temples and fire-vases

The old fire-temples of Iran and the new fire-temples of North and South America are sources of peace and joy, says the author

Ali A. Jafarey

India and Pakistan

In the early 1940s, while still a student of the late Dastur (Dr) Maneckji N. Dhalla, I was encouraged by my first preceptor Dr Maneck Pithawalla, principal of the B. V. S. Parsi High School, Karachi, to hold elementary Avesta and Pahlavi classes for Parsi friends of almost my own age, on the School premises. One of them was a martab, a fully qualified priest. One day he suggested that I accompany him to the fire-temple. I said: "But I can't enter." He said that most of the Parsis thought me to be an Irani ("born" Iranian Zoroastrian) and that no one will stop me. I said: "Still one thing stops me." "What?" "My conscience," was my reply. My conscience did not permit me to go to a place where the board read "For Parsis Only."

Again in 1971, when I attended the World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay, I was taken by a dear friend of the family to the Petit Fasli Atash Kadeh. I stopped at the gate. I pointed to the sign "For Parsis Only." He said that it meant for Zoroastrians. I said, "Yes, but I would visit a fire-temple only after the sign is removed to welcome any sincere visitor."

My wife Amy and I have visited Delhi twice to meet our Parsi friends and I to give a talk at the community hall and have stayed at the Dharamshala, and yet told the priests — first the late Darius Bagli and then his son — beforehand that we would not enter the fire-temple. Both of them thanked us for our restraint on an issue that was a source of concern for some members of the community.

I have not and I shall never violate the "law" governing the fire-temples in India and Pakistan, but I am looking forward to the day when they will be

voluntarily open to all, the way we have been having it in Iran for decades. The voluntary open-door policy by the Iranian Zarathushtis has made a difference. Those who visit, including the orthodox Muslims, see for themselves that Zoro-

astrians are not fire-worshippers but only face the fire altar to pray to God alone.

I cherish the memory of visiting the Parthian fire-temple at Taxila, north of Islamabad in Pakistan and the two Achaemenian fire-plinths at some distance in the same area. Candles and prayers to Ahura Mazda were my humble offerings. The Parthian temple, now more than 2,000 years old, stands as a majestic monument among the Achaemenian, Parthian and Sassanian ruins. It has become a tourist attraction.

Iran

Amy, our children and I returned to Iran in 1956 and settled in Tehran. We were welcomed by the Zoroastrian community as soon as we declared our position. My talks, classes and articles on the Good Religion at the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman, the Zoroastrian Women's Organization, the Zoroastrian Youth Organization, Faravahr and the Ancient Iran Cultural Society followed suit. I have visited and prayed at every fire-temple, Shah Bahram Izad and dar-e mehrs in Tehran, Yazd, Kerman, Isfahan and Shiraz. In Yazd and again in Kerman, I was asked by the priest-in-charge to join him in praying at the fire-altar under the *gonbad/gunbad*, the sacred chamber. At the wedding ceremony of two students of my *Gatha* classes, held within the Tehran Dar-e Mehr, I represented the "father" of the bridegroom.

We — my wife, our second daughter and myself — remember well our first visit to the Yazd fire-temples and Pir shrines, especially the old temple at Zainabad with its three "sleeping" fires maintained in the sanctuary. The altar at each shrine was lit by the caretaker (atashband) for us to pray. On the occa-



Zarathushtrian Assembly fire altar

astrians are not fire-worshippers but only face the fire altar to pray to God alone.

In Pakistan, there was, however, one small exception. I was invited by the late Tehmina Bhandara, another dear friend of the family, to visit and give a talk on "Fire in Zoroastrianism" at the new location of the fire-temple in Lahore within the main chamber before the consecrated fire was removed from the old building and enthroned on its new sacred seat. Amy and I were well out of the temple before the holy fire arrived. We have, until 1982, attended informal religious functions, gahambars, navjotes and weddings in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Quetta

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sion of the Pir-e Sabz festival, I suggested to my students that they set up loudspeakers at different levels of the shrine, from the top of the mountain to the ground level, so that the five *Gah* prayers with translation may be heard by the pilgrims and that regular congregational prayers and talks be added to the program. I saw the suggestion working well during my last two visits before I left Iran in 1981.

The ceremony I remember often is the yasna (Parsi Gujarati, *ijashni* — Zartoshti Persian, *jashan*) ceremony at the Yazd Atash Behram in which the two priests (*joti*, the leading priest was a visiting Parsi *ervad*), Amy and I were the only persons who went through the entire four-and-a-half-hour ceremony. Others came respectfully, sat silently and left quietly. And we partook the haoma juice as a part of the ceremony.

While visiting ancient fire-temples and shrines in Iran, including the Achemenian, Pasargadae and Naqsh-e Rostam fire-plinths, and the Sassanian fire-temples, Azar Goshnasb in Azerbaijan and Azar Farnbagh in Nishapur in Khorasan, I had lit my candles and prayed at what had once been fire places.

And I cherish much my visit in 1960

to Kharg Island, now one of the largest oil terminals in the world, to write a script on its history for the Iranian Oil Company. I was taken by an elite native, whom I had told about my religion and my field of studies, to the top of the hill where a Sassanian Chahar-tagh fire-temple surveyed the Persian Gulf waters around. A candle and a prayer, and the

**Those who visit,
including orthodox
Muslims, see that
Zoroastrians are not
fire-worshipers but
only face the fire altar
to pray to God alone**

usual ensuing *Ushta*, radiant happiness.

To turn to fire-vase, I saw that the youth at Faravahr in Tehran poured a little methyl acetate in the vase and lit it for inaugural prayers at functions held in the yard or on a camping ground. That gave me an idea. I took a fire-vase (*afargani*) to a gas-stove repairer. I asked him if he could fix a picnic gas-can in it

and see that it gave a natural flame. He asked the purpose. I said: "I am a Zoroastrian and I want it for functions outside the fire-temple." He asked me to return after two weeks. When I returned, he had it ready with golden flames leaping more than two feet high. And he, a retired oil engineer from Abadan, made it a gift to the "religion of his ancestors." How could I thank him! That was the beginning of gas-lit fire-vases and fire-altars.

It may be recalled that we had gas-fired fire-temples since the Parthian and Sassanian days. Archeology has shown that the temples were located in oil-rich regions from Khuzistan in the southwest to the former Soviet Azerbaijan west of the Caspian Sea in the northwest. We had what is now known as Masjid-e Soleiman north of Abadan, an old gas fire-temple; Azar Goshnasb, now called Takht-e Soleiman, one of the three chief fire-temples where Sassanian emperors were crowned, in Iranian Azerbaijan; and the Baku fire-temple, restored by the Azerbaijani government as a tourist attraction. Masjid-e Soleiman and Baku are 600 miles apart. Recent archeological works in Takht-e Soleiman have discovered pieces of the original baked

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Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda was Jamsetji Tata's companion aboard the ship 'Empress of India' on their voyage to America in 1893. Mr. Tata was deeply influenced by Swamiji's ideal of self-reliance. Later Swamiji helped the Founder to set up the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.



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Mahatma Gandhi

Johannesburg - Gandhi publicly acknowledged Tata's support towards the Satyagrahis in South Africa in 1909 and remained a close friend of Sir Ratan Tata. In 1925 he visited Jamshedpur at the invitation of C.F. Andrews, and successfully took up the issue of recognition of the Tata Labour Association with the Management in 1934, on his second visit.



Subhash Chandra Bose

Subhash Chandra Bose took charge of the Jamshedpur Labour Association in 1928 and provided leadership to the Steel Company's labour till 1937. He took up successfully with the Steel Company's Management the need to infuse qualified Indian engineers into covenanted positions.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru continued the patronage of his father, Pandit Motilal Nehru towards the Indian Steel Industry. He first visited Jamshedpur in 1925, with Mahatma Gandhi, and remained a friend of the Tatas and, on becoming India's first Prime Minister, paid a visit to Jamshedpur in 1958, the Golden Jubilee Year of Tata Steel.



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clay pipeline (yes, pipeline) that conveyed the gas from its natural fountain to the temple altar. One of the ways for Iranians to save their old monuments from destruction at the hands of Arabs in the early Islamic period was to ascribe such places to pre-Islamic Jewish prophets, particularly King Solomon (Persian Soleiman). It has worked well and we owe many relics to their cleverness.

In Iran, the navjotes were performed before the child reached his/her 10th anniversary. Many Iranians in Yazd and Kerman villages could not afford to have it done, mainly because of economical problems. A few of my students (one betrothed and nearing her marriage) wanted to have their initiation done. I succeeded in convincing the late chief mobeds Rostam Shahzadi, Arde-shir Azargoshasb and Firuz Azargoshasb that the given age in the Avesta and Pahlavi is 15 years and above, and never under 10. They permitted it, and my students and I arranged several such ceremonies in which the late Mobed Rashid Shahmardan, famous for his initiations of more than 200 Iranians into the Good Religion, including me, took a leading part to initiate from four to nine candidates on each ceremonial occasion

held at the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjuman Hall, Zoroastrian Women's Organization hall and Kashk-e Varjavand, the large park donated by the late Dr Fareidun Varjavand for youth camps and large gatherings in Tehran. I too officiated in the case of a few, especially of a hearing impaired young girl of Kerman, who could read and write but was refused by the mobeds there because of her speech disability, and at that time had come to participate in the youth camp and to be initiated by me.

This encouraged ZICA (The Zoroastrian International Cultural Association), established and run by Parsi residents of Tehran, to offer to bear the expenses for the Iranian youth who could not afford to have their navjotes done. I undertook to arrange it. The initiation of the first group of 33 boys and girls, all teenagers, was performed by nine Iranian and Parsi mobeds in Yazd. The procession of initiates was led in the Rostam Guiv Hall by the head officiating Parsi mobed who carried the spectacular gas-lit vase. After my speech on the significance of the initiation, I came down the platform to witness the ceremony from the opposite side. The ceremony was in its last stages when I overheard an old lady tell her

friend: "Do you notice that the fire-vase is burning for over an hour now without being fed? A miracle!" I hastened to the platform to give the concluding words and to explain that the fire was lit by gas and was no "miracle." The second group of 33 boys and girls had their ZICA navjotes in Kerman and the third group in Zahedan with the same vase lighting the ceremony. The move introduced the group navjotes, now so common in Iran and North America, held under the auspices of the Kankash-e Mobedan (Council of Priests), and of course, the Zarathustrian Assembly.

North and South Americas

With me attached to the newly founded California Zoroastrian Center as teacher/scholar/office manager, Amy and I settled in Orange County, California in 1982. The Center's headquarters already had an electric lamp lighting its prayer room all day and night and a fire-vase lit on the occasion of religious festivals. Simple for many and revolting for a few. Soon the Center was able to purchase a piece of land and an architect genius, an Iranian Zartoshti began work on the Rustam Guiv Dar-e Mehr. I rec-

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ommended a gas-lit altar that would overlook the main hall yet the Dar-e Mehr proper would have its own entrance with a washbasin and caps and scarves for the faithful. It was approved. The large fire-vase was donated by Ervad Jehangir Turel of the Shahenshahi Atash Behram in Surat, India. The inscription on it mentions that it had been donated by two Kapadia brothers Temulji and Edulji to the fire-temple in the year 1257 Yazdegardi, 114 years ago. It was transported to Los Angeles by a founder trustee of the Center.

The new Dar-e Mehr, an imposing building, was inaugurated with a jashan held by a team of 11 mobeds, eight Parsi and three Iranian priests on (3 Farvardin 3724 Zartoshti Religious Era.) March 23, 1986. With flames rising high, the fire-vase was majestic and revered not only by more than 600 participants in the main hall but seen by the people on the opposite street for quarter of a mile. Every religious function at the Dar-e Mehr begins with the officiating mobed standing behind the altar facing the main hall and praying aloud. It is the most radiant smokeless vase I have seen and a frequent point for the visiting faithful,

Iranis and Parsis, to come and pay their respect. Sandalwood agarbatties (incense sticks), lit by praying person/s, spread the fragrance.

A year passed by and I was told that Ervad Turel had come and would like to see the Dar-e-Mehr. I welcomed him and his company, showed him around the entrance of tall Persepolis columns, the main hall overlooked by the sacred chamber where the fire-vase stands across a clear wall of glass, the dining hall, the kitchen and the classrooms. Then we went out in the yard and entered the Dar-e-Mehr proper. We performed padyab-kushti — ablution and re-girdling of the kushti. I raised the flames to the highest. We faced the altar. He chanted the *Atash Niyayesh* loud and sweet. It was awe inspiring. He felt pleased to see the fire-vase in its new reverential place. I still cherish the occasion.

At its present headquarters in Anaheim, California, the Zarathushtrian Assembly has, in the main hall, its altar made on the Achaemenian model with three tall mirrors behind. It is gas fed. It is pleasing to see the flames reflected as if the altar has four fires.

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navjotes, marriages, memorials, congregations and individual meditations. And a few weeks ago, I lit the fire-altar at the Assembly for two visitors—a Christian priest and his friend from Portland who had come to have a friendly discussion on "Zoroastrianism and its influence on Christianity." I felt very happy at the open discussions and the respect shown to our altar.

The Assembly has fire-vases that light and enlighten people in Europe and South America. The fire-vases in Anaheim and Brazilian and Venezuelan branches use readymade firewood for open-air functions. I remember and cherish the flaming fire-vases that brightened the faces of the initiates for navjote as well as the attendants in Ciudad de Ojeda, Venezuela and Goibnia, Brazil. Venezuelan Zarathushtrians have acquired a large piece of land to build the first fire-temple in their country and the Brazilian Zarathushtrians have made for themselves the fire-altar in the new building they have leased in the heart of Goibnia city. They are also looking for a piece of land to have their temple.

During our next visit to Brazil in September/October 2002, fire-vases

will flare forth in many more cities. Another delegation is scheduled to leave on a European tour where fire-vases will be lit. The Assembly is blazing the way for the universal doctrine of Zarathushtra Spitama in every part of the glowing globe.

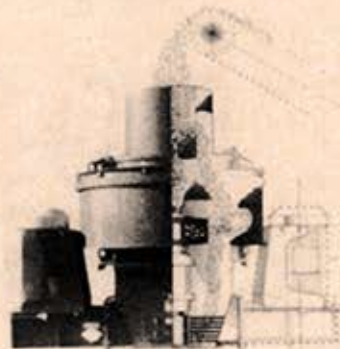
At our humble home, we have a small vase we light with wood, plain and sandalwood. And, learning from the late mobed Jimmy Makujina of San Jose, whose loss is still very fresh, we have a night-lamp lit day and night to remind us of fire, the divine light, heat and energy that lightens and enlightens our mind.

A founder director of the Zarathushtrian Assembly and a founder trustee of the Cyrus Society, Dr Ali Jafarey's fields of specialization include Indo-Iranian history, geography, culture, religion, linguistics and literature. Author of 16 books in Persian and English



on the Zarathushtrian religion and Iranian culture, Jafarey has taught at various universities and institutions in Iran and Pakistan.

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Spurs to success

From racehorse breeding to vaccines and engineering, the Poonawalla brothers are in the country's top league

Hilla P. Guzder

They are known to be frontrunners in their field — in the stud farm, at the racecourse, in the making of vaccines and the manufacture of mechanical seals. Their thoroughbreds ride the wind to win prestigious races all over India, their champions have streaked past the winning post in Hongkong and Malaysia. Their annually sponsored race — The Poonawalla Breeders' Multi-Million, now in its 13th year — is an elegant "see-and-be-seen" event, attracting not just the die-hard racegoer but families looking for fun, fashion and fortune as well!

But behind the glamor, the flamboyance, the hats and cigars of Dr Cyrus Poonawalla and the winning smile of brother Zavaray as they lead in their winners lie shrewd business brains and long years of hard work. Their Serum Institute of India Limited (SIIL) has cantered past many a competitor to become, according to their factfile, the largest exporter of vaccines and immuno-biologicals in India. With a turnover of Rs 403 crores for the year ended March 2002, SIIL's export turnover stood at a substantial Rs 276 crores! "The Serum Institute is very much my baby," states Cyrus, the chairman of the Poonawalla Group, adding that the foundation stone of the Institute was laid the day after his wedding in June 1966 and their company was the first in the entire developing world to get recognition as early as 1993 from WHO (World Health Organisation) for the DTP (diphtheria — tetanus — pertussis) and MMR (measles — mumps — rubella) group of vaccines. "Today, one out of every two children in the world is inoculated by vaccines of the Serum Institute," he notes, with products exported to 137 countries (as on January 1, 2002) across South America, Africa,

Asia, the Pacific islands and some parts of Europe as well!

Announcing the launch of their GeneVac-B, their Hepatitis-B vaccine, in July 2002, Cyrus termed it "the most affordable Hepatitis-B vaccine in India,

ferent countries as well.

"My career has been basically concentrated on two activities which ran parallel — my quest for being number one in horse breeding and control of racing administration in India, and on the other side my professional career in the development of immuno-biologicals in the Serum Institute. In both spheres, by the grace of God and without setting it as a goal, we have come into number one position," elucidates Cyrus whose PhD thesis from Poona University in 1988 was on "Improved technology in the manufacture of specific antitoxins (anti snake venom serum) and its socioeconomic impact on society." In the early years when the breeding industry was not blossoming, it was his wife Viloo who insisted that he persevere with the development of the Stud Farm as well, adds Cyrus.

"Because of its high profile nature I am obviously better known in the horse breeding and racing field," continues the experienced administrator who has won several awards including the Leading Breeders Award. Cyrus has been chairman of the Royal Western India Turf Club as well as chairman of the apex body, Turf Authorities of India, as also chairman of the Stud Book Authority of India. He has represented India on several international racing conferences as the permanent representative to the governing council of the Asian Racing Federation. His lavish lifestyle encompasses beautiful bungalows and classy cars. "In my younger days I loved sports cars — Jaguars, Maserattis, etc. I had even built a car in my college days and kept it in driving condition," he smiles, sitting relaxed in his expansive office dominated by a huge chandelier and glittering trophies, soothing greenery



Soli Poonawalla (right): founder of the Farm

with a production of 100 million (pediatric) doses annually. GeneVac-B is manufactured using the latest German recombinant technology, with a superior yeast vector — a genetically engineered process which requires sophisticated and advanced infrastructure — and is made at the Serum Institute's state of the art new laboratories at their sprawling Hadapsar complex in Poona.

With over 2,000 employees in the Poonawalla Group, of which Zavaray is the president, the companies have surged ahead at the dawn of the new millennium to reach a turnover of more than six billion rupees, according to their brochure. Their ISO-9001 certified engineering companies — Eagle Poonawalla Industry Limited (EPIL), Intervall (India) Limited and El-o-matic (India) Private Limited — are market leaders in the manufacture of mechanical seals, industrial valves and pneumatic actuators, exporting them to dif-



Top row: (left) Runner and rider on track; impressive entrance to Stud Farms; (alongside) Delegates of the Asian Racing Conference admire the pedigree in the paddock; (bottom row, from left) Behroze, Zavaray, Simone, Yohan and Delna; Adar, Villoo and Cyrus





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(Alongside) Zavaray and Cyrus; (below) owners Purviz (second from left) and Rusy (second from right) Shroff with Astonish in Hongkong; (bottom) Villoo (left) and Cyrus with Desert Warrior

outside his window. From sports cars to vintage cars, the Poonawallas' present stable of cars include custom-built stretched limousines!

With Cyrus grooming his son Adar to take over the reins at the Serum Institute ("not now, but gradually, when he's ready," notes the father), Adar told *Parsiana* that he's "very happy to be back in India." In his early 20s, Adar did part of his schooling abroad, and recently completed his Bachelor of Business Administration from King's College in London, as well as biotechnology courses in the UK. His immediate focus, he declares, is "to take on Indian markets — to increase the distribution of present and future products in this country." Adar aims to do his PhD "probably in immunology and immunological responses."

Devoting his energies mainly to the breeding and rearing of racehorses, Zavaray declares: "The Stud Farm is my life," as we drive past neat, white-fenced peaceful paddocks at the Theur breeding division, about 10 kilometers from their main complex at Hadapsar. "Yes, we keep our horses out in the open all year round," he says smilingly, in response to *Parsiana's* expression of surprise at the thoroughbred's ability to withstand Poona's searing summer sun! "We believe in making them tough and wiry right from the beginning, thus better able to withstand the rigors of the race."

At his command, the grooms lead out on to the green

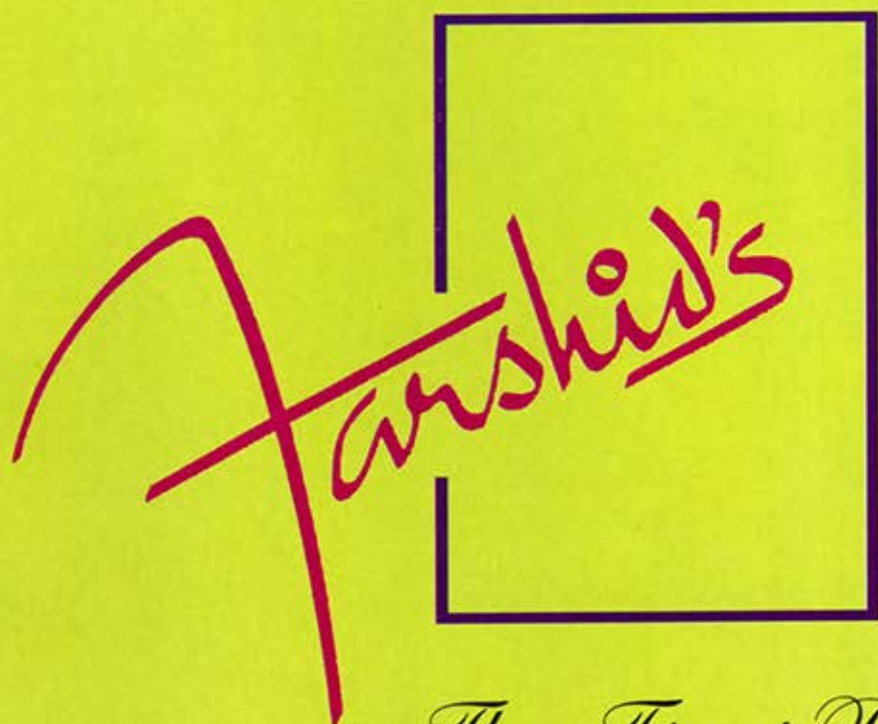
outside the Equine Viewing Gallery two of their champions and successful sires — Exhilaration, named horse of the year '88-'89, whose glistening coat and majestic mien even at age 16 proclaims his pedigree, and Astonish whose surprise debut win at the Sha Tin racecourse in Hongkong under the ownership of Hongkong residents Rusy and Purviz Shroff astonished that city's punters. "The horse has bitten me twice and stood on me, but I can forgive him after today!" Hongkong trainer Lawrie Fownes was quoted in *The Sunday Stan-*

dard, Hongkong of January 9, 1994. With many a win in India before he was exported to Hongkong as the first commercial Indian-bred export, the bay colt was required to reside for six months in the USA before being permitted entry into Hongkong (as per their stringent quarantine rules), by which time he had turned six and had passed his prime! "That was my proudest moment," says Zavaray, adding: "When Astonish was taking a lap of honor before leaving for the US in April '93, we could see half the crowd giving an ovation and the other half cracking jokes (as to an Indian horse's ability to win on foreign turf) — *varas véchva nikalyoch* (this man will make a fool of himself!)." When Astonish returned after his victory in the Red Room Handicap, which is a class one race, "the entire crowd gave us a standing ovation."

Their four farm estates at Hadapsar and Theur encompass computerized state of the art horse walkers and training tracks developed by their research and development (R and D) wing. The automated feed mill produces various combinations of freshly prepared feed, with the result that their strong and well-nutrited equines have galloped ahead to win over 240 classic races on different racecourses, including five consecutive Indian Derbies.

Their website, www.poonawalla.com shows the Poonawalla Stud Farms placed at the top of the table in the ranking of stud farms in India for the period November 1, 2000-October 31, 2001, according to the formula adopted by the Turf Authorities of India for graded and other races, but the Usha Stud of Delhi pips them to the post in the points total of graded races. On stakes earned, the Poonawallas emerge clear winners with 118 wins from 206 starters — the highest total number of victories for any stud farm in India! As of April 15, 2002, 131 of their "equine millionaires" (colts and fillies) have won stakes of more than one million rupees each! "I believe the filly is faster," observes Cyrus.





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(From left) top row: Group chairman Dr Cyrus Poonawalla, president Zavaray Poonawalla; second row: plasmapheresis machine, Serum Institute's laboratory; third row: blending vessel of vaccines, quality control and instrumentation laboratory, El-o-matic's products; fourth row: bellows seal, butterfly valve, varieties of seals



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Looking beyond the shores of the subcontinent, the Poonawallas have exported horses to Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Hongkong and USA. Among their successes abroad have been Adler, the Dr Vijay Mallya-owned, Rashid Byramji-trained thoroughbred, the first to win in the USA, Placerville who won at Royal Ascot, Diffident at Abu Dhabi and Smart Chieftan who set the track afire on many an occasion to become the highest stakes earner in India with a phenomenal Rs 16.8 million before he was exported to Singapore via the USA! "We could have been international much earlier, but because of the restrictions on foreign exchange (prior to the economic liberalization of India) horses of only a certain grade could be brought in. But even these have shown their worth. Careful selection of pedigree, heavy infusion of funds, technology and thought, tremendous dedication and hard work of our willing

staff have all contributed to the success of the Stud Farms," says Zavaray.

The reputation of the Indian horse in the early '90s (in the international market) was a big zero, he adds. In '95, it was acknowledged that the Indian horse could be fleet of foot, in December 2001 their Saddle Up was invited by the Emirates World Cup Championships Organization to run in Hongkong, Zavaray explains the progression. But behind the fame and fortune have been "tremendous traumas — the colics and the colic, accidental collisions and injuries, the deaths of foals or their dams. The '50s and '60s were very difficult — it's surprising I haven't had a nervous breakdown or developed ulcers!"



*Late Dr Jal Mehta:
liaising internationally*

Zavaray commends his wife Behroze (they celebrated their 33rd anniversary this year) for being "wonderful, supportive of me at all

times," whose efficient hospitality management has impressed many a foreign investor and visitor to the farms. Of their

three children, the eldest Yohan's energies are focussed mainly on the engineering companies. After his schooling at Poona's Bishop's School and MCom from Wadia College, Yohan did his MBA in '97 from the American College in London. With the engineering companies located also in the Hadapsar complex, flagship company EPIL has plants in Poona and Vapi and branch offices all over India, from Guwahati in the north to Cochin in the south. Enjoying a 50 percent share of the mechanical seals market in India, EPIL was established in 1975. "Prior to our tie-up with Eagle Industry Company of Japan we were restricted to India. We now have offices in the Middle East and South East Asia and are looking at Europe and USA as well, as territories for export have been allowed," asserts Yohan. EPIL's R and D facility is the only one in the country recognized by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India as an R and D unit for mechanical seals, according to their brochure.

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land. With a major market share in India, the company also exports its products to South East Asia, the Middle East, UK, Europe, etc, state company sources. El-o-matic (India) established in '89 is a prime supplier of pneumatic actuators for automatic valve control in collaboration with El-o-matic International of Holland, not only to the domestic market but to its parent company and to El-o-matic USA. "Customer satisfaction is our priority," declares Yohan, as interior designer wife Michelle (née Vazifdar), who lived in London before their marriage, nods her agreement. "We aim to slowly hand over the engineering group to Yohan," declares Cyrus.

Yohan's 26-year-old sister Simone's head and heart is with the Stud Farm. With a 45-acre annexe to the main stud, Simone manages the Youngstock Division and has her own staff. With a strong emotional attachment to horses, Simone watches with tender care the newborn foal struggling for survival after the death of its mother on the morning of the *Parsiana* visit. "These long-limbed animals often have difficulties in foaling," she explains. In the pipeline is the setting up of a modern surgery at a substan-

tial cost which should be ready within two years, states Zavaray. "The success of the farm is very much Dad's doing. He's never satisfied, he sets high goals," says Simone. After her schooling at St Mary's in Poona and BCom from Ness Wadia College, Simone did a diploma in Horse Business Management in Geelong in Australia. She also did the "hands-on and study" Irish National Stud Course where the student staff tend the horses. Simone worked for a while for yearling sales in a Kentucky stud farm in the USA.

Simone's twin Delna is into fashion designing, having studied the subject in London, and is now with noted designer Manish Malhotra in Bombay. "Delna loves horses. In fact I think she loves them more than all of us," asserts Simone.

"I tell my children, you must do at least one hour of social work a day," observes Zavaray who has won the Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award and Vijaya Shree Award for his achievements in equine breeding, as well as socio-economic activities like promotion of education and family planning among stud farm workers and surrounding villagers. When the Poonawallas offered to

widen and upgrade the old Sholapur Road up to Poona Municipal Corporation limits, which has been named after their father Soli, little did they anticipate the spanners that officialdom often puts into the implementation of any good cause! It took six years of "tearing and pulling out our hair" to get the work done, notes Zavaray. The Gool Poona-walla Park in the Salisbury Park precinct of Poona has also been built by the brothers for the public in memory of their mother Gool.

The Poonawallas trace the beginnings of their ancestral business to the firm of Adurjee and Brothers set up in 1896. It was father Soli, dealing in real estate and furniture, who set up the Stud Farm in 1945/46, because of his "complete love for horses," at a time bloodstock breeding was in its infancy in India, narrates Cyrus. Tracing the family tree, Cyrus explains that ancestor Dhunjisha Anklesaria was a civil contractor, "a right hand man of the British government who gifted him what is known as Poona's East Street. He developed and built over 100 properties and became commonly known as 'Poonawalla seth.'"

Cyrus terms the late Dr Jal Mehta

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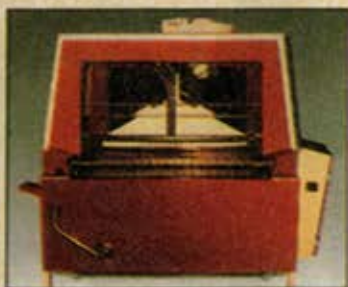
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(see "Savior for the scourge," In Memoriam, *Parsiana*, April 2002) as a great contributor to the development of the Serum Institute. "Jal was a totally selfless and dedicated social worker who toiled relentlessly, more towards the latter years when he was able to assist me tremendously in getting the WHO accreditation which led substantially to the Institute's turnover." Mehta's competent handling of scientific and technical matters at international level enabled him (Cyrus) to devote time to the breeding and racing aspect as well, he acknowledges.

With Satish Mundra, Manohar Borkar and Subash Kapre being other major contributors, Cyrus recalls the "lucky day" he visited the Haffkine Institute in Bombay many years ago and met "one more selfless person in the form of Pesi K. Sholapurwala, who joined Serum Institute as development advisor in 1970, consolidating the marketing set-up. "When he joined me, he had vowed to retire at 65. But his never ending quest for new products even at the age of 80 plus and his total dedication to SIIL's growth has self-motivated him to continue, and we are very happy to encour-

age him to do so till such time as he desires to stop," smiles Cyrus.

"Our products are on par with any international supplier," states Dr S. S. Jadhav, executive director in charge of Quality Assurance (QA) who has been with the Institute for 23 years. The Serum Institute of India Research Foundation, set up in 1977, is officially recognized by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the department of science and technology of the Government of India. All research is conducted in accordance with international GCP (Good Clinical Practice), states their brochure. Showing *Parsiana* around the new Hepatitis-B and other facilities donning protective robes, caps and shoe covers which are then discarded, Dr Rustom Mody, director of the Research Foundation, points out the distinctly separate sections, the special airlocks and negative (air) pressure work areas, (e.g. while working on the rabies vaccine) the bold Bio Hazard labels to denote places where entry is strictly prohibited. Dr Pralhad Patki, deputy director (medical) estimates there to be around 40 million carriers of the Hepatitis-B virus in India.

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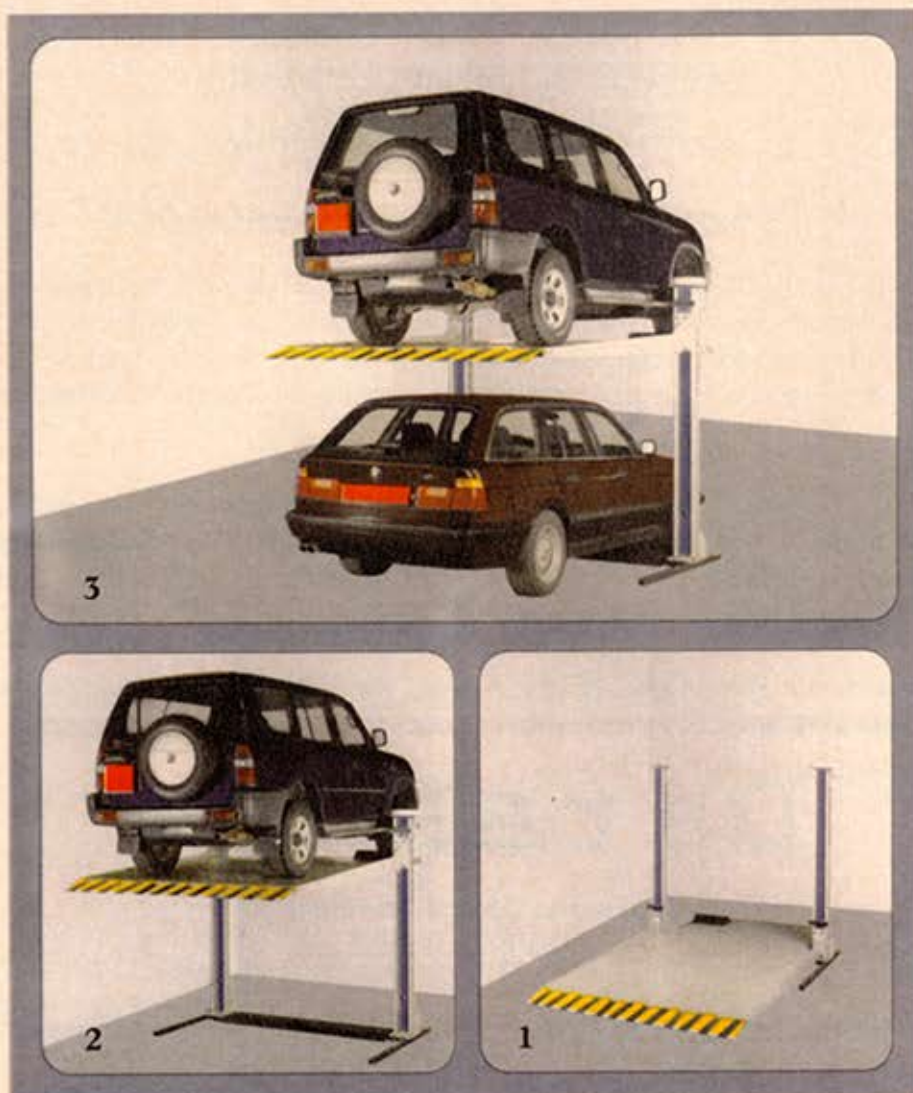
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for the Government of India's EPI (Expanded Programme of Immunization), FDA (Food and Drug Administration) inspectors regularly visit their production facilities, WHO inspectors check as per international benchmarks. Maintaining the price line is of prime importance, says Jadhav, stating that their "low profile" company which started exporting the measles vaccine at one dollar, 10 cents in '94, today sells it at one dollar, six cents, with no price increase even after eight years. The usual batch size for DTP vaccines, notes their brochure, is a massive two million to four million doses — a real challenge for QA! Using lyophilisation (complex process of freeze-drying) to increase shelf life and stability, Dr Rajeev Dhare, director, vaccine production, points out that SIIL produces 400 million doses of the measles vaccine and 120 million doses of rubella vaccine annually, and the vaccines undergo over 30 tests before they can be released!

SIIL's product portfolio includes anti snake venom sera for Indian, Asian and Central African varieties of poisonous snakes, anti cancer and infertility drugs. R and D efforts are focussed towards development of more combination vac-

cines which necessitate just one prick of the needle instead of several ("mothers would appreciate that," notes Cyrus), exploring of alternative routes like nasal inhalation, a rabies vaccine on human diploid cell and maybe even a vaccine against AIDS, which is, Cyrus stresses, still far away in time.

Never one to flinch from airing his views forthrightly, Cyrus believes Parsis of today "lack drive," and Zavaray concurs. Terming himself a "fair and generous employer who enjoys the respect of his staff" Cyrus laments India's missed opportunities for progress. "With the present government I can't see quick progress, I can't see any accountability. But at least the politicians are willing to meet you. It is the bureaucrats, with their delayed, high-handed and negative decisions," who are sometimes problematic.

Though "very proud to be a Parsi," Cyrus observes "very few Parsi families have grown because they have lost their business acumen and zest to work." Though conversion does not find favor, and "I don't want to encourage inter-marriage," he is not opposed, he says, to boys marrying out but "am dead against girls marrying out, because I believe Parsi men make excellent husbands!" If

children of mixed marriages are not taken into the community, it will die out, he foresees.

Lambasting the akabars of the community for "lacking the guts to take the right decision," Cyrus views the present disappearance of vultures over Indian skies as an act of God, thus forcing us to look for alternatives." Fully respecting the religious sentiments of priests and the veneration of fire, Cyrus does not advocate cremation as a solution. "But I do not see any objection to burial which is the obvious choice. I can't see why the orthodox part of the community is not going the burial way, especially when there is evidence that Cyrus the Great was buried. When we were burying in the past, there is no logic now," he opines.

With the Poonawalla brothers' signature style firmly etched over the activities of the Group, Cyrus and Zavaray assert: "As we look back over the past 50 years, we feel a sense of pride and achievement." With the hands of the second generation also firmly on the reins, the Group looks to stay the course over the next 50 years as well, continuing the name that has become synonymous with success.

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The open-minded Anjuman

The liberal atmosphere in Delhi encourages out-married Zoroastrians to retain their ties with community institutions

Ava Khullar

I arrived in Delhi in early July of 1965 for a job interview with a social science research organization called the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). As destiny took over, I went out that very day with friends to see a Hindi movie, in one of the very old theaters of Old Delhi, and met my husband-to-be, Gopal. Six feet, four inches, and towering over us all, he stood out with his friendly demeanor and gallant ways in the midst of our Parsi group.

I moved in with my dear friends Hilla and Parvez Banker, now both sadly no more in our midst, inside the army residential complex in the Red Fort, until the sudden war with Pakistan in 1965 that sent Parvez (Major Banker then) to the front. Gopal became our friend and guardian, looking after us and Hilla and Parvez's two kids, Dinyar and Nazneen. We went through the air-raid drills inside the Fort and had a few anxious days taking Gen Ayub Khan's boast of 'taking tea inside the Red Fort' quite seriously. When the family had to move to smaller non-family accommodation, I experienced living in Ms Mody's guest house, amidst other Parsi residents in the heart of Connaught Place, until Gopal and I got married in October 1967 and moved to our home in Defence Colony.

I found my relationship with Gopal no hindrance. He was friendly with many Parsis and in fact was a regular in the billiard-playing group at the Mengusi Dharamshala club. Ervad Darius Bagli, the panthaky at Delhi's Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher, often jokingly said, "*Laau tooné sudreh-kusti pehrav* (come, I'll make you wear the sudreh-kusti)." Gopal recalls an amusing incident when a new chasniwala, who was used to seeing him at the club,

assumed he was a member and came running to him to confirm if two brothers, both rather dark in complexion, were Parsis and should be allowed to enter the agiary!

The Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) scene was active during those years of the late 1960s. The Social Centre, as well as the Amateur Society, had their dinners, picnics, summer mango outings to India Gate on late evenings, tournaments, sports, Christmas parties and drama (both Gujarati *nataks*, enthusiastically directed by Bagli, and English plays) and the annual Amateur Society's fete in winter, which was our effort to collect funds for the year-round activities and have a fun time. I was an active participant in these events.

It was around this time that the early settlement of Parsis in Kashmere Gate started to slowly change as families resettled in south Delhi and other parts of the spreading metropolis. A spurt in the arrival of families from Calcutta, in the wake of the Naxalite menace in West Bengal, created a growing cluster in south Delhi (Greater Kailash, Defence Colony, etc) creating close community interaction in this area. The '70s and '80s saw a lot of interaction amongst the community members as a whole.

The 1978 North Zone meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India hosted by the DPA was a watershed in the growing awareness of the Delhi Parsis regarding the socioeconomic and demographic trends among the larger community in India. At this meeting it was decided to carry out a "Socioeconomic and Demographic Survey of the Parsis of Delhi," and CSDS agreed to undertake it. I was in charge of the survey and along with the team of researchers, we decided to make this a

comprehensive 100 percent survey of all households. However, while we had the list of families who were members of the DPA, we had this nagging feeling that there were many more that had not joined the Anjuman and we were determined to ferret them out. Through letters in the major English dailies and by word of mouth we came to know of an additional one-third number of families in Delhi. But what was most revealing was that these were mixed-marriage households. Coming as they did from the more orthodox areas of Bombay, Gujarat, etc where they faced ostracism, they had shied away from contacting the Anjuman in Delhi, fearing a similar response. The research findings also showed that a larger percentage of Parsi women, with higher education and occupational profiles, were married out and their non-Zoroastrian spouses also came from the upper socioeconomic strata of their communities. In other words, this was a fairly high profile group.

Shiavax Nargolwala (ICS), the DPA president for many years, was a man with a broad vision and moderate views. He immediately realized that the DPA was losing a crucial segment of the community whose alienation bode ill for the health of the community. He proposed to the board of trustees that the DPA rules be amended to accommodate these Parsis and their families as members, with the proviso that the non-Zoroastrian members would enjoy only the social privileges and not any religious rights, or the right to be elected trustees of the DPA. This created a healthy environment and happily expanded the Delhi Zoroastrian fraternity. The Parsi spouses and their children, after their navjote was performed, could avail of the facilities of the Dar-e-Meher and aramgah, while their non-Zoroastrian spouses were welcome to all social gatherings and activities. Delhi's response to the changing times was in line with the more progressive Zoroastrian communities in North America and other western countries.

The other result emanating from the project findings was a growing concern about the community's survival stakes. The project showed conclusively, as other similar studies had shown, that we were a fast aging society, with the 60-plus age group far exceeding the norm

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Alongside: A jashan celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher (below)

required for a healthy growing population, and the 0-5 years age group much below the required norm. There was also a growing concern that religious education of the young was sadly neglected and unless remedial measures were taken, their ties with the community would get weaker and weaker. The young mothers of the 4-14 years age group worked out a teaching program of religious education with the guidance of elders like Piloo Jungalwalla and Dr Sabar Havevala and the Young Farohars was born some years later. The classes served the dual purpose not only of religious instruction, but created friendships and camaraderie within this young group. Keeping in mind that friendships made at this age are a lifetime bonding, this was a fruitful bonus to ensure that when these children grew up they would have a circle of friends from within the community.

Nargolwala as president had, in his methodical and efficient way, put the Anjuman house in good order. His sudden passing away in a car accident, a few months before the golden jubilee celebrations of the Anjuman in 1986 when the priests' quarters were to be inaugurated, was a sad blow to his family and the Delhi Anjuman.

The Delhi Parsis did however find, as on previous occasions, the right person for the right job. Lt Gen Adi Sethna was unanimously elected as the new president, and the same moderate, liberal leadership is taking the community forward.

This open, democratic and liberal manner of functioning of the DPA suited my particular temperament and situation perfectly. Coming from a liberal athornan background, I had always been closely associated with the community and its activities from my early years in Nagpur. The Nagpur Parsis, a majority of whom came to the

city because of Jamsetji Tata's first industrial venture, the cotton textile Empress Mills, was a close knit group. My maternal grandfather, Ervad Eduljee Kanga was the first head priest of the Nagpur agiary. Realizing the declining role of the priesthood and the laity's indifference to their role and position, he consciously did not allow his three sons to become navar martabs. However, regular daily prayers, visits to the agiary which was nearby, and observance of all the religious festivals was a firm part of our upbringing. I realized later how insular our lifestyle had been at that time, when on looking back I could not recall a single instance when I visited or was invited to a non-Parsi home, until my last years in college. I also understood that this was not a deliberate, conscious isolation but a natural consequence of a happy and fulfilling community life which precluded any need or desire to go beyond it. Since I went to The J. N. Tata Parsi Girls School, most of the friendships formed were also amongst Parsis. I did have a few good non-Parsi friends, with whom I have still kept close ties, but that was a small fraction of my circle.

My marriage outside the community did not lead to any tension or break with the Parsis of Delhi. In retrospect I realize how fortunate I was that my life continued in the same even tenor after I chose a partner outside my community. Perhaps it would have been different if this had occurred in another city. Since the 1970s this trend of mixed

marriages has accelerated considerably and its widespread prevalence has led the larger community to accept this phenomenon philosophically.

There are, however, certain pockets where unpragmatic orthodoxy still opposes this trend as un-Zoroastrian and therefore unacceptable. There is a significant dimension to this phenomenon that the orthodox need to understand. During the course of our Delhi project, I came to know and interview almost all of the Parsi men and women married outside the community. What was revealed again and again was that in none of these cases had the choice of a marriage partner outside the community been an act of revolt against, or rejection of, the Zoroastrian faith or the community, but was a consequence of the particular situation in which those Parsis found themselves at a stage in their lives when they were ready for marriage. While they would have liked and found it easier to settle with a Parsi spouse — after all in day-to-day living a person from a similar background is more likely to be a compatible partner — they either did not find a suitable Parsi, or, working with non-Parsi colleagues, they got attracted to one of them and got married. Since the small, minuscule Parsi community has always had a strong hold on its members, the Parsis marrying out held on to their Zoroastrian faith and the values inculcated through this faith.

The vocal orthodox lobby does not appreciate this, and rather than work out some sensible measures to curtail this trend, or accept the inevitability of it, they just end up opposing it. This is proving detrimental for our small group that cannot afford to lose even a single member. A good percentage of Parsis married outside the community are more conscious of their roots, and see their earlier lifestyle and value system which they had otherwise taken for granted with greater appreciation. In other words, they tend to become more concerned and better Parsi Zoroastrians.

This was especially so in my case, as my association with my non-Parsi in-laws' family made me see my community as an interested observer from the outside. I could see in a clearer perspective the magnificent heritage we Parsis were privy





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to as well as the declining trends in socioeconomic, demographic areas. I observed also a growing psychological, attitudinal and identity crisis type situation overtaking the community. This led to my involvement and participation in research studies concerning the Parsi settlements in several towns and cities in India, since the 1978 study of Delhi. This interest still continues.

However, responsibilities in bringing up my daughter, Sonali, led me to resign from my job at the research center in 1981. The need to keep myself fruitfully occupied continued to urge me to take up some venture which I could combine with my role as housewife and mother. I took to creating embroidery designs for clothes. I started in a small way, designing for family and friends. My interest in the rich heritage of creative designs coming from different parts of India led me to weave together these different strains to create my own designs. What started as a hobby venture became a business, albeit a small one. I had never ever considered getting involved in anything remotely connected with business but now found this a natural extension of my creative work and under the name "Sonava" I started marketing my clothes through

periodic exhibitions in my hometown, Nagpur, and in Delhi. The close historic links between the Parsis and the Chinese design tradition as illustrated in the profusely embellished *garas*, *jhablas* and borders which most Parsi families still treasure as heirlooms now directed me into another avenue in creative designing, and I started adapting these Chinese designs into my clothes.

Alongside this business involvement, my association with the activities of the DPA has continued. In the last decade there is a conscious effort by the DPA to open up the small, progressive Parsi community and project itself through festivals and presentations to enlightened members of sister communities. There is now far more awareness about the Parsis, their faith, their special concerns and their achievements among non-Parsis in the capital.

As I go over the three decades of my stay in Delhi, I believe we as a community have grown and matured, and while we are second to none in keeping the community spirit alive and cherishing our religious values, we are moving out of the insular shell and making our presence felt in a meaningful way among the wider cosmopolitan population in

Delhi.

The spirit, in which the Parsis of Delhi have worked harmoniously, is a telling compliment to the level of our moderate and progressive leadership. If on occasions there have been some misunderstandings or discord among members as there are bound to be, they have always been toned down and underplayed, helping thus towards compromise and peace, rather than acrimony and groupism. Living under such a dispensation is therefore comfortable and enjoyable.

Edited and reprinted with permission from *Dipanjali*, December 2001.

A trustee of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Ava



Khullar is a social scientist, who was for 17 years associated with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), a research organization in Delhi. Since 1978 she

has been studying the demographic trends in the community and the problems facing the Zoroastrian population. Recently she has started an embroidery business in the name of Sonava.

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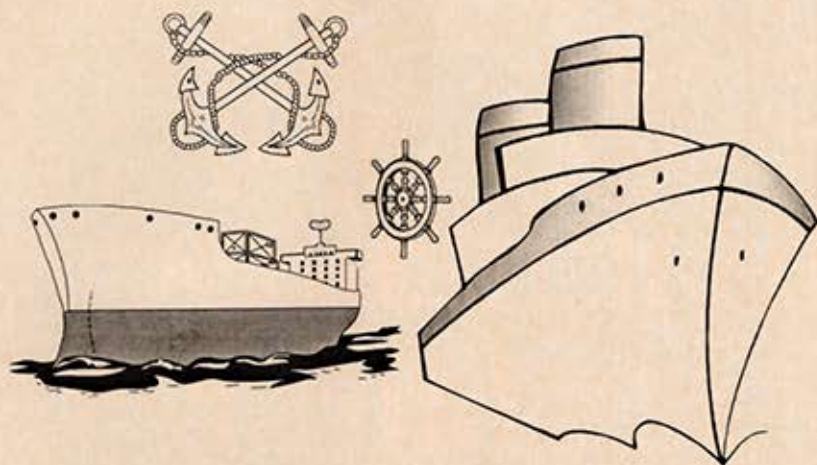
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A ROYAL VISIT

continued from page 48

show it and manfully wore the cap, returning it to Mistry only on exiting the premises. Sophie followed suit, using her own scarf.

After the prayer recital the couple were ushered to the stage, where they sat flanked by community bigwigs listening first to former president Shahrokh Shahrokh's welcome in Farsi and then to Mistry's recital of community and British interactions beginning with Rustom Maneck Sett obtaining the trade concession from Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb on behalf of the East India Company. Mistry's phraseology as much as the content of his speech had roused the Earl and Countess' attention:

"The British gave India what is popularly called the three 'C's' — the civil service, the civil and criminal justice system and above all the game of cricket. The Zoroastrian contribution to the Indian Civil Service as well as to cricket has been a tall one. Not so long ago, of the 11 members of the Indian cricket team, four used to be Zoroastrian, including the captain. However it has been tallest in the field of civil and criminal law and it is in this context that it is very fortuitous that we have in our midst today, India's long serving attorney general, our Zoroastrian brother Soli Sorabjee.

"The British also brought to their colonies the virtues of self-help and of private enterprise. Zoroastrians were the first community to as it were 'take the ball and run' in the field of business and industry. Jamsetji Tata, a Zoroastrian from Navsari, pioneered modern industrial India. Another Zoroastrian industrial house was that of the Wadias of Surat. They were

master shipbuilders. It is a little known fact that the oldest warship still afloat in the British Navy is HMS *Trincomalee*, built by the Wadias in India. We are delighted today to be joined by Nadir Godrej, grandson of Pirojsha Godrej, one of three great Zoroastrian industrialists of modern India.

"The Zoroastrian contribution to public life in Britain has been greatest in the field of politics. In 1892 one of the founders of this association, Dr Dadabhai Naoroji became the first person of Asian descent to be elected to the House of Commons. He was quickly followed by Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree in 1895 who won the seat of Bethnal Green and Bow for the Conservatives — the last time the Tories won this seat! Bhownagree was followed in 1922 by the remarkable Comrade Sak — Shapurji Saklatvala who gained the distinction of firstly being the first colored MP from the Labour party, secondly of splitting his local Labour party and getting expelled for being too left wing (a considerable achievement in that day and age) and then in 1926 becoming the only man in history to be elected to the House of Commons as a Communist!"

Mistry recounted how three of the four Engineer brothers who enrolled in the Air Force won the Distinguished Flying Cross in World War II, how Dastur (Dr) Sohrabji Kutar, high priest of the community in Europe, had seen

service with Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery in North Africa and that icon of British showmanship, the late Freddie Mercury, had been a Zoroastrian. He referred to the aforementioned discreet suggestion from the Palace that en-



Above: Hinnells with the Countess
Below: Countess with S. Mistry greeting children

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Mehraban Zartoshty, whose largesse had enabled the ZTFE to acquire the Harrow property, as read by Mistry, noted, "Zoroastrians all over the world are indebted to the British monarchy which has always promoted the virtues of religious

ored that the special service of thanksgiving is being held in the Zartoshty Brothers Hall..."

The oldest Zoroastrian community outside of Iran and India also sent its greetings. The message from the 180-year-old Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau conveyed best wishes on the occasion and added, "Indeed Hongkong, as an ex-colony, has also had a period of unparalleled prosperity and peace over 50 glorious years of Her Majesty's reign, which we are very grateful for."

In the course of the ZTFE's 141-year history, as documented in its archives, the community has asserted its allegiance to the British Crown on various occasions. Copies of scrolls presented to Queen Victoria, King George V and King George VI are now joined by the scroll addressed to Queen Elizabeth II read by ZTFE trustee Noshir Avari: "On this occasion celebrating the golden jubilee of your reign, we, the Zoroastrian community of the United Kingdom pay our most sincere and humble tributes with gratitude and respect for Your Majesty's huge contribution towards the just rule of our country, the

Volunteer mobeds of ZTFE led by Rustom Bhedwar (second from right) chanting the benedictions

abled Dadabhai Naoroji, seeking the amelioration of Iranian Zoroastrians, to gain an audience with Shah Naseruddin Qajar.

This is the London community's third official home in London. Earlier addresses had been in Olympia and West Hampstead which continues in use until the Harrow center in suitably refurbished. On the anvil is the project to create a consecrated atash dadgah on the adjacent plot of land.

A message from philanthropist

tolerance and understanding. My grandparents always recalled their debt of gratitude to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Empress of India. It was during her reign that Manekji Limji Hataria was able to travel in Iran under Crown protection and work for the betterment of the dire living conditions of Zoroastrians in Iran. The British monarchy spearheaded the supreme will of the British people and those of the Commonwealth to preserve freedom and liberty through two World Wars. Today, we rejoice at the golden jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and send her and the royal family our felicitations and best wishes.

"My family and I are especially hon-

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"As head of (the) Commonwealth, Your Majesty has been a unifying force for the people of differing cultures, society and religions worldwide. Today, the Zoroastrians of the United Kingdom and indeed all Zoroastrians throughout the

world rejoice in having in our midst the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex and his wife Sophie, the Countess of Wessex, in the celebration of the golden jubilee of Your Majesty's reign. We are indeed honored in His Royal Highness Prince Edward accepting to convey the warm and re-

spectful tributes of our community to Your Majesty.

"We join in prayers to the Creator Ahura Mazda to grant Your Majesty and all members of the royal family good health, long life and happiness, always." The scroll tied with a gold ribbon, was then presented by Avari to Edward.

The royal couple were obviously regaled by Nadir Godrej's recitation of his versified version of Zoroastrian theology and history. Godrej's tact and humor were particularly appropriate to the Anglo-Indian experience (see "The Zo-

roastrians," page 151).

Other tributes followed: A large glass etching of Zarathushtra, commissioned by ZTFE in Bombay, was presented to the Prince. The Young Zoroastrians (YZ) wing of the ZTFE had a traditional red garo, presented by YZ chair Farneen Sorab, and members Zubin Writer and Rohinton Munshi, to an obviously pleased Countess. On behalf of the Iranian Zoroastrians of the UK Simin Shahrokh, Khosraviani and Falahati latched a gold fravashi bracelet on her wrist. Art historian Pheroza Godrej presented a copy of her book *A Zoroastrian Tapestry* to the Earl with a few choice words of greeting and a special mention of Prof Mary Boyce's help through the nine years it took to put the volume together. Burjor Avari, president of the Zoroastrians of the North West presented the lady with a glass memento. Packets of *mawa ni machhi* were presented to Edward and Sophie by local philanthropist Khorshed Sodhi and former president of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America Framroze Patel, respectively.

Mistry requested the Countess to present packets of the *mawa ni macchi* to Karan Billimoria, chairman of Cobra



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Beer, Crabtree, Bayne and ZTFE's longstanding Inter Faith representative Jehangir Sarosh.

After the floral presentations to all the dignitaries on the dais, Mistry, to everyone's surprise (and the secret joy of the Prince who said he thought he would be able to get away without having to speak) declared this part of the function over! Within a split second however he had realized his "faux pas" and smilingly apologized.

Promising to "pass on your good wishes and greetings to Her Majesty" Edward hinted at more royal visits in the future because "You say it took 140 years (for us) to get here to acknowledge the fantastic contribution (your community) has made to the nation as a whole."

Noting "our pleasure to join you," Edward emphasized, "We are celebrating not only the Queen's 50 years (of rule) but we are celebrating 50 years of this nation's vibrant life."

The speeches were followed by a documentary recounting achievements of Zoroastrians in Britain put together by Mistry and ZTFE joint honorary secretary Malcolm Deboo and a brief recount of how the Alexandra Cinema

premises were to be refurbished in tune with the Zoroastrian vision without compromising their heritage status. The formal part of the event ended to the strains of *Chhaiyé hamé Zarathosti* (followed by Mercury's *I want to break free*) as the royal couple wended its way to the exit, meeting and greeting several more community members en route. At the door the Prince returned his *topi* to Mistry with a quiet word of thanks.

The winsome couple's graceful acceptance and easy response to individual greetings made the day for the assembled community who had come from distant parts of this extensive metropolis. Though the Mayor of Harrow Brig John Smedley and the Mayoress, and the deputy Lord Lt of Harrow Cmdre Anthony Barrett were a part of the royal entourage, there were no security officers or aides-de-camp crowding the approach to the Prince.

The 90-minute visit had unfolded with clockwork precision. The morning's two comperes — joint secretaries of the ZTFE Deboo and Paurushasp Jila — had performed with aplomb. Jitter bugs of the rehearsal night had been transmuted into an archival entry.

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The Zoroastrians

Nadir Godrej

About four thousand years ago,
Civilization's early dawn,
Saw nomads always on the go
Use their strength, their sheer brawn
To plunder, pillage and destroy.
The settlers then could not enjoy
The well-earned fruits of all their
labors,
They lived in dread of raiding
neighbors.

But one man pondered on this hate.
"Why is there evil in this world?
Could God have possibly unfurled
This ugly thing?" It was his fate
To state a doctrine then quite new.
The universe was shaped by two

Opposing spirits struggling on.
And one of them created good,
A single God, quite early on,
Ahura Mazda, proudly stood.
But evil wasn't his creation
For that would be an aberration.
So Angra Mainyu or Ahriman
Was the chosen name for the one
Responsible for evil's role.
The role of man was to bravely fight
For good and always spread the light.
Defeating evil was the goal.
Good thoughts, good words, good
deeds, the way
His followers could always stay

Engaged in this important battle.
This was the teaching of Zoroaster.
And I think it is no idle prattle,
To state that he was quite the master.
Religions then placated gods.
The people tried to fight the odds
By sacrificing what was dear
To any force inspiring fear.
But now we see a newer height,
We should ensure that good prevails
And ultimately evil fails.
We are important in this fight.
And ethics is religion's pillar.
Not that all else is just a filler,

For rituals have a role to play.
Above all else they help to guide,
They help to show the righteous way
They remind us that we're on the side
Of forces fighting for what's right.

And on this day we'll see the sight
Of priests in prayer offering thanks.
The power of prayer surely ranks
Extremely high. It's not the meaning,
However great, alone, that can't,
Explain the power of a chant.
In fact I think that I am leaning
To the view that just the sound
Can influence all things around.

Zoroastrianism next hit a peak
When Cyrus built a vast empire.
The emperors had a tolerant streak
The Jews maintain that the entire
Temple of Jerusalem
Was reconstructed just for them.
And they acknowledge gratefully
Their freedom from captivity.
Perhaps at this stage it would be wise
To talk about the exchange
Of ideas over a wide range —
The devil, hell and paradise
Around this time spread to the West
As many scholars can attest.

For a thousand years off and on
Zoroastrians were at the helm.
Three continents they ruled upon,
It was a civilizing realm.
Then from Arabia came the hordes.
And Persia fell beneath their swords.
King Yazdegird was cruelly killed.
The true believers were instilled
With dread and yet they kept the
flame.

But when they could take it no more
They just set sail for another shore.
And I don't think that we could
blame

The Indian prince who saw them land
For taking a suspicious stand.

His land was full, he had no need
For people from a distant land.
Refusal wasn't in his creed
And so he thought they'd understand
If he could cleverly convey
There was no way that they could
stay.

A pitcher full of milk was sent.
The Persian priest read the intent.
But he could not accept a no.
He slipped a lump of sugar in

And sent it back. And what a win!
The community began to grow.
But like the lump it stayed quite small.
In sweetness though, we have it all.

In Gujarat they settled down.
For their honesty they were known
When the British came they went
to town.
They really came into their own.
They moved with ease from East to
West

As go-betweens they were the best.
They built the ships, they went to sea,
Excelled in trade and charity.
Nowroji Seth came to these shores
To plead his case and protest
His wrongful treatment and arrest.
And luckily he won his cause.
Returning home he could declare
The British had been very fair.

Receiving twenty thousand pounds,
Which then was an enormous sum,
Was certainly sufficient grounds.
Others then began to come.
I can't tell tales about them all.
And so I'll have to make a call.
I'll talk of Mr Naoroji
Who was a Liberal MP.
For forty years he served you well,
Your longest serving president.
He had the courage to dissent
And in his book he chose to tell
The British to just walk the talk
There was no cause for them to balk

In giving India democracy.
"UnBritish rule" he then decried
And thanks to him today we're free.
But in deference to the British side
I do declare they did some good.
For English is now understood.
And even on a sticky wicket
Indians learned to play good cricket.
And why not also praise their trains?
Although we struggled to be free,
From them we learnt democracy
And the means to break our chains.
They also brought hygiene and health
And of course the Commonwealth.

Back to MPs, for I digress,
Sir Bohnaggee KCIE
For ZTFE did no less.
About a quarter century
He presided after Naoroji.
He was no Liberal MP
The Conservatives it was that sent



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This MP on to Parliament.
One more Zoroastrian was MP
Labour and the Commies
sent

Comrade Sak to
Parliament.
No! He didn't head
ZTFE.
At that time you could
find
Parsi heroes of every kind.

ZTFE in various forms
Has lived for 140 years.
But all the same against all norms
I will not bore you to tears
With every little change of name.
Few in numbers but rich in fame
Your illustrious members from the
past

Have made quite sure your fame
will last.
And Britain has been nobly served
By this group from distant shores
Who bravely fought in all her wars.
And your success is well deserved.
And Britain, I am sure will see
Much more of this loyalty.

And that brings me to the Queen



And her glorious jubilee.
In times to come she will be seen
As one who brought prosperity.
And though she isn't here
today
We should be able to convey
Your faithful pledge of
loyalty
To the nation and its Royalty.
We bow to the Countess and
the Earl
We hold them both very dear
And thank them both for being here.
I am quite dazed and in a whirl.
I pray my audience wasn't bored.
My poem's done, peace is restored.

Theology and history in verse was recited by
Nadir Godrej, managing director of Godrej
Soaps, to the appreciative Earl and Countess
of Wessex on June 26,
2002 at the thanksgiving
jashan by the Zoroastrian
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chant for rhyme and has published a book of
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The Eden they made Aden

Parsi enterprise helped turned the Arabian port city into a thriving commercial center

Dr Mani P. Kamekar

It was in January 1838 that two intrepid Parsis, following the tradition of the community, set forth with Capt Haines on his mission to capture Aden and to set British imperial power in the strategic Red Sea and Persian Gulf region, completing control of the Indian Ocean peripheries. Here again Parsis were amongst the first to venture into new lands near and far, as they had done earlier. Merwanji

Sohrabji Khareghat had joined Haines as a commissariat clerk and Nusserwanji Mancherji as kopar. They were the pioneers of a community which quickly established itself as a very active and important group in the social and economic life of Aden. As a community of not more than 500 at the height of Aden's prosperity, it established a very distinct identity of its own which stood out prominently in the development of Aden.

Aden lies on the southern fringe of Yemen. Its strategic geographical position made it a very important port in the region. With two harbors, the outer and inner, of which the latter was well protected from storms and gave a calm shelter to ships, it served as a resting place for ships coming from the Red Sea, going towards the Gulf of Aden and then into the Indian Ocean. Ships trading between Egypt, North East Africa and

the Arabian coast into the Indian Ocean also found it a very convenient stopping point. The British, after becoming masters of western India, were eager to control the route from Arabia, Persia, Egypt and East Africa to the western

coast of India and further to the East, which meant control of the Indian Ocean. Aden was a pivotal spot in this scheme of things.

Yemen and Aden had been through many conquests and had come under the rule of many empires circa 30 BC, when they were part of the Roman empire. When the Sasanians of Iran defeated Rome, this region came under their rule. The Sasanians then got control of the seas and started extensive trade in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean region making Aden an important port. The Iranian rule here extended up to 631 AC, i.e. till the advent of Mohammed, when Islam started its domination and ultimately took over Iran. The Moslems seem to have treated the Iranians less harshly than their other conquests due to an

important historical reason. One of Prophet Mohammed's confidantes was Salman-e-Farsi, alias Dastur Dinyar, to whom a charter of religious recognition and freedom called the 'Ahd-nameh' was granted. The 'Ahd-nameh' guaranteed this to him and his descendents and to all Zoroastrians for posterity. A second 'Ahd-nameh' was granted reinforcing this. In view of these guarantees, it is difficult to believe that Dastur Dinyar converted to Islam, as some have claimed.

After this, Yemen came into the hands of various Arab chieftains and constant internecine fights occurred. With the advent of the Europeans in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese, Dutch and English, Aden became an important halt for their ships. The Europeans were generally suspect and treated very harshly by the Arabs. None of them could gain an entry to do steady trade in the region. The British however kept up their attempts to gain influence, and freedom to trade in Aden and near about towns, but could not succeed till they had enough clout after winning western India in the early 1830s.

Preparations for capturing Aden were set afoot in 1829 when the British parliament decided to make Aden a 'coaling station.' Between then and 1838 the British made various sorties into the region, but were unsuccessful, till in 1838, the Bombay government sent Haines in a battleship with enough men and guns to attack the port of Aden. Haines opened fire from the ship and got its surrender. He was followed by Major Billy who landed in Aden with a brigade of Indian and English troops and captured the city. The



Above: Seth Cawasji Dinshaw dar-e-meher
Right: Cawasji Dinshaw and Brothers' pet lion with staff of the firm



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Alongside from
from far left:
Cawasji and
Jerbai Dinshaw;
Sir Hormasji and
Maneckbai with
children Ala,
Framroz, Din-
shaw and Nusser-
wan. Below:
Meherwan Baug
built in 1842

British lost 15 men, and the Arabs 150. Thus, by 1839, the British got full control of Aden and the sultan was made a tributary by a treaty of subsidiary alliance in the same style as those imposed on the Indian princes. A British resident was installed as a chief administrator and to overlook the sultan's activities. The sultan was given a pension by the British.

Peace descended on Aden for some time and an influx of traders, businessmen and government officials began to enter Aden. As noted, the Parsis were amongst the first to do so. In the next few years a number of Parsi entrepreneurs came over to take advantage of the opportunities opening out in Aden under the British.

Parsis prosper

The main goods traded in Aden were coal, leather, coffee, grains, dates, feathers, perfumes, ivory, metals, gum and pearls. Aden itself produced only pumice stones, salt and feathers. From neighboring countries Aden imported jowar, corn, sissam wood, dyes and many other articles. There was no farming possible in or around Aden. A great deal of food was therefore imported from India such as grains, rice, pulses, as well as tobacco, cloth and jewellery. The exports to India consisted mostly of coffee and gum. The majority in Aden, Arabs and Somalis, worked as laborers. The most important occupation was that of loading coal onto the ships as Aden was the chief port in the Red Sea region for coal storage. Parsis were foremost amongst those supplying coal to Aden. The local people were also engaged in working in salt pans, spinning and weaving, extraction of oil, dyeing cloth and fishing. The

Jews were particularly engaged in liquor production.

The Europeans after 1838 had set up printing presses, binding works, and manufactured soda and ice. They also established photographic studios and installed machinery to desalinate salt (sea) water. After 1860, when Aden was made a free port, the Greeks imported tobacco and manufactured cigarettes with cheap local labor.

Coffee was an important import for transshipment. The best came from Sanaa in Arabia and was called 'Mocha' coffee. Another brand came from Harare and was called 'Buraki' coffee. Some coffee was also grown in the hilly areas of Yemen. This variety was very popular with the Europeans. At one time, the docks of Aden were known for ship-building, particularly 'Baglas.' The major occupation in Aden was therefore that of collection of goods and their transshipment to all parts of the world.

By 1856 there were about 61 Parsis in the town and by the end of the century there were 325 Parsis among a population of 39,986 which at the beginning of British rule had been reckoned at 6,000. The peaceful and organized lifestyle of the colony after the British takeover enabled the Parsis to become one of the principal participants of the economic and social life of Aden and make their presence felt.

They entered many fields of occupation, both skilled and professional, into trade and business, and were employed by the government and private business

as clerks, accountants, supervisors, etc. A considerable number opened big shops selling Euro-

pean goods. Amongst the skilled were carpenters and kopars. The first Parsi trader to come to Aden was Sohrabji Cawasji Kharas. He had made a firm contract with Pestonji Hormasji Cama of Bombay to open a shop and a hotel for Europeans. Later he was joined by Khareghat and they started the first Parsi business house in Aden, the Merwanji Sohrabji Company. They were followed by Mancherji Edulji Sopariwala who came to Aden as the regiment agent and founded his own company. Dinshaw Hormasji Darji (Adenwalla) joined the firm as the manager in 1843. His son Cawasji followed in 1845. He also worked with Messrs Sopariwala and various other traders, learnt the elements of business and started his own firm in 1855. Another son, Dorabji Dinshaw Adenwalla, came



as head clerk of the P&O Company in 1854 and then joined his brother Cawasji's firm. In 1876, Cawasji, who by now had become a leading businessman of Aden, was appointed as their consul by Spain and Portugal, receiving a seven-gun salute! This was a rare position offered to an Indian at that time, and that too in a foreign country. It speaks volumes for the caliber and sta-



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tus of Cawasji. In 1892, in recognition of his services the King of Portugal invested him with the order of 'Commander of the Royal Military Order of our Lady of Conception.' Next to start a trading company together with Mancherji Kamod was Nusserwanji Bhaya.

The fifth company to be established by Parsis was that of Edulji Manekji Colabewala who started Mancherji Edulji Manekji and Sons Company, under the name of his son Mancherji Edulji in 1850. Apart from being suppliers for the British regiments, the firm undertook to install tanks and condensers to remove salt from the sea water and make it potable. Every day, about 4,000 gallons of sweet water was thus made available to the town. They also produced one ton of ice every day. By the end of the century, there were nearly 10 big Parsi business houses in Aden of which the Adenwallas were the most prominent and influential. These companies traded with Africa, Egypt, Europe and the Arab countries. The major business was transshipment of goods which came to Aden from Africa and India to Europe, and European goods to Africa and India. They also acted as



Kaikobad Cawasji Dinshaw

agents for big European and American companies. For instance, Rustomji Sohrabji Kharas and Sons were agents for the Arnold Hays and John Betram Companies. Later, seeing the enterprise and worth of Kharas, the Americans started branches in Aden and appointed Kharas as their manager.

As these companies grew in strength, and as more and more demands were made from Europe for Indian and African goods, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, many companies established branches in London, Paris, Marseilles, Geneva, Trieste, Amsterdam and Hamburg. The Adenwallas were the foremost in the spread of their companies abroad.

Expanding to East Africa

Another important activity of these entrepreneurs was to start trade with the East African ports of Zanzibar and Kenya. The Adenwallas and others opened branches there and established Parsi settlements.

Zanzibar was important as a supplier of cloves and ivory. With the opening of the Suez Canal those Parsi business houses which had started branches here now traded directly with Europe, and only sometimes through Aden. Other ports on the coast of Kenya, particularly Mombasa, were also developed by the Parsi traders. The first Parsi trader to reach Zanzibar was M. A. Mistry in 1845, followed by about 26 others between 1870 and 1890. Zanzibar became so lucrative that the Adenwallas shifted



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their base from Aden to Zanzibar in 1884. Here as in Aden, the Adenwallas dominated community life. The social life of about 184 Parsi expatriates evolved round the fire-temple, burial ground and the anjuman by the end of the century.

Mombasa was similarly populated by Parsis during the late 19th century. As Prof John Hinnells has stated, the first Parsi to settle here was Jehangir Bhedwar who developed the port with Sorabji Mistry who built most of the administrative buildings for the British government. As in Aden, a number of Parsi professionals such as engineers, contractors, accountants, lawyers, doctors and bankers settled in these colonies and were instrumental in carrying out the work of building the infrastructure of the cities and ports. By the 1930s, there were about 250 Parsis in Mombasa. Nairobi was another city where Parsis settled after the North East African Railway was built. Here also, the settlement consisted of about 200 Parsis. In Nairobi too, the community identity and closeness was maintained by the development of an anjuman building, prayer room and cemetery where everyone gathered during all important



Seth M. Rattanji Patel bungli built in 1883

occasions of the community. As in Aden, the Parsis here were an important part of business and administrative development of East Africa.

The Parsi business houses, especially the Adenwallas, were also active in shipbuilding in Aden and some of them owned ships of their own which plied in the Indian Ocean carrying goods from India to East Africa and Aden and other Arabian and Persian Gulf ports. Cawasji Dinshaw and Brothers owned ships that sailed along the Somali coast to Berbera, Bilahar, and along the Red Sea to Mocha, Hadesa, and the Arabian coast to Mukalla. These ships were instrumental in the Adenwallas having a large share

of most of the trade in this region.

Persons of consequence

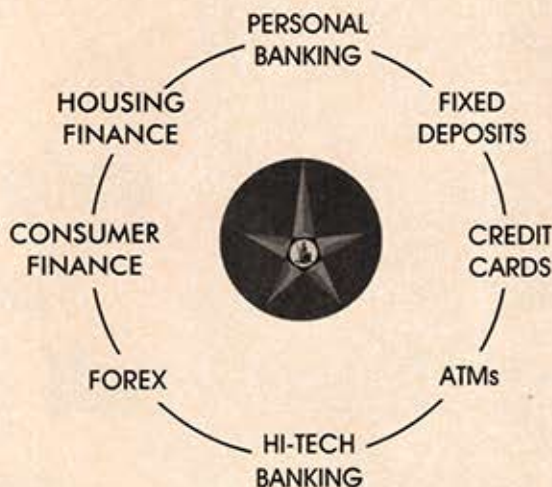
As a result of all these activities, the Parsi entrepreneurs of Aden were persons of consequence and played a major role in the port's development. The Adenwallas along with others were responsible for the development of the roads, telegraph, water supply,

amongst other things. As these business houses increased in strength and number, we find an increase in the number of Parsis in Aden. Each group brought along their relatives, as well as other fellow religionists to work in various corporations.

The contribution of many of them was recognized by the British Government and we find a number of them were honored by the British. Some were knighted, like Hormasji Dinshaw Adenwalla, Rustomji Mancherji Dholu was made Khan Bahadur and also given the title of CIE (Companion of the Indian Empire).

The majority of other Parsis were either professionals or government servants and formed a largely educated middle class section. There were in fact

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very few poor amongst the Parsis in Aden. Going through the list of Parsis as shown in the Zoroastrian calendar (panchang) of 1907, one gets the following picture: The biggest business firm by that time was that of Cawasji Dinshaw Adenwalla and the largest number of Parsis were employed there as managers and clerks. We also find them as accountants and cashiers employed in various Parsi firms. Only a few Parsis, it seems, were employed as clerks, accountants or cashiers in European firms. A small number were in these positions in the government offices, some being head clerks. A few were managers of Parsi companies. A considerable number were general merchants having their own shops. A number were employed as officers in the government as superintendents, treasury officers and police inspectors. Amongst the skilled workers was a carpenter in the Port Trust, a printer and teller for press composing. There were two schoolmasters and about three priests.

Amongst the unskilled were three or four cooks, two of whom were attached to the Cawasji Dinshaw family. Two or three were assistants in the agiary, to carry the dead bodies and do other manual work. They were well looked after by members of the community.

Thus, the community was largely a prosperous, educated entity. The leaders of the community were the owners of the wealthy business houses already mentioned. Under them, the Parsis organized themselves into a united community bearing a distinct identity. They came to be known for their communal solidarity. A few years after the first Parsi settlers arrived a few families joined them. The first to arrive was that of Hormasji Jamasji Mogra, who came as the British commissariat head clerk, sometime in the 1850s. It is reported that the women of the family were afraid of the Arabs and came down from the steamer in burkhas, and for some time continued to use them in the town too. From all accounts it appears that the sex ratio was always very adverse. Women formed only about one-third of the total Parsi population till the middle of the first half of the 20th century. For instance, at the beginning of 1872, there were 28 women to 93 men, and similarly in 1921, there were 86 women to 237 men. This was perhaps one of the reasons why they felt the need for community solidarity and support in the

absence of their families.

Religious infrastructure

The need of the community to come together for common purposes was met by Khareghat. In 1842, the small group of Parsis appealed to him to provide them with a common meeting place. Merwanji, thereupon, bought some property from the government and built a big hall, with a kitchen, a fresh water well, and a small adjoining room to be used for religious ceremonies. In 1847, Meherwan Baug, now also known as Parsiwadi, was gifted by Merwanji to the Parsi Anjuman, now called punchayet. A proper legal document to this effect was completed on March 27, 1854. In 1858 the trustees of the punchayet decided to build a Bungalow for their meetings and offices. Built next to the dar-e-meher (which was consecrated in 1854), it was used as a club by the community and was looked after by Mobed Cawasdaru Dadachanji. Meherwan Baug became the center of all community activity. With the establishment of Meherwan Baug, the community leaders from the business and trading world came together to form the anjuman to look after the community affairs, particularly to arrange important functions. They also began to collect funds to make payments for the common activities, ceremonial and otherwise. It began to be used for gatherings of all the Parsis during seasonal festivals and the monthly ghambars (communal feasting).

At every festival and ghambars religious ceremonies such as jashans had to be performed. Originally volunteers from priestly families would perform these ceremonies or somebody was called from Bombay. As these functions and jashans became popular, the need for a regular priest became necessary, and with the consent of the community, a mobed was invited to come to Aden from Navsari. Eruchji Cawasji Gara, belonging to the Bhagaria panth, accepted the offer and took over charge of the Aden panthak. He proved to be extremely efficient and painstaking and endeared himself to all. The anjuman members began to address him as Mobed Badshah. Besides his priestly duties, he was often asked to arbitrate in financial and other disputes between Parsis. He was paid by the anjuman and he lived with Khareghat's family. His arrival into Aden witnessed an expansion in activities promoting the common good.



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Rattanji Sorabji Khareghat, the younger brother of Merwanji, was the first Parsi to die in Aden in 1846. The need for a dakhma was now realized. Temporarily his body was put in a coffin and buried in a corner of Meherwan Baug. At this time, Merwanji vowed to put his brother's body in a dakhma and accordingly built a dakhma by April 1847 in the Meherwan Baug compound with his own money, and put his brother's corpse in it. A plaque was attached to the dakhma at the time of consecration giving all these details. For a Parsi, one of the most significant markers of communal identification is the plaque inscribed near the base of the dakhma.

The next important event in the community was the building of a dar-e-meher. Up to now, a small room next to the kitchen in the Meherwan Baug Bungalow was used as a dadgah where religious ceremonies were performed. It had by the 1850s become decrepit and too small for a community which was now about 60 strong and the need for a proper agiary was realized. Cawasji Dinshaw rose to the occasion and in 1854, built the dar-e-meher in memory of his first deceased wife, Bai Aai at his own cost. On September 20, 1854, it was consecrated amidst great joy. A jashan was held and a feast offered to all Zoroastrians which, it seems, was so sumptuous that it was remembered in Aden for the next 50 years!

With the dakhma and the dar-e-meher functioning properly, and an increase in the number of Parsis, the sole mobed, Gara was overburdened and requested for another mobed to share the religious duties. The anjuman agreed to this and...Mobed Cawasji Hormasji Dadachanji was recruited from Navsari in 1863. Both the mobeds came without their families and now stayed in the fire-temple complex and were paid by the anjuman. They seemed to be always busy with the increasing number of ceremonies commissioned by the community. Commemorating the contributions of their co-religionists who had passed away by holding yearly baj in his/her name was first done in memory of Nusserwanji Mancherji Kopar who was one of the first two Parsis to arrive in Aden and who spent the rest of his life here and died in 1883 at the age of 83. A fund was collected in his name to carry out the baj ceremonies.

By the 1860s, the small dakhma built by Meherwanji had to be abandoned as it was in the center of the town near the camp area which had become extremely congested. The government ordered all communities to move their cemeteries outside the town area. The anjuman had to carry out the order and look for a new place to build a dakhma. Naturally, the elders looked towards the hills of Aden and found a suitable spot near Meherwan Baug. However, in spite of the old dakhma being closed, it seems that the anjuman was dragging its feet about starting any construction for the new one. Gara took it upon himself then to arouse the Parsis to the need to act fast in this matter. It was he who explored all the hills and chose this particular one and got the sanction from Col Cogden to build on it. He also got the blueprints approved by the Public Works Department. The anjuman started the construction in early 1866 with funds collected through public subscription from Parsis in Aden, everyone contributing to the fund according to their capacity, ranging from Rs 2,500 from businessmen to the smallest sum of three rupees. The only outside contribution was that given by Mancherji Hormasji Cama who passed through Aden at that time, on his way back home from London. In spite of this, the work had to stop midway due to lack of funds, which was made good by

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Cawasji Dinshaw. The construction was completed by August and the dakhma consecrated and opened for use on August 31, 1866. When the community started using this new dakhma, they found it very difficult to carry the corpses up the hill without a paved road. The corpses were usually carried by relatives and friends in the absence of professional nassessalars. To solve this problem Edulji Manekji Colabewala, one of the first successful businessmen, had a proper road built at his own cost for Rs 10,000. Soon afterwards, he also had the sagdi built near the dakhma.

Another important event in the life of the community was the consecration of a new dar-e-meher on October 8, 1883 with great pomp and festivity. The first one built in 1854 by Cawasji Dinshaw needed much repair. Cawasji decided to rebuild the dar-e-meher from the start on a much larger scale befitting the strength and prosperity of the community. It should be noted that the dar-e-meher built in 1854 and reconstructed in 1883 were the only fire-temples to be built outside India by Parsi settlers after leaving Iran. (At that time, in spite of Parsi settlements in Hongkong, Singapore, London, Zanzibar having rich punchayet funds, they still did not pos-

sess their own agiaries.) The Parsis of Aden were, therefore, very proud of their achievement.

Another facility needed was a special room to keep the dead bodies and perform the religious ceremonies. So far, a room in the Meherwan Baug Bungalow was being used. On an appeal by the Parsis in 1883, Mancherji Rattanji Patel Siganporia had a small structure built next to the dar-e-meher and furnished it with chairs, tables, utensils, and a big clock. The opening ceremony of the building was done with a jashan on March 7, 1883 with the whole community participating and felicitating the generous donor. Rattanji, noting the increasing burden of work on the two mobeds, arranged for an additional mobed to be employed by the punchayet, and provided a special fund for the purpose.

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, the Parsis of Aden had all the religious and social infrastructure needed to provide for a proper Parsi identity. The closeness observed among the Parsis was proof of a very strong and distinct identity. It was this which had made the Parsis, though a very small minority, a very visible and important section of Aden's popu-

lation. They were recognized by the government and the public as people of consequence.

Generously endowed

The descendants of the original settlers and prominent families, such as the Adenwallas, carried on the good work in and outside the community as their fathers and grandfathers had done. Particular mention needs to be made of Hormasji Cawasji Dinshaw Adenwalla, who, in some ways, outdid his very enterprising and successful father Cawasji.

The leaders of the community not only did everything possible for its preservation, but were also the most socially conscious group, building schools and hospitals for the general public. The sons and grandsons of the first settler formed a sort of 'island' unto themselves, but at the same time, were responsive to others, interacting in social, cultural and economic fields.

After the establishment of the Port Trust in Aden in 1891, the government nominated Hormasji Adenwalla and Rustomji Dholu, secretary of the punchayet, as trustees. They took prominent part in the financial activity of the colony as members of various commer-



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cial institutions. For instance, Hormasji was an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and represented it in 1912 at an international conference on world trade.

Parsis, as mentioned, were also foremost in cosmopolitan public charities. In 1895 Cawasji Dinshaw established the Jerbai Charitable Dispensary. Earlier in 1858, Edulji Maneckji Colabewala, Cawasji Adenwalla and Aga Hasali together donated a surgical ward to the Civil Hospital in the town. They also contributed towards the Prince of Wales Charitable Dispensary in 1876.

After the Second World War and the emergence of new political entities in the Middle East and Africa, the Parsis began to leave Aden closing their establishments and making Bombay their headquarters. The Adenwallas continued for some time in East Africa but by the 1950s, had closed their establishment there also. Thus, the once flourishing and vibrant Parsi community slowly vanished from Aden, as from so many other places. The fires no longer burn in the dar-e-meher and Meherwan Baug is all but deserted. The course of history has taken its toll on the Parsis, here as elsewhere.

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A historian interested in Parsi history, Dr. Mani Kamerkar is vice president of The Asiatic Society of Bombay. She was former director, College Development Council, of the S. N. D. T. Women's University in Bombay. She has also served as principal of the Nanavati College.

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The Childline challenge

Operational in 38 cities in India, the Childline service initiated by Jeroo Billimoria proffers help to the destitute and forsaken children

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Their parents may have forsaken them. Their surrogate guardians may have deserted them. Their peers may have ostracized them. To whom can these children in need of care and protection turn? There is help at hand with the initiation of Childline, India's first 24-hour, free phone outreach service which on receiving a call on their toll free number Ten-Nine-Eight (1098) responds



*Billimoria:
"I love the
streets"*

to the emergency needs of the child and also links children to services for their long-term care and rehabilitation. This institution which is today operational "in 38 cities in India, receiving 1.1 lakh calls a month, coordinating with nearly 116 non governmental organizations, is basically my baby," acknowledges the unassuming Jeroo Billimoria.

Having nurtured and weaned Childline since its inception in 1996, she is confident that it can now function without her as do the other organizations — United Homeless Organization, Meljol, Special Unit for Investigation on Institutional Abuse — in all of which she had played a key role when

its foundations were being laid. "I have a policy in life, never to stay with one organization for more than five years." Not that she severs her ties. "I'm in touch with all of them," she maintains, impressing on the need "to streamline an organization, let it run without you and then move on to other social service ventures..."

"Nothing is ever enough. You don't need a lot of money to do social work," she believes. "You can be content with five sets of clothes. You don't have to travel in a private AC car. You can use the public transport." As executive secretary of Childline India Foundation (CIF) she is paid a salary like the 29

other staff members but she prefers to gift her remuneration to Childline, satisfied with the monetary support she receives from her family. From Childline, 36-year-old Billimoria will now be proceeding to Amsterdam to join her husband Bertjan Janzen whom she wed early this year. They met in 2001 when he was deputed by Pricewaterhouse Coopers to collaborate with Childline. She appreciates that he is "very supportive and understands my work." While in Amsterdam she expects to be involved with yet another venture, having earned the distinction of being chosen as a Fellow of Schwab, the Geneva based foundation which recognizes social entrepreneurs and encourages an international network. As Fellow of Ashoka Innovators for the Public, the Washington based international organization which honors those with innovative ideas by conferring on them a stipend



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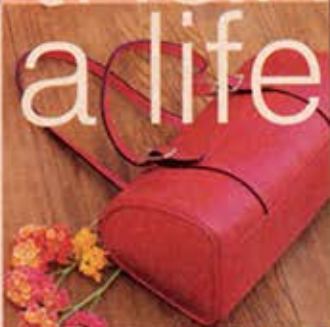
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Above: The street children rejoicing at Billimoria's wedding
Alongside (from left): Desai, A. P. Singh and Billimoria



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for two years plus the opportunity to link with other Fellows, Billimoria is in a privileged position.

Another valuable lesson Billimoria has learnt along the way is that when working "with government systems, the impact ultimately is much greater. Even though it is difficult to work with them and easier to criticize them" she happily reports that CIF is a project of the ministry of social justice and empowerment in partnership with non governmental organizations, the corporate sector, bilateral agencies, street and community youth and concerned individuals. "The whole concept is partnership. We refuse to report to them, otherwise we would be like lackeys. We are firm in what we believe and they respect us for that," mentions Billimoria.

The 11-member governing board of CIF has Asha Das, the secretary of the ministry of social justice and empowerment (MSJE) as the chairperson, Tata Engineering director Farrokh Kavarana as treasurer and Billimoria as the key office bearers. The joint secretary of the ministry Dharmendra Deo, deputy secretary Atul Chaturvedi, educationist Dr Armaity Desai, Arthur Andersen partner Ameet Parikh, Byramjee Foundation trustee Khushrooh Byramjee, deputy chairperson of Tata Consultancy Services F. C. Kohli, director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Dr R. R. Singh and Ogilvy and Mather managing director Ranjan Kapur constitute the rest of the board. The contribution of Damania Panday as internal auditors and S. R. Batliboi as external auditors is valued by Billimoria too. By the completion of the 10th Five Year Plan in 2007, Childline hopes to operate in 260 districts.

Having received 20 lakh calls in the last six years, the main need of most runaway children is medical assistance, according to Billimoria. Through their nodal and support agencies Childline is also able to provide rescue and long-term rehabilitation for those in distress with the cooperation of allied systems like the police, railways, hospitals, media, and welfare and educational homes. The nature of calls received differs from city to city. While the control room in north Bombay gets a

spate of calls during examination time, for south Bombay, most of the alarm signals are in the monsoons when the children seek a roof over their heads. After the control room gets a call, one of the volunteers reaches the child and then puts him/her in touch with a support agency in the vicinity which can meet his/her needs.

Childline intervention has helped 4.5 lakh children over the years, says Billimoria. Those helped are mainly street children, including those abandoned and missing, abused chil-

dren (including bonded labor and domestic workers), victims of the flesh trade, children affected by HIV/AIDS, differently abled children, child addicts, children in conflict with law, those affected by conflict or disasters, child political refugees and children whose families are in crises. In its efforts to evolve a comprehensive child protection strategy, Childline conducts research on relevant issues and advocates changes in law and policy relating to children's issues, according to their information leaflet.

The office of the CIF is located on the second floor of the Nana Chowk Municipal School where they are expected to pay just Rs 136 as rent per room. "Aapro ek motto chhè (We have one motto): FOC (free of cost)," she gives her disarming smile. The financial support of the Ratan Tata Trusts, Adi Dubash of Concern India Foundation and donors like Byramjee "who bail us out every time we are broke" prompts Billimoria to gratefully acknowledge their contribution. They are now approaching the Tata Trust for a revolving grant so that in the event of government grants getting delayed they can fall back on these resources. Hitherto the staff has stayed on despite delays in

"Nothing is ever enough. You don't need a lot of money to do social work"

salaries. "Commitment is above everything else," declares Billimoria.

While Byramjee and Kavarana are like her "two big brothers," she turns to Desai, "my guruji" for policies and program inputs. Desai was her professor when she was doing her masters in social work at TISS after which, "using all Tata charities" Billimoria went to New York's New School of Social Work to do her masters in management at the first non-profit management college in the world. The Coalition for the Homeless was started while she was training as a social worker there.

Over the years, most of her work has been focussed on the homeless. "I love the streets; the spirit and vitality inherent there," mentions Billimoria who used to continue her voluntary work with the street children even when she was a lecturer at the TISS. At that time there were four/five street organizations in Bombay. Today there are nearly 40, she informs us.

"I'm a product of my upbringing and lots of good luck," admits Billimoria. "I've learnt all my values from my parents." Her mother Homai was the social worker instrumental in starting the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) school counselling project to assist Zoroastrian students from select schools in Bombay adjust to academic and familial demands. Her late father Mehervan was an accountant and a silent social worker. She recalls her own disinterest in studies while a student at the J. B. Petit School and the motivation to improve the quality of education imparted to children. Thus in association with Gloria D'Souza of St Mary's School she happily formulated the environment education program for the schools selected by the BPP. Before she joined TISS she was at

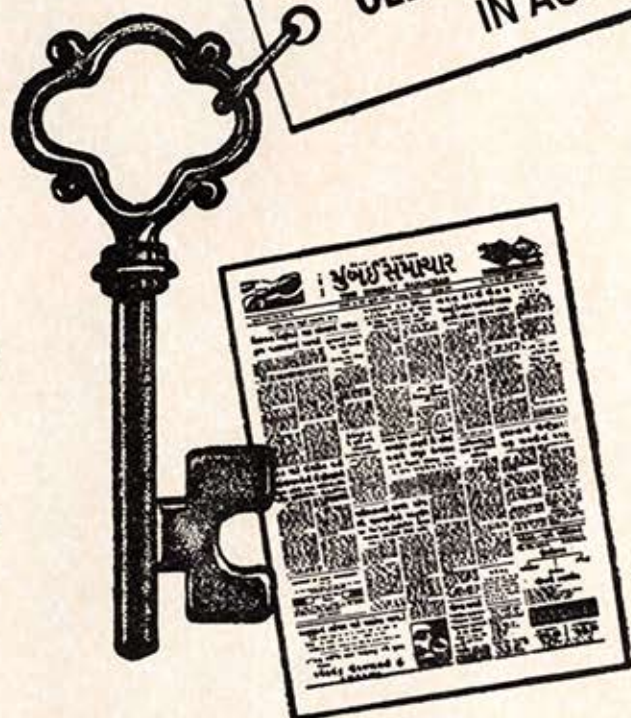
Billimoria family (from left): Rustom, Homai, Shahnaz, Arzan and Anosh celebrate Jerroo and Bertjan's marriage
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Through the organization Unnati she endeavored to create a national network for repatriating school children. "But the organization failed, teaching me what not to do when we started Childline," candidly declares Billimoria. With Meljol, which covers nearly 1,000 schools, students are taught to be responsible for their own environment and are imparted values for better citizenship. She has even co-authored fictional books on this subject whereby children can relate to the character named Aflatoon. The Special Unit for Investigation on Institutional Abuse, an offshoot of Childline, is meant to inspect complaints about abuse at residential care institutions, provide with interim administration and work out a rehabilitation plan as a solution. This Special Unit in Maharashtra is a collaborative effort by the MSJE, the National Institute of Social Defence and CIF. To enhance credibility in the voluntary sector she is seeking a self-regulatory framework from within the alliance in the interests of good governance, transparency and accountability.

In all her initiatives Billimoria has found that Parsis are "the greatest do-

nors and supporters. Parsis are essentially philanthropists. When Parsis are approached for help, eight out of 10 times you get a donation." There is need for professional social workers "to restructure the charity organizations within the community to make them more effective" but as Billimoria realizes, "The money is not with the professionals." Commenting on the community beneficiaries, she notes, "Parsis are too charity dependent and yet there are so many really needy who do not benefit from these trusts."

Feeling the need to practice religious synthesis, Billimoria's wedding rites extended from the traditional mandav-saro to a mass in church (her husband being born a Catholic), to a street wedding where there was an exchange of garlands according to Hindu rites and a mehendi ceremony as per the Muslim custom. "I don't go much to a fire-temple but I do believe in God. I meditate every day. I say my prayers. I wear the sudreh-kusti. I've taught our prayers to my husband also," Billimoria is happy with her credo. While she has taught him a bit of Gujarati and Hindi she hopes to learn Dutch when she moves there.

The "shuddh (pure) feminist" that she is, Billimoria insists on retaining her maiden name. Equally strong loyalties she has to the country of her birth, saying, "I can't give up India. I love India." According to the mutually agreed arrangement with her husband, initially she will try to settle down in Amsterdam. If she is not comfortable there, he will come down to India. If he is not happy here they will move to a neutral third region.

"The community should be more dynamic like it used to be," she recommends. "Traditions were created for a time and place, sentiment is more important." Considering that the concept of charity is interwoven in the dakhme-nashini tradition Billimoria feels that in the present scenario the death rituals should be so "adapted that we can donate organs of use to others."

Timely intervention "can make or break a case," has been the experience for Childline as reported in their newsletter *Hello Childline*. It is the same relentless attitude which spurs Billimoria to pursue the tasks before her for as conveyed in the newsletter, "What is most important is not giving up!"

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From fiction to football

English literature college reader Novy Kapadia's expert comments on the recent World Cup soccer matches provided an insight into the nuances of the game

Gul-Fraaz Ezekiel

Navroze (Novy) Kapadia's was the first Parsi family to settle in Delhi. It was his great-grandfather (after whom he is named) who made the pioneering move in 1880. "There are two legends about why Navroze (Sr) shifted from Broach, Surat. The first has it that there was a drought and he was told by his family to move either to Bangalore, Calcutta or Delhi.



Kapadia: a legend in Delhi football circles

"The second and more plausible one is that he was transferred by his company, Lever Brothers," according to 48-year-old Novy. "He played a pioneering role in the community. He would regularly walk to the railway station and meet Parsi families traveling on the *Frontier Mail* on the five-day journey from Bombay to Peshawar, encouraging them to settle in Delhi." His extroverted and affable ways obviously won over many of them.

Novy himself has many strings to his bow. He is a legend in Delhi football circles, having played club football in the capital since he was 13 years old. He also runs the Ashoka Football Club (FC) which he founded in 1975. He still turns out in the Delhi league for the team, apart from coaching the players and handling the administrative side of things.

For the duration of the recent football World Cup he was busy on a 'double shift,' shuttling to the studios twice a day as he gave his expert comments in both Hindi and English on the STAR News channel. For the last 20 years he has also been a part-time sports journal-

ist, balancing his writing between his full-time job as reader in the English department at S. G. T. B. Khalsa College which he joined in 1977 immediately after completing his MA from Delhi's prestigious St Stephen's College.

"Our family is very attached to Delhi University. There has been a Kapadia teaching there for a century now," says Novy who has inherited his great-grandfather's affability along with his name. Novy's daily routine during the college term is to teach in the mornings and then head straight to the Ambedkar Stadium in the heart of the city for his beloved football.

"I inherited my love of literature from my mother Soona (née Sethna), now 80, who was also a teacher. It was while recuperating from a knee injury suffered while playing football as a schoolboy that my mother encouraged me to read." Novy's late father Minoo ran a tailoring business in Delhi which was destroyed in the Partition riots as it was mistaken for a Muslim establishment. Minoo later became a minor partner in a shop of silversmiths, but he "never recovered" and passed away in 1985 at the age of 70.

Novy's love of reading and football combined under fortuitous circumstances during the national football championships in Jammu in 1978 where a journalist friend, Tarun Basu encouraged him to try his hand at sports journalism. The experiment proved to be a

Kapadia at the STAR News channel studio

success. Novy has been a sports 'stringer' for the *Telegraph* newspaper group of Calcutta since 1982 and was also a regular contributor to their magazine, *Sportsworld* that was launched in 1978 and folded up in 1999.

Today he writes for dozens of Indian and foreign publications and is an acknowledged expert on Indian football. He has also covered four World Cups, three European championships and four Asian Games and has contributed articles on Indian football for a number of books in India and abroad. In 1986 he won the Wills Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism for his article, "The Other Side of the Medal" published in the *Business Standard* newspaper in October 1984. He has been sports consultant and sports editor for the *Limca Book of Records* since 1993.

Besides, Novy has also done extensive commentary on radio and TV on football and other sports as well. Right now he is planning to write a book on Indian football, having helped compile a list of eminent Parsi sportspersons for the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. He edits their journal *Deepanjali* on special occasions such as for the 40th anniversary celebrations of their Kaikhushru Pallonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher last December.

Editor of *Parsi Fiction* (two volumes), it is his eighth book on literature (see "Feedback on Fiction," Books, *Parsiiana*, April 2002). It was done in part to help clear up the many misconceptions about the community as well as to explain the uniqueness of Parsi authors.

Novy says even to-





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With mother Soona: a love for literature

day he gets phone calls wishing him Merry Christmas — which is why the first part of the book is a history of the community. "I found that in the University there was a certain amount of confusion in relation to Parsi authors. There was a need to explain their identity crisis to a wider audience and also certain reference points which constantly crop up in these novels relating to the community's unique social problems."

Novy touches on the declining trend of higher education in the community with fewer Parsi youngsters joining IITs (Indian Institute of Technology), business management schools or clearing Indian Administrative Service exams. The community also faces the dilemma, he feels, of whether to seek minority status and reservations or opt for quality and compete with the best. Zoroastrians abroad face a crisis of "whether to share the cultural life, traditions, moral codes and loyalties of the adopted country or to remain closely identified with India."

While lack of societal pressure, as exists in other communities, may have contributed to increasing intermarriage, Novy believes the children of mixed marriages "should be allowed to have their navjotes if they and their parents so desire." He is also in favor of individual choice regarding the mode of disposal of the dead, be it "the electric crematorium or burial as we have in Delhi." Conversion should also be allowed by mutual consent, he feels, "if it can be ascertained that the conversion is not just for reasons of property, etc."

Novy has an elder sister, Bunny who is married and lives in England. He is

single and football is obviously the great love of his life. "My family was never too keen on my playing football. It was considered a rough sport, one unsuitable for young Parsi boys. But call it an omen, I was gifted a football for my navjote in 1963 and I could not stop playing with it," says a nostalgic Novy with a chuckle. Growing up in the Old Delhi area of Kashmiri Gate, he was surrounded by football. "The majority of the neighbors were Bengalis and Muslims and football has always been a passion for them. If at all Indian football is alive today, it is due to their efforts alone."

The Mengusi Parsi Dharamshala is on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg (also known as Delhi's Fleet Street for its numerous newspaper offices) and the young Novy would slip across to the Ambedkar Stadium just across the road to watch football matches. He started his playing career as a schoolboy forward in the second division for Union FC, moved onto Young Bengal Club and also played for the President's Estate FC in the first division before establishing Ashoka FC. He represented the Delhi XI throughout the '70s and played in the Durand and DCM tournaments, the main fixtures in Delhi's football calendar.

Novy despairs at the sorry state of Indian football which enjoyed a glorious period in the '50s and '60s but today languishes at number 123 in the current FIFA (the world football body) world rankings. For this he squarely blames the apathy of the All India Football Federation: "The game is dead in North India where it used to be so popular. Today it is confined to a few states — Bengal, Kerala and Goa. Traditional areas like Hyderabad and Bangalore have declined and there has been no effort to spread its popularity. In Bengal too cricket has become a strong counter-attraction thanks to the success of (Indian cricket captain) Sourav Ganguly." He feels this decline is largely due to the fact that whereas at its peak there used to be 125 to 130 national level tournaments played the year round, today there are barely 15 to 20.

"Further, there is no public identification with the national football team as, unlike the cricket team, they hardly play a few international matches throughout the year."

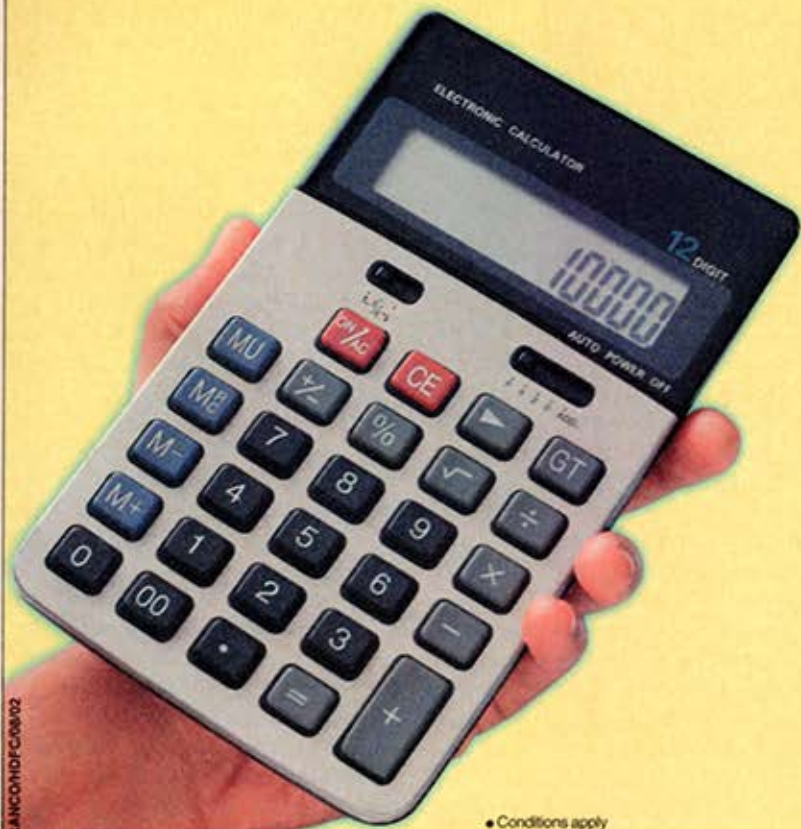
Literature and football may seem an unusual mix. But in Novy the two are in perfect harmony.

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Serene at Sherwood

The Palias' new venture, Sherwood Resort in Mahabaleshwar, offers a choice of bungalows, suites and duplex rooms set amidst lush forest

Hilla P. Guzder

The name suits the surroundings. Taking many a leaf out of Robin Hood's legendary Nottingham forest, Sherwood Resort is set amidst eight acres of lush land on the secluded slopes of Mahabaleshwar's Blue Valley Ride, off the Satara Road. On a shady May morning *Parsiana* watched the mist take a walk over the mountains. The blue water of the swimming pool, set on the hilltop, seems to merge with the infinity of trees and sky.

The famed Mahabaleshwar lake, crass commercialization eroding nature's bounties, is far away. The air is clean, at Sherwood the sound of silence prevails, punctuated occasionally by the rev of car engines as guests arrive at Mahabaleshwar's newest resort.

"It is very difficult to set up any project in Mahabaleshwar," asserts Meher Palia, initiator and director of Sherwood Resort, whose love for the hill station situated at an altitude of around 4,500 ft spurred him to embark on this venture. Man and mountain posed many a problem. "This being our first foray into hoteliering, we had no idea it would involve so much toil and sweat," smiles the Bombay-based Palia, who is also the joint managing director of Champion Jointings Limited, founded by his father Keki in 1960, which manufactures and exports Champion brand asbestos/non asbestos, fiber jointings sheets, cloth, packings, seals, etc.

On Christmas day last year, the Resort opened its 38 air-conditioned and non air-conditioned rooms, four bungalows of three bedrooms each and four suites each with hall, one bedroom and kitchenette. "We were completely full this season," states Meher's wife Zeubin, also a director of the Resort. "People have been very encouraging and appreciative. We feel proud and victorious." Sharing his parents' love for Mahabaleshwar is 20-year-old Neville, a third-

year B.Com student in Bombay's H. R. College who spent much of his summer vacation helping out at the Resort.

While closeness to nature and tranquility form the Resort's USP (unique selling point), the hotel has not overlooked the requirements of city dwellers in whose equation nature means boredom! There is a color TV with numerous channels in each room, a small gym for the fitness freaks, a recreation room with pool table, chess, carom, table tennis, a children's park with slide, seesaw, swing, etc. Livening up evenings for restless teenagers is a soon-to-be-opened discotheque, ensconced some distance away from the rooms and made soundproof!

For the adventure lovers, there are nature walks all around — the arboreal paths and bird conversation of Helen's Point, the blustery, approximately 4,700 plus ft height of nearby Wilson (Sunrise) Point where the rays of the rising sun struggle to slice through the morning mist. And for the brave heart, the cold waters of the pool beckon. "We are very happy with our 'infinity' pool," says Zeubin. "Arun Kumar, our landscape consultant, has done a fine job on it." Zeubin also commends renowned interior designer Elizabeth Kerkar whose "excellent and accurate drawings, at reasonable cost" at the earlier stage helped the management complete the rooms. Describing Meher as a "perfectionist" who oversaw every detail of civil construction, Zeubin says the plans had to be adjusted many times to meet the requirements of the plot's topography.

The land, originally belonging to the Raja of Sangli, was bought by the Palias in the late 1990s to develop as a four-bungalow scheme. Once the bungalows were ready, it was decided to add a main building and incorporate the bungalows into the Resort, explains Meher. "Ideally the main structure should have

been at the highest point, but there was no clearing big enough, so the structure is situated at a lower level," elucidates general manager Ramesh Gaur, adding that there is little skilled workmanship available in Mahabaleshwar and things move laboriously. "What can be done in a couple of days takes a month in Mahabaleshwar," he laments.

Ironically enough, in a hill station where around 250 inches of rain belt down every year and five rivers (*panch-ganga*) — the Krishna, Koyna, Venna, Gayatri and Savitri — are said to find their source, Mahabaleshwar faces water shortages every year! More than half the forest cover has been depleted in the last 20 years with 250 hotels, boarding houses and small lodges mushrooming over the hillsides, asserts Gaur. Sherwood has preserved the plot's original forest cover, notes Neville proudly. A kitchen garden is planned with a view to sprouting the oft-times ignorant city dweller's interest in flora. "We are also keen to have a small animal farm with rabbits, geese, ducks, etc.," asserts Neville.

A sewage treatment plant is in place, with the aerated filtered water used for gardening. Gaur mentions that much ecological damage to the hill station has been done because people just allow the sewage to flow out!

The tariff at the Resort varies with the category of room (double bed, duplex or suite) high or low season, etc. The large restaurant, with its wind-swept verandah overlooking the wooded slopes of the saddle mountain, serves an eclectic buffet, incorporating Indian, Chinese, European cuisine. A gourmet cook herself and a member of the Gourmet Circle in Bombay (where each member has to cook and serve a gourmet sit-down meal for 20 people once in a month), Zeubin plans to introduce some of her recipes at the Resort. With



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Top row, from left: Zeubin and Meher Palia on chalet balcony (Photo: Hilla Guzder), the rooms amidst verdure; 2nd row: Neville Palia and the pool with forest backdrop (Photos: Hilla Guzder), a chalet



3rd row: Lobby, conference hall; 4th row: Entrance to Resort, bedroom





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porcelain painting among her hobbies, over 100 of the artifacts she has made adorn the restaurant, lobby and the rooms. "It took me almost two years to complete them," she smiles.

For those who put a premium on privacy, the bungalows are rented out per day, per week or per month. Dining at the restaurant is not mandatory. The bungalows are suitable as company guest houses or holiday homes, declares Meher. Sherwood also targets corporate clientele with a fully carpeted, air-conditioned conference hall which "can seat 150 people in theater style and about 60 in round table style," Gaur informs us, and has all the modern requirements of conferencing in place. In the few months since its inauguration, the hotel has also been booked by marriage parties, with the bridal couple, families and friends enjoying the change in venue from stuffy marriage halls in a big city to the cool climate, outdoor barbecue and expansive views of a hill station.

Mahabaleshwar was founded as a summer retreat by the British in the 1820s, and Zeubin's family association with the hill town dates back 106 years when the ancestral firm of Adurjee and Brothers was established in 1896. Cousin of Poona's well-known racehorse owners and breeders Dr Cyrus and Zavaray Poonawalla (Zeubin's father Dhunjishaw and Cyrus and Zavaray's father Soli being brothers), Zeubin's father changed his surname to Anklesaria when he was around 45 years old, she narrates. Adurjee and Brothers was a fine departmental store where you could get everything, she adds. The business prospered and encompassed running a house agency, furniture hire and two hotels — Victoria Hotel (only for British guests) and Race View Hall. The properties in Poona and Mahabaleshwar were inherited by the different branches of the family during subsequent generations.

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should not be closed down for at least 100 years from inception, Zeubin continued to run it even after his demise in 1985. Functioning as house agents Adurjee and Brothers currently looks after over 60 bungalows in Mahabaleshwar, providing services like payment of bills, property maintenance, etc as per the owners' requirements. In addition Zeubin runs a seven-room lodging house in a new block constructed there.

Adurjee are also the agents for the celebrated MAPRO (Maharashtra Agricultural Produce) products — in a town where the visitor is bombarded on every street corner by colorful proclamations of the merits of jams and jellies, syrups and squashes, crushes and cordials, dessert toppings and fruit-flavored ice creams!

Easy for the first-time visitor to locate because of Sherwood's many signboards, luminescent in the dark, pointing the way, Meher and Zeubin credit Neville with doing much of the hard work in this regard. Eldest son Danesh has completed his BCom, is doing his MBA and works with his father in Champion Jointings; the youngest Delna is in

standard 10 in Cathedral and John Connon School.

"My father took all his six brothers into the business with him," says Meher, with the first factory being established at Andheri and subsequent ones at Dahisar,



The 106-year-old firm of Adurjee and Brothers (Photo: Hilla Guzder)

Vapi, Tarapur, Daman and near Kamshet. "For my children, I have kept joining the business as an open option." With both Danesh and Neville having done their navar-martab ceremonies from H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, Neville says he is very happy that the priestly tradition continues in the family.

Commuting regularly between

Bombay and Mahabaleshwar, ("that's the most difficult part," Zeubin sighs), the Palias give their fledgling Resort their personal attention. Despite Mahabaleshwar's many lures — the boating, the panoramic Points, the neat rows of strawberries in the fields, and the charm of its sibling Panchgani — the little town of tableland and boarding schools set amidst tall silver oaks, the tourist traffic fluctuates. Events like the Gujarat earthquake and the recent riots there have affected the flow of visitors to the hill station in the last couple of years.

The Resort proposes to remain open even during the heavy Mahabaleshwar monsoons, specifies Meher, as "everyone seems to have found it a better idea to continue, albeit at reduced strength, during the rains." The hotel will soon be applying for its star rating.

Sherwood Resort can be contacted on tel: 95-2168-61177/70070/70077/70099 at Mahabaleshwar or tel: 8367311 Ext. 555/8381448/2581577/99, Fax 8381447 in Bombay. E-mail: sherwoodresort@indiatimes.com sherwoodresort@post.com Website: www.sherwoodresorts.com

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Cool in Cottons

Learning from past experience Behroze Singh of Jaipur has succeeded in building up customer loyalty for her Cottons outlets

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"The biggest problem when I started my own business was loneliness. I had no one to talk to," Behroze Singh, whose company Indiewear has under its umbrella created Cottons as a brand and retained that name for its two shops, was quoted in *Everyday Entrepreneurs*, a 11th standard textbook by Aruna Bhargava brought out by Vikas Publishing House Private Limited. The 10-page chapter profiles Singh's accomplishments and experiences when starting her shops — in Civil Lines, Jaipur and in the Santushti Complex, Delhi. Supplying her products to stores in Bombay, Delhi and Poona as also exporting to the UK, Austria and Australia, customer satisfaction is of prime importance to Singh. She relates that initially her employees were mostly tailors and unskilled workers who depended on her to solve their problems. She couldn't go to them with hers. Working long hours and on holidays as well, at first Singh had no life except work. She needed someone to discuss policy matters, someone to consult with regard to critical decisions she had to make. As Cottons grew she was able to hire one designer and then a second one.

It is important to have your own tailoring unit. That way you can control the quality of your products which is of prime importance in any business. This was among the important lessons Singh had learnt during her 10 years at Anokhi, an export business with retail stores.

Her list of regular customers may include well-known socialites Shweta Bachchan, Rajmata Gayatri Devi, Hema Malini, Princess Bhargavi of Mewar, Bhicoo Manekshaw... but the savvy Singh, based in Jaipur, realized that there was no point in selling one salwar

suit for thousands of rupees and then nothing for two months. She opted to keep her profit margins low so she could have a high turnover. Starting with children's clothes she then moved on to men's Indian clothing, both casual and dressy, women's readymade salwar suits and woven fabrics from south India. Gradually her range expanded to include home furnishings, tablecloths, bed covers, handicrafts, jewelry and such.



Singh: comforts for shoppers

Marriage to Mrityunja Singh, her peer at Bombay's St Xavier's College, took Behroze to Jaipur where she was warmly welcomed by the Rajput family. Her mother-in-law 'Jane,' the name given to her by her English nanny who could not pronounce Prafulla Kumari, ran a small export business and encouraged Behroze to become an entrepreneur too. But Behroze felt she first needed to learn about running a business.

Jane's brother John (actually Jitendra) and his British wife Faith then used to run Anokhi and mentored many aspiring entrepreneurs in Jaipur. But sometimes Anokhi had excess stocks or their consignment was rejected for some reason or the other so Behroze and Mrityunja offered to start a retail store to sell these surplus goods for Anokhi. Around this time the Indian Air Force intimidated them of their shopping center Santushti in Delhi and enquired if Anokhi would be interested in opening a shop there. The timing was perfect. Behroze and Mrityunja moved to Delhi and started managing the retail store which was a huge success with the Anokhi products in great demand.

After a couple of years Mrityunja left Anokhi and joined his mother's export business while Faith and John

taught Behroze everything about running a business and made her director with full authority and responsibility for running Anokhi in Delhi. They allowed her freedom to run the store the way she wanted. She made mistakes and she learned. Behroze worked hard to expand the business to Bombay and Poona. In Bombay she renovated an old and crumbling Parsi home and converted it into a beautiful store for Anokhi whilst maintaining the architectural beauty of the original building, thereby winning the heritage award. In Delhi she started another store for Anokhi in Khan Market.

When Faith and John decided to retire and their children joined the business, Behroze felt it was time for her to move out on her own. Her father-in-law Lt Gen Himmeth Singh bought her two shops next to the Anokhi store which she called Indiewear. She broke the wall between the two shops and converted them into one large store. Not wanting to compete with Anokhi she decided to sell children's clothes but soon realized that it had a limited market. She bought another shop in Civil Lines and called it Cottons, operating under the same company name, Indiewear. She looked at what Anokhi was not doing. Anokhi specializes in prints, she focussed on weaves. Anokhi does exports, she decided to cater to the local market — from men's clothing, to women's clothing to home furnishing, the possibilities were infinite.

Behroze has some important guidelines for those seeking to start a business:

- Train somewhere and gain experience before starting out on your own. You have to learn to work through the labyrinth of government bureaucracy for licensing, insurance, sales tax, etc. There is also much to learn about man man-

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Behroze Singh (right)
The interiors of her shop Cottons in
New Delhi (above) and (below) with
her family (from left) Vijay, Nandika
and Mrityunjaya

agement.

- Take an interest in your employees and help them out in their time of need. They will remain loyal to you. Never argue with an employee in front of others.

- Always pay your employees on time. Pay your creditors within a week of receiving their invoice.

- Keep good control over your finances. Don't leave it all to your accountant.

- If your product does not sell, change it but stay within your area of knowledge and expertise.

- At first rent a place for your business rather than buy. Cut down on decor but spend on air-conditioning especially in India where it is hot eight months of the year. People like to go to air-conditioned shops. When they are cool and comfortable, they linger and they buy. At her shops Behroze has comfortable couches with bright cushions for the convenience of husbands!

Twice a month Behroze goes to Delhi, which is just four hours away from Jaipur, to supervise the functioning of her outlet which in her absence is managed by a team of capable people. Regular



contact over the phone and fax ensures smooth coordination, she states.

"I think we Parsi women definitely have an inborn sense of honesty, integrity and sensitivity. We work hard and do not look down on any work," 41-year-old Behroze comments on the spirit of entrepreneurship among Parsi females. Her younger sister Parivaz with her husband Ronnie run the Pearlina Hotel and a chikoo farm in Dahanu. She gives credit to her maternal grandfather Aderji Irani who had a flourishing flower business for being one of the pioneers in



chikoo farming in Dahanu. Born in Bombay to Silloo and Kemas Irani, Behroze is a product of Queen Mary School. It was her mother who pushed her into doing things, acknowledges Behroze. "She sent me to practically every class in town so by the time I got married I had done my typing and shorthand from Davar's College, baking from YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), computers from NIIT (National Institute of Information Technology), art and sewing classes... I even worked briefly at Diner's Club."

Behroze and Mrityunjaya's 16-year-old son Vijay who is studying in the 11th standard at Mayo College, Ajmer plays football at the district level and is a budding golfer, reports the mother. Twelve-year-old daughter Nandika Kumari (all Rajput girls are called

Kumari) is in the seventh standard at the Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls School in Jaipur.

"I read the *Mushkil aasaan Behram yazad* story every Friday whilst Vijay shells the chana (grams). My daughter says the *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* every day. My husband is not

particularly religious so the children have been exposed to a bit of all religions," states Behroze. "I have a little prayer space in my bedroom with pictures and idols of assorted gods and goddesses including Zarathushtra, Shirdi Sai Baba, Mother Mary, Ganesh, Shiva, Hanuman alongside photographs of my parents and father-in-law who are no more. We have the divo lit 24 hours a day and if I am out of town, my husband and children ensure it is always lit," she adds.

The Parsi influence rubbed off on their household is dhansak which "is served at practically every party and relatives from my husband's family regularly demand *marghi na farcha...*" As for the Rajput customs she has imbibed, Behroze touches her mother-in-law's feet every morning and again while saying goodnight but she is not expected to keep her head covered or wear traditional clothes except at weddings "which is fun

continued on page 242

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He is of medium height, fair and handsome. He is a well-known model and actor, has a pleasant disposition and is earning fabulously. A matrimonial advertisement? No way. We are talking about 10-year-old Parzaan Dastur who has played small roles in films such as *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Something or the other happens), *Zubeida*, *Mohabbatein*, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*.

He also received offers for bigger roles in other films but that would mean missing 30 to 40 days of schooling which was not acceptable to his parents Maharukh and Tehmtan. Says Maharukh: "Although he had tiny roles in the films he has so far acted in, those were big banners and were shot during vacation time. We want our child to give first priority to studies. It is only under unavoidable circumstances or in a dire emergency that Parzaan would be allowed to miss school for acting." Parzaan studies in standard six at St Mary's High School (ICSE), Mazagaon.

Parzaan's upcoming films are *Kehta Hai Dil Bar Bar* starring Jimmy Shergill and Kim Sharma, the shooting of which took place in the US. The shoot was for four days only but Tehmtan and Maharukh took the opportunity to see the US and stayed there for a month. Another film to be released is a children's film, *Haathi Ka Anda*, produced by the Children's Film Society where Parzaan (Kinto) plays the lead role. The movie brings out his relationship with Vallabh Vyas (Baba), the owner of a *raddi* (secondhand dealer) shop.

Parzaan has also acted in a couple of episodes of the television serials, *Sanjivani* and *Rishte*, and has been co-anchor with Divya Dutta on Doordarshan in *Hum Tum Ek Camere Mein Bandh Ho*, a weekly show. He is a regular on the advertising scene too.

Parzaan was interested in dancing and singing from early childhood. As a two-and-a-half-year-old, he would cavort at home in front of the mirror. At the age of three, Parzaan participated in a fancy dress competition at the New Activity School as an onion and potato vendor. A year later he joined Meher Jehangir's elocution classes. One day, Kashmira Vazifdar, Maharukh's sister, who assists Jehangir, received a call from White Light Productions. They wanted a few children to dub the Sil Jam advertisement. Parzaan was one of the many sent for the purpose. He was not at all nervous. But, surprisingly, Maharukh and Tehmtan were: "We were anxious that he should perform well and behave well. Although never a mischievous child, supposing he wasn't able to perform? After all, a child's a child..." But the production house was so impressed by Parzaan's manner of singing jingles and reciting a few lines that they not only selected his voice, but also asked for some of his photographs for future advertising campaigns.

Thus began Parzaan's journey in the advertising/modelling world. Within a month he got offers from White Light Productions for doing advertisements for Polaroid,

BPL and Whirlpool. However, the roles were very small. Parzaan's most remarkable role in the advertising world is for White Light Production's Dhara advertisement which shows a happy child eating delectable jalebis fried in Dhara oil. At one o'clock on the day of the shoot Maharukh, a software programmer with ICICI Infotech Limited, received a frantic call at her office from White Light Productions, who were desperately in need of a small boy to do this advertisement, requiring a substitute at the nth hour. They requested Maharukh to get Parzaan immediately after school at 1.30 p.m. Recalls Parzaan: "I was so hungry after school that I gobbled all the jalebis on the plate!" Parzaan loves jalebis. No wonder Dhara is his favorite advertisement! It gave Parzaan such a good exposure that soon he started receiving calls from other production houses such as UTV, Candid Creations... for advertisements for Pepsodent, Johnson's Kids soap, Kelvinator, Splash Candy, D'Cold, etc.

The Dhara advertisement also opened up a new avenue for little Parzaan — Bollywood. The boy's undoubted potential brought several of-

Parzaan ko Kuch Kuch Hota Hai

Rashna Ardesher

Child artiste Parzaan Dastur has acted in several Bollywood blockbusters as well as popular television serials





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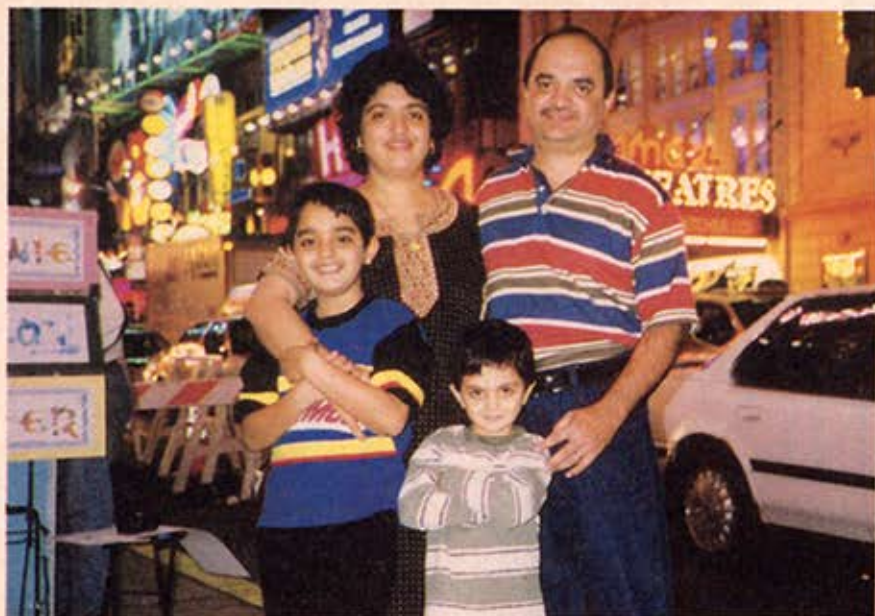
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(From left) 1st row: Parzaan in New York with Maharukh, Tehmtan and Rushad; off to school with Rushad; 2nd row: Shooting for the Tata Tea advertisement with Juhi Chawla; with Shahrukh Khan and Rushad on the sets of Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham; in the Johnson's Kids soap advertisement

fers for acting in films. But Tehmtan and Maharukh were very firm about Parzaan not missing a single day of school. So things didn't work out. Soon, however, came the offer for acting in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* starring Shahrukh Khan and Kajol. Director Karan Johar of Dharma Productions had noticed Parzaan in the Dhara advertisement. The production house took a few photographs of Parzaan, and Johar approved of him. The shoot was conveniently timed in the month of May when Parzaan had his school holidays. Parzaan fondly recalls: "We really had fun in Ooty. We were a hundred children in all. They (i.e. Dharma Productions) had cordoned off the whole area and employed security guards. Since the land was barren, even the grass was put there by them! Shahrukh Khan also played with us on the sets. There were small cottages built

for us. There were lots of books, games and soft toys to keep us occupied when there was no shooting." To date, his best actor (and friend!) is Shahrukh Khan and best actress, Kajol.

Enacting the role of a Sardar child at a summer camp, Parzaan was shown counting stars. When this writer jokingly enquired whether he was really counting the stars in the sky, Parzaan, with a twinkle in his eyes, said: "My shooting was at 8.00 p.m. But there were hardly one or two stars in the sky. The stars they showed, including the falling meteor, were computerized."

Apart from Ooty, there was another place, far distant, from which Parzaan didn't feel like returning — Salzburg, Austria, where he was acting for the Donear Suitings advertisement for 10 days in the month of May.

Despite the showbiz, Parzaan is very



well mannered. He has been mobbed several times on the roads, but never does he misbehave or get irritated. He smiles, shakes hands and talks to people (until and unless they ask stupid questions)!

No special attention is given to Parzaan, either in the house or in school. It is only when his schoolmates see him in a good advertisement that they remark noticing him on television. But, yes, he is thoroughly pampered on the sets. Says Maharukh: "He is offered Pepsi, chocolates and other goodies. Even if he asks for something and if it is not available on the sets, one of the unit persons goes out of his way to go and get it for him. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance at home so that he remains down-to-earth and does not have any airs about himself. After all, all this is very short-lived."

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Parzaan balances his studies and acting career quite well. His day starts at seven in the morning, he leaves for school at eight. After school, it is on to maternal grandmother Silloo Patel's house at Khareghat Colony at 4.15 p.m. when after some homework he plays with Colony friends. At 6.30 p.m. either parent picks him up to go to Ness Baug where he resides with his parents and father's *maasi*, Meher Mody. Then it's more study under Maharukh's supervision, or piano practice, watching TV, playing games on the CD or funtime with younger brother Rushad, studying

jects are maths and science. He takes part in school dramas and conducts assemblies. Besides elocution where he has passed three Trinity College examinations, Parzaan has already appeared for one Trinity College pianoforte exam under Sabrina Billimoria's tutelage, standing first amongst 104 students in Bombay in 2001. No wonder, he wants to become a music director when he grows up! Mohammed Rafi and Kishore Kumar's songs are his favorites. He also enjoys watching children's films in English and Hindi or reading.

Hailing from a family of priests, Parzaan is working towards becoming a navar, studying the navar prayers at home under the able guidance of his grandfather, Pesi Dastur, a priest himself, and his father, who is not only a priest, but is senior accounts officer with Sight Savers International. Parzaan's initiation as a navar will be a



Four-year-old Parzaan in his first advertisement for Polaroid Camera

couple of years later at the Iranshah. Tehmtan remarks: "We tell him that prayers are very important. He is too young just now. But I am sure he will gradually understand the value of prayers towards his becoming a better human being." Parzaan's inspiration are both his mom and dad who, in spite of their hectic work schedule, accompany him on shoots.

As a child artiste grows, offers often start waning. There are few accolades, people may not even recognize the artiste and the child may fade into oblivion. But

Parzaan is not at all worried: "I don't think I'm going to miss it. I know that it is just a passing phase and all this will be for a few years only, at least so far as my connections with Bollywood go. Now, as studies get heavier by the day, it is time for me to concentrate more on them rather than on films. After all, I want to become something in life."

Hailing from a family of priests, Parzaan is working towards becoming a navar, studying the navar prayers with his grandfather

in St Mary's High School in standard one.

Scoring more than 85 percent marks in his studies, Parzaan's favorite sub-

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Far Eastern cuisine - I

The control of the heat, cutting of the ingredients, aroma and taste are critical to Far Eastern cuisine, says the author

Bhico J. Manekshaw

The people of each country believe that their cuisine is the best and most unique. While one may prefer one's own cuisine, yet one can't surely be so parochial as to believe that it is the best in the world! There are so many distinctive and sophisticated cuisines that a prejudiced palate is surely missing out on a lot of pleasure in this world.

It is essential to have a feel of a country before writing on the subject of food. As the Chinese say, food is of the first importance, and one can never really do justice to the cuisine of a country unless one has been there. I have consulted at least 30 books on this subject and feel quite overwhelmed by it all.

The cuisines of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Philippines and Indonesia have been clubbed together as Far Eastern cuisine. This could well be because they have certain ingredients in common, like Hoisin sauce, oyster sauce, light and dark soy sauce (the light one is used mainly in Japan), fish sauce — called *nam pla* in Thailand, *prohok* in Cambodia, *nuoc mam* in Vietnam and *myolchichorin* in Korea. Though Far Eastern cuisine has been influenced by Indian, Muslim, Dutch, British and French cuisines, China because of its huge land mass has dominated it for a long time. As food tastes in the world are getting more adventurous, each individual cuisine is now getting its due importance.

In all Far Eastern food, the control of the heat, cutting of the ingredients, aroma and taste play a predominant role. As cutting affects color, aroma and taste, this is a very important aspect. Slicing, dicing, shredding, cubing, mincing and puréeing of ingredients are what gives a dish its characteristics. Flavorings are sweet, sour, pungent, fragrant and bitter.

Rice and noodles are used in differ-

ent forms in all these countries, along with chillies, which were brought in by the Portuguese. Lemon grass, galangal, coconut, wheat and rice wrappers, sambal and balchu are all parts of different cuisines. Pork is the favorite meat

indispensable part of their daily life. They drink it before and after meals, but never during one. The word tea is derived from *dih*, the tea plant and they call the drink *cha* hence *chai* in the Indian subcontinent. Tea-drinking in China, Japan and Vietnam is devoted to a ceremony laden with intellectual meanings and aesthetic significance.

The different varieties of tea and the flavored teas are brewed in the teacup and refilled with hot water when it is two-thirds empty. This second infusion has the best flavor.

The Chinese keep a balance between foods that are cool — *yin*, and hearty food — *yang*, very similar to our

own traditions.

Most of our readers have numerous recipe books on Chinese cooking, and so have I, but I must make mention of a delightful Chinese cookbook I have come across, called *Chinese Gastronomy* by Hstang Ju Lin and Tsuifent Linthey, the wife and daughter respectively of Lin Yutsang, the famous and eminent Chinese writer and artist.

Since most of the *Parsiana* readers must be well versed in cooking Chinese dishes, I have chosen some unusual ones and I hope you enjoy them.

I am giving you a recipe for a cream stock. It is used in making soups and other dishes. I find it so good that I feel it should be just drunk by itself. You can make it, freeze it as small ice cubes, and then use it as required. Don't be alarmed by the ingredients. It is laborious but worth the time.

The following steps should be taken for a perfect result:

- Breaking the bones: The bones are broken into 2-inch pieces, thus the marrow is exposed to cooking. The ribs and the thigh and drumstick bones are richest in marrow.



Dim Sum, Hong Kong's favorite breakfast or lunch Photos courtesy Hong Kong Tourist Association

eaten in all but the countries dominated by Islam. While there are many varieties of rice grown in the different regions, white glutinous rice is grown and consumed almost throughout Southeast Asia.

The first instalment in this series of Far Eastern cuisine carries recipes from China, Japan and Thailand while the subsequent instalment in the September issue will carry recipes from Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines and Indonesia.

China

I was once presented with a Chinese cookbook by their embassy while I was the catering consultant at the India International Centre in Delhi. The very first words were 'The epicurean civilization is in China.' But the polite and courteous people that they are, the book said these words were written by a foreign traveler.

Tea was 'invented' in China and is an



MASTI KA NAYA RANG



*Enjoy-
ing
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onese
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- Slashing the meat: Permits the juices of meat and marrow to enter the stock.
- Removal of scum: Most important for the final result. Bring the liquid to the boil, lower heat, simmer and keep removing the scum as it is formed.
- Rinsing: Now this is unusual. I have never heard of this method before. This is done because the meat juices coagulate on boiling and clog the meat, which prevents other juices coming into the stock. Rinsing and rubbing the meat in cold water unclogs it and releases the other juices. This procedure thus helps a second lot of juices to come out into the stock. This rinsing water is added to the stock at a later stage.
- Simmering: This is important, as the flavor of the stock comes out from the meat juices by simmering. After this stage the meat is discarded and only the bones are retained to complete the cooking of the stock.
- Removal of fat floating on top: The richness of the soup comes out from the suspended fat, but the excess is removed as it floats on top of the soup.
- Rapid boiling: This is done in this particular recipe. It should not be done for ordinary stocks. Generally after a stock comes to the boil, the heat should be reduced and the stock surface should be moving gently — smiling — as I used to tell my students. The boiling results in a creamy quality; hence its name. The stock is not actually milky, but golden and rich. If the liquid is reduced too much during rapid boiling, add the rinsing water, filtered through a fine cloth.
- Finishing the stock: filter through a muslin cloth.
- Use of stock: The rich stock sets on cooling and can be kept refrigerated for a few days or frozen for further use. It is best to use it a day after it is made so that all the rich flavors are well absorbed.

Note: I would use this method for all stocks, except for the step of rapid boiling, as we usually want our stocks clear.

CREAM STOCK

(makes 1 liter)

Duck ($\frac{3}{4}$ kg)

Chicken (2 kg)

Pork rib bones ($\frac{1}{4}$ kg)

Pork fillet (350 g — undercut or tenderloin)

Spring onions (3 large — sliced)

Ginger (50 g — sliced)

Separate and cut all joints into 2-inch pieces and slash flesh of duck and chicken. Place all ingredients in a large pan with 6 cups of water. Bring to boil, skim off scum as it rises to the surface, lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Place 6 cups cold water in another large pan. Remove stock from heat and put a few pieces of meat and bone at a time in the cold water.

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water to the bones, bring to boil, filter the liquid through the cloth into the same pan to mix the 2 stocks together. Cool, allow the stock to set and carefully remove the film of fat on top. Add salt if needed.

into 2-inch pieces)

Soy sauce (4 tsp)

Sugar (1 tsp)

Dry sherry (1 tbsp)

Heat oil in a frying pan and sauté garlic for a few minutes. Add beans and stir to coat with garlic and oil. Sauté for 1-2 minutes. Add soy sauce and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in sugar and sherry, reduce heat and cook for about 10 minutes until French beans are tender, but crisp.

Excellent served cold.

SPINACH IN CREAM STOCK (serves 6)

Spinach (½ kg)

Water (12 cups)

Cream stock (1 liter)

Blanch spinach in boiling water. Drain immediately and rinse under cold water until thoroughly cold. Wring out leaves thoroughly and cut into half-inch pieces. Wring again. Heat cream stock, add spinach, heat through and serve.

FRENCH BEANS WITH GARLIC (serves 6-8)

Oil (2 tbsp)

Garlic (3 cloves — crushed)

French beans (½ kg — trimmed and cut

BAMBOO SHOOTS WITH MUSHROOMS (serves 6)

This recipe is from *Court Dishes from China* by Su Chung.

Soya bean oil (18 tbsp)

Bamboo shoots (¾ kg)

Ginger (5 tsp — chopped)

Garlic (3 tsp — chopped)

Mushrooms (350 g — julienned or sliced)

Soy sauce (9 tbsp)

Sugar (1½ tsp)

Water (1½ cups)

Bring 15 tbsp oil to just below smoking point in a wok or frying pan and fry bamboo shoots for 1-2 minutes over high heat, stirring briskly. Re-



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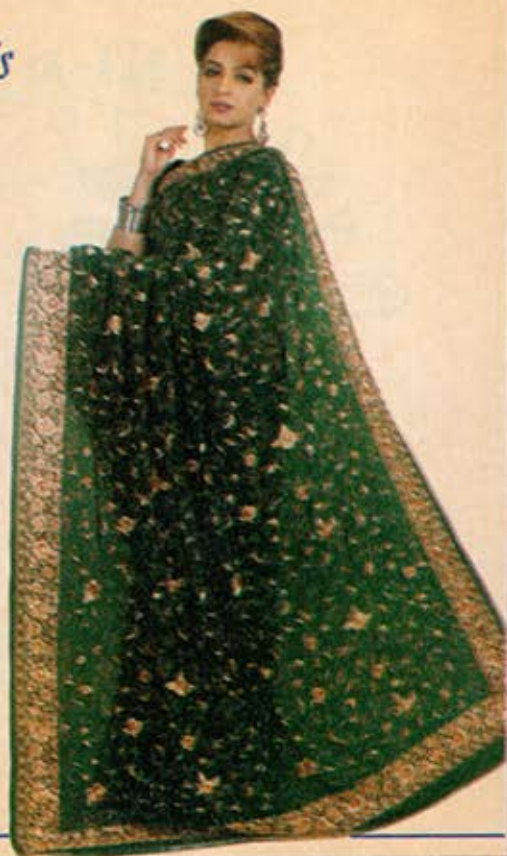
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move from pan. Add ginger and garlic to the pan and fry for a few seconds. Stir in bamboo shoots and mushrooms and cook for 1 minute. Add soy sauce, sugar and water, stir well and bring to boil. Lower heat to moderate and simmer uncovered until very little liquid remains.

Serve hot or cold.

VELVET CHICKEN

(serves 4-6)

Strong chicken stock (6 cups)
Spring onions (4 — chopped)
Ginger (about 30 g — 4 slices)
Chicken (about 1½ kg — trussed)
Oil (as needed)

Bring stock to boil with spring onions and ginger. Immerse chicken, breast-side down and bring to boil quickly. Cover immediately, remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Leave at room temperature for 5-6 hours or overnight. Remove chicken from pan, drain well and remove trussing string. Rub oil very lightly over chicken and chill to set the juices in. Cut into small pieces and serve with any of the sauces given below.

SESAME SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce (5 tbsp)
Chinese sesame oil (1 tbsp)
Mono sodium glutamate (½ tsp — optional)
Mix all ingredients together. Spoon sauce over chicken.

OYSTER SAUCE

Oyster sauce (4 tbsp)
Chicken stock (3 tbsp)
Sugar (2½ tsp)
Oil (4 tbsp)
Mix all ingredients together. Stir until sugar is dissolved and pour over chicken.

GINGER SAUCE

Spring onions (2 tbsp — chopped)
Young ginger (tender, without fibers, 2 tbsp — finely chopped)
Salt (1 tsp)
Oil (4 tbsp)
Mix together all ingredients except the oil. Put oil in another pan and heat to just below smoking point. Pour oil over the remaining ingredients and allow to stand for 15 minutes. Spoon over the chicken.

These dips can be used over any vegetables — blanched or raw.

Japan

Japanese cuisine is uniquely refined, subtle in flavor and extremely fastidious. Derived from Chinese cuisine, it has over the centuries evolved its own style. The main factors here are aesthetic eye-appeal, freshness of the raw materials, preserving of the natural flavors.

Freshness is highly prized, and this is as it should be. I have never been able to understand the recent trend of the newly rich people who spend vast sums of money on food that is out of season and therefore tasteless as well.

The outstanding characteristics of the cuisine are the tiny-sized portions, along with their artistic platters and serving dishes. Culinary artistry is its greatest attribute and cooking seasonal ingredients the keynote.

The Japanese prefer to retain the individual tastes of the ingredients used, rather than merging their flavors, and are very particular about the presentation and appearance of a finished dish. Sushi, of course, is one of their famous snacks.

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CHAWAN MUSHI

(serves 6)

This is a most delightful soup.

Dashi (3 cups — see below)

Light soy sauce (2 tsp)

Mirin (sweet rice wine or sweet wine, preferably white — 2 tsp)

Salt (a pinch)

Eggs (8 — beaten until blended)

Bean sprouts (50 g)

Chicken breasts (2 — boiled, skinned and cut into large dice)

Prawns (12)

Dried white mushrooms (6 — preferably shitake mushrooms, soaked for 30 minutes, drained and sliced)

Snow peas (12)

Pickled shredded ginger, for garnish (see alongside)

Bring dashi, soy sauce, wine and salt to boil. Remove from heat and cool. Mix with beaten eggs and divide mixture into 6 ramekin dishes. Add bean sprouts and chicken pieces to each dish. Position 2 prawns in each dish so that their tails are above the mixture. Place the snow peas and mushrooms on top of the custard. Place ramekins

in a large baking tray and pour water into the tray to come halfway up the ramekins. Bake in a medium oven at 180°C (350°F) for 15-20 minutes or steam for 15 minutes until the custard is firm and cooked. Garnish with pickled shredded ginger.

DASHI

(makes 3 cups)

Dried bonito flakes (30 g)

Kelp (4-inch piece)

Water (3 cups)

Lightly score the bonito flakes with a knife and put into a pan with the kelp and water. Place pan on high heat and remove from heat just before it starts to boil. Use as required.

Note: You can use fish stock in place of dashi, or use 3 cups chicken stock combined with 2 tbsp fish sauce, but don't tell a Japanese cook that you have used these as a substitute!

PICKLED SHREDDED GINGER

Ginger (100 g — grated)

Lime juice to cover ginger

Salt and sugar to taste

Mix all ingredients together and keep bottled in a glass jar in the sun for about

a week. Store in a refrigerator and use as required.

TEKKA MAKI (A VEGETARIAN SHUSHI DISH)

Dried seaweed (5 sheets — you can get them in sheets or discs)

Sushi rice (3 cups — see below)

Wasabi (horseradish — 1 tbsp)

Cucumber (1 small — finely sliced)

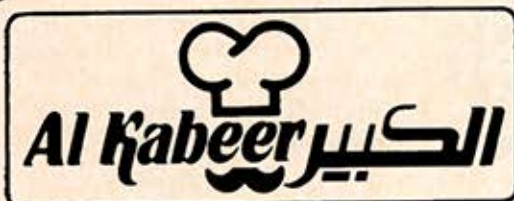
Place seaweed on a sheet of brown paper or foil or cling film, or better still a bamboo mat for rolling. Spread a layer of rice on it then spread a little wasabi over the rice. Cover with sliced cucumber. Roll and cut the roll into 1-inch long roundels. Arrange on a dish and serve.

Note: Wasabi is available in powdered form in tins or in a paste in tubes. If using the powder, mix with an equal quantity of water and stand for five minutes before use. The tube should be refrigerated and the powder can stay indefinitely. Our (Indian) horseradish and the Japanese one are similar in pungency but the flavors are not the same.

SUSHI RICE

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rice. Use any short, round-grained rice.
Rice (short, round-grained — 2½ cups)
Water (3 cups)

Vinegar mixture (see below)

Wash rice under running water until the
water runs clear. Drain in a strainer for
one hour. Place rice in a pan with a tight
fitting lid. Add water and bring to boil.
Reduce heat and boil for three minutes.
Lower heat further and cook for 12-15
minutes more. Remove from heat and
take off the lid. Cover with a clean cloth or
towel, replace the lid and keep aside for 15
minutes. Place rice in a thali or large
serving platter. Spread out the rice to
separate the grains, sprinkle with vinegar
mixture and mix lightly. Do not add too
much liquid to the rice, as it should not be
mushy.

VINEGAR MIXTURE

Rice vinegar (5 tbsp)

Mirin (sweet rice wine — 1 tbsp)

Sugar (3 tbsp)

Salt (2 tsp)

Combine all ingredients and cook over
gentle heat until sugar has dissolved.
Remove from heat and cool. Use as
required.

VEGETABLE TEMPURA

(serves 6-8)

Oil for deep-frying

Carrots (2 — peeled and cut into 2½-
inch long and ¼-inch wide strips)

White radish (1 long — peeled and cut
into 2½-inch long and ¼-inch wide
strips)

French beans (round variety, 100 g —
trimmed and cut into 2½-inch pieces)

Cauliflower florets (1 cup)

Broccoli florets (1 cup)

Small whole okra (bhindi — 2 cups)

Batter

Flour (2 cups)

Ice-cold water (2 cups)

Egg yolks (2 — beaten until blended)

Salt (a pinch)

Combine all ingredients for the bat-
ter. Heat oil in a wok or kadhai. Fry
one type of vegetable at a time. Dip
the pieces in the batter and fry until
crisp. Do not fry more than 4-5 pieces
at a time. Drain well and place in a
strainer lined with brown paper. Serve
with a dipping sauce.

Note: Prawns may be cooked in the
same way. Shell them but keep the
tails on. Cut down the length in the
center and devein. Spread out the two
sides and make four cuts on either
side to flatten them. Dip in seasoned

flour first, and then in the batter and
deep-fry.

GOMA-JOYU (SOY SAUCE WITH SESAME SEEDS)

White sesame seeds (3 tbsp — dry-
roasted and ground into a paste)

Soy sauce (1 cup)

Combine both ingredients just before
serving and use as required.

Thailand

The cooking of Thailand is outstanding.
The Thais have made themselves fa-
mous with their sauces. Their cuisine is
influenced by Szechwan, Malaysian,
South Indian and Arabian cuisines, but
with all these influences, they have de-
veloped a cuisine of their own.

Nam pla, the fish sauce and *nam prik*,
the chilli sauce, coconut milk, fresh cori-
ander, chillies, kaffir and basil leaves are
the characteristic ingredients here.

The Thais are famous for their artis-
tically carved and crafted fruit and veg-
etables. Some of their food, like the red
and green curries, can be quite spicy, but
still retain their own distinct flavors.
Rice is served with all dishes, but noodles
are consumed as much as rice. They are
sold by street-hawkers with a variety of
hot soups which are seasoned and fla-
vored with *nam pla* and *nam prik*, by the
customer.

PAD THAI (THAI FRIED NOODLES)

(serves 6-8)

Oil (8 tbsp)

Garlic (4-6 cloves — finely chopped)

Lemon or lime juice (4 tbsp)

Fish sauce (3 tbsp)

Oyster sauce (2 tbsp)

Chilli powder (1 tsp)

Sugar (1 tsp)

Peanuts (4 tbsp — roasted, chopped)

Dried ground shrimps (4 tbsp)

Dry rice noodles (250 g — soaked in
water for 20 minutes until soft, then
drained)

Eggs (2 — beaten until blended)

Bean sprouts (60 g)

Spring onions (4 — chopped)

Chinese cabbage (150 g — shredded)

Carrot (1 large — julienned)

Coriander leaves (50 g — chopped)

Lime wedges for garnish

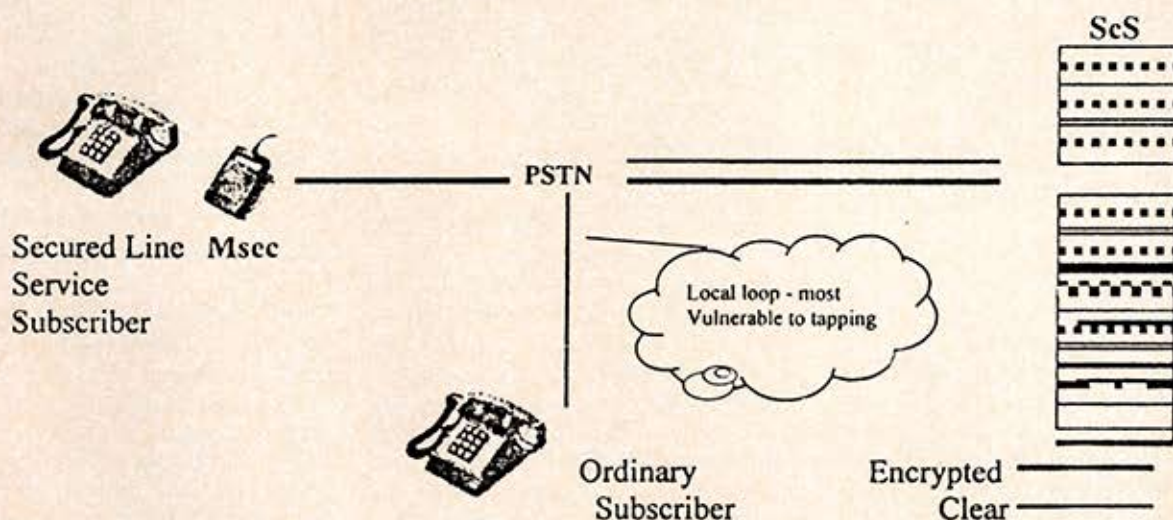
Heat oil in a wok or kadhai. Add garlic
and stir-fry until golden. Add lemon or
lime juice, fish sauce, oyster sauce, chilli
powder, sugar, peanuts, shrimps and
noodles. Mix well and add eggs, stirring

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till well incorporated. Add all vegetables. Stir-fry for 1-2 minutes and remove from heat. Add coriander leaves and serve garnished with wedges of lime.

SATTAY

(serves 6)

Sattay is cooked using different flavors in most Far Eastern countries.

Coriander seeds (2 tsp)

Cumin seeds (2 tsp)

Chicken breasts (6 large)

Light soy sauce (4 tbsp)

Salt (1-2 tsp)

Oil (8 tbsp)

Curry powder (2 tbsp)

Turmeric powder (1 tbsp)

Coconut milk (240 ml)

Dry roast individually, coriander and cumin seeds, taking care not to burn them. Keep shaking the pan to roast them evenly. Cool and powder finely. Cut chicken breasts into slices lengthwise, about 3-inch long and a 1/4-inch thick. Combine all ingredients and marinate the chicken for eight hours or overnight. Preheat an electric or charcoal grill (charcoal is best). Thread the chicken pieces on wooden sattay sticks, or any other wooden sticks soaked in water for four hours, drained and dried. Thread two pieces of chicken per stick. Thread them in and out as if you were seaming a piece of cloth or gathering material. Grill until the chicken is cooked, basting with the leftover marinade. Use a brush to do this and keep turning the sticks so that the pieces are well browned. Do not overcook, as overcooked chicken breasts tend to get tough. It should take about 5-8 minutes. Serve with peanut sauce and cucumber pickle.

Note: Vegetarians, do not despair! Use paneer, red and green capsicum and baby onions. Cut paneer and capsicum into 1-inch chunks and thread

them onto the sticks after marinating in the same paste for one hour. Grill for 4-5 minutes.

PEANUT SAUCE

Oil (4 tbsp)

Garlic (6 cloves — finely chopped)

Red curry paste (2 tbsp — see below, or you can buy it ready-made in packets)

Chicken or vegetable broth (1 cup)

Coconut milk (1 cup)

Sugar (2 tbsp)

Salt (1-2 tsp)

Lime juice (2 tbsp)

Peanuts (12 tbsp — roasted and ground to a paste) or peanut butter

Heat oil in a frying pan until hot. Add garlic and fry until golden. Lower heat a little and add curry paste. Mix well and cook for 2-3 seconds. Add broth and stir for about 1 minute. Stir in coconut milk, sugar, salt and lime juice and stir well for another minute. Mix well in peanut paste or peanut butter. Remove from heat, pour into a bowl and serve with sattay.

RED CURRY PASTE

Dried red chillies (10 — seeded and broken into small pieces)

Coriander seeds (1 tbsp — ground)

Cumin seeds (1 tbsp — ground)

White pepper (1 tsp — ground)

Garlic (2 tbsp — chopped)

Lemon grass (2 stalks — finely chopped)

Coriander roots (2 tbsp — finely chopped. Our roots are not so long, so use a bit of the stems as well)

Lime leaves (1 tsp — finely chopped or 1 tsp finely grated lime rind)

Galangal or ginger (1-inch piece — chopped)

Shrimp paste (2 tsp)

Salt (1 tsp)

Grind all ingredients to a fine paste and use as required.



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KAO-MAN-SOM-TOM (PAPAYA RELISH)

Dried red chillies (1-2)

Small green chillies (4-5)

Garlic (10 cloves)

Black pepper (1 tsp)

Jaggery (2 tbsp)

Fish sauce (2 tbsp)

Tamarind water (2 tbsp)

Lime juice (2-3 tbsp)

Dried ground shrimps (1/2 cup)

Raw papaya (4 cups — chopped)

Lettuce leaves for serving

Seed red chillies and soak in water for 10 minutes. Grind together red and green chillies, garlic and peppercorns to a fine paste. Add jaggery, fish sauce, tamarind, lime juice and shrimps. Gently pound the papaya and mix with remaining ingredients. Serve on a bed of lettuce leaves.

Bhico J. Manekshaw, a graduate of the prestigious Cordon Bleu School of Cookery, London and author of *Traditional Recipes of India and Parsi Food and Customs*, has been associated with many haute cuisine organizations in



the country.

*Wishing all Parsis a very
Happy New Year*



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"This monumental work"

The most complex and ambitious publishing effort in the community culminated with the launch in London and Bombay of the seven kilogram tome, *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*

Arnavaz S. Mama

The jam packed audience in the Ballroom of Bombay's Taj Mahal Hotel reflected the variegated textures and hues of *A Zoroastrian Tapestry — Art, Religion & Culture*. Between the elegant Indian silk brocade of Pheroza Godrej and the resplendent gara and gorgeous net sudreh of Firoza Punthakey Mistree, co-editors of the seven-kilogram encyclopedic tome, hundreds of hues, styles and fabrics endorsed the fabled Parsi *joi de vivre*. Also present were a host of friends from other communities to witness the launch of the book in India by the then governor of Maharashtra Dr P. C. Alexander on June 7, 2002.

The world launch of the book, printed in Singapore (priced at Indian Rs 7,500, UK £ 175, US \$ 195) had taken place earlier at London's Zoroastrian House when the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) had commemorated the golden jubilee of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II with a jashan on June 1, 2002. Unlike the high social overtones of the Bombay event, in London it was Prof Nicolas Sims-Williams of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), who performed the honors while an array of academics in the field of Zoroastrian and Iranian studies, many of whom had contributed original pieces to the *Tapestry*, eulogized the final product.

Congratulating the editors for "this monumental work" which documents the art, religion and culture of the Zoroastrian people from antiquity to 1947, Alexander urged them to produce a companion volume documenting the Zoroastrian contribution to the "political and national evolution of India, of the Indian identity, business and the professions. Only then can we say that the 'Zoroastrian tapestry' is complete."

Rephrasing a question posed by the late Roshan Sabavala to Godrej ("Why

has the community not been able to throw up another Jamsetji Tata?") Alexander asked, "Why has this country not produced another Jamsetji Tata?" and proceeded to analyze the great Tata's thought process: "He was the first to realize that merely political independence was not enough without economic development and underpinning... the first to realize the linkage between political independence and economic independence. I take very special pride in saluting his memory." The Taj Mahal Hotel which Tata founded in 1903 — the first Indian luxury hotel and one of his several gifts to India's development — will be celebrating its centenary next year, as noted its vice president Ajoy Mishra in his welcome address.

The governor proceeded to ask, "What is the importance of this (Zoroastrian) community? What is the importance of the teachings of Zarathushtra to this community? What influence did those teachings have among the people of the world?" He analyzed the initial birth of religion in man's fear of the unknown. Time and understanding led to the quest for God through the "different manifestations of this unseen power," endowing the deities with human attributes like jealousy, rage and lust for power.

Though others like the Assyrian Hamurabi and the Egyptian Akanathan had inklings that "there is only one power, one embodiment which we cannot see but is behind everything we can see and feel... (it was) Zarathushtra (who) tried to educate people to the concept of monotheism." Alexander differentiated the exclusionary revengeful Israeli god of the *Old Testament* (who fought their wars, ensured their prosperity, inculcated the belief in an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth) from Zarathushtra's concept: "For the first time ethics be-

came the foundation of religion. With Zarathushtra's triad of good thoughts, words and deeds there was no place for revenge, confrontation, conflict or hypocrisy." This triad was based squarely on the foundation of righteousness, a concept practically unknown before Zarathushtra's time, emphasized Alexander. "This is what you have inherited from the great prophet — ethical behavior. If Zoroastrianism has survived and influenced others, it is because of this great dimension to the concept of god."

Alexander recalled how Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had thought it fit to include a Parsi in his small cabinet of 16 or 17 ministers in 1947. "In today's society when numbers matter in election politics, the community has been sidelined... (And though) your numbers may decline, your influence, never."

Facing a host of well wishers, Godrej, a dedicated social activist and art historian, declared herself "touched and overwhelmed by the welcome to the book." She admitted to pride in her published work and also "a tremendous sense of humbleness."

The book, which took over nine years to put together, contains over 1,200 illustrations, "many of them not previously published," noted Godrej. Their location in various museums, fire-temples and Parsi homes and their identification took up a major part of the time, she added.

The book, whose launch had been originally planned at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, "had a spirit and life of its own. It increased in size whenever we decided to call a halt," laughed Godrej. Despite its size, there are aspects of community involvement like music, sports and the professions which have not been covered, she admitted. Largely based on the Zoroastrians of Yazd and the Parsis of Bombay



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and western India, the editors drew the time line at the 1947 Independence of India because they felt "we were not equipped to tackle contemporary history and current issues," said Godrej, adding, "Our intention was to create a visual panorama so that young Zoroastrians the world over can be inspired by the heritage of the community and feel proud of being Zoroastrians."

Though the initial impetus came from Prof Richard Frye who suggested to the late Sabavala to entrust the book to Godrej and Punthakey Mistree, the support and commitment of Prof Mary Boyce over all the nine years enabled them to complete the book. Godrej said that Boyce "put them in touch with scholars — all specialists in their fields — and nudged them to support us with hitherto unpublished work." Faced with a "lot of intellectual wrestling," Boyce advised them, "Do as your conscience tells you." Godrej also acknowledged the encouragement of her husband Jamshyd's uncle, the late Sohrab Godrej, in seeking and maintaining a balanced, consensual approach when faced with contentious issues. "A thread of inherited value system runs through the book. We hope to leave it to the future generations just as we have received it from the past," observed Godrej.

The final hurly-burly of organizing the book launch was "on war-footing (like) a marriage," she recalled. "Thanks to the Taj we were able to put this function together," she expressed her gratitude as also to the Godrej and Mistree families for their support despite "the incessant badgering they suffered at our hands."

"Everyone at the Taj has been a part of the extended book family" quipped Punthakey Mistree in her vote of thanks. The religious educator and researchist had a special word of gratitude for Bipin Shah, director of Mapin Publishing Private Limited, for the firm's "patience with the many deadlines we missed!" The designing by Kirti Trivedi, the pro

(L to R) Top row: Punthakey Mistree, Alexander and Godrej at the Bombay launch. Second row ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, Sims-Williams and Malcolm Deboo at the world launch in London. Third row: Punthakey Mistree and Godrej. Fourth row: Jamshyd, Pheroza, Raika J. Godrej, Firoza, Bipin Shah, Mapin art director Paulomi Shah and Khojeste; B. Shah

India won its freedom in 1947,
when will she win hers?



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cessing by Pankaj and Ashvin Mehta and coordination by Sudha Seshadry (who was also the evening's compere), all added up to make every page of *A Zoroastrian Tapestry* "picture perfect," noted Punthakey Mistree.

Among the book's major sponsors were Citibank, Godrej and Boyce, Standard Chartered Grindlays, Housing Development Finance Corporation and Zoroastrian Studies. Rumi Majoo of Godrej was credited with "hundreds of hours" of work on the computer entering the 39 articles that make up the contents of the *Tapestry* and many of the contributors, especially the local ones, were individually acknowledged.

Commending Godrej's "persistence and unwillingness to give up the project," Punthakey Mistree noted, "There could be no more supportive teammate." She also publicly acknowledged the support of her husband Khojeste Mistree and his help and training in the understanding of Zoroastrianism.

The hour-long function formally ended with Punthakey Mistree's final word of gratitude addressed to "India as a nation, for opening her arms and welcoming us so readily when we came as refugees in the 10th century." Cocktails and snacks followed by a sumptuous

dinner in the Crystal Room brought the evening to a close.

In London Sims-William termed the book "a wonderful example of cooperation between members of the Zoroastrian community and scholars who have studied Zoroastrianism and its history." Noting that three former SOAS colleagues and three pupils there were among the contributors to the book, he felt he had "some sort of responsibility for the contents!" The expensively produced limited edition was an heirloom, he noted.

"Almost every major artefact of Zoroastrian antiquity has been reproduced," noted Prof David Bivar. He particularly commented on the 19th century Parsi costumes and portraiture by English, Indian and Chinese artists, especially since the images are not familiar internationally. The book's "unprecedented" range of topics, glossary, clear and readable style made it a "monumental resource for education and understanding," he added.

The editors had not been able to attend the London launch but their message relating to the genesis of the book and its goal was read out to the gathering. Some of the contributors like Shirin Simons, Dr Sarah Stewart and Dr Alan

Williams were present to give the audience a hint of their involvement. Health problems prevented Boyce and John Hinnells from attending, though Hinnells' message was read. Dasturs (Drs) Kaikhosroo JamaspAsa and Firoze Kotwal, Khojeste Mistree, Jamsheed Choksy, Dr Philip Kreyenbroek and Farhang Mehr, all of whom have contributed articles to the book, were present in word and spirit though not in person.

The day's compere, Malcolm Deboo, injected audience participation by inviting them to name the two female devotees worshipping at London's Setayesh Gah in a photograph accompanying Hinnells' article on Zoroastrians in Britain. The winning entry would receive a case of General Billimoria wines on Navroz, he promised.

Drawing the event to a close ZTFE president Dorab Mistry noted that ZTFE has "a history of being involved in the propagation of Zoroastrianism." As early as 1856 it had launched a book in Germany at the behest of Hormusjee Cama, the first president of the association. "We take great pride at being the first to launch *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*," he added. The evening ended with a ghambar sponsored by award winning entrepreneur Shernaz Engineer.

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The secretaries' role

Rashna Ardesher

The Effective Secretary by Dr Khorshed D. P. Madon. Published in 2001 by Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, 7, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi, 110008. Pp: xxiii+299. Price: Rs 120.

Times change and so does the role of a secretary. But as author Dr Khorshed D. P. Madon remarks in *The Effective Secretary*: "There is always a demand for a competent secretary. Every executive, every professional, doctor, lawyer, chartered accountant, needs the services of a well-trained confidential secretary, a person who is well-organized, who not only has the basic skills of shorthand, typing, telephone operating and computer applications, but is also unflappable and dependable, who has loyalty, patience and a professional attitude towards her work, who considers herself an extension of her boss, who always strives to acquire more knowledge and the latest technological skills to near perfection."



Madon: providing fresh insight

The book covers in great detail the role of a secretary who strives for perfection. Topics such as "Travel Arrangements," "Time Management and Prioritising," "Stress Management," "Importance of Attitude," "The Changing Role of the Secretary" and "Towards A Perfect Secretary" provide fresh insight into the demanding secretarial work and how best it can be dealt with. Poised and active even at the age of 80 plus, Madon is the principal of the oldest college of commerce in India, the Davar's College of Commerce (now First Counter), a pioneer of the Personal Secretaries Diploma Course in India in 1964 and author of several publications. Madon writes: "She (i.e. today's secretary) must take change in her stride and treat it as a challenge she must face

cheerfully. In fact she must welcome it as an opportunity to show her adaptability to a changing environment. This will help her towards promotion, leading ultimately to an administrative or managerial position."

The chapter, "Importance of Attitude," struck this reviewer the most. Madon gives some hints to enable secretaries acquire the correct attitude:

- If you are assigned work just 10 minutes before leaving time, accept it cheerfully and give of your best even if it means sacrificing an appointment to which you were looking forward.
- Before your boss goes on a vacation sit down with him and discuss how he wants you to work in his absence.
- In his absence do not take any days off. Be punctual and responsible to see that his work does not suffer in any manner.
- Work never reduces, so a secretary should have the capacity and the right attitude to take up whatever responsibilities come her way.
- Never look down on your present career no matter what it is. Respect the work you do and the people in your office.
- Control your temper. Remember, anger is the acid which burns the vessel in which it is stored, so relax. A relaxed person can think much better than an angry one.

"Business Etiquette" is another informative chapter that can help enhance a secretary's personality. This chapter, as the title suggests, teaches good behavior in office and how to deal with people in different situations. One of the many interesting situations mentioned in the

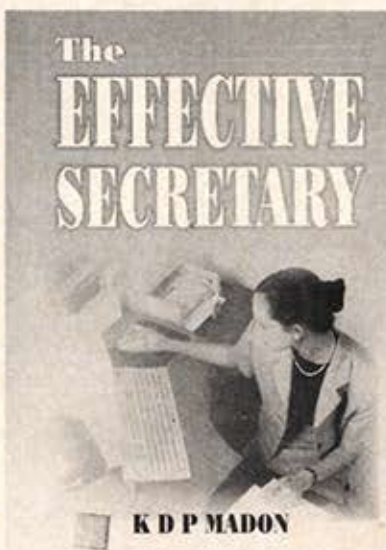
book is dealing with the wolf in the office: "You will probably come across someone who will try to get fresh with you. You can deal with such a person firmly, indicating that you dislike such behavior. Try to avoid running into him but if that is impossible, be sure you do nothing to encourage him. You can take the matter up with your boss as a last resort if the person continues to persist with unwelcome advances." But what if a secretary comes across a senior co-worker who constantly runs her down without any fault of her own? This is one situation, not mentioned in the book, which comes to the reviewer's mind. How does one tackle such a situation?

The chapter, "Office Site and Layout," lists various factors the secretary should consider while selecting the office site. This, especially, is relevant in today's age when so many companies are shifting office from south Bombay, due to escalating costs, and moving to the suburbs or even out of Bombay.

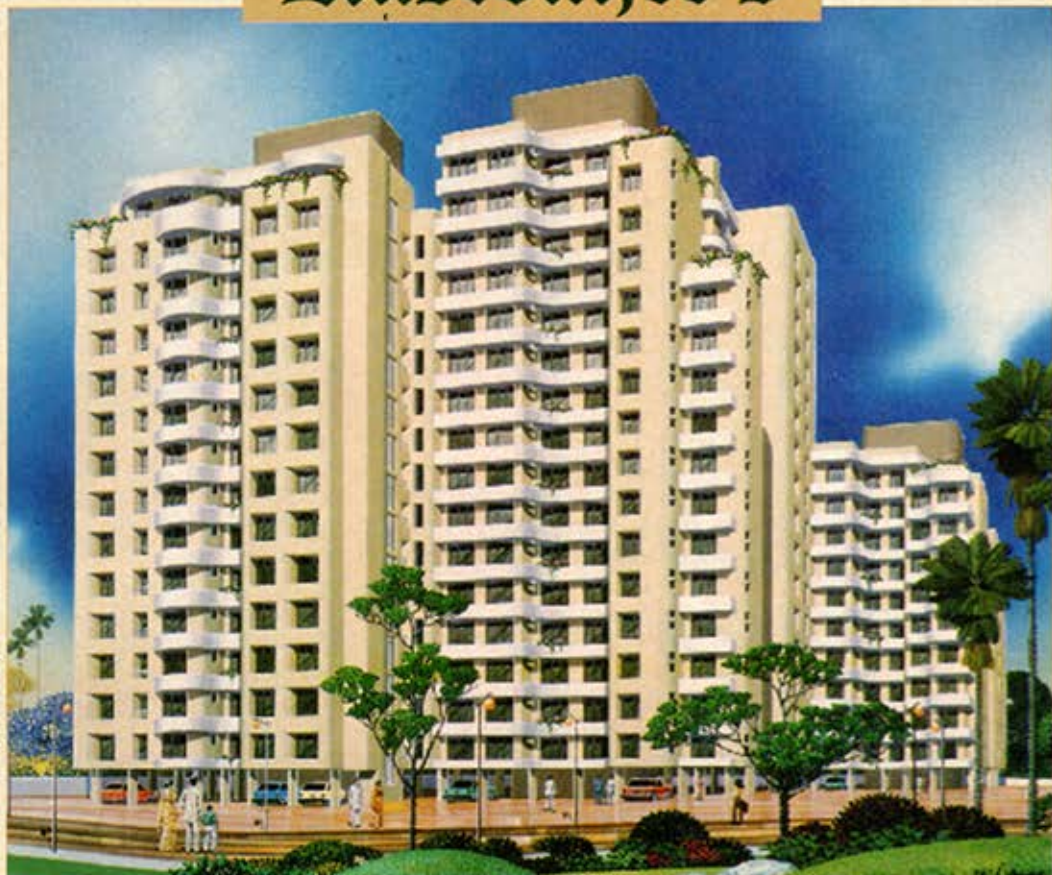
The Effective Secretary does not end with teaching secretarial functions. It goes beyond and teaches how to apply for a job, how to move ahead in your

job, what would be an ideal boss-secretary relationship, etc. Appendices comprising case studies, check lists and quizzes tax the reader's brain and teach some important practical lessons.

If you are ambitious, then joining as secretary is just the beginning. You can move up the corporate ladder, step by step, gradually, to become an executive.



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The book is a well thought out and useful guide to secretaries of all ages, irrespective of whether they are beginners or experienced and working in different sectors of business. It is an ideal book even for executives to know and understand what to expect from their secretaries. Cartoonist Priya Raj's delightful and clean humor has done justice to the book.

Madon dedicates the book not only to the memory of her father, Prof Sohrab R. Davar, who established this College in 1900 at the age of 20, but also to her beloved students — past, present and future. But does she know how indebted her students are to her and to the Davar's College of Commerce? The book shows her missionary zeal to provide well-qualified, excellent secretaries and, above all, good human beings to society.

'Noble ideals'

Zoroastrianism may not have the equivalent of a *Bible* or *Koran* that governs our lives, but the most cherished and revered text that we have is the *Gathas*. Thus it is no wonder that translations of the hymns of Zarathushtra abound. Not only are there translations from the

Gathic language but there are numerous interpretations often derived from studying the translations in Gujarati and/or English.

One such book is *Thus Preached Zarathushtra* by Irach S. Kuka whose third edition was published in Bombay in October 2001. Priced at Rs 20, this hard back 129-page issue has a modification in the title from *Thus Spake Zarathushtra* to *Thus Preached Zarathushtra*. The author mentions that the first two editions received a warm response and hence the third revised edition came into being, but what Kuka does not state is how the third edition differs from the first two, besides the change in title.

The author states, "I claim not scholarship of our religious scriptures. Nor do I claim to be a teacher of Zoroastrian theology. But as a humble student, (I) have attempted to bring out the gist of the profound and noble ideals, as could



Kuka: citing the *Gathas*

be gathered, from the writings of the holy *Gathas*.

"While preparing this book I have depended upon the Gujarati translation — *Gatha-baa-maaeni* — of the profound Avestan savant, the late Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga and greatly on the English translation — *The Gathas of Zarathushtra* — of my 'guru,' the late Dr Irach J. S. Taraporewala. So, whatever worth that may be observed from this book will be the result of the learning and wisdom of these great departed souls."

Stating that *Gatha* means 'poetic prayers' Kuka notes: "I have humbly endeavored to give 'gists' of free rendering of the translations of the *Gathas* in poetic style." "The renderings are free but faithful," Dastur Navrooz Minochehr-Homji had stated at the time of the first edition. "While attending ceremonies (a Zoroastrian) may go through this (book) with enlightened advantage." Kuka has seven other publications in Gujarati and English to his credit.

Those wishing to acquire copies of *Thus Preached Zarathushtra* may write to the author at Band View, 665, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014.



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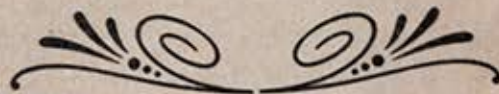
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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* carries Milestones data for May and June 2002. Also published herewith are intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House and at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the 10-month period of March to December 2001. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

The Old Customs House registered 47 intercommunity marriages plus five civil marriages, whereas the MHADA office registered 34 intercommunity unions and one civil marriage.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers revealed the names of seven Zoroastrians cremated between August to December 2001.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 57 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 30 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 21 and 86 years, averaging at 35 years.

One hundred and fifty-one Zoroastrians breathed their last. Compared to this only 26 births took place in the two months. As usual heart disease was the major killer claiming 61 lives of whom 28 were above the age of 80 years. Pneumonia/lung disease (claiming 24 patients), cancer (11) and septicemia and old age/general debility (nine victims each) were the other killer diseases. Six patients succumbed to brain disease, five to diabetes and four to kidney failure. Hypertension took a toll of three lives whereas two Zoroastrians each fell prey to asthma, liver disease and anemia. There were 11 isolated cases for May and June: haematemesis (vomiting of blood), uremia, epilepsy,

Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, polyneuritis (multiple inflammation of the nerves), nervous disorder, cystic bronchiectasis (dilation of the bronchial tubes following infection), peritonitis (inflammation of the serous membrane which lines the abdominal and pelvic cavities), hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body) and infected prosthesis (artificial substitute for a missing body part). Two still-born baby boys were also lost to the community. The eldest to breathe her last was a centenarian, compared to the youngest, a 41-year-old male. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for May and June, in Bombay, was 75 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans 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 anjumans 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 breakup 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.

AHMEDABAD

MARRIED

Delna Khambatta, daughter of Persis and Areez, and *Rustum Boyce*, son of Roshan and Sam on December 4, 2001
Perzin Bharucha, daughter of Franak and Farokh, and *Burzin Daruwala* of Hillsboro, Oregon, USA, son of Kety and Aspi; December 24

Parinaz Faredoon Havewalla and *Rohinton Viraf Talati*; April 18, 2002

BARODA

BORN

A girl, *Arnavaz*, to *Ruby* and *Kairus Talati*; April 13

MARRIED

Anahita Sheriar Behramji and

Hormuz Phiroze Mukadam; February 17

DIED

Minocher Faredun Pestonjamas (83); March 18
Shapoor Behramji Bhungara (56); April 22
Najamai Jehanbux Manekshaw (81); May 1
Rohinton Rustomji Mirza (84); May 1
Pervez Jehangirji Mysorewalla (76); May 24

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy to *Ferzin* and *Vispi Elavia*; May 4
A boy, *Shehryar*, to *Binaifer* and *Burzin Edibam*, brother to *Rukhsar*; May 5
A boy to *Naznin* and *Mehernosh Gotla*; May 5
A girl to *Yenisha* and *Firdosh Gagrar*; May 11
A girl to *Meher* and *Rustum Jesia*; May 15
A girl to *Parizad* and *Cyrus Patel*; May 15
A boy, *Kiyonush*, to *Mahvash* and *Khushroo Irani*; May 17
A girl to *Dinaz* and *Zarir Bharucha*; May 21
A girl to *Despina* and *Hushedar Mehta*; May 22
A girl to *Dilbur* and *Cyrus Langrana*; May 23
A girl to *Farzana* and *Vistasp Balliwala*; May 25
A boy, *Zerius*, to *Jennifer* and *Ruzbeh Davar*; May 26
A boy to *Roshini* and *Firoz Soonawalla*; May 28
A girl to *Ronak* and *Shapur Wadia*; May 29
A girl to *Payandeh* and *Dinyar Billimoria*; June 3
A boy to *Vabiz* and *Sharukh Pavri*; June 3
A girl to *Niloufer* and *Nauzer Bharucha*; June 4
A girl to *Sabrina* and *Dinshaw Shroff*; June 5
A boy to *Dinci* and *Nadir Karanjia*; June 6
A girl to *Neeta* and *Porus Khareghar*; June 13
A boy to *Tasneem* and *Neville Razmi*; June 20
A girl to *Roxanne* and *Darius Vakharia*; June 20
A girl to *Lyla* and *Zubin Marker*; June 24
A girl to *Khurshid* and *Zarsis Merchant*; June 24

A girl to *Keshmira* and *Cyrus Patel*; June 24
A girl to *Maheet* and *Kaiomerz Desai*; June 26

MARRIED

Martina Wiedemeyer and *Cyrus Nariman Mody*; March 1, 2001
Trupti Shambhunath Narsule and *Jimmy Pirosha Wankadia*; March 4
Rashna Jehangir Sethna and *Anamitra A. Dasgupta*; March 8
Rashna M. Zainabadi and *Rinhas S. Jhaveri*; March 18
Zia Aspy Adajania and *Rahul Gautam Divan*; March 19
Dilshad Rusi Cooper and *Amit Mohansingh Akali*; April 15
Varsha Pinoo Soneja and *Aaresh Nariman Patel*; April 16
Shobha V. Devre and *Syrus Golwalla*; April 18
Tasneem Mustafa Lokhandwala and *Neville Boman Razmi*; April 26
Delnaz Viraf Dadachanji and *Ashish Chhibber*; April 27
Garima Sinhal and *Melvin Aspi Mehta*; April 27
Benaifer Vispi Lakdawalla and *Torak Adi Pavri*; April 30
Shiraz Khambatta and *Sanjay Sadanand*; May 3
Pushpa V. Gohil and *Carl J. Sethna*; May 4
Ashkeem Behram Balsara and *Vaibhav S. Dharamsey*; May 5
Sonia Ashok Panjwani and *Zarir Rumi Patel*; May 15
Pervin Fali Pardiwala and *Ganesh T. V. Narayan*; May 18
Mahrukh Meherji Bhot and *Thaiparambil Suby Mathew*; May 24
Tina Keki Mobedjina and *Hiral Jaychandra Mehta*; May 24
Maria Cseko Tunde and *Nishat Pervez Elavia*; June 6
Geeta Dalysingh and *Carl Adi Cooper*; June 8
Bina Chakko Jacob and *Kaizad Lim Patel*; June 22
Perween Nowroji Gandevis and *Samit Nataveral Trivedi*; June 29
Nainaz Aspi Tarachand and *Kannan Veilumuthu Nadar*; July 2
Thrity Aspi Asa and *Romsonlal Rajan*; July 2
Simone Dossu Paymaster and

Rahim Karim Premji; July 6
 Mary Flocy D'Souza and
 Nozer Jal Sethna; July 16
 Jennifer Davar and Steven
 Oswald D'Souza; July 17
 Hoveyda Firdaus Patel and
 Aniruddha Subroto Nandi;
 August 4
 Thelma Walter D'Silva and
 Desmond Divecha; August 7
 Andrea D'Monte and Peeran
 Phiroz Billimoria; August 17
 Teresa Soares and Homi K.
 Dastoor; August 18
 Tangtonphi Luikham and
 Kayzad Pervez Hiranmanek;
 August 23
 Sheetal Salian and Homi B.
 Tarapore; August 23
 Harsha Girdhari Jaisinghani
 and Jal Kersy Godiwalla;
 August 31
 Namita Kamalakar Ghogare
 and Rohinton Minoo Wadia;
 August 31
 Monika Chandru Hiranandani
 and Mehernosh Pheroze Patel;
 September 10
 Meena Afshin Bakhtari
 and Nevil Fanibanda;
 September 18
 Nahida Hanif and Cyrus
 Bhikhaji Makujina;
 September 24

Rakhi Chotulal Bhargav and
 Abel Beharam Patrawala;
 September 24
 Samantha Ann Samuels and
 Karl Bahadur Wykes;
 September 27
 Deepa Damodaran and
 Sharokh A. Yezdegardi;
 September 27
 Ami S. Fernandes and Rashid
 S. Mehta; September 29
 Karenina D'Souza and

Almost every third marriage is outside the community

Jamshed Vazifdar; October 9
 Pereena Sorab Colabawala
 and Devkrishnan Kanwal
 Lamba; October 12
 Sheetal Dattatray Kadam and
 Manek Toos Anklesaria;
 October 20
 Kainaz Bilimoria and Kalyan
 Karmakar; October 22
 Dilnaz Farokh Kanga and
 Malcolm Keki Shroff;
 October 24
 Firuza Adi Kavarana and

Rohit Nalin Sharma;
 October 25
 Kainaz Kayoji Mirza and Rohit
 R. Singh; October 29
 Zenobia Bapu Mithaiwala and
 Bhupesh Pramod Velaskar;
 October 31
 Pervin Gustad Gandhi and
 Aspi Feroze Batliwalla;
 November 5
 Shibani Puran Goklani and
 Aariz Hoshang Elavia;
 November 8
 Bhargavi Manahar Kakkad
 and Nauzad Jimmy Irani;
 November 8
 Shamim Bhayani and Kerman
 Karwa; November 8
 Gitanjali Hanspal and
 Farzad Rohinton Engineer;
 November 9
 Shirley Pesi Moos and
 Husain Hasanali Merchant;
 November 9
 Tehnaz Parvez Avari and
 Shishir Garg; November 12
 Avi Sorab Shroff and Dhun
 Homi Sethna; November 12
 Zarine Pervez Vesuna and
 Clayton Tyrone Rana;
 November 15
 Smita Ramdas Gupta and
 Sorab Jehangir Variava;
 November 15

Khushnum C. Dastur and
 Mitesh Dilip Dhruv;
 November 19
 Shoma Anand Jaisuar and
 Yezdi Fardun Beramji;
 November 20
 Yeneta Arvind Bhansali and
 Yezdi Jehangir Kutky;
 November 21
 Peacho Dhaul and Minoo
 Ghasvala; November 22
 Rohini Flora Tewari and
 Mirron Unwalla; November 22
 Farah Sarosh Contractor and
 Darran Geoffery Davis;
 November 23
 Rajita Darshan and Berjis
 Patel; November 27
 Daisy Soli Sidhwa and Niket
 Muralidhar Pradhan;
 November 27
 Tania Fernandes and Adi
 Echaporla; November 28
 Rukhsar D. Fitter and Alok R.
 Tripathi; November 29
 Neevia D. Ramaiya and
 Zoru Darayus Bhathena;
 November 30
 Mehernaaz Adi Mody and
 Guy Miles David Green;
 December 3
 Git Jen Yuan and Percy K.
 Limbuwalla; December 4
 Daisy Rusi Kapadia and

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Agostinho Piedade Fernandes; December 7
 Ruby Bejan Vapiwala and Sumeet Sitaram Kamath; December 10
 Pooja P. Bhavnani and Carl Neville Bokdawala; December 11
 Natasha Adi Banajee and Mehul Nagindas Shah; December 11
 Delnaz Darius Daruwala and Divesh Pravinchandra Damania; December 13
 Rupal Phiroze Daruwala and Devendra Shreeram Raval; December 13
 Yakuta Kashalkar and Zubin Sarkari; December 14
 Rizina Cyrus Patel and Monishankar Subrata Chatterji; December 18
 Jer Bahadur Daruwala and Chintan Ishwarlal Mistry; December 18
 Krupa Mahesh Gajjar and Zubin Sorab Gandhi; December 21
 Anahita Daraius Amaria and Mark John Lobo; December 21
 Shubhangi Karkannavar and Rohinton Antia; December 27
 Unhana Jamalkhan Sirguroh and Kersi Tehmuras

Daruwala; December 27
 Naazreen Kersi Minwalla of Mira Rd, Thana and Khushroo Kekoo Irani; May 7, 2002
 Sanobar Naval Charna and Cyrus Nariman Patel; May 7
 Hutoxi Ratansha Saher and Kaizad Minoo Master; May 13
 Niloufer Meherji Frenchman and Fredy Soli Bhesania; May 18
 Silloo Faram Balsara of Ambarnath, Thana and Sharukh Minoo Engineer; May 19
 Persis Nariman Bhagwager and Nozar Cavas Bharucha; May 20
 Sanobar Adi Kharoliwalla and Hanoz Yazdi Buhariwalla; May 20
 Persis Gev Fitter and Fakir Sorabji Siganporia; May 24
 Niloofer Zahir Guzder and Yezdi Maneck Bhathena; May 26
 Benaaz Pervez Magra and Cyrus Pervez Irani; May 26
 Roshnee Dadi Sanjana and Komran Behram Amooyan; May 27
 Niloofer Viraf Hansotia and Jangoo Bahadur Broacha; May 27

Roshan Gev Goimewala and Sham Godrej Irani of Poona; May 27
 Mazarine Dara Patel and Hanoz Hoshang Panthaki; May 30
 Meher Keki Desai of Delhi

In 2001, 65 males married out as versus 50 women

and Rustom Behram Falahati; May 31
 Dinaz Jal Guzder and Percy Dadi Talati; June 1
 Nuvana Behruz Zarhoshtimanesh and Hormuzd Minoo Khosravi; June 2
 Benaifer Dinyar Mistry and Rayomand Soli Nilgiriwala; June 6
 Jai Dady Wadia and Vispy Jehangir Mistry; June 18
 Ruby Shapur Mody and Maneck Rustamji Captain; June 19
 Rashna Ardeshar Irani and Yezdi Sohrabji Zaiwalla;

June 20

DIED

Mani Nariman Patel (77), residing at 9, Ratan Manor, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400039; August 10, 2001 (cremated)
 Zal Khurshed Lalkaka (71), 27, Mayflower, Carmichael Rd, 400028; August 20 (cremated)
 Dina Edulji Bilimoria (86), Oceana, Marine Drive, 400020; August 24 (cremated)
 Sorab Rustom Modi (77), 32, Tulip Apts, 71, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; September 2 (cremated)
 Jamshed Shiavax Lord (73), 59, M. Karve Rd, Marine Lines, 400002; September 4 (cremated)
 Dina A. Ghadially (82), D/2, Alpa Apts, Pochkhanawala Rd, Worli, 400016; September 26 (cremated)
 Jehangir Sorab Sorabji (70), 12, Nirmala Mhl, Cumballa Hill, 400026; October 18 (cremated)
 Shera Faramroz Bardi (96), Multani Bldg, Khambata Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; May 1, 2002

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Aspi Meherwan Engineer (89), Jehangir Villa, 107, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; May 1
 Barjor Cawasshaw Paymaster (90), B/2, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 1
 Dossabhoy Hormasji Bhiwandiwalla (72), S/13, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 2
 Darabshah Pallonji Palkhiwalla (84), 101, Blue Bird Apts, Off Carter Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; May 2
 Jerbanoo Ardesir Daver (91), 8/10, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 3
 Homai Hormusji Irani (86), Khush Villa, 621, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 3
 Alamai (Aloo) Jehangir Mehta (93), Society Bldg, 655, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 3
 Phiroze Manecksha Durwalla (73), F/5, Malinee Apts, Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; May 4
 Faramroze Nadirsha Kyas (78), 219, Auburn Hse, Forjett St, 400026; May 4

Cyrus Eruchsha Lalkaka (80), 904, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; May 4
 Dhunmai Noshir Machliwala (78), Bacha Manor Outhouse, 600, J. J. Rd, Matunga, 400019; May 4
 Jaloo Piloo Sarkari (71), 7, Daruwalla Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 4
 Dhan Kaikhushroo Mody (79), Navroze Apts, B. Desai Rd, 400026; May 5
 Soli Vicaji Patel (69), P/13, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 5
 Amy Soli Sanjana (58), Vitthal Bhavan, Khetwadi 6th Lane, 400004; May 5
 Khorshed Rustomji Bharucha (86), Cassinath Bldg no 2, Cassinath St, Tardeo, 400034; May 6
 Dosamai Rustomji Dhapla (82), Shapoor Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 7
 Sam Dinshaw Khodana (67), 5/21, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; May 7
 Bahadur Nadirshaw Patel (67), Mumtaz Manzil, 63, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba,

400005; May 7
 Katy Dinshawji Subedar (96), 4, Parsi Towers of Silence, Kemp's Corner, 400036; May 7
 Jal Ratanshah Choksey (80), 14/8, Hendre Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; May 8
 Dhun Merwanji Ghadiyali (70), Petit Block no 1, Avabai Petit Lane, Balaram St, 400007; May 8
 Dinshaw Nusserwanji Siodia

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 (24) in 2001 as
 versus 2000
 (12) opted
 for cremation

(86), 8, Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 8
 Homi Rustomji Irani (45), E/95, Shree Mahavir Apts, Ratan Ngr, Dahisar (W), 400068; May 9
 Naval Shavak Karanjia (78), Desai Bldg, 668, Katrak Rd,

Wadala, 400031; May 10
 Viloo Ratanshah Karkaria (88), 6, Jehangir Mans, 1st Marine St, 400020; May 10
 Mani Rustom Sidhwa (96), 222/A, Rustom Palace, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 10
 Keki Sohrabjee Engineer (92), 66/D, Soonaiji Ter, Gowalia Tank, 400026; May 11
 Nergish Tehmurasp Randelia (81), 5/5, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 11
 Perinkumari Jamshedji Ratnagar (67), Metro Bhavan (Chmb), Dhobitalao, 400002; May 11
 Piloo Ratanshaw Suratia (64), 22/A, Wellington Ter, Wellington St, Dhobitalao, 400002; May 11
 Soli Cawasji Vesuna (90), Godiwala Hse, Gilder Lane, Off Lamington Rd, 400008; May 11
 Kashmiri Marazban Mistry (50), 604, Jatan Apts, Datta Mandir Rd, Malad (E), 400097; May 12
 Hilla Phiroze Shroff (79), 3, Framroze Court, 205, Marine Drive, 400020; May 12
 Fali Phirojsha Desai (69), Forjett Hse, Forjett St, 400036;

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Homi Pirojsha Ghadiali (74),
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 Clny, Parel Tank Rd, 400012;
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Sorab Faramroze Lali (86),
 Home for the Aged, Andheri
 (E), 400093; May 13
Dara Kaikhushroo Surti (64),
 Dehnm Bldg, Opp Laxmi
 College, B. A. Rd, Parel,
 400012; May 14
Dolly Dossabhai Balsara (63),
 402, Mount Unique, Mount
 Mary Rd, Bandra, 400050;
 May 15
Khorshed Kaikhushroo
Dodhmal (86), F. S. Parukh
 Dharamshala, Hughes Rd,
 400007; May 15
Daravus Rashid Irani (41),
 6/A, Maneck Bldg, Off
 Lamington Rd, 400008;
 May 15
Aloo Faramji Cooper (86),
 B/6, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug,
 400012; May 16
Piroze Behramji Gandhi (77),
 5, Parsee Anjuman Bldg,
 Doodh Naka, Kalyan, 421301;
 May 16
Ardeshir Jehangirji Paowalla
 (91), Mistry Bldg, 695, Dr
 Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi

Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 16
Kaikhushroo Jamshedji Antia
 (78), 141, Venus Apts, Cuffe
 Parade, 400005; May 18
Jamshed Eduljee Mistry (87),
 31, Green Acre, Union Park,
 Rd no 5, Khar (W), 400052;
 May 18
Ratansha Manekshaw
Kandawalla (82), 2/14, Tata
 Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd,
 Tardeo, 400034; May 19
Nergish Dhun Mistry (72), B.
 Banoo Mans, Cumballa Hill,
 400026; May 19
Bachamai Bejonji Surty (88),
 9, Alu Jamasp Tata Bldg, 38th
 Rd, Bandra, 400050; May 19
Homai Bomanshaw Buchia
 (86), B/7, Jer Baug, Ambedkar
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 20
Jamshed Bomanji Irani (81),
 Meher Muncher Mans, 512,
 R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga,
 400019; May 20
Bacha Darab Masani (74),
 669, Katrak Rd, Wadala,
 400031; May 20
Meherwanshaw Rustomji Patel
 (95), 6/16, Panthaky Baug,
 Andheri (E), 400069; May 20
Khorshed Khurshedji
Bharucha (82), Khurshed Hse,
 604, Lady Jehangir Rd, Parsi

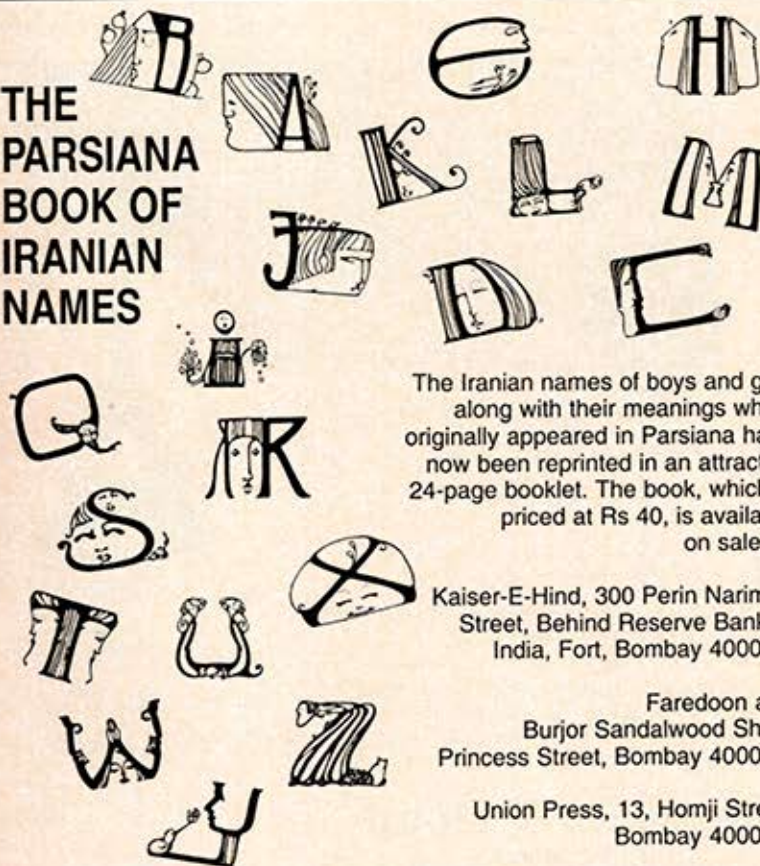
Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 21
Kersi Rustomji Vaid (52), 20,
 Doctor Bldg, S. B. Bharucha
 Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W),
 400058; May 21
Dinshaw Sorabji Bhathena
 (81), 401, Varun Apt, 123, Dr
 Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012;
 May 22
Rusi Minocher Deboo (57),
 C, Muncher Manzil, 35/C,

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Jairajbhai Lane, 400008;
 May 22
Bomi Jamshedji Dubash (69),
 Sagar Villa, B. Desai Rd,
 400026; May 22
Noshir Sorabji Patel (66),
 2, Parsi Punchayet Staff Qtrs,
 Kemp's Corner, 400036;
 May 22
Noshir Darabsha Shroff (76),
 C/16, Rustom Baug, Victoria
 Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 22
Noshir Framroz Daruwala
 (71), 127/5, Shree Punjab

Co-op Hsg Soc, Andheri (E),
 400093; May 23
Soonamai Kaikhushroo
Ghunnawalla (100), 94,
 Aderbad, Hughes Rd, 400007;
 May 23
Rusi Pheroz Jall (68), 502/B,
 Seth M. A. Patel Co-op Hsg
 Soc, Pali Ram Path, Andheri
 (W), 400058; May 23
Homi Hoshang Jalnawalla
 (77), 21, Malcolm Baug,
 Jogeshwari, 400102; May 23
Rustom Ardeshir Jesung (75),
 Damania Bldg, Chikalwadi,
 Tardeo, 400007; May 23
Maneksha Dhunjisha
Wadiwalla (77), 2/3, Tata
 Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 23
Cawas Nariman Bilimoria
 (73), 24, 41/43, Police Court
 Lane, Fort, 400001; May 24
Rusi Jehangirji Damania
 (47), B/10, Mistry Bldg, Dr
 Shirodkar Rd, Parel, 400012;
 May 24
Rusi Jehangirji Patel (65),
 E/7, Captain Clny, Haji Ali,
 400034; May 24
Cawas Nasarwanji Chinoy
 (70), 17, Rustomji Bldg,
 Sleater Rd, 400007; May 25
Edul Framroz Postwala (80),
 A/5, Daswani Apts, Four

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 Sulfacetamide, Sulfisoxazole (Gantisin),
 Thiazolsuldone, Salicylazosulfapyridine
 (Azulfadine), Sulfoxone, Sulfamethoxypropyridine
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 Chloramphenicol, Para-aminosalicylic acid.

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 Methylene blue, Dimercaprol (BAL), Phenyl-
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 containing compounds including Septran, DDS
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 including all derivatives of this group, Antistine,
 Diphenylhydramine, Pronestyl, Nitrites, Large
 doses of Chloroquine, Chloromycetin, Vit. C & K,
 Quinoline group of drugs, in particular cipro-
 floxacin.

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Bglws, Andheri, 400058; May 25

Baby boy of Zareen J.

Billimoria (stillborn), 690, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 26

Keki Jal Chawda (76), A/1, Petit Block, Avabai Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 26

Amy Jehangir Jesia (86), T/6, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 27

Pervaz Jamshedji Daruwalla (45), 13, Lam Bldg, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 400013; May 28

Pirojsha Faramroz Kararia (84), 4/A, Meher Mans, J. Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 28

Tehmi Nariman Mirza (81), 10/B, Mehta Bldg, Pasta Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 28

Baby boy of Niloufer Shahrukh Mondegari (stillborn), 267, Panchsheel Apts, Dr Babasaheb Jaikar Marg, 400002; May 28

Parvez Phirozshah Patel (73), 4, Doctor Bldg, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 28

Jehangirji Jamshedji Aga (78), 9, Neel Kamal Apts, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 29

Sorab Minocher Irani (63), 2/A-6, Gul Villa, S. V. Marg, Mahim, 400016; May 29

Dara Sorabji Umrigar (74), 2/2, Tata Blocks, Bandra (W), 400050; May 29

Rattansha Dhunibhoy Bamboat (91), 576, Chandanwadi Corner, J. S. S. Rd, 400002; May 30

Firoz Jahangir Sethna (63), E/20, Shapoor Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 30

Nergish Vikaji Tadvalla (68), L-1/34, Merwanji Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 30

Rusi Cawasji Davierwalla (78), Nimakwala Bldg, 34/38, J. D. Lane, Fort, 400001; May 31

Banoo Irani (77), Najoo Mans, Sleater Rd, 400007; May 31

Rati Godrej Tavadia (73), A-1/10, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; May 31

Homi Ardeshir Engineer (76), 14, Jer Bldg, Khetwadi 6th Lane, 400004; June 1

Perin Dara Mobedji (66), 1, Mody Hse, Padamji St, 400004; June 1

Bai Manchershaw Shroff (85), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 1

Cashmeera Minoo Sanjana (44), T/7, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 2

Shapur Rustam Damri (83), Ben Nevis, B. Desai Rd, 400026; June 3

Jerbanoo Bamanshaw Deboo (87), 3/5, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; June 3

Mani Keki Rivetna (80), 40, Razak Manzil, Lady Jamshedji Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 3

Kharmen Jamshed Irani (83), Riverside, Dahanu, Dist Thana, 401601; June 4

Dolly Parvez Master (80), Apurva, 662, Palamkote Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 4

Shirin Hormasji Rustomji (84), 12/5, Wadia Block, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; June 4

Coomi Darabsha Dhabar (75), Dhan Bldg, Sant Gadge Maharaj Lane, Dadar Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 5

Shirin Faredoon Irani (83), A-1/4, Above A-1 Restaurant, Proctor St, Grant Rd, 400007; June 5

Nergis Jehabux Contractor (76), M1/G1, Merwanji Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 6

Roda Ardeshir Tata (86), 1, La Belle, Bomanwada, Andheri (E), 400099; June 6

Cyrus Ardeshir Wadia (75), 17/B, Kalpana, Marine Lines, 400002; June 6

Sorabji Darabsha Mistry (88), 51/A, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 7

Aloo Nowroji Daroga (82), 171, Baj Bldg, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; June 8

Saker Darayus Kalyaniwala (83), Spenta, 677, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; June 8

Bachamai Shapursha Nalladaru (75), Mistry Bldg, 816, Jame Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; June 8

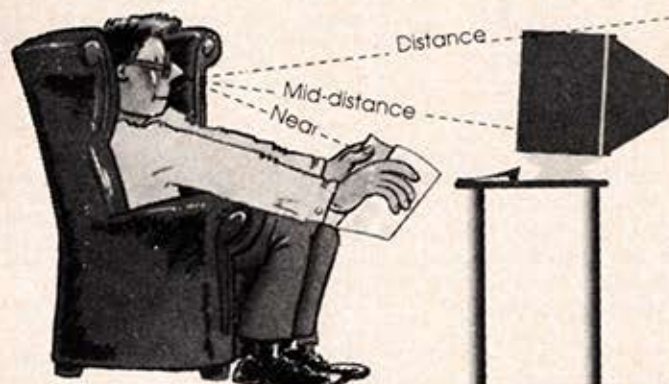
Behram Munchersha Mancherjee (91), 13, Clover Soc, 27/A, N. B. Marg, 400007; June 9

Jimmy Hormasji Cooper (86), R/6, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 10

Piroja Darabshaw Sinor (84), 245, Kapadia Hse, Dr Cawasji Hormusji St, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 10

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Jamshed Pestonji Thanewalla (59), 2, Namdar Hse, 89, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 11
Mary Keki Udwadia (71), 762, Mancherji Joshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 11
Freny Kaikhashroo Cooper (82), D/12, Malegamwalla Bldg no 2, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 12
Goolbai Bahadur Lashkari (81), B/13, Mistry Bldg, Dr Shirodkar Rd, Parel, 400012; June 12
Dhun Khurshed Sanga (78), Noshirwan Mans, Henry Rd, Electric Hse, 400005; June 12
Fardoon Sheriar Irani (90), Readymoney Bldg, Tata Clny Lane, Tardeo, 400034; June 13
Nargish Manekshaw Vadiwalla (78), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 13
Dossabhai Limjibhai Elavia (87), 5, Turner Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 14
Merwan Kaikhashroo Irani (72), 21, Laxmani, Gulmarg Park, Andheri (W), 400049; June 14

Firoze Jahangirji Mobedjina (78), T/4, Dalal Est, Lamington Rd, Bombay Central, 400008; June 14
Dolat Jehangir Aga (76), 9, Neel Kamal Apts, 7/A, Proctor Rd, 400007; June 15
Shera Framroze Boyce (93), 10, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 15
Nowrosji Jehangir Gamadia (82), 31, Napean Sea Rd, 400026; June 15
Katie Manek Bengali (86), B/25, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 16
Mehra Kersi Gandhi (84), N/21, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; June 16
Hirabai Minocher Jijina (89), 28/392, Transit Camp, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 16
Dhun Nariman Gheewala (74), F/41, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 17
Soli Shavakshaw Wadia (77), A-1/12, Proctor Rd, 400007; June 17
Rusi Ardesir Irani (56), 1st Block, Jamshedji Petit St, Balam St, 400007; June 18
Meherwansa Pallanji Panthaki (92), 19, Doctor

Bldg, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 19
Nergish Firoze Antia (80), Dhanesh Bldg, Laburnam Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; June 20
Dossabhoj Minocher Raja (53), Minoo Manor, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 20
Adi Jamshedji Boga (58), 165, Manibai Bhuvan, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; June 21
Nadershaw Sorabji Gazdar (79), 273, Mani Bhuvan, Thakurdwar Rd, 400002; June 21
Mani Palonji Bharucha (79), 10/B, Mehta Bldg, Pasta Lane, Dadar, 400014; June 22
Bakhtawar Rusi Billimoria (52), 68/10, Godrej Hillside Clny, Vikhroli (E), 400079; June 22
Minoo Jamshedji Shroff (76), B/11, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 22
Keki Barjorji Bhathena (79), Danawalla Bldg, Opp Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 23
Katy (Coomi) Phiroze Khariwalla (90), 202, Jer Mans, 19, Gazdar St, Chira Bazar, 400002; June 23

Pesi Byramji Ranji (74), 204, Royal Gate, Yari Rd, Versova, Andheri (W), 400068; June 23
Piloo Ardesir Italia (69), 309/6, Zaveri Bldg, R. R. Rai Rd, Girgaum, 400004; June 25
Keki Jamshedji Driver (75), Q-5, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; June 26
Hoshang Muncherji Khursigara (79), Sheri Hse, Cawasji Patel St, Fort, 400001; June 27
Ardesir Kaikawoos Nowshirwani (73), A/4, New Sai Niketan, Mazgaon, 400010; June 27
Jerry (Jer) Ferdun Pochkhanawalla (79), 95/K, Khatau Mans, Omer Park, B. Desai Rd, 400026; June 27
Najamai Bhikaji Sidhwa (84), M/28, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 28
Ratti Dinyar Writer (87), Mithu Villa, 749, Rd no 6, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 28
Burjor Jamshedji Vania (78), A/10, Popular Apts, Four Bglws, Andheri (W), 400053; June 29
Jer Sohrabji Billimoria (97),

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5/C, Salsette Parsi Clny, Opp
Pump Hse, Andheri (E),
400093; June 30

CALCUTTA

DIED

Beji Minoo Bulsara, husband
of Aloo and father of Rayzad
and Behnaz; May 1

Rati Jamshedji Dandiwalla,
sister of Pesi; May 30

Dinshaw Navroji Medhora,
husband of Dhun and father of
Sorab, Soona, Nilufer and
Neville; June 1

Parveen M. Hukku, sister of
Minoo Aga and Freny Aga;
June 21

JABALPUR

DIED

Rusi Dorabji Panveliwalla
(67), husband of Freny and
father of Ruzan; June 8

MADRAS

BORN

A boy, *Kaizan*, to *Fehmida*
and *Behram Kabrajee*;
May 15

NASIK

DIED

Fali N. Bharucha (58) of

Indore, husband of
Jasmine and father of Vispy;
May 9

POONA

DIED

Kekee Rattanshaw Parakh

(80), 3, Sano-Lai Apt, 457,
Salisbury Park, 411037;
January 2

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2001*	2002○	This issue	2001*	2002○	This issue	2001*	2002○
BIRTHS									
Boys	9	97	29	1	10	2	5	37	10
Girls	17	98	46	1	7	2	2	35	7
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	26	258	123	7	20	10	1	11	3
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	46	63	—	—	1	—	1	6	1
Females married out	36	50	—	—	1	—	3	5	3
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	81	432	213	16	66	32	8	48	14
Females	70	454	232	9	39	30	4	34	8
CREMATED									
Males	4	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	3	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-August 2002 issues)

○Running totals for 2002 (January 2002-August 2002 issues)

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

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



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Nergesh Kekee Parakh (82), 3, Sano-Lai Apt, 457, Salisbury Park, 411037; February 25

SECUNDERABAD

MARRIED

Roda Irani, daughter of Zenobia and Jamsheed, and *Rasheed Bastawala*, son of Shireen and Ardisheer; April 28
Shanaz Bhatena, daughter of Hufriah and Shapoor, and *Cyrus Godrej*, son of Dinoo and Farokh; May 9
Gulnar Rustom Hansotia and *Kerman Daruwala*, son of Nargis and late Keki; May 26

DIED

Khorshed Barjorji Kanga (77), sister of Gool, Jinnie, Dhun, Feroze, Adi, late Godrej, Ratan and Jehangir; March 15
Astad Erachshah Chinoy (80), husband of Feroza and father of Saam and late Sanobar Noshir Marker; May 25
Maneck Dittia (73), wife of Dara and mother of Zubin, late Kaisad and late Piroja; June 1
Homi Beramji Daruwala (53), brother of Khorshed Vasaigara,

Banoo Mehta, Anoo Amaria and Daisy Saher; June 7

SURAT

DIED

Alamai Framji Daruwala (88), Mazda Mans, Jahlod Rd, Opp Overbridge, Dahod, 389151; May 10
Rusibhai Jalejer Karkaria (64), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; May 12
Kaikhushroo Hormasji Doctor (80), Parsiwad, Sigarpore; May 17
Katayun Kaikhushroo Chiniwala (76), Bglw no 16, Sangita Park, Rander Rd, 395003; May 25
Jalbhai Eruchshaw Kalabhai (82), 12/2628, Aganovad, Sayedpura, 395003; May 25
Firojshaw Darabshaw Bhagvager (75), 12, Sarvodaya Soc, Kanjari Rd, Halol, 389350; May 30
Fali Rustomji Sethna (84), Near PO, Main Rd, Rustompura, 395002; June 9
Sehramai Bomansha Mehernose (87), Bibiniwadi, Sayedpura, 395003; June 17

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

MARRIED

Kainaz Khandadia and *Fardaad Choksey*; January 19

CANADA

British Columbia

MARRIED

Trity Pourbahrami and *Peter Capak* in Vancouver; May 19

DIED

Keykhosrow Monfared (52), husband of Mahnaz and father of Kaveh, Shirin and Yasmin in West Vancouver; March 22
Parviz Foroutan, husband of Banu and father of Shirin in Vancouver; May 14

Ontario

BORN

A boy, *Behram*, to *Zenia* and *Rustom Hathi* in Windsor; April 16
A girl, *Aisha*, to *Kainaz* and *Junaid Ladha*, sister to *Vahaab* in Toronto; May 2

DIED

Shiwax Pallonji Damania, husband of Susan; March 8
Mithoo Jehangirji Bharucha, mother of Yezdi and Sarosh in Toronto; March 11
Dhunmai Jamsheed Buhariwala, mother of Kerman, Goshasp, Koorshed and Shahernaz in Toronto; June 1

MEXICO

MARRIED

Mojgan Poulad-Noshiravan and *Sean Purcell*; May 22

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Gool Minwalla, mother of Zarin Balsara; May 20

Rawalpindi

DIED

Pestonji Burjorji Patell (71), husband of Perin and father of Adil and Jasmine; May 26

SOUTH AFRICA

Transvaal

DIED

Cursetji Mancherjee, father

*Down with Wrath!
Crush cruelty,
you who would maintain, through Truth,
the widespread penetration of the Good Mind
in whose company walks the just man.
Such dwell in Your House of Song, O Ahura.*

(Gatha Spenta Mainyu, Yasna 48.7., translation by Piloo Nanavutty)



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of Hosie in Johannesburg;
June 19

UK

London

DIED

Savak F. Captain, brother of
Shahpur; June 17

USA

California

BORN

A girl, *Shehrezad*, to *Kashmira*
and *Behram Irani* in Los
Angeles; November 25, 2001

DIED

Jimmy Adeshir Makujina (65),
husband of Amy and brother of
Abaan in San Jose; June 13, 2002

Illinois

BORN

A boy, *Kyle Ross*, to *Laura*
and *Shahriar*, brother to Sarah
in Winfield; February 21

MARRIED

Bethany Panepinto, daughter
of Tracy and Russ, and *Firoze*
Dhunjisha, son of Freya and
Farrokh in Chicago; May 18
Zenobia Mehta, daughter of
Nergish and Kayomars, and
Ethan Sribnick in Chicago;
June 15

Massachusetts

BORN

A boy to *Teresa* and *Jahangir*
Nakra in Boston; April 21

DIED

Jamshid Zartoshty (76),
husband of Paridokht and

The number of Parsi and inter-
faith marriages in Bombay, 371,
was more than double the figure
of 181 in 2000. The intercom-
munity marriage figure rose from
50 in 2000 to 113 in 2001; the
number of Parsis marrying within
the community increased from
131 in 2000 to 258 in 2001. The
2000 marriage figure was the
lowest in the last four decades,
as reported in "Bombay: The
Telling Figures," *Parsiana*, Sep-
tember 2001. And as observed in
years past, the year proceeding
the leap year invariably shows
an increase in marriages.

The percentage of intercom-
munity marriages rose from 28
last year to 30 percent in 2001 if
calculated as a ratio of intercom-
munity marriages to the total
number of marriages (113:371).
If calculated as a ratio of inter-
community to community mari-
riages (113:258) the percentage
increased to 44 as compared to
38 in the previous year.

As has been the trend in the
last five years, barring 1999 when
an equal number of males and
females married out of the com-
munity, more males than females

opt for non-Parsi spouses. In
2001 there were 63 males who
married out as versus 50 females
who contracted intercommunity
marriages. Thus we know that
56 percent of Zoroastrian males
married out of the community in
2001. In 2000 the percentage
was 54, in 1999 it was 50, in
1998 it was 53, in 1997 it was 54
and in 1996 it was 56.

The number of births in 2001
too registered an increase from
171 in 2000 to 195 in 2001.
From the data available to us
from two hospitals in central
Bombay, the birth count of boys,
97, rose by 10 from last year's
count of 87. The number of fe-
male births, 98, rose by 14 from
last year's tally of 84.

The death count in the
Bombay community declined by
26 over last year's figure of 936
to give a count of 910 in 2001.
Among the deceased, 886 were
consigned to the dakhmas of
whom 432 were males and 454
were females. Last year the count
was 463 males and 461 females.
As versus 12 Zoroastrians who
opted for cremation in 2000,
twice the number, 24, opted for

cremation in 2001. An equal
number of males and females
opted for cremation in 2001 as
versus eight males and four fe-
males who were cremated in
2000. But while there are five
crematoria in Bombay, *Parsiana*
accesses data from only the
Chandanwadi crematorium in
south Bombay.

Based on data made avail-
able to us by the Bombay Parsi
Punchayet the Life Expectancy
at Birth (LEB) calculated for
those consigned at Doongerwadi
was 75 years in 2001. It was
highest in the month of Septem-
ber and lowest in February and
June.

Given below are the 2001
figures pertaining to the Bombay
Zoroastrian community based on
records available to *Parsiana*.

Born: 195

Males: 97, *Females:* 98

Married: 371

Parsi: 258

Intercommunal: 113

Died: 910

Consigned: 886

Males: 432, *Females:* 454

Cremated: 24

Males: 12, *Females:* 12

father of Shirin, Parinaz and
Esfandiar in Boston; May 7

New Jersey

BORN

A boy, *Zahan*, to *Zarin*
and *Michael Meyer*;

December 9, 2001

New York

BORN

A boy, *Davin*, to *Ferzin*
and *Rajan Patel* in Pomona;
March 27, 2002

North Carolina

DIED

Pervin Nozar Satarawala (73),
mother of Soonu, Pearl, Zarin
and Zerkis; February 17

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

COOL IN COTTONS
continued from page 192
anyway," she remarks.

Social functions for
Behroze who views herself as
a "people person" are occa-
sions to make new friends, her
potential customers. The best
public relations officer for her
company she has succeeded in
creating wealth for herself as
also 40 others who are in her
employment. The credit for her
flourishing enterprise should
also go to her family, acknowl-
edges Behroze saying, "I have
been lucky that my husband
and in-laws accept me for what
I am and have encouraged me
to work and form my own iden-
tity."

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Life was a journey

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Homi Kaikobad Lala, 77, partner of H. K. Lala and Company, and founder president of the Maharashtra State Tour Organisers Association, on April 26, 2002 in Bombay following pneumonia.

"Lala Tours...was a favorite of all our students and teachers for almost five decades," wrote Freny Mehta, principal of The Alexandra Girls' English Institution in her condolence letter, adding, "Lala was indeed a very large-hearted man and made sure that each and everyone was well looked after throughout the tour...He used to do his best to maintain a rapport between the school authorities and his organization."

Echoing these sentiments was Bapsy Chubb, principal of the Cumballa Hill High School, who noted, "His cheerful winning ways, his arrangements for tours...will always be remembered...He was always there with guidance and understanding. At Lala Tours his gentle dignity will be sorely missed..."

"He must have taken generations of our School children all over India on his wonderful tours," recalled Shirin Darasha, principal of the J. B. Petit High School for Girls. In fact, the first tour Lala was emboldened to organize was for the students of his alma mater St Xavier's High School, when he was yet in college, relates his wife Roshan. Following this successful maiden venture came a request from the parents of J. B. Petit students asking for a similar tour for their daughters. Then came a spate of tours for schools, colleges and the public, mainly organized during vacations.

In 1956 he started H. K. Lala and Company with Pesi Khandalavala as his partner. By then the business was mushrooming, with pleasure and educational tours popular in all seasons. Since certain destinations like Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were more favored than the others, at the Republic Day festivities in January there would be a chartered train which served as home to the

thousands of students from different schools and age groups who journeyed together for those eight days.. Many youths got an opportunity to travel to different regions as his helpers while

earning some pocket money. "He was very particular about the caliber of the persons chosen as his tour leaders and helpers as his clients' safety and comfort always came first with him," reveals Roshan.

When the Foreign Travel Scheme was introduced in 1970, under the banner of Lala Tours he pioneered the first kitchen bus when cooks

and ingredients from India would accompany the passengers to bring down the costs of travel and keep them comfortable with a familiar cuisine. At that time a tour to Europe for 30 days was priced at Rs 7,500, all inclusive. Today this amount is not even enough to cover the visa costs, relates Roshan.

Love for the outdoors, camps and hikes Lala had developed during his years of association with the Scout movement. Vice president of the East Bombay Bharat Scouts and Guides District Association, at a condolence meeting convened on June 23, 2002 by the 13th East Bombay St Xavier's High School Scout Group it was acknowledged, "Scouter Lala was the oldest Scouter in our group... All of us present here have benefitted from the training and guidance imparted by him... In spite of his failing health (a fracture in the hip had reduced his mobility), he made it a point to be present, whether it was a regular Sunday meeting or a training camp..."

Having joined the 167th Boy Scout Group in 1936, over the years as he had risen from scouter to group leader to group leader emeritus, district scout master, assistant district commissioner, district commissioner, vice president and chairman — fund raising committee, he had played an important role which was recognized with awards and medals. Several of his juniors recalled his contribution. As noted Phiroze K. Wadia of

Chicago, "Homi always challenged us to be better individuals and test our own limits. We have to count our blessings that we all had an opportunity to come in contact with him during our formative years." His childhood friend Air Marshal (Retd) Eruch Lala referred to the lessons he learnt "about scouting in particular and histrionics in general" from Lala.

Through scouting he was associated with blood donation drives, the physically handicapped, the blind, etc, notes Roshan. "When there was a major explosion in the Bombay Docks in 1944 when the ammunition warship *S. S. Fort Stikine* exploded, Homi was at the Carnac Bunder Bridge and at great risk to his life saved the lives of two persons..." recalled Phiroze Chaina, group leader of the 51st West Bombay Scout Group, referring to Lala as "an institution. His wit and ready humor along with his many faceted talents were always apparent..." In the mid 1980s as he was riding along Marine Drive on his two-wheeler his courage and rare presence of mind saved his life when the glass coated string of a kite cut through the skin of his neck and his fingers requiring prompt medical attention.

Adventure and travel fascinated Lala. Initially it was meant to be a hobby. After his graduation in science from St Xavier's College, he graduated in law from the Government Law College on the insistence of his father who was a senior partner of Payne and Company, solicitors. Until 1956 Lala worked as a junior partner of Bennett and Company, government auctioneers and valuers, although during his vacations he would happily conduct tours.

He loved children and any excursion was a good enough reason to be with them. Those with whom he came in contact "gained immeasurably from his wisdom," as acknowledged Dr Winston Tellis, assistant professor of information systems and operations management at the Dolan School of Business, Connecticut, adding, "I use so much of what I learned from Homi in my daily life, both personally and professionally. That is a tribute that is more lasting than anything else."

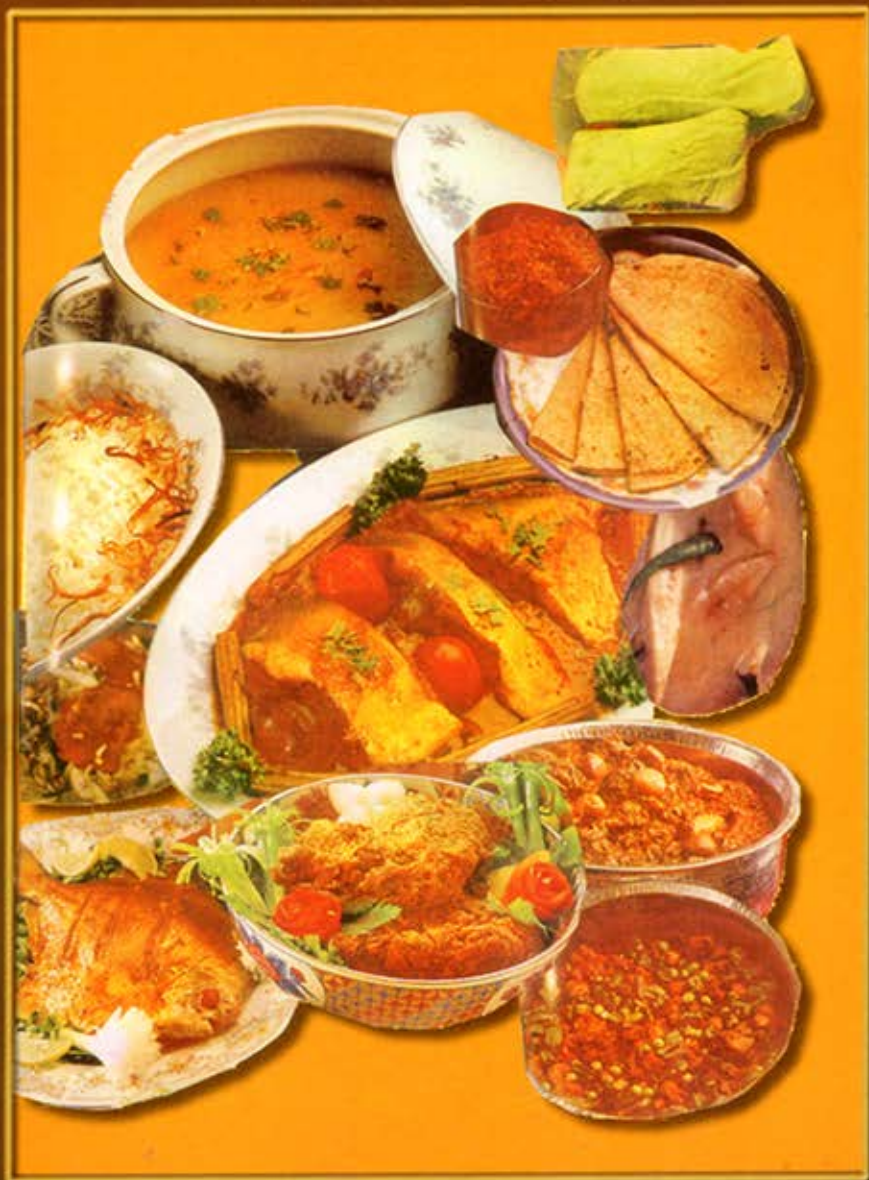
The daring traveller is survived by his wife Roshan, son Dinyar and daughter Dr Kamal David Masaki.



Lala: fascinated by adventure and travel

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