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Parsiana

June - September 1976

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Editor's Column

If Parsis feel their influence is fading, they may take heart that thanks to the community's lobbying for Navroz to be declared a public holiday, millions of inhabitants in the state of Maharashtra did not have to go to work on Friday 27 August. Seldom before have so few done so much for so many. But while it is true that all work and no play makes Jehangir a duller boy, Parsis must keep in mind that hard work and iron discipline are the need of the hour if the country is to consolidate the hundred new gains of the Emergency. To this end the *Parsiana* office remained open on Ganesh Chaturthi for half an hour, the equivalent of a half day for us.

Before we move on to less pressing matters, we take this opportunity to wish our subscribers whose subscriptions are still valid, those who have renewed their subscriptions and those who have gifted subscriptions to others, all our advertisers (especially those who don't get any response but keep advertising anyway) and all our donors (one in Ghatkopar, two in Girgaum) a Happy New Year. May *Parsiana* continue to bring joy and sunshine in your lives throughout Yezde Zerdi 1346. ● The Editor's Column is the clearing house of much material. Little snippets that had humble beginnings in this serious forum have graduated to full-fledged columns, such as 'In the News' and starting with this issue 'Zoroastrians Abroad.' Barely had the latter column been written, than we received news of a Zoroastrian association being formed deep in the heart of Texas. Named The Zoroastrian Association of Houston, its objective is to "enhance brotherhood and friendship within Zoroastrians residing in Houston and the community at large." Those of us who have worked with Parsis know this is no mean goal, but the Texan Zoroastrian (there is no truth to the rumour that they have replaced the pugree with a ten-gallon cowboy hat) are going about it in the right manner. Membership is open to all regardless of race, sex, creed or color. All persons of Zoroastrian lineage, including those who have married into

the community... shall have the right to vote in matters concerning the well-being of the association."

The Australian Zoroastrian Association in New South Wales sent us a newsletter noting they celebrated the New Year on 28 August with prayers, a piano recital, a garba dance, games, fancy dress competition and dinner. The new executive committee headed by Dorab Kotwal will communicate to members through the newsletter which will now be typed on an electric typewriter purchased by the association from donations. They already have a duplicating machine and addressograph. Ernañi Giambuzzi, the honorary secretary, notes the AZA is in contact with the Zoroastrian associations of Europe & England and Los Angeles. ●

As people often lament the dearth of religious literature in *Parsiana* (aside from the Editor's Column, everything else is secular), we intend to introduce in our next issue a religious question and answer column. Now you can get the answers to everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-the-Zoroastrian-religion if you'll take the trouble to write and ask. Ms Piloo Jungalwalla of New Delhi has offered to help us on this venture as have several other scholars in the community.

The space for this column will be donated by various individuals and institutions. Instead of placing advertisements, some parties have suggested we use the amount to sponsor certain features; unfortunately no one came forward for the Editor's Column. ●

Those who complain that Parsi scholarship is on the wane and that the community's youth aspire to little beyond clerical jobs and serving coffee and tea 33,000 feet above sea level, will be pleased to know that among the 61 students selected this year by the J. N. Tata Endowment for Higher Education of Indians, twelve are Parsis. Hafeez Contractor, Behram K. Taraporewalla, Arda-E-Viraf M. Minocherhomjee, Khushroo S. Bagli, Darius B. Dahmubed, Jamas B. Irani, Shahrugh H. Hirananeek, Jimmy M. Wadia, Sorab G. Sadri, Hoshi D. Deboo and Yesvy G. Dordi will join universities in America and Europe

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to study subjects ranging* from Engineering to English.

The J. N. Tata Endowment was established over 80 years ago by Jamselji Tata, the Founder of the House of Tatas, and now enables about 60 Indian graduates "with an academic record of conspicuous distinction" to go abroad every year for higher studies.

● Every year for the last nine years, the Poona Parsi Dramateurs has been staging plays to raise funds for various charities. This year they put up Dorab Mehta's *Tirungi Temul* (Colourful Temul) on 29 August at the Balgandharva Rangmandir to a packed cosmopolitan audience. The cast included Firdaus Kothavala, Noshir Press, Armaiti Golwala, Yasmin Gandevia, Shernaz Amaria and Zenobia Pajnegar and was directed by Ms Rati Ginwalla with Ms Tehmi Grant in charge of stage designing. Pesi Anklesaria's Penosh Transport firm provided free bus service to theatergoers.

The Dramateurs' President, Comdr Kaiki B. Godrej notes "the aim of the society is to channelize the energies of young and also

adults into creative activities by performing the Parsi Drama once a year, either on Navroze, Pateti or a Sunday nearer to these festivals. The amount collected by us through the sale of tickets and advertisements is solely used for charity, without distinction of caste or community, though needy Parsis are given preference. So far we have distributed about Rs 50,000."

● Parsis who are concerned about our dwindling numbers, may find consolation in the knowledge that this phenomenon is not restricted to the community. Lovji Cama sent us a clipping from *Time* magazine (July 14, 1975, an issue that many of us were denied the privilege of reading due to its misinterpretation of developments in this country) titled "The Disappearing Jews" which shows our two communities have more in common than just high regard for Cyrus the Great:

Since the Nazi holocaust, which wiped out one-third of the world's Jews, "Jewish survival" has been a slogan that encompasses a number of issues. Besides support for

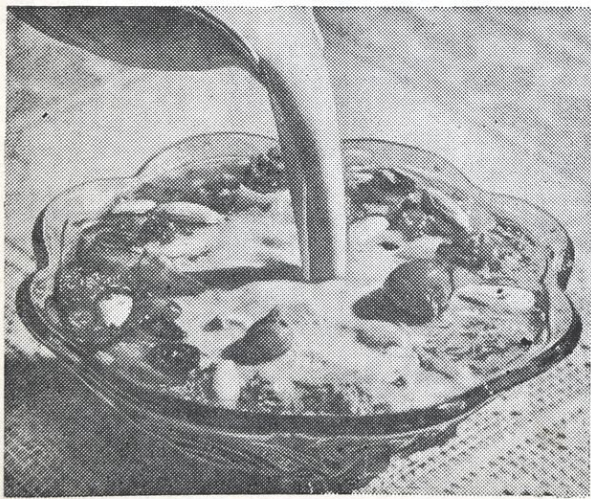
Israel and Soviet Jewry, the concept includes attempts to counteract losses through secularization and intermarriage of Jews with Gentiles. Another, and some say the greatest threat to Jewish survival is being increasingly talked about: the trend among modern Jews to have small families. In the U.S. for example, enrollment in synagogue classes and day schools has declined by roughly one-fourth since 1965, owing largely to the falling Jewish birth rate.

At this spring's meeting of the Conservative rabbinate, a study was presented that advocated "immediate reconsideration of attitudes toward family size" and asked rabbis to promote bigger families in their synagogues. The liberal Reform branch is less worried about birth rates than the Conservative, but its national rabbinical conference last month also expressed concern over Jewish population trends and authorized a study of the issue.

Revering Z.P.G. "The statistics only really began to hit us in the past few years," says New York City Conservative Rabbi William

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Berman, who a year ago organized the Jewish Population Regeneration Union to promote a reversal. Zero population growth (Z.P.G.) may be a good idea for humanity in general, he believes, but "it's not a service to humanity for Jews to disappear." Since Jews constitute only three-tenths of one per cent of the world's population of four billion, Sol Roth, president of the New York Board of Rabbis, reasons that "the Jewish community will not solve the world's problems by applying Z.P.G. to itself."

Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm, who raised the question in a recent speech in Milwaukee, admits that world population control is a "moral imperative," but maintains that it must be balanced by a concern for the survival of all human groups. "Jews are a disappearing species," he says, "and should be treated no worse than the kangaroo and the bald eagle." Lamm's recommendation: each Jewish couple should have 4 or 5 children. ●

For over 60 years, a fire has burned in the Adariyan of Bordi village. Now, notes the Zai Bordi Parsee Anjuman Fund President, Ms Khorshedbanoo M. P. Mistry, "with the very limited funds at our disposal, we are finding it difficult to cope with the ... administration and upkeep." In order

to maintain the premises "in good condition—symbolic of a place for worship and *Ashoiyee*" (purity), the Trustees appeal to the community to make "any donation



they deem fit for the general maintenance of the Adariyan." Donations should be made in favour of the Zai Bordi Parsee Anjuman Fund and mailed to Ms Mistry at

West Hill, 27 Nepean Sea Road, Bombay 400 036. ●

Among the mail we receive around New Year time, bills, subscription cancellations, lawyers' notices, we are privileged to receive a few greeting cards, especially so from the N. M. Rustomji family of Belgaum. Instead of the usual pretty-picture-and-rhyme cards, the Rustomjis send a poem or proverb that conveys their resolution for the coming year. The first card we received carried a poem by Annie Besant written in 1875 which is still relevant today: Who pants and struggles to be free/Who strives for others' liberty/Who failing, still works patiently/He truly prays.

Greeting cards must bear the stamp of the individual, if they are to have meaning. At *Parsiana*, for example, this New Year we sent our subscribers reminder cards.

And so friends, till the next issue, whenever that be, let your New Year resolution be one of patience towards *Parsiana*. As the Rustomjis' latest message (which must have been chosen keeping *Parsiana's* erratic appearance in mind) notes, "Time waits for no man; rise therefore to the occasion if you can".

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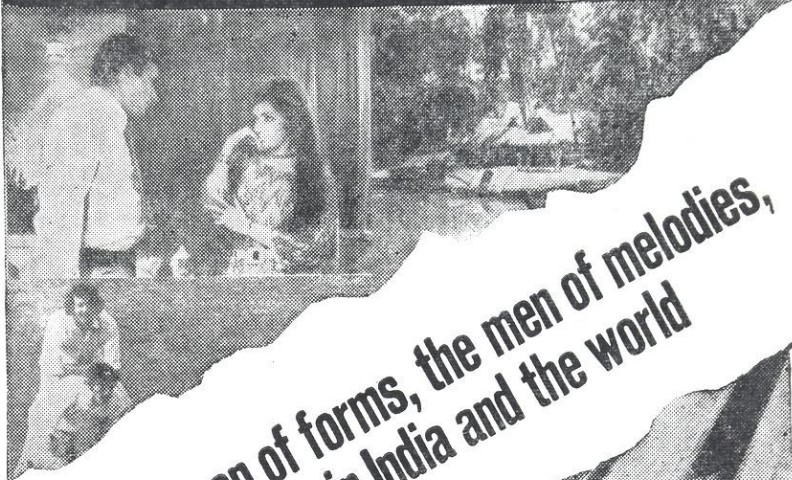
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Is Charity Harmful?

Ekkehard Kulke in his book *The Parsees In India* pays tribute to Parsi philanthropy. Then he adds: "The problems and, in spite of all merits, the inadequacies of the Parsees' welfare system have become more obvious in the last decades. For one, the system is suffering under a lack of coordination. No one is able to say with authority exactly how many Parsee charities there actually are. A great number of small endowments that were started at some time in memory of someone deceased are not sufficiently equipped and are waning away; a part has lost its original function." Referring to the efforts made by the "Parsi Charity Organization Society" and "Central Investigation Bureau", Kulke adds: "A necessary combination of small, unprofitable endowments has been run aground up to now by the opposition of the founding families or the trustees of the endowments."

He further says that a large number of endowments were rather aimed at a direct alleviation of need than at a real rehabilitation of those who had become needy. This kind of charity does not strengthen the community. Kulke gives figures to buttress his state-

READERS' FORUM

ment. Relying on the information provided in Desai's *A Changing Social Structure*, he says that while 76 Parsi families asked the Parsi Panchayat for help during 1871-80, the number grew in 1901-10 to 700 families and in 1931-40 to 4,600 families—40 per cent of the then Bombay Parsis. While at the beginning of this century primarily widows and half-orphans were given help by the Panchayat, in 1940 this group constituted only 25 per cent of those receiving aid, 33 per cent being complete families.

The figures are staggering. In all probability the number of recipients of aid increased after 1940. Do these figures prove that the Parsis are getting poorer? If so, can we not do something tangible to make the community economically sound?

It is a tragedy that our vast charities have not helped the community as they should. On the other hand, there are critics who opine that dependence on charity is partly responsible for the present state of affairs. We need experts to present suggestions to improve the present economic state of the community.

RATAN R. MARSHALL
Surat

All those who were interviewed for the feature, "Is Charity Harmful?" (*Parsiana* May 1976), answered that it was not.

However, charity is considered an offensive word nowadays. It deals a death-blow to the self-respect of the recipient. Poor but self-respecting persons who are blind, handicapped, or unemployed, refuse to accept charity. They want work instead.

The Indian Express recently published the story of an ex-convict who was offered a security-free loan of Rs. 1,500 by a nationalized bank. He successfully rehabilitated himself and repaid the entire amount ahead of schedule.

S. A. KALYAN

Behman of the Two Mangoes

Reading Homi Dhalla's article on Parsi surnames (*Parsiana*, May 1976) recalled some amusing incidents of my childhood. As my father, grandfather and great-



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For further details see page 68

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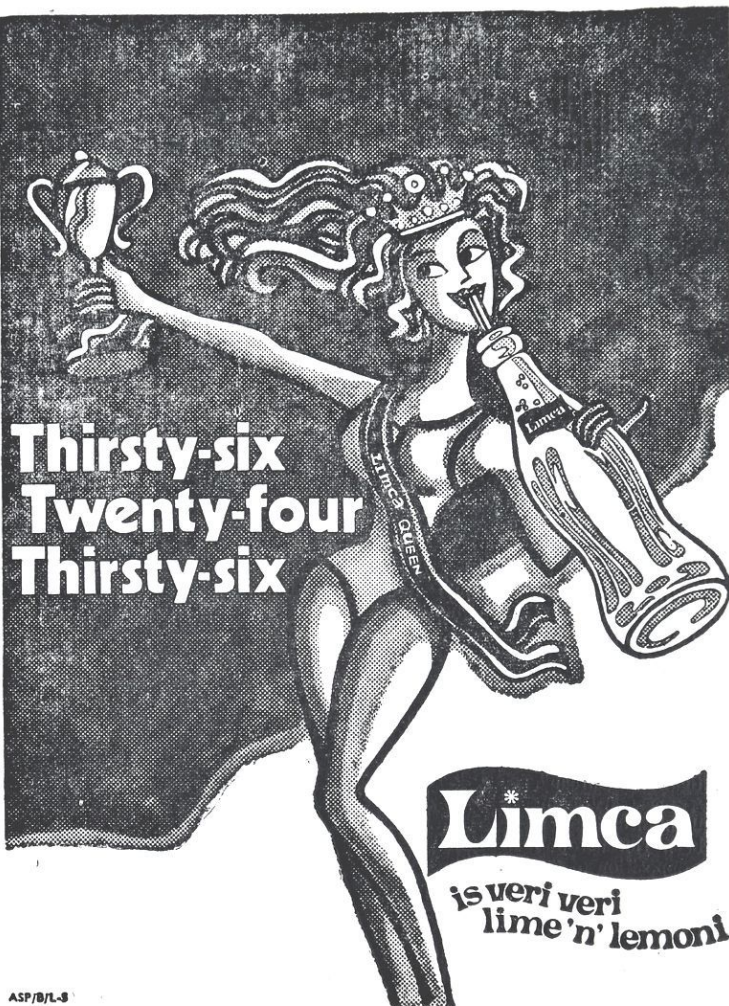
Pen-pals

Ratansha B. Vakil, 15, a student in Singapore would like to have pen friends (boys and girls). Interests include Scouting, outdoor activities, music and reading. Write 9 Dunman Lane, Singapore 15.

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Party interested in purchasing small to medium sized printing press in the Fort area. Write giving particulars and price to The Advertiser (Press), *Parsiana*, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001.

Readers views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to The Editor, Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, G. P. O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.



ASP/B/L-S

grandfather all came from Surat, it was but natural that as children, my sisters and I spent several vacations with our widowed Bapaji. She lived in a crooked little house in a crooked little street named Vanki Dordi (twisted rope). Across the street lived a youth named Behman Beh-keri (Behman of the Two Mangoes). At the time, I was four years old and would gang up with other little urchins to tease him. Keeping a safe distance, we would shout at the top of our voices: "Behman Beh-keri, amneh ek kerī aap!" ('give us a mango').

I sympathize with Ardeshtir Sethna's indignation ("Pillou, Khodu, Homi", Readers' Forum, *Parsiāna*, May 1976) at the cold-blooded murder of our "glorious names". But this is an ingrained trait in human nature, whatever one's nationality or cultural background. Elizabeth is corrupted into Beth or Betty, or simply, Liz. Margaret, for some obscure reason, becomes Peg or Peggy.

Mr. Sethna will smile grimly when he reads that *pilu* in Sanskrit means bitter root! When the last Sasanian king, Yazdegard III, was murdered in 651 A.D., his son, Firouz, fled to the Chinese emperor, 'Tai Tsung, for refuge.

The Chinese promptly dubbed the Iranian prince Pilousse; from Pilousse to Piloo is but a small step. Besides, little children often cannot even pronounce Piloo. A three-year-old Parsi girl would imperiously demand my presence with "*Maneh Piu joie* (I want Piu)". "Piu, Piu," is the cry of the peacock for his mate—a very pleasing and familiar sound to residents of Delhi!

PILOO N. JUNGALWALLA
New Delhi

Maiden Show

Readers of "Parsi Shakespeare-wallas" (*Parsiāna*, May 1976) may be interested to learn of the uproar caused in 1940 when Parsi girls acted on the public stage for the first time. I was one of the actresses and proud to have been a pioneer. The occasion was a war charity show of Pijam's *Aftatoon* at the Capitol Theatre by the Parsi Amateur Dramatic Society founded by Rustom Marzban and others.

Much was written for and against us in the Press; *The Sunday Standard* headline of September 22 blazed: "Orthodoxy revolts against appearance of Parsi girls on stage in War Charity Shows"; threatening letters were sent to us individually. On the opening night

we were escorted to the theatre near Bori Bunder under police protection. A threatened attempt to prevent the staging failed to materialize, however, due to the police bandobast, and the show was a great success.

PERIN M. JEEJEBHOY

"Should we switch to English?"

Whether we switch to English or not, practically everyone in our community speaks English. It is taught in all the schools and is especially necessary for business and as an international link-language. It is not only Parsi parents who send their children to English-medium schools but also staunch politicians who take pride in speaking to us in their mother tongue.

But there is another side to the coin. What applies to us for Gujarati is equally applicable to those who speak Marathi, Tamil, Hindi, Punjabi or Sindhi. How is it that most of them know their mother tongue fluently, can read their scriptures in their original script and understand their religion? The rules and regulations that apply to others at school, are applicable to us as well.

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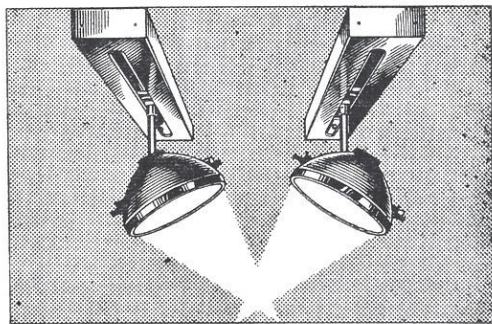
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A Gujarati, born and educated in Bengal or Tamil Nadu, will read and write his mother tongue well. Why can't we?

Some time ago, I visited Africa; there the Gujaratis, besides speaking the local language, spoke and wrote in their mother tongue, though some of them had never visited India. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs have erected temples, mosques and gurdwaras wherever they settle. A Muslim child is taught Arabic in order to read the *Quran*. A Sikh child learns Gurmukhi to understand the *Guru Granth Saheb*. Even Sanskrit is taught, so that the Hindu scholarly tradition is not lost. What prevents Parsis from learning a living language like Gujarati?

Most young Parsis cannot read prayers written in Gujarati and do not know anything about their religion. They recite their Navjote prayers like parrots. Our religious discourses are mostly in Gujarati, our mobeds speak and read their prayers from Gujarati books. There is treasure for us in Gujarati, provided we know how to unearth it. If we don't, we will be isolated because in the future, Hindustani the national language of India, will become increasingly important. It is for the leaders of the community to think and act in the right direction.

DR. S. R. WADIA

Garden Party

Some time ago on *Farvadin roj* of *Farvadin* month I went with my family to Doongerwadi to pray: I was shocked at the behaviour of the Parsis who had turned up in large numbers. I had the impression of attending a garden party given by a gossip magazine. I have also had similar experiences in fire-temples on auspicious and festive days. This could be due to the fact that the average Parsi does not have much of an inner world. Sitting quietly and contemplating the fire, or just silently concentrating (to say 'meditating' would be asking too much) is something they are not used to. True, our *Avesta* prayers are very effective and have strong, positive vibrations, but in order to bring

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In the News

Edited by Jeroo Gorimar

Parsi weddings made Lillian Carter "feel at home. She loved spicy food and eating off plantain leaves," recalled Ms. Aloo Mowdawalla a welfare officer at the Godrej Pragati Kendra at Vikhroli where the 78-year-old mother of Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter served as a Peace Corps worker. "She was friendly and active and had many interests," said Ms. Mowdawalla. Aside from her nursing duties at the workers' welfare centre, Ms. Carter attended Swami Chinmayananda's discourses, went to medical conferences and won a prize for orange marmalade in the annual flower, fruit and vegetable show of the Friends of the Trees.

"I'll never forget the first day when we were walking home from work," said Ms. Mowdawalla. "We used a road passing under the railway tracks when a fast train suddenly roared overhead. Not realizing what the sound was, Ms. Carter shouted to her associate, Ms. Mabel Yewel, 'Mabel, run for your life' and charged down the road. Mabel being older, could not and just held my hand. When I explained the situation, they both had a hearty laugh."

Ms. Mowdawalla, who has been corresponding with Ms. Carter since she left for America in 1968, recalls that Jimmy "was her favourite son. She was ambitious for him. At the time he wasn't even Governor of Georgia, so we never dreamt that he might rise to the highest office in the States."

Before she left, Ms. Carter had lost 30 lbs and could not eat without thinking of her Indian friends—the workers she had counselled, the asthmatic gardener, the 11-year-old she had treated for leprosy. She gave away as gifts all that she had brought from the U.S.A. but carried away warm memories of her stay. "She gave me a sleeping bag. But the best gift they left for me is the memory of two lovable neighbours," said Ms. Mowdawalla. ●

House collapses during the monsoons have become as much a part of the Bombay scene as clogged drains and flooded roads. Every year, thousands of luckless tenants are left without a roof over their heads or a floor below.

This new urban nightmare was dramatically brought home on July 14 when a portion of the 70-year-old Hanuman Building in the Fort area came crashing down on the offices of the *Kaiser-E-Hind* weekly, injuring Editor **Jal Heerjibehedi**. The three-storey structure was under repair at the time and was temporarily supported by bamboo props. "On that ill-fated day, the office and the press had just started," noted the journal's report, "when the heavy stones at the extreme end of the ground floor gave way.... the heavy partition with glass panels dividing the room, crashed, giving the Editor no time to escape."

"Simultaneously the masonry from the ceiling began to give way... The staff and press workers rushed to the crushed portion engulfed in dust and falling rubble, broke the glass panels of the adjoining room and rescued Mr. Heerjibehedi." He was rushed to St. George's Hospital where he was under treatment for five days for head and hand injuries.

Fortunately the premises where the press is located were not damaged but as a preventive measure, electric power was turned off for a few days causing the *Kaiser's* issue of July 18 to be delayed by a week. At last reports, repairs to the damaged portion were under way.

* * *
Dadi Dorab Pudumjee of Poona is the first Indian to win the Union Internationale de la Marionette Scholarship (UNIMA) offered to students of puppetry around the world. An economics graduate who studied at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, Dadi took to puppetry at the Darpana



Pudumjee with one of his creations

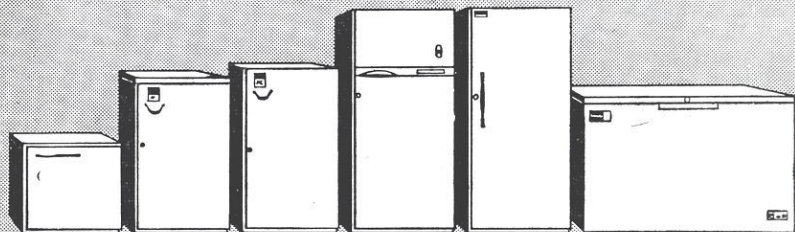
Academy of Performing Arts under the able guidance of Ms. Meher Contractor, honorary director of the puppet section.

The young puppeteer, who specializes in Voice and Manipulation of string puppets, has participated in the UNIMA International Puppet Festival and toured Europe with the Darpana Puppet group in 1972. In 1974 his play, *Black Theatre*, won the All India Students award in Madras. Dadi worked as production assistant for the Satellite Instruction Television Experiment (SITE) on puppet programmes for rural education.

Presently in Europe, Dadi will study under Micheal Meschke at the Swedish Institute of Puppetry, after which he has been invited to work a month in Bucharest, Rumania, and to visit Poland, Czechoslovakia and Iran.

* * *
The Lady Tata Memorial Trust has singled out Ms. **P. N. Pavri** of the Grant Medical College, Bombay, and Ms. **M. S. Bamji** of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Bombay, for "research work in India... having a bearing on the alleviation of human suffering from

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disease."

Ms Pavri who is in the Genetics department, and Ms Bamji who is in the Biology and Agriculture division, have both won the awards for the second year. The Lady Tata Memorial Trust was established in 1932 by Sir Dorabji Jamsetji Tata in memory of his wife. Since its inception, the trust has given support to 124 international research workers and awarded 196 scholarships to Indians for research in India.

A total of 15 awards, five to foreigners and ten to Indians, were presented this year.

One of the few Indians to step behind the bamboo curtain into Communist China is Ms **Avabai Wadia** president of the Family Planning Association of India. Along with a group of 16 family planning officials from 11 countries, Ms Wadia went on a study tour to observe how the Chinese controlled their population. Below are a few snippets from an article she wrote for *The Times of India* (August 1) giving her impressions of the mainland:

"China's Constitution (revised in 1975) proclaims: 'He who does not work, neither can he eat'. . . work is not a matter of personal fancy or choice—it is allotted at the place where it exists and may involve travelling far away from home. Men and women dress

If readers know of any news item of interest to the community they should send them to The Editor, In The News, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001

alike in loose bush shirts and trousers with limited choice as to quality, texture and colour. The only 'jewellery' is a watch. . .

"When we visited the Shanghai No. 2 Medical College we learnt that in accordance with Chairman Mao's thoughts, a new strategy has been adopted. The medical course has been reduced from six to three years. . . and the students should be well-versed in class struggle and proletarian politics. . .

"Everywhere there is a sustained and strong propaganda to break with old ideas and customs and implement a new way of life in which birth planning is essential. . . It is reported that China's progress in family planning has led to a drop in the rate of population growth, though no precise figures are available. The growth rate is now said to be about 1.9 per cent per annum. This still means, of course, that 15.2 million people are added to China's population each year—about three million more than in India."

"In many ways university education (in my old-fashioned definition of the word) is growing rarer and rarer. There are others who find this acceptable and indeed desirable. They consider that every modern nation needs more and more men with practical skills, such as engineering, economics, physics, chemistry and the like. I am old-fashioned enough to adhere to the belief that what a nation really needs above all things are social skills—critical ability and decision-making skills."

Please turn to page 71 col. 3



IN MEMORIAM

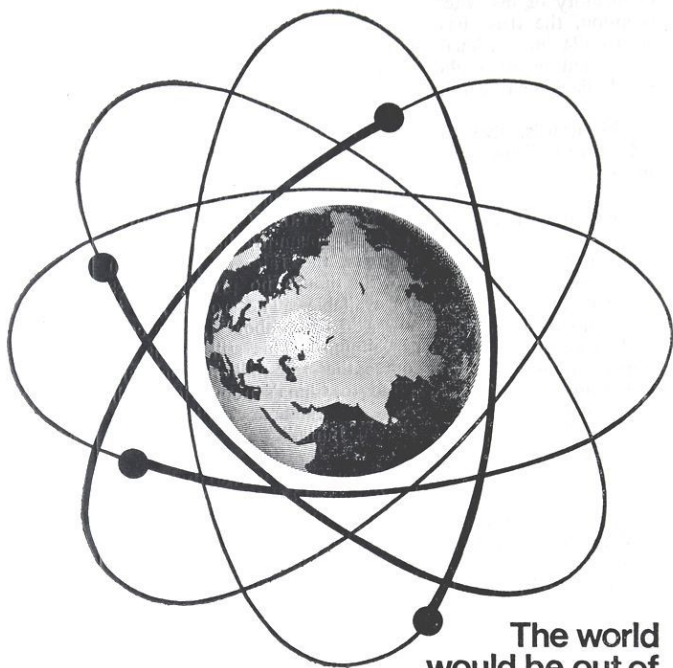
We regret to announce the sudden passing away of Mr. Mohan J. Bijlani, the Joint Managing Director of Blaze Advertising Private Limited and Blaze Film Enterprises Private Limited and partner of many other concerns on July 31, 1976.

The late Mr. Bijlani was Miss Freni Meherji Variava's partner for over 30 years and together they launched on an equal basis, many successful companies and firms. Mr. Bijlani was a gentleman of rare good humour, of whom it is said that laughter virtually followed at his heels. In his passing, the film advertising world has lost its pioneer, and the field of feature film production, a producer of films like *Ankur* and *Nishant*—films of stark reality totally divorced from any vulgarity or box-office gimmicks.

Mr. Bijlani leaves behind him three capable sons, the eldest of whom, Lalit M. Bijlani, has now become the Joint Managing Director with Miss Freni Meherji Variava.



About 500 people attended the reception hosted by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman in honour of Admiral and Ms Jal Cursetji on July 21 at the Anjuman Hall. Seen in the picture from left to right are Anjuman President Shrivastav Nargolwala, Cursetji and Zal Nowshervanji, vice-president of the Anjuman.



**The world
would be out of
its element if India
had not generated
atomic thought**

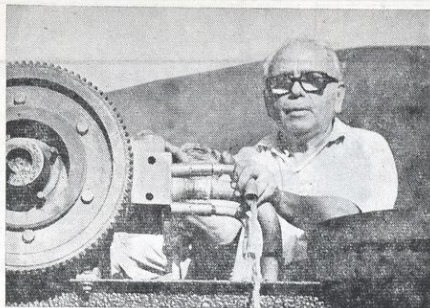
Today the world is in its element as it finds itself in the atomic age. But the discoveries of modern times echo the atomic theories of ancient India—theories that were brilliant explanations of the physical structure of the universe. An atomic theory was taught by Pakudha Kātyāyana an older contemporary of Buddha. Indian atomic thought thus originated before Democritus the great Greek philosopher—one of the founders of the atomic theory. In physics and other spheres Indian talents have enriched the world. We at L&T continue the tradition by enriching life through industrial development. The source of our energy is the vast reservoir of technical know-how generated over 35 years. It has spurred us on to manufacture equipment for India's nuclear power projects. The reactor vessel, fabricated for the first time in India, is an example. In order to foster the growth of nuclear power, we have set up modern fabrication facilities; formed a specialist cell for handling design, fabrication, application of new techniques. We are a vast industrial complex designing, manufacturing, installing plant and equipment for every vital industry. The secret of our success lies in the individual talents of over 10,000 people in our associate and subsidiary companies and our network of offices all over India.

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Patent Pending

Maneksha, a
with his
Homak-6
water pump



He has several inventions up the sleeve of his faded bush shirt and the detailed plans of his latest breakthrough in his bulging cloth bag. At 58, Homi Maneksha has to his credit a water pump which incorporates a new principle of motion, the first swadeshi positive segregation valve and a silent railway track joint that promises to make travel quieter and sabotage next to impossible.

"I have written to Russian and Iranian authorities," says the

Bulsar born inventor who recently retired from the Bombay Port Trust after 27 years of service. But judging from his past abortive efforts to market his inventions, the prognosis is not very bright. "The design of my first invention was discussed in Parliament, but nothing came of it. This country treats her inventors very badly," says Maneksha. After months of being "in suspense"—without finance, workshop or permanent home—Maneksha now has a job with J. N. Marshall.

"Whenever I have any engineering problem, I think to myself that there must be a better and easier way out," says the electrical and mechanical engineer. "I lie awake at night trying to solve the problem. Then I put it down on paper. When I was with Ahmedabad Pottery works, I designed a machine for making tiles and bricks." During a stint in hospital he conceived his water pump, christened Homak-6; his silent railway track joint was inspired by a post-Independence sabotage attempt near Igatpuri.

Maneksha has many more inventions in an embryonic stage. "The time I take over an invention varies. I have to depend on other people and a lot of time is wasted. Once my inventions start selling I can use the money to finance more projects, help my community and use a part of it for charity here and abroad. I have also drawn up a plan to make India self-reliant." He hints at another invention which will augment human happiness, "I can't give you any details now. It's a secret."

The Lost Generation

The essays came in from all over India and as far away as California and Canada. They contained a wealth of information and a variety of suggestions ranging from the creation of a 70 lakh rupees research institution to reciting prayers with understanding. Their length varied from a page to 39 hand-written sheets by Ms Rati Pire of Bombay; B. S. Surti of Secunderabad deserves special mention for his beautifully bound, 14-page typed essay with Persian quotes neatly inked in.

Most of the essays reflected a considerable amount of thought and effort on the part of the writers. *Parsiana* intends to carry extracts from several of the essays in future issues to highlight the various ideas put forth.

The results are:

First Prize of Rs 500 to Jamshed A. Modi of Bombay

Second Prize of Rs 300 to Lovji Cama of New Jersey, America

Third Prize of Rs 200 to Piloo N. Jungalwalla of New Delhi

Special Award of Rs 100 to Berjis M. Desai of Bombay

Amongst the other essays singled out for merit and a prize of two books, *Our Heritage Past and Present* published by the P. N. Mehta Education Trust and *Let Us Pray to Ahura Mazda* by Noshir Vajifdar, are:

Jamshed K. Pavri of Canada; A. H. Sethna of Calcutta; Jehangir Das'ur of California; K. M. Mistry of Sangli; Ms Mani M. Gatta of Surat; Ms Goolshan K. Hahiram, Bombay; B. S. Surti, Secunderabad; Ms Rati Pire, Bombay; Homi M. Engineer, Vancouver; J. R. Doomasia, Bombay; Ms Muneezah Banu Kaosji, Hyderabad; Maneksha D. Mistry, Bombay; Rustom A. Kotwal, Bombay; K. D. Chergeman, Bombay; Ms Thrity Keeka, Bombay; Dinshaw B. Irani, Bombay; Jamshed R. Darukhanawalla, Bombay; Murzban J. Daroowala, Bombay; Keki E. Hilloo, Bombay;

Homi N. Dumasia, Nasik; Darayus, Bombay; D. K. Engineer, Bombay; Hormuzda B. Davar, Asansol; Ms Khurshid S. Medhora, Bombay; Ms Yasmeen R. Nazir, Shillong; Ms Piloo R. Nazir, Assam; Minoo S. Pithawala, Bombay; F. N. Mehta, Bombay; Dr. Homi Choksey, Bombay; Shehnaz T. Athugar, Bombay; Ms Freny B. Sanjana, Bombay; A. N. Bharucha, Bombay; Ms Hira F. Bhandara, Bombay; Ms Banoo R. Hodiwalla, Bombay; Ms Mani Sahukar, Bombay; A. B. Bhiwandivalla, Bombay; A. K. Kathawalla, Bombay; Ms Zenobia J. Aga, Poona; Burjor M. Bilimoria, Bombay; Nariman P. Suratia, Navsari; M. F. Engineer, Bombay; Dr. Jal K. Wadia, Calcutta; Minoo C. Dalal, Calcutta; Ms Khorshid J. Chesson, Bombay; J. R. Mulla, Bombay; F. P. Cooper, Bombay; A. F. Cama, Bombay; Ms Homai J. Satha, Nagpur and F. B. Kapadia, Bombay.



Schubert 1797-1828

A symphony traditionally has four movements. Schubert wrote just two and said it will do. But the traditionalist thought otherwise and labelled it the 'Unfinished' symphony.

Inspiration, they accused, had left him. Schubert was a spent force.

Schubert wasn't perturbed. He wrote yet another symphony. This time, his critics acclaimed it, called it the 'Great' G major. His triumph wasn't without irony. The 'Great', they said, was composed before the 'Unfinished.'

The 'Unfinished' symphony is now finished.

Lack of inspiration, they accused, with finality, was why the 'Unfinished' was not finished. But now, new evidence has come to light.

Evidence that confirms that the 'Great' was composed much after.

The liberated artist he was, Schubert's genius leapt beyond convention. The two movements were complete in form and expression. A third movement, he decided was redundant.



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The Student Prince

In the secular bareness of Patkar Hall, a lissom youth paid homage to the God of Dance in the sculptural movements of Bharata Natyam. Acclaimed by critics as a "promising, eloquent artist" with clean lines and powerful footwork, 19-year-old Rohinton Cama's first public performance following his debut as a professional dancer a year ago, has already earned him three bookings.

A product of Natyalaya, the dance school run by the noted Bharata Natyam exponent Vyjayanthimala Bali, Rohinton has performed with Ms Bali's troupe all over India and to appreciative audiences in Mauritius, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines. With the archetypal dancer's

lithe frame and delicately etched features, Rohinton "has the liveliness and grace of a young prince," says Dr. Narayana Menon, executive director of the National Centre for the Performing Arts.

"Being male and a dancer is no disadvantage," says Rohinton, of a dance form that has for long been associated with the temple priestesses of Tanjore and Chidambaram. "There have been male Bharata Natyam dancers in the past," he notes. "It's a matter of feeling and expressing emotion. Only the costume varies."

A sociology and political science graduate from Bombay's St. Xavier's College, Rohinton is "not interested in further studies. I haven't thought of any other

career. I'm totally absorbed in Bharata Natyam." He practises till he is "satisfied. I practise more at the time of a performance and I go to the Institute every day. Preparing for a recital takes time, especially if there are new items to learn. It's not taxing, I thoroughly enjoy it. I feel nervous before going on stage but once I'm on, all my nervousness melts away."

Rohinton's association with Natyalaya, where he recently completed a rigorous five-year diploma course, is going to be lifelong. "The more you learn, the better. A tradition is handed down and you follow it. You may perfect traditional patterns and create new things within the framework." But in the process of innovating, "the art shouldn't be commercialized," says Rohinton. He feels traditional, religious themes are still relevant. "I am not religious in the orthodox sense but I am religious about my art. After all, Bharata Natyam is a temple dance of a devotional nature. The audience has to identify with the dancer in order to be one with God. But eighty per cent of Bombay audiences don't appreciate this."

As for his family members, "they love to see me dance," says Rohinton who has been dancing since he was nine years old. He did not encounter any opposition to his decision to pursue his art professionally, though he admits that "there exists an orthodox section among Parsis" for whom dancing has a slightly dubious aura. "But it all depends on the family, and mine gave me a lot of encouragement."

Rohinton shares with his family, a love for Indian music and plans to study Carnatic music. "I intend to learn Tamil too as the songs are in the language." Even though Bharata Natyam evolved in the South, Rohinton feels the dance form "is not the trademark of any region. You don't have to be a South Indian to be a good dancer."



Cama: Nobody's trademark

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Natural Justice

By Jeroo Gorimar

A sense of humour is not a hallmark of imposing government edifices. But if the visitor to Bombay's High Court glances up at the sandstone pillars flanking the wide, cool corridors, he will see a solemn animal court in session, paralleling with mock earnestness the human proceedings below. A monkey judge with one eye blindfolded, holds a balance heavily tilted to one side; a litigant frog looks bewildered by the battle between his foxy pleader and the opposing advocate, a snake; a ghoulish owl, a proud maned lion, a poised, crouching tiger and a variety of Indian flora and fauna are all expressively carved.

"Whoever conceived them was a genius with a delicious sense of irony," notes Burjor Taraporewala, a lawyer and amateur photographer who has filmed for posterity every carved nook and ornate column. "The carvings are a little weather-beaten but in no real danger except where they have been eroded by water trickling down them.

"There is a story behind the friezes", recalled the tall, bespectacled advocate, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, "but I put no store by it." A Phirozeshah Vatcha who wrote the history of the High Court mentions a dispute between the government and the contractor; the result was justice caricatured for all time on the five hundred pillars of the court.

But though generations have worked in the 98-year-old High Court building, "their noses buried in papers," few have ever noticed "this wealth of beauty in stone,"

says Taraporewala. A year after discovering the mute simians in stone, he wove a tongue-in-cheek fantasy around them for *The Illustrated Weekly of India*. "Murder in the High Court" was spun round the murder of a duck and high-lighted the ironies of the legal system: the unreliable witnesses to the crime—an aged monkey ridden with cataract and the waiter who eavesdrops on the conspirators but is actually hard of hearing; the monkey judge who prosecutes these witnesses for perjury on the grounds of "trying to make monkeys of us all," and after stating he has nothing to add, reels off a judgement running into a hundred pages.

At the moment Taraporewala is working on a book about animals which is almost ready and in which he will use his photographs: "I've taken pictures of East African and Indian game. My favourite game sanctuary is Kanha in Madhya Pradesh. It has beautiful tigers and the sal forests are lovelier than in East Africa. And Shrivantar Lake never dries up. The game collects here in the second half of May. That's the best time to take pictures."

But Taraporewala does not restrict himself to animals. "I've shot landscapes, portraits, abstracts, cities..." he noted. "Photography trains the eye and makes you observant; it teaches you the art of composition, of deleting the inessentials." Asked which camera he uses, the Groucho Marx moustache bristled with indignation: "It's not the camera that's important, but the person behind it."

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PANCHAYAT PRIVATE LIMITED

The politicking got off to an early start—too early for even the Panchayat's traditional supporter, the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. In a column titled "No Indecent Haste," the Gujarati daily's Editor, Adi Marzban, bemoaned that "whenever a member of the Parsi Panchayat Trustees passes away, it results in a flutter of activity (that) starts even whilst the funeral ceremonies are going on."

Whatever the timing, the sudden death of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat President Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir on June 9 following a massive coronary attack, threw the best laid plans of Parsi politicians out of gear. According to *The Bombay Samachar* Editor Jehan Daruwala, Lady Jehangir was being "persuaded to stand for another term of ten years. . . for the simple reason that Mr. Erach Nadirshah. . . who is next in line of succession may be automatically eliminated" from the presidency.

But the octogenarian Senior Trustee was not to be denied ascendancy to the most prestigious chair in the community. Shortly after taking over the presidency, Nadirshah let it be known he would continue the open door policy initiated by Lady Jehangir and administer the trust in accordance with the wishes specified by the donors. In an informal talk he defined the Panchayat's role as an institution functioning for the uplift of the community and felt the best candidates to fulfil this role would be influential individuals from established families with a tradition of service.

The next Trustee to be elected to the Panchayat, Maneck B. Hodiwala, fits that mold. The son of Khan Bahadur Bejonji M. Hodiwala, an industrialist in whose memory his children built the Hodiwala Bungli at Doongerwadi, he is a director in two family concerns and chairman of three

trusts. And at 71, it seems unlikely that he will attempt any major policy upheavals. Indeed his subdued and low-key campaign style resulted in his critics describing him as an aged and disabled person, causing him to write in *The Kaiser-e-Hind* that "I am neither old nor have I ever suffered from diabetes or heart

November, but held back in favour of Eruch Desai, who came on the board unopposed. But without Lady Jehangir's mediating influence a compromise was not possible this time and the various factions within the Panchayat became involved in yet another no-holds barred power struggle. As the *Samachar* queried, "is it a straight contest between the two candidates or is it a fight *inter se* among the trustees?" It was a rhetorical question given the present electoral system where the Trustees have inordinate influence over the 388 voters of the "E" and "F" Registers who elect candidates.

The contest between Hodiwala and Kuka initially swayed in the older man's favour as he was better known in the community and believed to have closer ties with the 205 "F" Register donors, those who have donated Rs. 5,000 or more. But Kuka's impressive campaigning and his image as a man who got things done won him many converts. His manifesto stressed his role in getting government sanction for an access road to a proposed housing colony on the "unused land behind the Dokhmas," and his membership on the Doongerwadi Advisory Committee, a body created in the wake of Shiavax Vakil's statements on the Towers, established his bonafides with the orthodoxy. But his candidacy suffered a damaging blow when the *Kaiser* carried a letter signed by Dara R. Meher-Homji, a retired journalist from *The Times of India* and Minocher Buhariwala, stating that Kuka had been a director of Anil Hardboards, a company which allegedly "over the years. . . has been evading payment not only of interest but also of the principal amount (on maturity) to numerous depositors many of whom are Parsi widows and pensioners. . . during his tenure (of 17 months) as director many depositors failed to get back their money. Many cheques issued by Anil Hardboards have bounced." Kuka, who made no mention of his association with the company in his two English manifestoes, replied that "when I came to know that the company was not fulfilling the promises, I could not



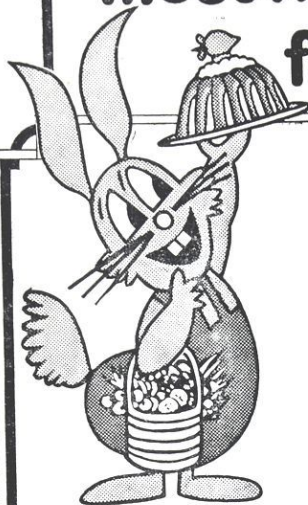
Hodiwala : Hale and hearty

disease." Hodiwala's candidacy was engineered by Trustee Nelie Noble and his 163 to 132 vote victory was a major set-back to B. K. Boman-Behram, the next seniormost Trustee who along with Trustees Aspi Golwalla and Jamshed Guzder reportedly supported the candidacy of Rustom Behramji Kuka.

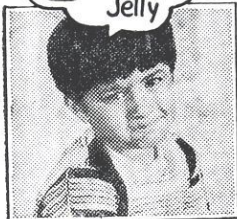
A well-to-do real estate agent with "vast influence in government circles," Kuka was considered the more active and ambitious of the two candidates. He had considered contesting for the seat vacated by P. P. Khambatta last

(Please turn to page 65)

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I promise to let
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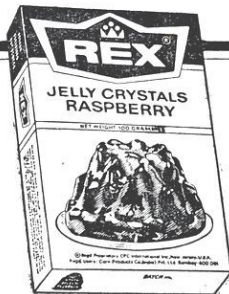


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ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

From Sydney in the East to San Francisco in the West, Zoroastrian associations are springing up abroad as fast as those in India are closing down. Indeed the level of Parsi activity seems to increase in direct proportion to the distance from Bombay. Whether it is the new environment or the longing for home that goads them to action, Zoroastrians abroad are engaged in a host of community activities ranging from bingo to constructing community centres. To keep track of their doings, Parsiana introduces a "Zoroastrians Abroad" column, whose frequency and length will be determined by the response we receive from our fellow travellers.

Iran

Dinshaw Behram Irani, vice-president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman in Bombay writes from Teheran that there are around 1,000 Parsis settled in Iran. They have formed the Zoroastrian International Cultural Association (ZICA) whose membership is open to all Zoroastrians over 18 years of age on payment of 600 rials (10 rials = Rs. 1.30). ZICA activities for the summer include a jashan-cum-dinner, a trip to the Caspian Sea, a puri-bhaji party, and a film show. The spacious premises of the Sazmane Farohar is at the disposal of ZICA for social activities through the courtesy of two prominent, local Zoroastrians, Merwan Zartoshty and Tahamtan Aresh.

*Newcomers are helped by the Teheran Zoroastrian Anjuman with regard to residence and work permits," writes Irani. "Those who are qualified have lucrative jobs and have created a good impression. A few have returned to India because they lacked qualifications, did not have the aptitude for work or could not bear extremes of climate. Living here is costly, especially apartment rents, but the income is high and if one is thrifty, he can save a good sum every month."

Canada

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) is gathering funds for a community center. According to the President's Report for 1975-76 "there has been an immense amount of background work and study required for this project. Determination of the size and scope of the center, the necessity of making it a revenue producing proposition, capital funding, location etc. are some of the problems the committee has to tackle." The committee, consisting of Kawas Nanavati, Bomi Boyce, Katy Khambatta, Adi Dastur, and Kobad Zarolia note the total planned target for the project is \$600,000 (around 50 lakh rupees) of which they hope to get \$200,000 as a grant from the Government, to collect \$200,000 as donations from the community and friends and \$200,000 to be raised from financial institutions.

The ZSO has also set up a Zoroastrian library and at last report had 75 books catalogued. More publications are on their way from India and anyone wishing to donate books to the association should contact Kobad Zarolia at 180 Mississauga Valley Blvd., Unit 162, Mississauga, Ontario, L5A 2M1, Canada.

In the field of communication, the ZSO has a lively and attractively produced newsletter edited by Sabar Balsara. Aside from keeping members informed of ZSO happenings, births, navjotes, marriages, awards, where to buy chutney, and so on, the newsletter also provides brief write-ups on the community in India.

Among future projects on the ZSO anvil are: a directory of Parsis in Toronto along the lines of the sleek, xeroxed publication issued by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York listing names, addresses and professions; a Zoroastrian Credit Union and the hosting of a Zoroastrian World Congress which was initially planned for 1977 but postponed when the Federation of the

Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India decided to hold a Congress in India in November 1977.

ZSO outgoing President Yeزدi Antia in his annual report, writes of "The Tasks Ahead":

"Perhaps the greatest challenge to the retaining of our identity is the dissemination of information amongst Zoroastrians about themselves. An average Zoroastrian is not very well acquainted with the principles of his religion. Very few amongst us can discuss very knowledgeably our history, Iranian and Indian. This is not surprising and is due to the lack of simple and concise publications on this subject that are suitable in a North American context. This also prevents us from imparting to our children basic and factual knowledge about ourselves that can give them a sense of identity. I would like the Z.S.O. to take a lead in this matter and am pleased to announce that various members are currently preparing both a folder and a brochure about Zoroastrians and the Z.S.O., as a first step in this direction, and I hope a Publications Committee will be set up by our future Executives. . . .

"The strength of any organization can only depend on the sacrifice of time and effort of its individual members. From the President's chair, I have been privileged to see this increasing sacrifice of time and effort by the Executive, by the sub-committees and by the members. . . . I feel happy to announce an increasing tendency to sink small differences and pull towards the common good in the service of the community. All this means only one thing: the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario is growing from strength to strength."

Quebec

While the controversy over conversion rages in Bombay, the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec's newsletter, *Gavashni* has come forward with some definite points of view on the subject:

"How does proselytism fit in

Please turn to page 72

TWILIGHT YEARS

While the rest of India breeds at the rate of 100 babies every 30 seconds, maternity wards in Parsi hospitals are going out of business. To study this phenomenon for a doctoral thesis, a young anthropologist from the University of North Carolina in America came to India in January 1972. Financed with a grant from the Carolina Population Center at the University and from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, Paul Axelrod spent several months in the country gathering data for his dissertation, "A Social and Demographic Comparison of Parsis, Saraswat Brahmins and Jains in Bombay." With the aid of two field assistants, Aloo Contractor and Khorshed Medhora, Axelrod interviewed around 1500 Parsi families in Bombay and the towns and villages in and around Surat, Navsari, Sanjan and Dahanu. The purpose of the comparative study was to show that "the unique social and demographic patterns found in the Parsis are attributable not to the economic success and urban experience they share with the Saraswats and Jains, but to the unique historical experience, religion and culture of the Parsis." Below Parsiana carries an abridged and edited report of an article written by Dr. Axelrod who is presently teaching at Ripon College in Wisconsin.

A great deal of speculation has centered on the population decline in the Parsi community. There are sound reasons for this concern; recent censuses of the Parsis in India have shown that their population has declined from almost 120,000 in 1951 to 91,000 in 1971. One does not have to be a professional demographer to recognize the implications of these figures. Over a 20-year period, the population of the Parsis in India has declined at a rate of about one per cent per year, while the population of India has been growing at a rate of about 2.5 per cent per year. The drop is widely attributed to a number of causes which are well-known in the community. They include late marriage, a high percentage of unmarried adults, marriage outside the community, emigration from India, and the use of family planning. Some also believe that genetic factors, accentuated by centuries of inbreeding, are involved.

Making love, not babies

In the course of the interviews, all married informants were asked if they had ever made any effort to plan their families. Although the reliability of responses to this type of question is suspect, 47 per cent of the Parsi couples interviewed claim to have used some form of family planning. This is somewhat higher than the other wealthy and educated communi-

ties studied. All the three Zoroastrian groups—Bombay Parsis, rural Parsis and Iranis—favour the use of condoms, abstinence from sexual relations and female sterilization. Seventeen per cent of those born between 1905 and 1915 have used the condom, while those born after 1935 favour the pill.

As for spacing of children, the average number of years between marriage and the first birth is 1.6 years, a shorter period than for the other two communities. Between the first and subsequent children, however, Parsis prefer a greater time span. The later the age at marriage, the less the space between the marriage and the first pregnancy. Thus, it appears that the Parsis are not subfecund as some suggest. Once married, they are able to have children when they want them.

All in the family

As there is a certain amount of inbreeding in the Parsi community, it is important to consider whether genetic factors affect demographic behaviour. Among those married individuals sampled in the study, 17 per cent have married a first or second cousin; among those born before 1906, 23 per cent have married a first or second cousin. The findings indicate that there is no relation between such marriages and subfecundity or sterility. The statistics show that despite the late age at marriage among Parsi

women, the frequency of married women who have never had a pregnancy (regardless of whether they have married a cousin) is about the same as in other communities.

Outward bound

According to the figures published by the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayat, the natural decrease indicated by the difference in births over deaths is around 300 per year. Since the census shows a decrease of around 1,000 per year over the last 20 years, factors other than fertility must also be contributing considerably to the population decline.

Migration and outmarriage affect the population of the Parsi community to a much greater degree than the other communities. It is difficult to determine the actual rates of these factors as no official system for registering them exists. But the genealogical data I collected from 60 Parsi families shows, for example, that for those born between 1931 and 1940, five per cent of the women have married out, and 18 per cent of both sexes have settled abroad; some may return, others may raise their children as Zoroastrians. The likelihood of their offspring marrying Parsis is small.

Sex and the single Parsi

In addition to outmarriage, migration, and low fertility, the Parsis are characterized by late marriage and a high incidence of unmarried adults unusual in a country like India, where marriage

The high number of unmarried women in the Parsi community is clearly related to education.

is generally universal. The special census of Parsis found that in 1961 the mean age at marriage was 26.5 years for women and 31.4 for men. This compares with the figures of 26.2 and 31.9 for 494 marriages listed in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* in 1972 and 1973.

The high number of unmarried women in the Parsi community is

clearly related to education. The census shows that among Parsi women, 16 per cent of those who have not completed secondary school, 39 per cent of the secondary school graduates and 50 per cent of those educated beyond high school, have never married. In the other communities studied, only four per cent of the Saraswats and two per cent of the Jains over 25 are not married. Thus it seems that celibacy has established itself as a pattern in the Parsi community and not in the other communities.

The evidence also suggests that neither the relatively late age at marriage, nor the proportion of celibates, is new in the Parsi community. According to the census of Bombay Parsis and the data gathered in this study, the mean age at marriage between 1921 and 1931 was around 24. Yet in 1881

school in the Parsi community marry at a later age than college graduates in either the Jain or Saraswat communities.

Love story

In order to understand the differences in age at marriage, each community's social structure and values must be understood. One well-known example that demonstrates the importance of values is the strong emphasis placed on love marriage in the Parsi community. Young Parsis would object if their parents wanted to arrange a marriage for them after high school or college. They would prefer to find jobs and wait for the "right man" to come along. Fifty-eight per cent of the Parsi marriages sampled were love marriages. Among the wealthier and more "progressive" groups, there is some dating and mixing at clubs. Many in the com-

There is no way that Parsis can be prevented from going abroad or marrying outside the community. Nor can young Parsis, struggling to raise a family, be induced to have more children.

over half the marriages involved women under 15 years of age. This suggests that there was a dramatic increase in both celibacy and the marriage age between 1890 and 1920. The high age at marriage and celibacy are also characteristic of rural Parsis, even though most village women are not matriculates. Rural Parsi women marry at an average age of 24, and 25 per cent of the sample over 20 have never married. Generally, for rural women, finding a marriage partner has been difficult because many of the males have gone to the city. There is no single phenomenon which explains the late age at marriage and celibacy in the Parsi community better than ethnic membership in the community. Factors such as urbanization, education and wealth that are often used to explain distinctive features about the Parsis, are not as important as membership in the community. For example, in all the communities studied, those with more education marry at a higher age. However, even those who have not completed secondary

munity have access to other organizations which encourage mixed groups. But there are also large numbers of young people who have limited means with which to achieve a love marriage. Much of the courting is done without the knowledge of parents, who go along with the concept of a love marriage but not the idea of dating. There are a number of other factors which make it difficult for women to achieve this goal of a love marriage before they reach their mid-twenties. When these women are in their late twenties, many of them, because they want to marry, have their families arrange their marriages for them. Thus those whose marriages are arranged are, on the average, older than those who have a love marriage. But the desire to have a love match is ultimately responsible for the raised marriage age.

I am inclined to believe that finding a satisfactory spouse is the primary obstacle to marriage in the Parsi community. The problem is more than the logistic one of "boy meets girl"; that can

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be easily arranged. Rather, it seems to be one of meeting the right person under the right circumstances. Indeed, this can be hindered by a variety of factors ranging from strict parents to a set of very high standards about the economic and social standing of the prospective spouse. Even if a suitable spouse can be found, there are other barriers to overcome, such as finding a residence or getting around the parents' powerful, psychological influence if they do not approve of the choice.

We shall overcome

As the causes of all the factors leading to the population problem are ultimately connected to a complex of psychological, economic, historical and social factors that are peculiarly Parsi, it would be impossible to identify any miraculous cure-all "magic bullet" that could put an end to the problem. Some actions by community leaders, such as increasing the availability of low-cost housing for newly married couples, would prob-

ably help to lower the age at marriage. There are already youth groups in the community, such as the Young Collegiate Zoroastrian Association, which help young adults to meet each other. Genetic counselling is available at the

The desire to have a love match is ultimately responsible for the raised marriage age.

Tata Memorial Hospital. However, as a social scientist, I would argue that the problems are so complex that they cannot be solved completely by the kinds of dedicated efforts already underway. There is no way that Parsis can be prevented from going abroad or marrying outside the community. Nor can young Parsis, struggling to raise a family, be induced to have more children. These problems are the result of values that are fundamental to the Parsi community, and

cannot be changed overnight. Moreover, some of them are probably very positive. The Parsi couple who decide to have only one or two children probably benefit their country and their family, though at the expense of the community. The young Parsi scientist who goes abroad to learn or work, is probably making the best possible decision for his career, but he is not helping his community.

It does not seem, however, that there is cause for panic. Parsi women who do marry are having more than enough children to replace themselves. Moreover, the sense of community and ethnic identity is very strong in the Parsi community, a strong feeling of historical, cultural and religious pride remains. The Parsis are currently undergoing a transition in age structure; the community is presently aging and when this process is completed, the degree of the population decline should be less dramatic. It seems to me that fears of the Parsi community someday dying out are unjustified.



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Can Anyone Convert?

Interviews by Feroza Paymaster
and Jeroo Gorimar

In the historic *Petit vs Jeejeebhoy* case of 1908, the Bombay High Court ruled, "The Zoroastrian religion does admit and enjoin conversion." As Justice Daver noted, "A Zoroastrian need not necessarily be Parsi. Any one who professes the religion promulgated by Zoroaster—be he an Englishman, Frenchman or American—becomes a Zoroastrian the moment he is converted to the faith . . . the word Zoroastrian simply denotes the religion of the individual; the word Parsi denotes his nationality or community and has no religious significance whatever attached to it." Nearly all the community trusts (agiaries, dokhmas, scholarships etc.), require the beneficiaries to be both Parsi and Zoroastrian. Thus people who convert cannot avail of the trust benefits unless they are also Parsis, and a Parsi is one who is born of a Parsi father.



Dr. Aspy Rana, 44, Chairman, Dept. of Government & Politics, University of Baroda

"There would probably be more disadvantages than advantages if we were to throw open our doors to conversion. If we wish to spread our religion and enlarge our community, the acceptance of converts is the natural corollary. But if one's position is to preserve intact the ethnicity of our race, conversion would swamp our sub-cultural identity."

Rana feels that the issue is "of some significance to the community because we are small in size and our survival depends upon the ethnic homogeneity we are able to maintain. Conversion would result in more Zoroastrians, but not necessarily convinced Zoroastrians. My impression of conversions in India makes me

feel that material benefits and improving social status are the motivating factors. On the other hand, we need fresh blood because inbreeding has resulted in a poor mutation of the species. On paper, selective conversion may be a way out, but it would be very difficult to implement. What could be the criteria and how could we do it without being charged with discrimination?

"We have been respected in India because we have never been a proselytizing community; most Parsis are proud of their distinctive identity within a multi-ethnic society. This issue could split the community into two, and become another futile controversy."



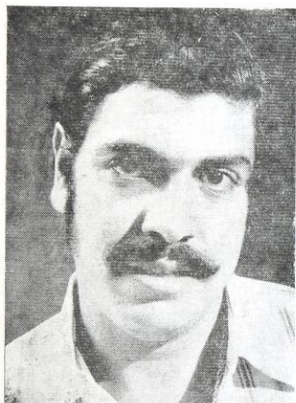
Nelly Kavarana, age not given, Secretary, Ciba Geigy of India

"I'm all for it, provided those who convert follow the rules and regulations of our religion. If the law is not relaxed gradually, in a few years there will be no Parsis left and our agiaris will be empty.

"I don't know what the law says," notes Ms Kavarana "but I think the majority of Parsis would be against, rather than for, conversion. In the case of intercaste marriages the bar creates a lot of problems. For instance in Rajkot, a Parsi who married a Hindu girl has been stopped from entering

the fire temple. Why should we be so selfish? If a person wants to follow the partner's faith or feels he will find peace and harmony in our religion, he should be accepted. Why should we feel that people are converting for material benefits? In fact they will add to our dwindling funds.

"Religion should be a matter of personal choice. There should be no force, or door-to-door canvassing. I think very few would want to switch religions. I for one would never change mine."



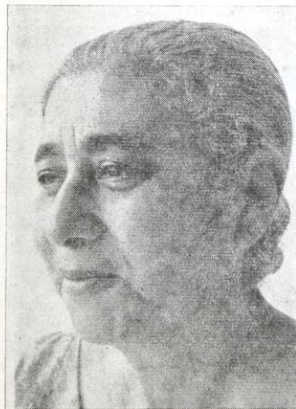
Darius Dastur, 21, Third Officer, P & O Steam Navigation Co.

"There is no law which says you can't convert. As far as I know, the religion was given by Zoroaster to the world. Those who accepted it were known as Zoroastrians.

"Unfortunately in this country Zoroastrianism has become a closed shop affair. Our religion is like a precious book which has become moth-eaten because nobody reads it." Darius feels that reforms are needed because "there is too much inbreeding and the children are not strong genetically. You shouldn't

make an election campaign out of it, but whoever wants to, should be allowed to convert. They should also be entitled to the whole works—trusts, agiaris, the towers of silence; only a minority may be tempted by material benefits.

"The story goes that we promised not to convert anyone when we landed in India. So we segregated ourselves for twelve centuries. We could continue like this for another century—and die out."



Roda Tata, 60, Housewife

"It's not possible. Even Zoroaster didn't convert everybody—only Persians. If you're born into a certain religion you should stick to it. A Parsi is one who is born of a Parsi, and the orthodox wouldn't like any changes. If a person loses faith in his own religion, then today he will jump into Hinduism, tomorrow into Christianity; this shows instability.

"The law should be relaxed in the case of Parsi women who marry out of the community or Parsi couples who adopt non-Parsi child-

ren. The navjotes of these children should be performed at the age of seven, so that they are full-fledged Zoroastrians. This way our numbers would increase and quality wouldn't deteriorate."

Ms Tata feels people often change their faith for the sake of convenience. "The Christians have vast funds and when you convert they help you. I wouldn't stop other people from converting. But I wouldn't change my own religion because there must be some reason why God made me a Parsi."



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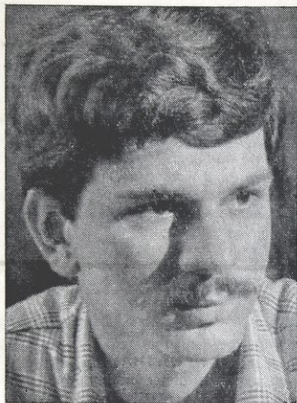
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Hormaz Irani, 19, Student, Burhani College of Commerce and Economics

"Of course. If a person likes the preachings of a religion, he should be allowed to follow it. Before Zoroaster there were no Zoroastrians. He converted people and started a new religion. If we took in more people, the community would get a great push—not immediately, but with the years our numbers would increase.

"When we first came to India we probably accepted converts," says Hormaz. "The law does not prevent conversion, but it's not the practice here. In Iran, Muslims often convert to Zoroastrianism.

Most people only give up the religion they are born into if they are deeply inspired by another religion. They wouldn't convert just for the funds. Of course converts, if they are needy, should be allowed to use our trust funds. Children of mixed marriages should be taught the principles of both faiths and be allowed to choose the one they prefer.

"I like being a Zoroastrian and I think it's the best for me, but I wouldn't force anyone to follow my religion."



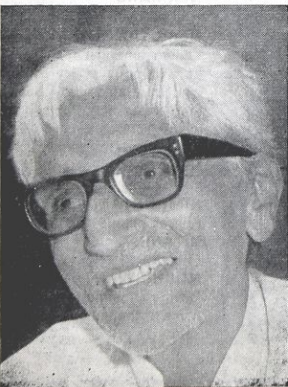
Armaity Sanga, 27, Secretary, Citibank, N.A.

"Why not? The custom says it is out of the question for anyone to convert but if individuals took it upon themselves, the law would follow suit."

Armaity favours conversion as she feels "the Parsis are too inter-linked. We are a minority and are declining numerically. Girls are marrying out of the community. Conversion will keep us on level. I wouldn't go out and canvass for converts. I don't think religion should be seeped into people. It

must come from within the individual.

"If someone accepts the faith, they should avail of the trust benefits. But I don't think many people would convert to our religion because it's too full of rules and regulations. People convert if they find some sort of attachment or they get married or they are disgusted with their family. I wouldn't convert, I like my religion."



Dr. Rustom Batliwala, 77, Retired

"If you are born into a religion you should stick to it. By planting the seed of a mango you cannot get a *chikoo*. What's the point of taking in any Tom, Dick or Harry? Quality is more important than numbers.

"Zoroaster didn't convert other races. His followers were Mazdayanis whom he put on the right path. When we came to India 1,300 years ago, we promised Jodi Rana that we wouldn't convert any of his people. It hasn't become a law, but it is a principle."

Batliwala feels people would

convert for the sake of convenience, not out of love for the religion. "Those who want to, can follow the principles of Zoroastrianism. But they shouldn't wear a sudrah and kusti, enter an agiary or avail of our funds—they can't become Parsis; a Parsi is one who is born of Parsi parents. As for Parsi women who marry out, their husbands would insist on bringing up the children in their own religion. Religion is transmitted from parents to children. So if you accept people from other communities it's not the same"

Mahburzin, Mahdat, Mahmeher

In this issue Parsiana publishes the list of male names from "M" to "Z".

All the names are of Iranian origin.

In some cases we have furnished the Avestan (Av.), Pahlavi (Pahl.) and Cuneiform (Cun.) forms. Some of the spellings may seem unusual to readers, but they approximate as closely as

possible to the pronunciation in the original languages.

The list is not comprehensive and readers are requested to draw omissions and errors to our attention so that corrections may be incorporated in our next issue and in the proposed book of names. We extend our thanks to the several scholars of Avesta and Pahlavi

whose assistance made this project possible. The responsibility for any shortcomings is entirely ours.

Parsiana staffers Sanobar Marker, Pervin Mahoney, Veera Parbhu and Veera Patel worked on the project. Alphabet illustrations designed by Manjula Padmanabhan. All rights reserved.



MAHBURZIN

Exalted moon

MAHDAT

Created by the moon

MAHMEHER

The moon and the sun ; the month of Meher

MAHNAHID

The moon and Saturn

MAHRASPAND

Holy word ; name of an angel ; name of the 29th day of the month

MAHRUY

Moon faced

MAHVANDAD

Name of a commentator on the Pahlavi Vendidad

MAHVIR

Moon hero

MAHYAR

One whose friend is the moon

MANUSH

Intelligence

MANUSHKHUNARF,

MANUSHKHURNER

Hero of the heavenly sun ; an ancestor of Zarathushtra ; name of the father of the Pishdadian King Minocheher

MARDAN,

MARDANSHAH

King of men ; name of a nephew and son-in-law of Darius 1

MARDASP

Name of the pious father of Zohak

MARDBUD

Chief amongst men

MARZBAN

Governor of the frontier ; margrave

MEDIOMAH

Middle of the month ; cousin and first disciple of Zarathushtra ; Av. *Maidyoi maongha*

MEHBAZU

Arm of the angel Meher

MEHBUD

Chief of a country ; name of a trusted relative of King Kobad

MEHER

Mithra, the sun ; love, friendship ; pact, contract bond ; name of an angel ; name of the 16th day and seventh month

MEHERAB

Lustre of friendship ; name of a king of Kabul who was the father of Rudabeh, mother of Rustam

MEHERABAD

Made prosperous by Meher ; city of Meher

MEHERAFSHAN

Devoted in love

MEHERAK

Like Meher ; name of a hero, the father-in-law of King Shapur 1

MEHERAN

Name of the head of one of the seven illustrious Sassanian families

MEHERASP

Friendly horse ; name of a chamberlain of King Xerxes

MEHERBAKHSH

Gift of Meher

MEHERBAN,

MEHERWAN

Kind, friendly ; name of a noted scribe

MEHERBURZIN

Exalted Meher ;

name of a son of Farhad

MEHERDAD

Created, given by Meher ; Cun. *Mithradata*

MEHERGAN

The second most important festival in Iran after Navroz even today, occurring in the month of Meher

MEHERNARSEH

Name of the prime minister of King Behram V, also known as Behram Gor

MEHERNOSH

Immortal Meher

MEHEROJ,

MEHERUZ

Day of light and love

MEHERSAN

Looking like Meher

MEHERYAR

Friend of love

MEHERZAD

Born of the sun

MINOCHEHER

Of spiritual or heavenly appearance ; born of a heroic family ; name of a Pishdadian king ; Av. *Manushchithra*

MINOO

Spiritual, heavenly, divine

MOHOR

Moon ; Av. *Mah* ; name of the 12th day of the month

MUNAJAM

Astrologer

MURAD

Wish, desire

MURDAD

Immortality ; later form of *Amardad*



NADIR

Excellent

NADIRSHAH

Excellent king

NAMDAR

Keeper of the illustrious name ; famed

NANABHAY

Younger brother

NAORUZ

New year's day

NAOSHAD

New joy

NAOTAR, NAVDAR, NAVZAR

Younger, newer ; one of the three sons of Minocheher ; Av. *Naozara*, Pers *Naozar*

NAOZAD

New-born

NARIMAN

Manly minded ;

Av. *Nairemanah* ; epithet of the hero Kersasp, ancestor of Zal and Rustam

NARIMANZADEH

Born of the family of Nariman

NARSEH

Name of the sons of Shapur I and Yazdgerd I

NAZBAN

Protector of gracefulness

NEKCHEHER

Having a good disposition, nature, appearance

NEKDIL

Good hearted

NEKMARD

A good man

NERIOSANGH

Known amongst men ; name of a famous priest of India who translated into Sanskrit the Avesta and Pahlavi texts in the 12th century ; abbreviated to Narseh

NEVAZAR

Intrepid as fire

NIMRUSTAM

Half as mighty as Rustam

NITASH

Cheerful

NOSHIRWAN

Having an immortal soul ; name of the famous Sassanian king

NOSHZAD, NUSHZAD

Born immortal

NOTRIGA

Name of the third brother of Zarathushtra

NUSH

Immortal ; elixir ; antidote ; shortened form of *Anosh*

NUSHADAR, NUSHAZAR

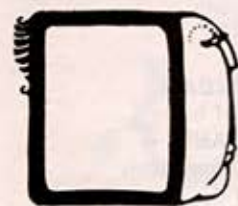
Fire of life ; name of a son of Azar Afruz, son of Mehernosh, son of the hero Aspandiyar

NUWAZISH

Gift given by God

NUVED, NIVED

Good news

**ORVADASP**

Possessing swift horses

**PABAND**

Secured

PAHLAWAN, PAHALVAN

Hero ; warrior

PAITIRASPA, PETERASP

Name of Zarathushtra's grandfather

PAKTAN

Having a pure body

PALASH

Name of a king

PARASTAR

Adorer, worshipper ; name of a learned Mobed of Patna

PARWEZ, PARVEZ,**PARVIZ, PERWEZ,****APARVIZ**

Victorious ; an epithet of King Khusru II

PASANGH

Name of King Afrasiab's father

PASHIN

Forward, advanced ;

name of King Kaikobad's son

PEROZ, PERECH, PIRUZ

Victorious ;

name of a Sassanian king

PEROZSHAH

Victorious ruler

PESHOTAN

Wisely active, devoted ; one of the sons of King Gushtasp ;

Av. *Pishishyaothna*

PESI

Short form of Peshotan

PIL

Elephant

PILSAM

Terror of an elephant ; name of a son of King Afrasiab, killed by Rustam

PILTAN

Having an elephant-like physique ; epithet of Rustam

PIR

Old man ; grey

PIRAK

Belonging to Pir.

PIRAN

Revered ; the wise minister of King Afrasiab

PIRANGUSHNASP,**PIRGUSHNASP**

Having old, male horses

PISHAN

Predecessors

PISHKAR

Zealous in his duty

PISHKASIR

Head of a profession or guild

PISNANGH

Name of a son of King Kaikobad

POREGAVE

Having abundant cattle ; name of King Faredun's ancestor

POURUSHASPA

Having grey horses

PULAD, POLAD

Steel

PULADVAND

Steel-like

**RAHAM**

Name of a son of Gudarz or Godrej

RAM

Joyfulness, peace ; name of the 21st day of the month

RAMBAX

Bestower of joy

RAMBEXISHT

Joyful heaven

RAMBURZIN

Exalted joy

RAMDIN

Joy of religion

RAMGUSHNASP

Joy in possessing a stallion

RAMIN

Joyful

RAMISHT

Most joyful

RAMYAR

Friend of joyfulness

RANGUSHTAR

Name of the second elder brother of Zarathushtra

RANJISHN

Name of an ancestor of Zarathushtra

RASHID

One who has attained salvation

RASHNA

Justice ; name of an angel ; name of the 18th day of the month

RATUSHTAR

Brother of Zarathushtra

RAYOMAND

Full of glory

RINVIZ

Warrior

ROINTAN, ROYINTAN,**RUINTON**

Having a body of brass, i.e. invulnerable ; an epithet of Aspandiyar

ROSHAN

Bright, shining ; name of a scholar mentioned in the Pahlavi *Vendidad*

ROZAFZUN

Prosperous day

ROZBAHAR

Spring day

ROZMEHER

Day of love and light

RUHI

Soul

RUMI

Of Rome, Greece and Byzantium

RUSHAD

One whose soul is joyous, i.e. deceased

RUSTAM

Name of the celebrated hero of Iran ; strong and well built ; Pahl. *Rotastahm* : "I am freed", the words spoken by Rustam's mother at his birth, for he was the size of a one-year-old

RUZBEH, RUZEVEH

Good day

**SAEN**

Summit ; one of the foremost disciples of Zarathushtra

SAHI

Straight

SALAMAT

Secure, safe

SAM, SAHAM,**SAHEM, SHAHAM**

Name of Kersasp's grandfather ; name of Zal's father

SARAFRAZ

Conqueror ; one whose head is high

SAROSH, SARUSH**SORUSH**

Obedience ; Av. *Sraosha* ; name of an angel ; name of the 17th day of the month

SAROSHYAR

Friend to obedience

SARVAZAD

Noble like a cypress

SARVIN

Tall like a cypress

SASAN

Name of the grandfather of King Ardashir Babakan

SELAM

A son of Faredun

SHAH

King

SHAHAK

A princeling

SHAHAN

Belonging to a king

SHAHANSHAH

King of Kings

SHAHBEHRAM

Victorious king

SHAH DAN

Royal gift

SHAHEN

Royal

SHAHFIRUZ

Victorious king

SHAHJEHAN

King of the world ; name of a Moghul emperor

SHAHMARD

Royal person

SHAHMARDAN

Of the family of Shahmard

SHAHPUR, SHAPUR

Son of a king

SHAHREN

Belonging to the realm

SHAHREVAR

Divine power; best rule; the third *Amahraspand* (arch-angel); name of an angel, name of the fourth day and sixth month

SHAHROAKH, SHARUKH

Having a royal face

SHAHRUD

Royal river

SHAHRYAR

Sovereign, ruler, lord

SHAHRZAD

Prince of the realm

SHAHVIR

Royal hero

SHAHZAD

Of royal birth; prince

SHAHZEMAN

Famous, honoured person

SHEHERAZAD

Independent, free

SHEHERBARAZ

Exalted person of the realm;

name of a general of King

Khusru Parviz

SHERFIRUZ

Victorious lion

SHERGIR

One who holds the lion

SHERSHAH

King of lions

SHIDASP

Possessing shining horses;

name of the son of Tur,

son of King Jamshed

SHIDUSH

Shining shoulder; name of the

son of Gudarz; a disciple of

Azar Kaevan

SHIRMARD

Lion-like man

SHIROY

Lion-faced;

son of King Khusru Parviz

SHIRVANSHAH

Lion-like; name of the kings

of the Shirvan dynasty

SHIRZAD

Born of a lion

SIYAKHSH,**SIYAKHSHAN,****SIYAX, SIYUSH**

One who possesses black

stallions; name of the great-

grandson of King Kaykavus

and father of Kaykhusru;

Av. *Syavarshana*

SMARDIS, SMERDIS

Exalted; *Bardiya* in the Cuneiform

inscriptions

SOHRAB, SOHRKHAB

Having glowing features;

illustrious; name of the son

of Rustam

SPENTODAD

Created by the holy spirit;

Av. *Spento data*

SPITAMAN

White, pure; name of Zarathushtra's ancestor of the family of Spitama

SPITYUR

One who possesses white

lambs; name of a brother of

King Jamshed; Av. *Spityura*

SRIROXNA

Having beautiful oxen

STIVANT

Steadiness, security

SURIN

War-like, brave; name of a

warrior family of ancient Iran;

Pahl. *Suren*

SUROYAZAT

Valiant angel

SYAMAK

Name of a son of Gayomard

**TAHM**

Brave, valiant

TAHMASP, TUMASP

Having strong horses

TAHMTON

Strong-bodied

TAHMURASP,**TAHMURAS**

A strong body; Av. *Takma*

Urupa; name of the second

Pishdadian king; son of King

Hoshang

TAJ

Crown

TAKHMASPADA

One who has an army of

heroes; name of a general of

Darius I

TAMUR

Name of a son of the hero

Barzu; shortened form of

Tahmuras

TESHTAR

Sirius; Av. *Tishtrya*; name of

an angel; name of the 13th

day and fourth month

TEZ

Sharp; quick

TEZASP

Having swift horses

TEZRAV

Quick moving

TEZYARSHTI

Holding a piercing spear;

name of King Gushtasp's

brother

THRITAK

Third; Avestan name of

Kersasp's father, so called as

he was the third son;

Av. *Thrita*, Pahl. *Saret*, Pers.

Asrat

TIGRAN

Shooting an arrow; name of

two Ashkenian kings of

Armenia

TIR

Arrow; the planet Mercury

TIRANDAZ

Thrower of arrows, archer

TIRDAD

Created by Tir; name of

Ashkenian kings

TOKHARE

Belonging to the country of

Tokhar; name of one of the

sons of the hero Framarz

TUS

Contented, satisfied; name

of a heroic son of the

Pishdadian King Naozar

**UKHSHAN**

Ox

UPAMANA

High minded; name of a

angel

URVAKHSHA

Joyful, cheerful; brother of

the hero Kersasp

URVATATNARA

Man of perfection;

second son of Zarathushtra

USHAH

Dawn; morning light

USHTAVAD

Having bliss

USHTAWAITI

Blissful

**VAFADAR**

Faithful; in whom one

may believe

VALAKHSH, VALASH,**BALASH, PALASH**

Names of Ashkenian and

Sassanians; kings

VANITAR

Conqueror

VARAZ

Boar

VARAZDAD

Giver of boars

VARDANIS

Of a brave family

VEER

Hero

VEHWARD

A good man; Pers.

Behward

VIFRANAVAZ

Wise boatman; name of one

who was flown into space in

the form of a bird, lost his

way and prayed to

Ardivisura who safely

returned him to earth

VISHNASP

Possessing a stallion; Av.

Gushnasp

VISHTASPA

Having ready horses;

Avestan form of Gushtasp;

Kayanian patron-king of

Zarathushtra

VISPANFRYA

Beloved of all

VOHUKHSHTHRA

Good sovereignty, power

VOURUNEMANGHA

Of wide homage

VOHU-USHTRA

Having good camels

VOHUPERES

Good inquirer

**WEHAFRID**

Well created; later form is

Behafid

WEHSHAPUR

Good prince

WEHZAN

Well born ; older form of Bezan

**XERXES**

King

**YADGAR**

A memento, remembrance

YAKDAST

One hand ; name of a celebrated one-handed Turanian warrior who fought with Rustam

YAMA, YIMA

Older form of Jam, Jamshed

YAVISHT

Young

YAZAD, YAZD

Angel ; worshipful ; Av. Yazata

YAZDANDAD

Created by angels

YAZDANSETAE

Worshipper of angels

YAZDEZAD

Born of an angel

YAZDGERD

Created by angels ; names of the Sassanian kings

YAZDYAR, YAZDANYAR

Friend of angels

YAZDI

Shortened form of Yazdyar

**ZARAYANGH**

Sea

ZARAZDAITI

Relying on, trusting

ZADHORMAZD

Born of Hormazd

ZADMIHR

Born of Meher

ZADSPARAM

Born as sweet as basil ; brother of Manushcheher,

High-Priest of Pars and

Kirman**ZAHAN**

World

ZAL

Old man ; name of Rustam's father, who had

white hair at birth

ZAOSH

Willing

ZAR

Gold

ZARAN

Golden

ZARATHUSHTRA

Possessing yellow camels ;

Greek *Zoroaster* meaning

golden star

ZARD

Yellow

ZARIAB

Sea water

ZARIR

Having a golden breast-plate ;

name of a valiant brother

of King Gushtasp

ZARMAN

Old man ; old age

ZARMEHER

Exalted love, great

friendship ; shortened form

of Buzargmehr

ZARVAN, ZURVAN

Time

ZAVAREH

Name of a brother of Rustam

ZIRAK

Clever, intelligent, wise

ZIRAKZADEH

Wise born

ZINAWAR

Having weapons

ZINDEH

Alive

ZINDEHDIL

Having an active heart

ZOHAK

Burning ; an evil king of

Persia

ZREH

Sea

ZUBINHelper ; Av. *Uzava*

A list of additional names will be carried in the next issue. Space for the four pages of names in this issue is donated by :

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COMMENT

The Mystery of my Mother

By Homi Engineer

Mother would probably have been the last person to claim that there was something special about her. For Maneckbai Irani was a simple soul, mild and self-effacing, no different from millions of good mothers the world over. And yet her family knew that this quiet lady possessed a power that none of us have been able to fathom to this day.

One episode particularly stands out in my memory: that unhappy afternoon in May 1930, when father and I returned from the Drigh Road Aerodrome near Karachi after congratulating Manmohan Singh on his successful solo flight from England to India. There had been no news for days from my brother, Air Marshal Aspy Engineer, who flying over the same route, had clearly been beaten in the £500 prize Aga Khan race for the first Indian to fly solo between England and India. To our surprise, Mother on hearing of Singh's arrival, quietly remarked, "I am so glad he has arrived safely, but Aspy will win the prize."

Shortly thereafter, we sighed with relief to learn that Aspy would be landing at Karachi the very next day. Mother was there to welcome him with a warm embrace and a "Fateh (Success), my son!" She then performed the time-honoured ceremony with the coconut, *tila* (red mark on the forehead) and rice, to celebrate the occasion.

Mother had never been known to be wrong in her predictions in the past. But her assurance that Aspy would win, flew in the face of reality. We tried our best to be patient when she kept insisting on a palpable impossibility...until a telegram from the Royal Aero Club, London, informed Aspy that he had

been awarded the Aga Khan Prize. Singh had been disqualified on a technicality.

Mother believed implicitly in kismet, or destiny. In her daily communion with God, she could sense with uncanny certitude whenever important events were in store for her loved ones. At the time of Aspy's solo flight, she had received strong positive responses of joy. That is why she never wavered in her belief that her son would win. "And in this case," she explained, "a forty-year-old prophecy is involved, which makes it next to impossible for Aspy not to win the Aga Khan's 500 pounds."

She then recalled how her father,



Rustom Aga, had been Persian tutor to the young Aga Khan. As a token of his special esteem, the Islamic prince had sent him a chest of gold coins, more money than Grandfather had earned in a long life of hardship. Despite the entreaties of his large family and the appeal of the Aga Khan himself, Grandfather had steadfastly refused to touch the gift, as a matter of principle.

In frustration, the Aga Khan had turned on the proud patriarch uttering the following prophecy: "Mastersaheb! Perhaps you will not accept what is mine today; but some day if not you, then a descendant of yours will accept my money on your behalf." Grandfather was profoundly moved by the young man's intense sincerity and had replied: "If he is worthy of it, then my soul will be happy. Amen!"

"So you see," Mother ended, "Aspy had to win to make Grandpa's soul happy." The Aga Khan himself had been astonished to learn that the winner was a grandson of his revered Persian tutor.

Mother also believed in the power of her prayers to ward off, if at all possible, the crueler blows of fate. When she sensed that her prayers would be unavailing, she steelled herself to face the inevitable. Standing as a sort of guardian angel over her flock, Mother's life was

Please turn to page 43



Minoo, Aspy and Rohinton at a chance get-together during World War II.

Unfortunate Relics

By Noshir H. Vajifdar

"Ashem vohū
vahištemasti
ushtastushtamai
isntai Ashem...."



Nature hailed Zarathushtra at his birth as an *Athravan*—the honoured fire-priest of the Avestan period. Ahura Mazda himself took this term to define one of his names. But today, the distant descendant of the *Athravan* is a hapless, indigent member of society.

In seeking a solution for his plight we miss the wood for the trees. We fail to realise that we are steeped in prayers, rituals and institutions which are out of step with our times. Orthodoxy dies hard but what reason cannot change, time will alter willy nilly. Who would have said fifty years ago that one out of every five Parsi marriages would be "mixed" or that about half the community would no longer offer prayers to their Maker?

Our priests are mainly required to perform religious ceremonies, to pray for others (including the dead) and to attend to the duties connected with fire-temples. Since priests and prayers are so closely linked, three fundamental questions should be considered: how a priest prays, what he prays and why he prays.

We are familiar with how a priest prays. He generally recites from memory what neither he nor his patron (if present) understands, as the prayers are in a dead language; and he recites mechanically what he memorized in his youth, without any feeling and without much attention to the meaning, pronunciation and punctuation of the prayers. Let us take the example of a simple prayer of Arabic origin: "Oh my Lord! If I worship Thee from fear of hell, burn me in hell; if I worship Thee from hope of paradise, exclude me thence; if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."

To say this prayer with the feeling it deserves, would take about 15 seconds. But if we say it in five

seconds, pay no attention to the punctuation and run the words together in one fast sprint, then this is the result: "Homailad eveiavarsi theyfarm ferroell bunminell anifeeyarsi theyfarm opodise seelmeeduns...."

One has only to listen to the usual, mutilated recital of the *Yatha Ahu Vairyō* and the *Ashem Vohu*, when they occur repeatedly in our longer prayers, to realize the truth of the matter. A deep breath and then a cascade of words as long as the breath lasts, then another deep breath and a continuation of the process, until the prayer ends. The pauses for punctuation and meaningful intonation are only for fussy scholars.

As to what the priests pray, they have no choice. The schedule is laid down for them to follow. There was a time when the *Vandidad* ceremony, entailing the recital of the entire *Vandidad* used to be performed. Even Dastur Maneck Dhalla, the profound Zoroastrian scholar, once had it performed in his youth. When he realised that the *Vandidad* is only a book of laws and codes of conduct, including instructions on how to dispose of cut hair, nails and corpses or what number of whip lashes to inflict for various types of crime, he realised his folly and never had the ceremony performed again. The crowning irony is that the *Vandidad* ceremony is held to be the prerogative of the higher grade of priest, *maratab*, while the junior *navar* is prevented from performing it.

Even the modern translations, now freely available, of the *Khordeh Avesta* show how repetitive and even irrelevant most of our prayers are, for example, "May the Chief Priest (*zaota*) recite the *Yatha Ahu Vairyō* and his associate (*rathvi*) recite *Atha Ratush Ashat-chit Hacha*".

This phrase appears over and over again in several prayers.

Another example is the recitation of the *Gathas*, the Prophet's original writings in concentrated verse. They are full of philosophical import and to expound their deep wisdom, Jatindra Mohan Chatterji wrote 800 pages in his volume, *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra*. The *Gathas* are not entirely prayers and should not be recited by rote. They are philosophical treatises to be cogently understood.

As to why priests pray, the answer is obvious: to make a living. They are merely professionals like doctors, lawyers or accountants. They pray out of material necessity, and to satisfy the needs of those who are not prepared to pray themselves. Their prayers are usually devoid of fervour, feeling and enthusiasm.

The modern generation demands that the priest act as a moral preceptor and a spiritual ministrant to the soul. They do not want him to act as an intercessor between the layman and Ahura Mazda, purchasing paradise for the dead through elaborate ritual and penitential prayers. Devotion is the first requisite of prayer. Where there is no devotion, there is no religion.

Our priests are unfortunate relics, the victims of an obsolete system which we have failed to change, and probably never will, until it dies a natural death. As the priests themselves have prophesied, there may be no mobeds left in twenty years. At that time we may eventually learn to pray what the heart feels and yearns.

About the author: Noshir H. Vajifdar, a retired State Bank official who lives in Ootacamund, is the author of "Let Us Pray—to Ahura Mazda," a collection of prayers in English with an exposition on Zoroastrianism.

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Mother—Continued from page 41
full of forebodings of disasters to be countered as best she could, and joys to be thankfully accepted.

Thus, a week after Aspy won the prize, Mother asked him to postpone a mere hop of 600 miles from Karachi to Bombay. This was totally unexpected from one who had serenely said goodbye to her 17-year-old son when he set forth in his frail, single-engined Gypsy Moth to cross seas, deserts and continents. She wanted the flight postponed until the winged symbol of the *Farohar* was redrawn on both sides of the newly silvered fuselage. However, there was no time to do this for Aspy had to leave to attend the Governor's reception in his honour at Bombay.

We returned from the airport to find Mother immersed in fervent prayer. It upset us to see her in such an agonized state. Later, when Bombay telegraphed to enquire why Aspy had not turned up, we became really frightened and as usual turned to Mother for solace. Seeing the tranquility on her face we took heart; it definitely ruled out a tragedy.

Aspy had crashed midway, near the little town of Bhuj, and was

lucky to be alive. Had he taken the normal precaution of buckling his safety belt, he would have been crushed in the diminutive cockpit. Instead, he was flung clear and knocked unconscious, but sustained no serious injuries. Aspy himself could not explain what force prevented him from fastening the seat belt in his moment of danger.

Surely, by now, one would imagine we would think twice before disregarding Mother, however irrational her advice might appear to be. Unfortunately we had yet to learn our lesson. This was when Aspy decided to compete for the second Aga Khan Prize, for the first Indian to fly between India and South Africa.

While preparations were under way, one of the competitors, Murad, suddenly took off from Karachi. There was little time to lose if Aspy was to overtake him. To our dismay Mother pressed for postponement for another day, explaining that Aspy would otherwise be in great danger. Despite grave misgivings, Father backed Aspy against further delay.

Aspy ran head-on into one of the severest storms ever to hit the Persian Gulf. With fuel running low

and uncertain of his bearings, he was driven to land in near zero visibility with no modern aids to guide him. His luck held as he gingerly descended, till he found that he had landed in water! But the plane refused to sink. Aspy had actually landed in a shallow marsh on the very edge of the Persian Gulf, not far from the oil city of Abadan. Ironically, Murad also crashed about the same time.

As evidence of Mother's astonishing prescience multiplied, I found the supernatural aspect somewhat bewildering. She continued to foretell with frightening accuracy many events that came to pass. Among these were Aspy's parachute escape from a burning plane in 1933, the date and tragic circumstances of her beloved husband's death in 1935, a difficult period I was to encounter in my life, and the safety and success of my five brothers in the armed forces during World War II. Indeed, she ended up as one of the few mothers with three sons awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

As time passed, I became more and more fatalistic about the inevitability of Mother's predictions as evidenced by the following episode. I was a construction officer stationed

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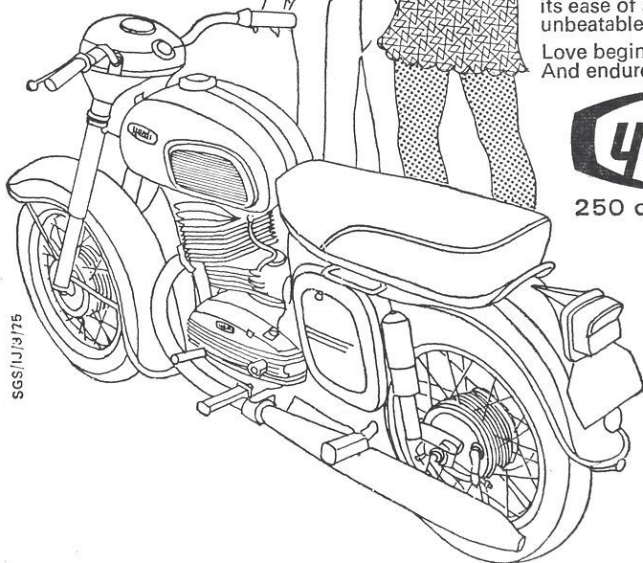
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at Bombay when orders were received in June 1942 posting me to an out of the way place. I hated the idea of leaving my favourite city, and tried my best to avoid doing so. At the eleventh hour, I appealed to Mother for help. At first she demurred, as no major issue of life or death was involved, but finally gave in to my pleas.

When I heard Mother's voice turn towards God, a feeling of peace and security arose within me. At the same time, I felt a bit guilty, not only for trying to get help from a higher Power whom I could not completely accept, but for driving my mother into such a difficult position on so petty an issue.

When she finished praying, I hesitantly approached her for an indication as to whether the prayers had evoked a responding echo. Mother slowly turned toward me with that serene smile I knew so well. "Do not pack your bags, Homi. You will not be leaving Bombay." I was overjoyed, since I knew that it had to be so, though I hadn't the faintest notion how.

Then, on the very day I was to hand over charge, I ran into the new boss, (Sir) Percy Edmunds,

who had arrived unexpectedly in town. When I mentioned that it was my last day in Bombay, he asked whether I was looking forward to my new posting. I replied "No", and before I could put in a plea, he summarily directed that I continue in the same post. This impromptu scene in the office vestibule seemed to have been laid on by some unseen Director purely for my benefit!

Maneckbai Irani had a noble and generous nature. She would never speak ill of anybody, except as a mother trying to protect her dear ones. Time and again, she would tactfully caution me against many of my friends, whose sincerity I never doubted. I soon learned from experience, sometimes bitter, to heed her findings.

The mystery behind this astonishing lady will perplex me to the end of my days. Many other people have displayed ESP, extra-sensory perception; still others have been gifted with intuition about future events. But few have been granted the otherworldly power to apparently deflect Destiny from its chosen path. To me, Mother was a virtuoso in all three directions—her main

instrument, the timeless creed of Zarathushtra, Prophet of ancient Persia, now but a flickering shadow of its past greatness.

Perhaps, in the centuries to come, researchers will be able to decipher the field surrounding a highly charged, complex, human personality, a field that can bring kismet into resonance with what is fervently desired. Till then, Maneckbai and others like her, will remain enigmas to haunt us.

About the Author Homi Engineer, a 19-year resident of Canada who works with the British Columbia Telephones Co. is one of the six brothers of the noted Engineer family.

Five of the brothers, Aspy, Minoo, Jehangir, Rohinton and Rashid, have distinguished themselves in the Indian Air Force, with Aspy being at one time Chief of Air Staff, the highest position in the IAF. Jehangir was shot down during the 1967 Pakistan War; Rashid is a retired Colonel in Poona; Rohinton resigned as Group Captain and is presently in the real estate business in Vancouver; Aspy is doing business in Iran and (Air Marshal) Minoo is working in Bombay.

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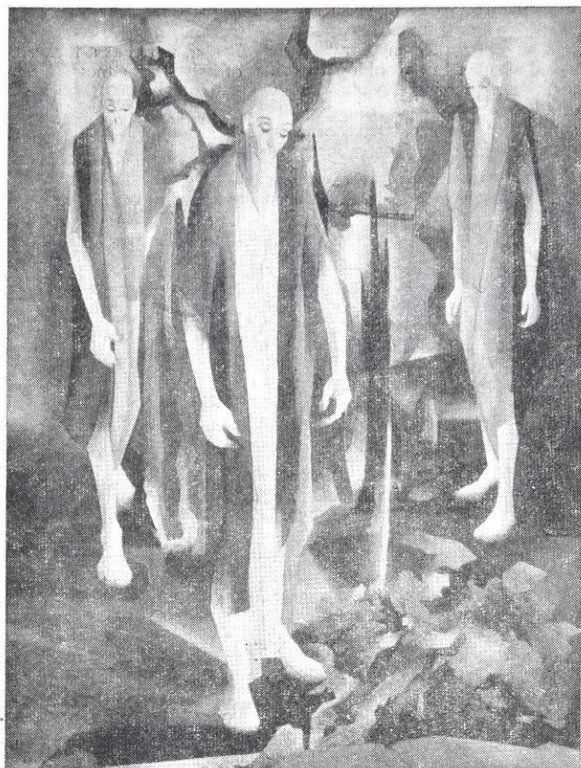
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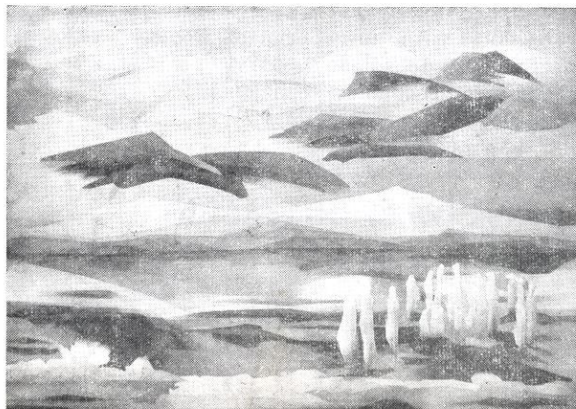
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Artist from The Middle Mist

By Geeta Doctor



From the glare of the world outside to pass into the sunless expanses of Sabavala's paintings is to deliberately shut the door on reality and enter a world of shadows. One approaches it with all the reluctance of experiencing a familiar dream which even as it repeats itself cannot but disturb us with the question of what in effect is reality.

The dream world of Jehangir Sabavala, who recently held his 10th one-man show at the Jehangir Art Gallery, is now filled with people, tall, attenuated creatures with hooded heads and hooded eyes wandering in the silent saharas of his landscape like restless seekers thirsting after the eternal questions, "Who am I? What am I doing here?" In "Wanderers in the Middle Mist", which is perhaps the most representative of this phase, there are three figures like the Magi, but indistinct and unfocused, until they seem almost like mirages in the desert. As in all his work, he has a marvellous faculty for representing distances; the eye seems to wander off even further than the normal range of sight and looks at something beyond the horizon. The three figures in his painting stand like signposts pointing to a different plane of experience. Since we do not know who they are or what they represent, it is usual to ascribe a mystical quality to them.

More than any artist of his time, Sabavala has the capacity to create an atmosphere for things unknown and unseen. And yet the very deliberate manner in which he appears to do this, makes us slightly uneasy. His manner is more that of a guide than of a visionary and for those who expect the mystic to be revealed in flashes of revelatory insight, there is something unsettling in the prosaic manner of his approach. This deliberately eschews the more dramatic modes of representation in favour of a reasoned approach.

The cerebral quality of Sabavala's work is evident even in his use of colour. Anyone who has seen a colour wheel in action, will remember how colours when rotated quickly mix and blend into a uniform white, thus proving that colours are an illusion and that there is only white light. Sabavala's palette seems to arrest this

process just at the moment when the colours are about to break down and disappear into white. He has distilled his colours and taken them to the very brink when logically, they should explode into a blinding flash of white. Whether he actually manages to achieve this or whether his paintings meander into a limbo of colourlessness is a question which can only be answered subjectively. One must, however, concede that his efforts have been guided by the severest restraint and sincerity of purpose, evidenced by the steady progression of his work. In Sabavala's case to travel hopefully is perhaps as important as it is to arrive.

* * *

"Do my paintings speak to people? Is there a conversation? Are these the reactions I am looking for?" These are some of the questions Sabavala poses to himself during an exhibition. It gives him immense pleasure, he says, to see people react in just the way he anticipates. "If it didn't speak, I would know I had failed. When you paint there is a communion between the artist and his work. If he fulfils his vision, then it reaches straight to anyone who is interested in his work.

"When a painter is young he has every right to be uneven," said the artist commenting on the criticism that there has not been any dramatic change in his work through the years. He did not feel obliged to be swept by the changing dictates of current fashions and maintained that the works of the masters show great consistency of style and approach. "I am as open as I can be at my age," he said.

"Everybody struggles. The problem is in trying to reach a personal interpretation of an emotion and give it a quality which is your own. If an artist can do this to the best of his ability and with sincerity, he cannot ask for more.

"Only very few artists can take their emotions directly onto the canvas. Van Gogh was one. But how many Van Goghs are there? In my own case I don't paint like that. For some artists their work represents a flowing outward of their emotion. I find that I am going in entirely another direction. I'm drawing into myself and looking more and more inwards."

Sabavala is contemptuous of that genre of art which makes a virtue of free expression. Art as a product of conflict is the kind of theory he considers "so immature and ridiculous" as not to be worth talking about. "An artist has only to produce some sort of a mess and say it shows great conflict.

"For me the structure is very important. I enjoy it. Like an architect I plan out my work," he said. Once he forms an idea, he works out the entire painting. If he is satisfied that it corresponds with his original vision, he starts painting. Pointing to a representation of a waterfall in which the image was cut and chiselled into different facets of colour, he revealed how each fragment interacted with the other in a carefully thought out sequence to produce the idea of continuously cascading waters.

"I have been one of the fortunate painters," says Sabavala. "I have never had any difficulty in selling my work." He strove to clarify the impression that he charged exorbitant rates and created a snob appeal for his work. The prices for his current exhibition, he noted, could not be considered too high by any standard. Far from appealing only to an elite minority, he finds that people from all walks of life respond to his work. "It has been always very important to me to know where my paintings will be housed, in what kind of institutions." When he finds that someone is very anxious to have one of his works, but cannot afford it, he is always willing to let the person pay for it in installments.

Sabavala deplores the tendency of some art critics to label artists and judge them only within their particular context. In India his work is often said to reveal too westernized a sensibility; abroad it was felt that the very colour of his paintings was the colour of India. When he exhibits in other countries he does not allow his sponsors to categorize him: "I don't like my works being coloured politically. I don't want the attitude, 'Let's help him along because India happens to be in vogue at the moment,'" he emphasizes. "All art should stay clear of politics. The only relevant commitment an artist has is to his work."

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Since the beginning of the century, women have made impressive inroads into the male-dominated world of professional Indian classical music. Though more and more male bastions now lie in ruins, a professional female tabla-player is still a comparative rarity. Among the handful of pioneers in this field is a Parsi, Aban Eruch Mistry.

"Till some time back, people hardly gave any special attention to the tabla," notes the soft-spoken and bespectacled musician who has given tabla, sitar and vocal performances all over India. "It was considered only as an instrument for *sangat* (accompaniment), never in its own right. There is no history of tabla artistes." Aban hopes to remedy this lacuna with her thesis,

Tabla and pakhawaj artistes, their styles and traditions during the last hundred years in Maharashtra. She hopes that her study, the first of its kind in India, would earn her the coveted Sangeet Pravin (PhD) degree of the Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal. Planning to meet tabla artistes in over a hundred towns and villages scattered in Maharashtra with her guru, Keki Jijina, Aban tries to coordinate her field trips with concert tours. "But it's slow work," she notes. "I first have to draw up a list of tabla artistes from Sangeet Kala Vihar magazines. These musicians often suggest that I meet others. In this way I've discovered several unknown artistes and new intricacies of bol (rhythm)."

Aban would have liked to include the whole of India in her study, but she says, "Money is my biggest problem." The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 18,150 of which she has not even managed to raise half. "Even professionals are so badly paid," she lamented, "sometimes as little as 300 rupees per show." So far she has collected a mere Rs. 3,000 from her performances. Her experience with government agencies and Parsi charity trusts has been equally unhappy. Most government agencies, instituted specifically to help aspiring artistes, "are interested only in big names," she says. "Some refused to help because I am a Parsi and told me to apply to Parsi charity trusts instead." When she applied to thirty-one such trusts, they turned down her appeal. "One of them replied that they only helped research in Western classical music!"

Both Aban and Jijina regret the Parsi community's lack of interest in Indian classical music. "My aim is to make my community interested in music," says Aban. "And I want to produce some Parsi Tansens," adds Jijina with a smile. The Swar Sadhana Samiti, founded in 1961 under the tutelage of Jijina, holds free monthly concerts and annual *sammelans* with the dual purpose of providing budding artistes with a platform, and of "tuning people's ears" to Indian classical music. Aban also teaches music at the Wadia Sangeet Class, where she has several promising Parsi pupils. "They are all very devoted," she remarks, "but could be better if they practised more. But then they have to work all day in offices for a living."

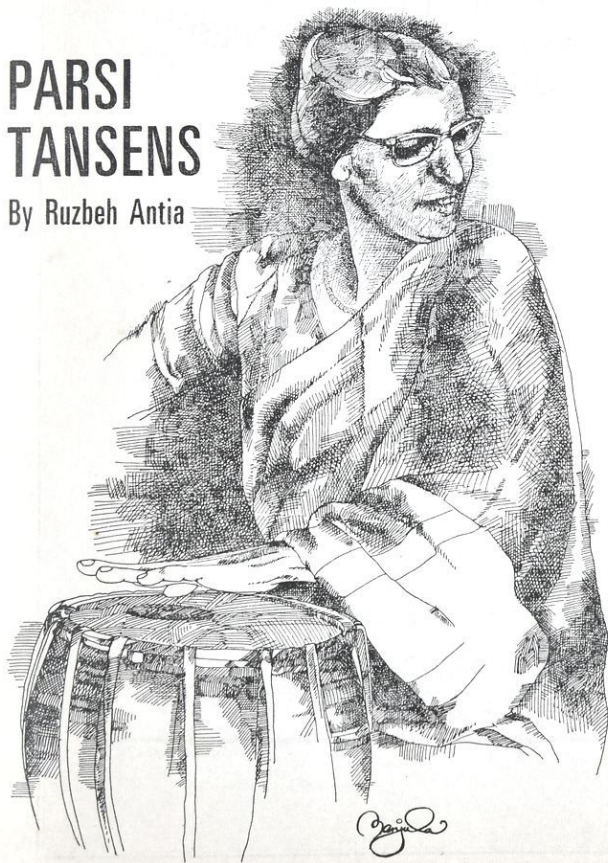
For Aban the romance with music began in the nursery when she was four and continued through her student days at the Bai M. N. Gamadia Girls High School. But her penchant for the tabla developed after a bout of appendicitis forced her to give up learning the *kathak* dance form. Deciding to make it a career, the young musician underwent a period of rigorous training with the famous tabla *navaz*, Ustad Hussein Khan.

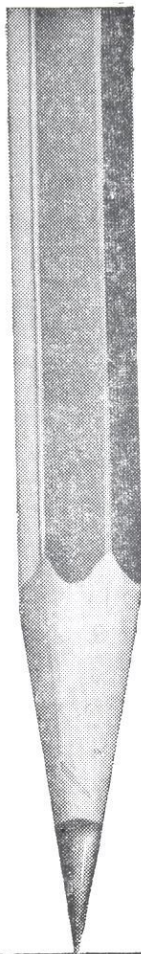
The study of Indian classical music entails hard work and expense, says Aban. "A good sitar alone costs about 2,000 rupees. Then there is *dakshina* (fees) to be given to the gurus and payments to the accompanying musicians. It is difficult even to make up the initial cost."

Please turn to page 65 col. 3

PARSI TANSENS

By Ruzbeh Antia





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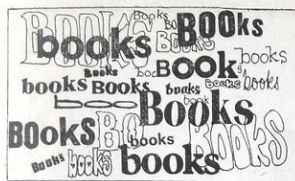


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Look Homeward

Directory & Survey Report Of The Parsis Of Navsari compiled by The Navsari Jarthosi Hunnar Udyog Kelavani Fund, 170 pages; Rs. 4.

Many years ago Navsari was a sleepy township with a population of barely 20,000. Today its numbers have increased five-fold, industries have sprung up and its suburbs are spreading. But this spiritual homeland of the Parsis which produced great scholars, priests and pioneers such as Dadabhoy Naoroji, Jamshedji Tata and Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, is being deserted by the community. No longer do the streets hum with religious activity; the Vadi Dar-e-Mehr, whose doors were never locked from without, now stand closed at night. And the Navsari Parsi population, which was 6,000 strong at the turn of the century, is today half that figure.

To throw light on the problems of this Gujarati city, the Navsari Jarthosi Hunnar Udyog Kelavani Fund under the direction of its president, Shapur Vajifdar, compiled a *Directory and Survey Report of the Parsis of Navsari*, 1974. Published in Gujarati and priced at Rs 4, the report provides substantial information on the socio-economic condition of the Parsis plus a summary and interpretation of statistics by Dr. Ratan Marshall of the Surat Parsi Panchayat. Several of the articles dwell nostalgically on past glories but the story that the sheaf of statistics conveys is discouraging and reflects demographic trends in the Parsi community as a whole.

The Navsari population, according to the Survey, is not a viable one and is bound to dwindle. There are 729 families comprising 2,326 individuals. Seventeen per cent of the population is under the age of 15 and 39 per cent is over 51 years old. That means only 44 per cent of the Parsis are

in the earning bracket—a group which is diminishing—for Bombay lures many young people with its greater job opportunities and the attractions of metropolitan life.

But there is no reason why the migration from Gujarat cannot be stemmed. Navsari and Surat, which are separated by a distance of only 20 miles, are growing industrially, and the neighbouring industrial complex of Udhna is flourishing. Attempts could be made to house Parsis, who have roots in these areas, between the two towns. There are 39 public charity trusts in Navsari of which 24 alone are for *ghambars*, the free feasts held traditionally at harvest time. If the courts were moved to allow change of use (Cy Pres), the money could be better utilized. By congregating in Bombay the Parsis are placing 'all their eggs in one basket'. If this dangerous trend is reversed, the community stands to gain.

From a review by Sapur Desai, former Joint Secretary of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat.

The Golden Jubilee Souvenir Of The Bai Dhumai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-e-Meher 460 pages, published by the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman. For 50 years now the Bai Dhumai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-e-Meher has vibrated to the prayers of its devotees, to the chanting of priests, to the sounds of religious discourse and to revelry on Jamshedi Navroz and Parsi New Year.

Located in the heart of Bangalore, the story of the fire-temple goes back to 1880, when the first Parsi settlers felt the urge to have a Dar-e-Meher for their fledgling community. But, as the Souvenir notes, it was not until 1926 that the need crystallized with a donation from Dinshaw Cawasji of Khandala (given in memory of his parents) and the efforts of the late Kaikhushroo Belgaumwalla and Meherwanji Merchant who raised the additional funds. The then Executive Engineer of the Mysore Government, Hormusji Marker, gave shape to the dream, designed the building and looked after its construction. Beyond the fact that the 500-strong community in Bangalore is 'small and well knit', not much more can be gleaned about it from the fragmentary articles in the Souvenir.

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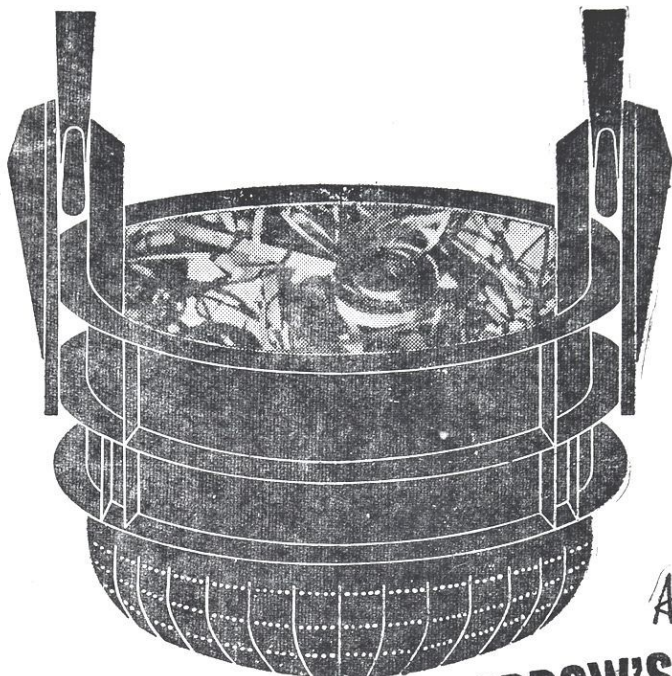
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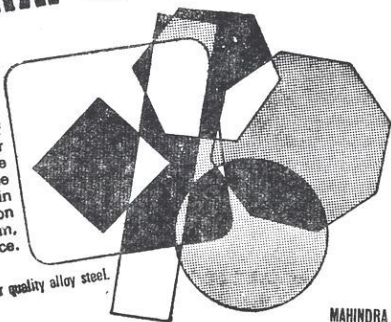
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The volume, jacketed in glossy blue with the traditional fire motif at its centre, confines itself to recording the jubilee celebrations which included symposiums, speeches, skits, songs and an international essay competition. A selection of essays by scholars on the Zoroastrian religion and history has been tacked on for 'mental refreshment'. Of particular interest to most Parsi readers, nostalgic for their Persian past, would be Dr. H. K. Mirza's article 'Rock Inscriptions of Darius the Great', which conveys the titan grandeur of Behistun and the importance of its cliff-face inscriptions.

Of a more contemporary nature are the contributions from Parsis abroad which give an insight into the struggle to maintain a distinct, ethnic identity. In a bid to fill yawning gaps in religious knowledge, prayer classes and symposiums are initiated, only to fold up for lack of support. Dr. Sohrab Kutar of London calls for a Zoroastrian Youth Movement to counter the secularism of the younger generations abroad.

Swinging from the conservative to the mildly reformist, the articles present a fairly wide spectrum of views. Some question the validity of religious institutions, others emphasize their importance. The 19-year-old prize-winner of the essay competition, Berjis Desai, maintains "We are like the Jews trapped in the ghettos of tradition"; while Dr. Minocher Kar-khanawalla believes that, as history has shown, only by preserving these traditions can we survive. Most of the writers have plucked threadbare the twin issues of ethnic purity and dwindling numbers, and some have advocated solutions. One scholar suggests the Parsi press should be made to conform in all religious matters to a standard book on Zoroastrianism, in order to root out controversy.

Running parallel to the themes of past Parsi glory, is the consciousness of what the community owes the country. As Dr. Kar-khanawalla notes, the well-being and preservation of the Parsis lies "in the prosperity and stability of India".

Thus Spake Zarathushtra by Irach S. Kuka (second edition) 176 pages, Avan Series, Rs. 2.

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The condolence messages poured in from all over the world. They referred to her as the 'Mother of the Community', a 'regal figure', 'warm, loving and understanding', a 'true example of noblesse oblige'. When she died at the age of 82 following a massive coronary attack on June 9, Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir left behind a 50-year legacy of social service, of which 30 had been to the community as a Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. She had the distinction of being the august body's first woman president, a chair once occupied by her husband and to which she lent a new dimension.

An imposing, dignified woman, equally at ease with urchins in a Worli chawl or Viceroys in a chandelier-studded hall, Lady Jehangir gathered around her a devoted band of social workers who effected improvement in every sphere of community life from health to housing. "Her goal was the uplift and betterment of the community," notes Erach Nadirshah, the senior-

most trustee and new chairman of the Panchayat. "There was not a single activity of the Parsi Panchayat in which she did not take a leading part." Her efforts were instrumental in creating five housing colonies, Shapurji Bharucha Baug, Panthaki Baug, A. H. Wadia Baug, Dhunbai Wadi and Contractor Baug and five schools: the J. B. Vacha High School, the Sir C. J. Infant and Primary School, Sir C. J. Rural Boys' Home at Golvad, Fort Nursery School and the Jehangir Rural Girls' Home at Golvad. She was the "guiding spirit" of the Liaison Committee for the Organization of Parsi Charities and its chairman for 27 years. Among the cosmopolitan charities she headed were the King George's Infirmary, the Beggars' Home, The Mothers' and Childrens' Society and the Bombay Women's Work Guild. "Whatever project that was undertaken by her was infused with her personality, her grace and her humane approach," noted a resolution passed by the Bombay Sheriff's meeting.

Even upon occupying the presidency of the Panchayat on July 22, 1974 at the age of 80, Lady Jehangir broke with precedent and invited the Parsi press to meet with the Board of Trustees in an attempt to bring the much maligned trust and a greatly alienated community together. It was a measure few expected from an elderly Dowager who on several past occasions had refused to give her views on the community for publication, but as one of her close acquaintances remarked, "She always adapted herself to the changing values." And it was perhaps this characteristic that enabled Lady Jehangir to keep pace with the triumphs and tribulations of an era which witnessed the fortunes of the community and her family peak, and then decline.

Born in the illustrious Wadia family of ship-builders in 1893, one of two sisters and a brother, Lady Jehangir attended Queen Mary High School before marrying Cowasjee Jehangir at the age of 17. Cowasjee was 32 at the time, an active figure in public life and next in line for the family's baronetcy which he acquired on his father's death in 1934. "They made a wonderful couple," recalled a relation. "Each complemented the other." Sir Cowasjee, an outgoing man with a zest for life, took an active interest in public affairs. He was a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the Bombay Legislative Assembly. He attended the Round Table Conference in London in 1930 and despite his favoured position with the British, declared that the future of the Parsi community lay with the Indian people.

For her part, Lady Jehangir became involved with several welfare associations. According to Jamshed Pavri of Canada, her first public service was probably connected with an effort to reduce infant mortality; she headed the Bombay Baby Week committee in 1924. In the same year, her mother-in-law Dowager Lady Dhunmai and members of the Princess Victoria Mary Gymkhana held a "Fancy Fete and Exhibition" and launched a fund-raising drive to net over three and a half lakhs to construct five buildings at the Dadar Parsi Colony. Lady Jehangir and



Sir Cowasjee and Lady Jehangir: "Each complemented the other"

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Sir Cowasjee contributed Rs. 50,000 to the cause; over the course of their lives they gave lakhs of rupees to charities ranging from hospitals to the building fund of the Zoroastrian House in London.

They were both active in the world of business with Sir Cowasjee serving as Chairman of the Bank of India and various other concerns, and Lady Jehangir as Chairman and Director of several companies including the Ruttonsha group of companies, Dai-ichi Karkaria and Communication and Power Equipment Company. "Her object was to help people and not to take control," recalls Russi Ghadiali, Executive Director of Ruttonsha's.

During the war years, Lady Jehangir helped set up a recreation centre for Indian soldiers after a non-commissioned officer complained that no such facilities were available for Indians. From his mills, Sir Cowasjee sold cloth at cost price to jawans. And when rationing was introduced, Lady Jehangir and her band of workers kept a watch at the grain shops to see that people did not take more than their quota. Lady Jehangir herself took a bus ride for the first time in her life when petrol was rationed, and later remarked to her secretary of many years, R. D. Aria, "It was not so bad."

In 1944 tragedy struck the couple when their eldest son Jehangir died after being struck down by a truck in England. "They never recovered from the blow," recalled a family friend. In his memory they donated six lakhs of rupees toward the construction of the Jehangir Art Gallery.

Two years later, Lady Jehangir stood uncontested for the trusteeship of the Panchayat, Sir Cowasjee having been a trustee from 1934 and Chairman for six years till his death in 1962. After Sir Cowasjee's death, Lady Jehangir devoted herself almost wholly to the community, restricting her social circle to a small group of friends. Her evenings were spent studying the contents of the grim looking black tin box in which the Panchayat circulates its papers to the Trustees. She was despondent that the community's numbers were dwindling and according to Sapur Desai, a former joint secretary of the Panchayat, was "trying to call the trusts together (after the Press conference) to consi-

der the next step." It was under her tutelage, that the Panchayat ventured on a special fund for housing. Yet, for all her legion service, Lady Jehangir's name aroused strong emotions in many quarters. Her critics attacked her for everything ranging from her style of wearing an *udhi saree* to serving on the Panchayat for 30 years. The Godrej Memorial Press scandal in which a loss of around four lakhs of rupees reportedly took place, caused much calumny to be heaped on the Trustees. Despite the furor, she intensified her efforts to make the press a profitable concern. "She did what she thought was right, and never worried about what others said," recalled a friend. "Once she gave her word, she never went back on it. She never had an angry, ugly or undignified word to

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say of others." But in an age of rising expectations and democratic values, she and the other Trustees suffered in status for remaining in office too long.

Aside from witnessing the Panchayat and the community's decline, the aging Lady also had to watch the ancestral home, Ready-money Mansion, succumb to the wrecker's ball. But instead of letting it depress her, she busied herself with plans for the modern glass and concrete structure that was being constructed in the same compound.

A few nights before her death, she was on the phone till 11 p.m. to ensure that some families left homeless by a house collapse had found shelter. She spent sleepless nights agonizing over which deserving family should get accommodation. On July 9 at 4 p.m. she was on the phone discussing some community matter. Two hours later death came, sudden and unexpected. As the news spread throughout the city, the long line of mourners began streaming in till the wee hours of the morning to pay their final homage. They bore testimony to her life's endeavours.

Lady Jehangir leaves behind her daughter Silla, her son Sir Hirji, her daughters-in-law, Lady Jinoo and Mehrroo and two grandchildren, Jehangir and Ardeshtir.

Died: Dr. Sohrab Ardeshtir Eruchshaw Hakim 57, the medical researcher whose investigations into the common yellow poppy resulted in all-India tests devised to detect argemone adulteration in cooking oils to safeguard public health against cancer of the oesophagus and blindness through glaucoma; five days after an abdominal cancer operation on May 24 in a London hospital.

The fifth in a line of physicians hailing back to the renowned Sola Doctor of Surat, Dr. Hakim was in England during a break in a WHO assisted cancer research project in Iran. The Royal Iranian Cancer Society had commissioned him to conduct a study in the Mazendran district of Iran whose inhabitants suffer from a high incidence of oesophageal cancer.

"The work is of such importance that it is greatly to be hoped that Hakim's influence and the application of his principles will continue," noted the *British Medical Journal* obituary written by Prof. Alan W. Woodruff, former president of the



Hakim : A family tradition



Patel : A firm full of partners

Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. "India has lost one of its most original medical investigators," said Woodruff.

Hakim's research at the Sola Hakim Research Center high above Dadabhoy Naoroji Road took its clues not only from test tubes and guinea pigs but from sources as diverse as Shakespeare's *Henry V* and the traditional remedies of Ayurvedic and Unani medicine whose prescriptions were handed down from father to son.

A graduate of Bombay's King Edward Memorial Hospital, Hakim developed an early interest in the toxicity of *Argemone mexicana*—the deceptively pretty poppy that dots the Indian countryside. But it was while pursuing his doctor-

ate degree at Oxford's Balliol College that he adapted a paper chromatography test for recognising the alkaloid 'sanguinarine', the adulterant used in edible oils that is believed to have caused 82 epidemics in the last 100 years with symptoms ranging from swelling of the feet, diarrhoea and vomiting, to glaucoma, breathlessness and heart failure. Upon returning to India he tried to convince the Ministry of Health to apply the test to all cooking oils. As he noted in a letter to Karan Singh, then Minister of Health and Family Planning, "The petty *bhaya* who adds a *lota* of water to milk is an insignificant offender compared to those directors of public health who by withdrawal of scientific knowledge can cause death, blindness and cancer in millions of unsuspecting victims." In 1971, the Government of Maharashtra approved the test and in 1974, the Director General of Health Services passed a similar all-India ruling.

Below Ratan Karaka, a family friend of the Hakims, gives a few personal glimpses of the man:

"The degrees and scholarship were not what made Soli Hakim. It was his understanding—he shared what he knew and learned with others. He was never too busy to walk a visitor down his lab and show the heart of a tiny chicken beating or stop by an old half-broken urn and take out a handful of poppy seeds, saying, 'So like the mustard seed that the poor unsuspecting customer would be quite baffled.' Over lunch with his family he'd talk enchantingly of the Parsi wells of the bearded *Hakims* of old—how they'd saved several fires—and the stories of old recipes.

"Soli had studied theosophy under Madame Sophia Wadia, from whom he learnt about many religions and philosophies. He was learned in the Zoroastrian scriptures and spoke on them.

"He read a lot, everything from modern journalism to Persian history. In his lab he was like a child playing with his pots and pans, his bottles and stoves and pinners. Never without a sense of fun, he liked worldly things too. Occasionally he went to parties but he longed to go back home to his *Hakimi* problems. Once he re-

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marked, "It would be so much nicer if the allopaths worked with me. We could do so much." He seemed to mean that there were many things that were undreamt of in their philosophy.

"When he went to Iran to research the causes of cancer in Mazendran district, a late snowfall had delayed the poppy fields from flowering. Meantime he visited England and before the operation confided to a few friends, 'If I should die please recite these few Avesta prayers for me, then have me cremated.' He requested his ashes be scattered in Kew Gardens."

His wife Dina, also a doctor, Dr. Rumi Jehangir and Mr. Balakrishna are left to carry on the research work. Among others, Dr. Hakim leaves behind his mother, Manijeh, and daughter, Avimay.

* * *

From a night telephone operator to founding director of one of India's leading advertising agencies, the career of Adi Patel was a

classic case of the wages of talent being success. When he died of a heart attack on June 15th, the 69-year-old Chairman of Everest Advertising left behind not only an agency with an annual turnover approaching two crores but also a co-operative enterprise where every member from sweeper to director could hold shares: in his own words, "a firm full of partners".

"He rose from the ranks and was always close to people in those ranks," recalls Kali Sopariwalla, a director of Everest. A debonair salesman with boundless enthusiasm, Patel served as chairman of the prestigious Audit Bureau of Circulation and the Advertising Agencies Association of India; he headed the latter's delegation to the International Conference held in London in 1951.

Born of a poor family with a tradition of service in the railways, Patel was a high school drop-out who drifted through an assortment of jobs—including motor mechanics and electroplating—before joining Bennett Coleman as a telephone operator. Soon after he

graduated to box clerk in the advertising department, the company introduced an incentive scheme for the staff to canvass for classified advertisements in their spare time. In the first month, Patel found that he earned double his salary by canvassing two hours every evening. When he exchanged a secure job—albeit at Rs 40 a month—for the dizzy ups and downs of a full-time representative on a commission basis, he faced family opposition. But as his earnings soared higher than the salary of the advertising manager, a European, Patel was reappointed an officer—the first Indian to attain the post. At the same time he became leader of Bennett Coleman's first union, fighting for proper staff grading and benefits such as provident fund. He was *The Times of India's* Chief Advertisement Representative when he joined the newly formed Everest as Managing Director. "He had the gift of building up small clients into big advertisers—even people who started off with no faith in advertising," recalls Homi Kharas, a co-

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founder of Everest and a 40-year associate of Patel.

In 1958, Patel's deteriorating health led to the appointment of a new managing director, but a spate of financial problems caused him to rejoin within two years. The staff responded to the crisis by subscribing more capital; even the janitors chipped in. "It's easy to contribute towards a rising firm, but to pay a part of one's own hard-earned income to save a sinking ship is nothing short of a miracle," notes the agency's write-up.

"Patel was a man of extremes—it was said that he had a split personality," said Kharas. "For a few years he would lead the gay life, then he would suddenly become almost like a sadhu." Added Sopariwalla: "He was religiously inclined, but he believed that religion was meaningless unless it brought about results for mankind. There were pictures of all the prophets in his house. He didn't believe in rituals so he was cremated." He leaves behind a daughter, Niloufer Kapadia.

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Private (Continued from page 25) carry on with the managing director as well as the other directors. . . hence I tendered my resignation at the end of February 1976 and during (the) period (I served) no fresh deposit was taken from anybody. . . during my short tenure. . . I have helped many Parsi depositors to recover their deposit or their interest dues."

Despite Kuka's clarification, his association with the company weakened his candidacy and caused *The Jam-e-Jamshed* to speculate that some of the Trustees who initially supported him "May shift their allegiance to someone else. . . the present trend of 'kingmakers' picking and choosing potential 'yes men' is a very unhealthy one." Kuka replied he was still a candidate and was contesting "on my own merits."

On a tense and rainy election Saturday, July 31 in the Parsi Panchayat building on Dadabhai Naoroji Road, the keenly contested election ended in a 31-vote victory for Hodiwala. Three weeks later, in remembrance of Lady Jehangir's wish and in a

gesture of solidarity, all the Trustees signed an appeal to the community seeking contributions for the creation of a new building construction fund. "The Parsi Panchayat of Bombay has lands at different places on which buildings can be constructed," they noted. "In Panthaki Baug at Gundavli (Andheri East) there is room for ten buildings which can provide low rent tenements to the weaker sections of the community. What is wanted and wanted badly are funds to implement the housing schemes of the Panchayat."

"We have therefore to make this appeal to every individual and association and institution of the community to contribute their mite towards the solution of the housing problem. The solution no longer lies with the Panchayat alone. It is a challenge to the community at large and the community must come forward to meet it."

But until the Panchayat extends the community's franchise and incorporates much needed reforms in the electoral system, it is unlikely that people would donate

their money to an institution that denies them a vote.

Tansens (Continued from page 49)

She was fortunate, however, in getting the active encouragement of her parents.

Chief among the *sammelans* in which Aban has participated are the All-India Sadarang Music Conference in Calcutta, Sur Singar's Kal-Ke-Kalakar S sammelan where she was awarded the Tal-Mani, the Swami Haridas Sangeet S sammelan and the Agra Musical Conference. While at Calcutta, Aban became the only female tabla-player to cut a disc with Hindustan Musical Products.

Stressing the importance of *brahmacharya* (celibacy) and strict dietary control for the artiste, Aban says she has to "take great care about what I eat and drink to preserve my voice." As for fusing different styles, the musician recalls, "I once tried a sitar and piano duet with Yezdi Soonawala. It sounded very nice but. . ." She trailed off with a shrug and a far-away look, till she found the right words, "Experiment is all right, but the purity of the art will be lost."



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Forum—(Continued from page 13)
one's self to inner harmony and peace, it is important once in a while to remain quiet and achieve inner silence.

ABAN H. BANA
Switzerland

Heartbreaking

Many Parsis feel that our mobeds do not tell us the deeper meaning of our religion and religious rites. Religious discourses are held by dasturs on varied topics twice or thrice a week. I have attended these discourses many times but found barely 20 to 25 persons present. The response is heartbreaking. The reason for the lack of response is that the majority of Parsis in Bombay are busy and do not find time to attend the talks. Many do not wish to spend money on transport to go to the meetings. They should then instead read books on the religion available on loan in some *agaries* and free libraries. If people do not help themselves they alone are to blame for the lack of knowledge about the religion.

K. D. CHARGEMAN

Hind Sight

Our form of disposal of the dead has always been admitted by many enlightened non-Zoroastrians to be highly scientific, clean and devoid of impurity. It may well be asked why Parsis do not also offer their eyes at death to an eye bank, for thousands of corpses are admitted to our Towers of Silence with eyes that are perfectly normal and healthy. The body could be donated within a few hours after death to the anatomical sections of hospitals, for study and research by students and medical men. Every corpse has in it parts and tissues which can be grafted on to the living, so the demand for dead bodies is great. The charitable Parsis have not thought of this measure. The rest of the body would be disposed of by the hospitals under scientific conditions.

Many would like our large acreage of the present, valuable grounds, used for the disposal of the dead, to be sold for industrial purposes or for building enterprises. Thus the question of doing away with the grounds, which also house the corpse-bearers and their

families, in the heart of Bombay has become important.

If the trustees are compelled to continue the present, ceremonial form of disposal of the dead, then the time has come to discover another plot of ground which may be constructed to serve the needs of Parsis for at least a further period of one hundred years, remote from the city of Bombay. The land presently used for the *dokhmas* may be used for other purposes such as housing. If a similar situation had faced the Parsis in the city of New York, would they have continued to maintain that ground in modern times for disposal of their dead, as in Bombay?

FRAMROZ RUSTOMJEE
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Parsi Saint

The Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital has become a mecca for the sick people of all communities. I have seen on some occasions, people taking *darshan* before the statue during the evening visiting hours. A garland is always put round the neck of the philanthropist and a bouquet of roses at

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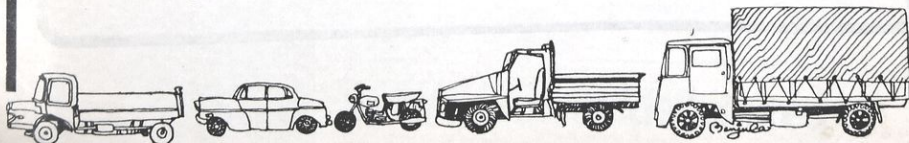
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his feet. It is high time Jeejeebhoy be declared a Parsi saint and a prayer meeting be held at the hospital every year.

GEORGE FALGADO

Double Standards

The world has celebrated 'International Women's Year' and the 'Women's Decade' is on. Several types of discrimination against women have been tackled and remedied. But it is surprising that Parsi women have not yet raised their voices against the glaring social and traditional injustices that confront them.

Why should a Parsi girl marrying a non-Parsi be restrained from visiting the fire temple, if she chooses to maintain her religion? Why should she not be allowed to participate in religious ceremonies if she chooses to do so? Why should the Navjote ceremony not be performed for her offspring, if she and her husband agree to bring up their children as Zoroastrians?

All these are strictly male prerogatives in our community. Double standards lead to disillusionment, and this coupled with frustration sounds the death knell of faith.

P. H. PATELL
Secunderabad

Tagore on the Prophet

The renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore in his book *Religion of Man* has a chapter on Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. Tagore writes, "The most important outstanding fact of Iranian history is the religious reform brought about by Zarathushtra. There can be hardly any question that he was the first man we know who gave a definitely moral character and direction to religion and at the same time preached the doctrine of monotheism... Zarathushtra was the greatest of all pioneer prophets who showed the path of freedom to man; the freedom of moral choice freedom from blind obedience to unmeaning injunctions."

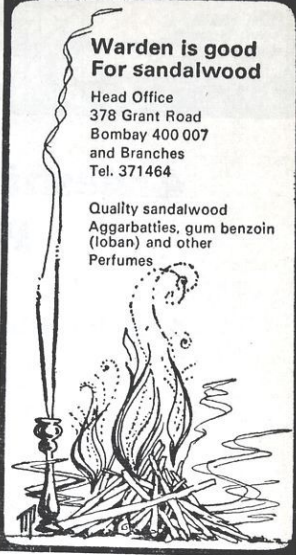
There is no better food for the hungry human spirit than a good religion. Every individual is their own judge of what best nourishes them. This freedom of thought and action for the purification of one's soul is explained by Zarathushtra in the *Yasnas*. Our youth should revive their interest and preserve this fascinating heritage.

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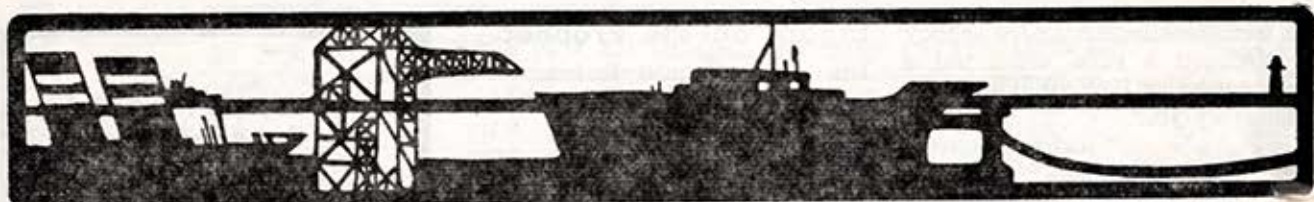
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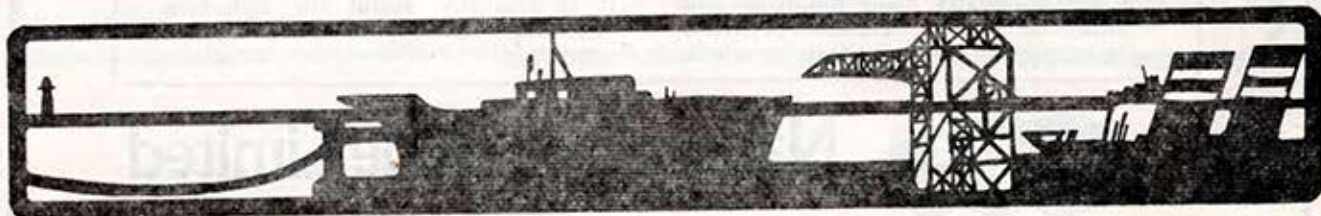
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Three, according to the science of numerology, is an auspicious and mystic number; perhaps this is why Irach S. Kuka reserved his third literary effort, *Thus Spake Zarathushtra*, for an explanation and translation of the divine songs of the prophet, Zoroaster. This pocket-sized and modestly produced publication is the latest of the author's *Avan* series, the first two having dealt with the Zoroastrian viewpoint and the virtues of Dokhme Nashini, while this one is "an attempt to bring before the minds of the Parsee youth, the gist of the profound and noble ideas... from the writings of the Holy Gathas."

Compiled from the translation of the verses into Gujarati by the late Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga and the English translations of these by the late Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala, the songs and prayers are set out in clear, easily readable blank verse with short descriptive titles to introduce each group of verses. Preceding them are the author's foreword and short explanatory notes to clarify basic Zoroastrian terms and concepts, such as who Zarathushtra was and the meaning and significance of *manashni-gavashni-kunashni* as good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Daily Prayers of the Zoroastrians, compiled by Framroz Rustomjee; 600 pages, Rs. 25.

The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Calcutta plans to bring out a second edition of the *Daily Prayers of the Zoroastrians* compiled by Framroz Rustomjee of Colombo,

Sri Lanka. The 600-page tome contains "not only the transliteration of the Avestan text in English but also a word to word and a free translation of each prayer." Those institutions and individuals who wish to purchase copies can place an advance order; remittance at the rate of Rs 25 per copy in India and US \$ 4.00 per copy for foreign countries, inclusive of postage, are to be sent to the Association Treasurer R. B. Dastoor, 14A, Chowringhee Mansion, 30, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta 700 016.

Tantra, the erotic cult, by Capt. F. D. Colaabavala, 142 pages, Orient Paperback; Rs. 5.

It was only to be expected that after telling us about crime, hippies and himself, that Capt Colaabavala's next literary venture should focus on sex. *Tantra, the erotic cult* is in the Captain's own words, "hypnotic in holding the readers spellbound... details never before told... mysterious sex-oriented rituals... gory practices... murder by remote control". Aside from promising readers the secret to "unfold treasure of personal power, success, worldly desire as well as the attainment of spiritual experience," the book should also help the Captain finance a future writing project dear to his heart: a history of the Parsis. Colaabavala, whose analytical and information gathering skills have been gleaned from life itself, is looking for a sponsor who will give him Rs 20,000 a year for five years to research the book. Any offers?

* * *

In our last issue we had errone-

ously stated that Dr. Jal K. Wadia's *A Few Zoroastrian Fundamentals* was priced at Rs 8. It is for free distribution and only postage charges need be paid. The 36-page booklet weighs under 50 grams (postage in India 10 p, foreign seamount Rs 1.20). The author's previous publication, *The Inner Man* is priced at Rs 8. The error is regretted.

News Continued from page 17

Behram Saklatvala, vice-chairman and managing director of Tata Ltd. (London) and son of the late 'Comrade Sak' Shapoorji Saklatvala India's Communist M.P. in Britain's House of Commons, made the above statement in an article on "Working Men's College" in *The Economic Times* of August 22. Noting that for democracy to function it was essential that voters from all strata of society "must be critical, must be able to winnow the grain of truth from the chaff of eloquence," Saklatvala stressed the need of a liberal education to cultivate this faculty.

"Although illiteracy has largely vanished from Britain, the need for such a liberal education process and the need for those with the privilege of education to share it with their less-privileged compatriots persists. In India today, the need is as intense as it was in Britain... If men and women, both educated and uneducated, are to relate themselves fully to the community, I can conceive of no better way than experimenting in this direction."

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Abroad Continued from page 27
the context of survival of Zoroastrianism on the North American continent? Since it started with the Prophet ... and was practised by early Zoroastrians in the interest of propagation of the religion, without any inhibition, our first objective on this continent should be to revive and spread the Glorious Faith of Mazda to all who are willing to follow the Path of Asha.

"Let us assume the Navjote ceremony as the sole means by which an individual can be accepted into the faith. Under the circumstances, the Community will soon face instances where Zoroastrians married to non-Zoroastrians, will desire their progeny to be brought up as Zoroastrians. Surely, we are not going to bring forth that absurd and

groundless argument of 'blood mixing' as a barrier to fulfill their wishes. *The basic concept of the religion must prevail, and these progeny must be accepted into the Zoroastrians' fold, irrespective of the sex of the non-Zoroastrian parent.*

"Going a step further, it is not inconceivable that in the North American society, Zoroastrian parents will adopt children—not necessarily children of Zoroastrian descent. The decision of these parents to bring up their adopted child—irrespective of his/her race, colour or creed—as a Zoroastrian must also be respected, in the interest of propagation of the religion of Mazda. What is of the utmost importance is that sincere attempts... be made to educate the child in the basic concepts and ethics of

Zoroastrianism; whether of Zoroastrian parents, or of a Zoroastrian and a non-Zoroastrian marriage, or adopted by a Zoroastrian couple, being of no consideration. It is of paramount importance that effort spent by parents, priests and all knowledgeable individuals of the community should be to make a child worthy and deserving of being a true Zoroastrian, rather than a class conscious, pseudo Zarthushti!"

To this end the ZAQ and several other Zoroastrian associations provide their members with cassette recordings of the navjote and other prayers "with authentic pronunciation by competent dasturs... the prayers are so recorded that it will allow children to repeat (the prayers) after the recording."



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