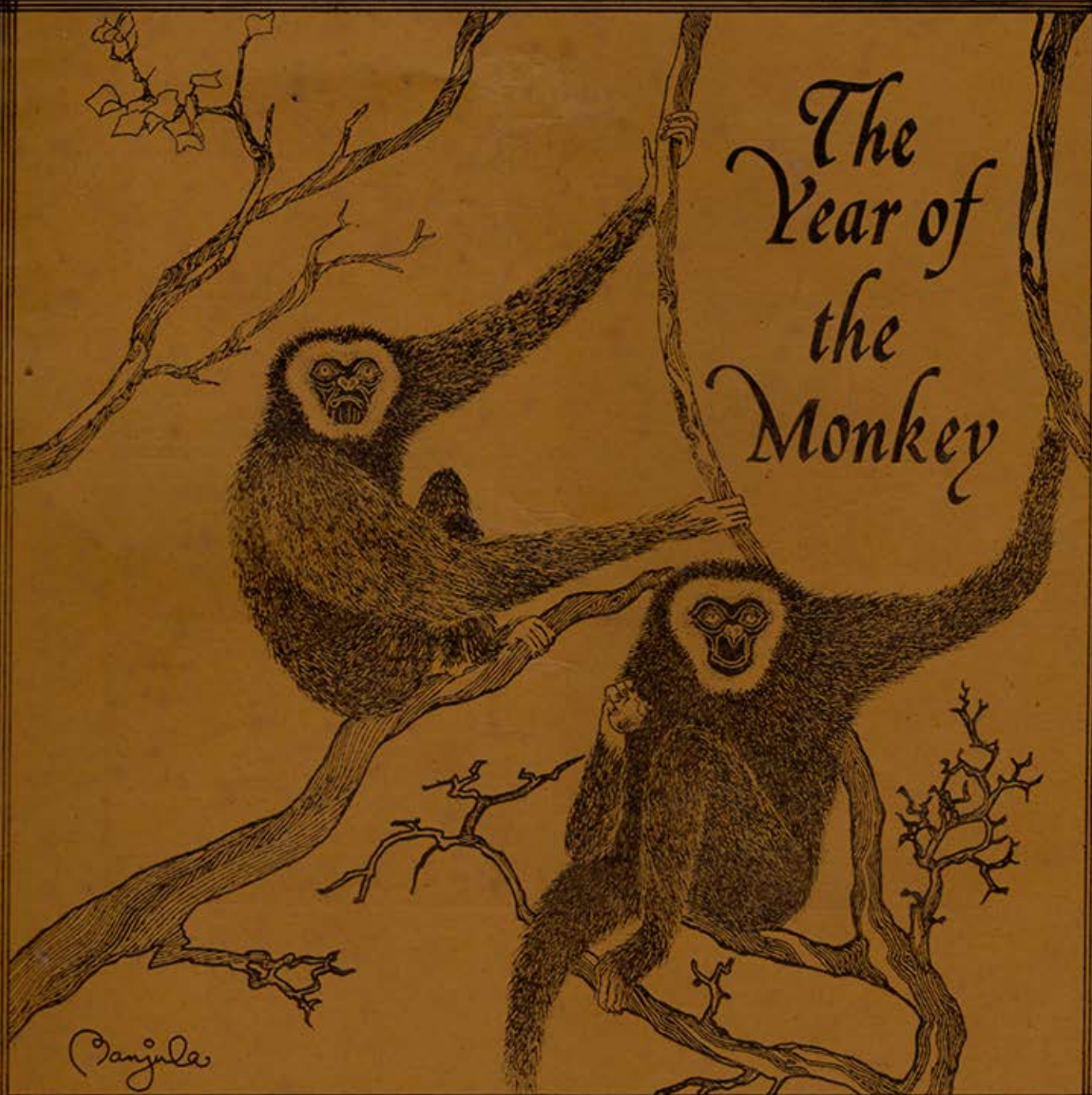


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Parsiana

March-April 1980 Vol. 2 No. 12

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EDITOR Jehangir R. Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Gustasp Irani
EXECUTIVE EDITOR R. P. Thanavala
ART ASSISTANT Najoo Amroliwalla,
Ketayun Wankadia
ADVERTISING Feroza Chavda, Veera
Parbhu and Khushroo Amroliwalla
MANAGEMENT Dr. Rustem Colah
and Zarin Billimoria
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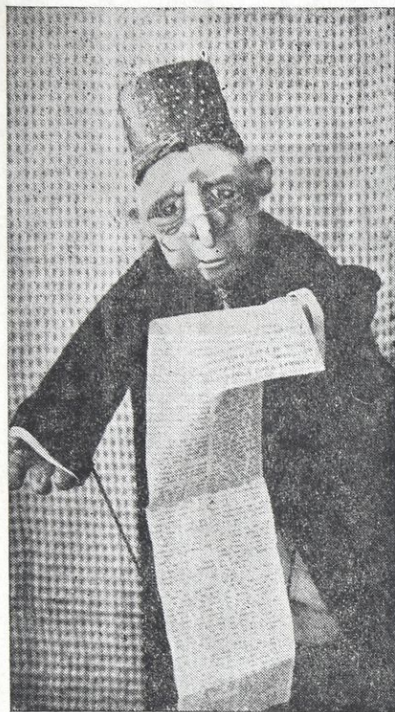




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Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

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

The Original 'Atmakatha'

It was interesting to learn about the English version of Dastur Dr Manekji Dhalla's autobiography. It reminded me of the times when the Gujarati detailed second edition was out some time in 1946.

When the 'atmakatha' was first published there were very few good autobiographies in Gujarati language. Dastur Dr Dhalla's autobiography was adjudged an important addition to the then limited list of outstanding autobiographies in Gujarati, though written in a style popular with Parsi writers. Besides the style the language was fascinating and drew the attention of those literary people who came across it. I still remember how happy I felt while going through the chapters.

To those who know Gujarati, I suggest that they go through the original, which will make for enjoyable reading even for those who may not agree with various views of the learned Dasturji. He was quite prepared to accept that all may not agree with all his views and was ever ready to discuss and explain to them his viewpoint.

RATAN R. MARSHALL
Surat

"Where are They"

I was interested to see the group photograph of a Parsi family of the 19th century. ("Where Are They?" Parsiana, September 1979).

I have in my collection of old photographs scores of photographs of Parsis — single and group — of 19th century, similar to the one mentioned above. Men with Jama/Dagla, loose silken pyjamas, wearing fenta or pagari or khoku, and women with ornate bordered saris, jackets and mathubanu. The shoes of the men were mostly chadavi and women generally wore velvet sapats. They appear strange to this generation, and this generation's costume will appear as much strange to the generation of 2079 A.D. The photograph in question appears to be of the third quarter of the 19th century.

I once picked up a photograph of my late father, (Talukdar in The Nizam's Revenue Service, died 1918), from a footpath kabadi and asked him as to who the man was in the photograph. He told me that he must be a Nawab "of the time of Mahboob Ali Pasha" (i.e. Nawab Meer Mahboob Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VI. 1869-1911). My father had "mutton-chop whiskers" which was a fashion in the "Days of the Beloved" as the Beloved himself had mutton-chop whiskers, and Jagirdars, Rajas and officers of the then Nizam's Government followed the fashion. Mutton-chop whiskers was a common fashion of Parsi men of the Victorian Era.

To me, the group photograph in Parsiana appears to be of an orthodox Parsi family of Surat, Navsari or Udavada, and not of Bombay. The studios of Bombay photographers were equipped and well decorated and the photographers had some sense in making the subject pose decently. The Parsiana photograph seems to be of

a "Gamadia" family taken by a local photographer. The family seems to be a middle-class one.

HURMUZ KAUS
Hyderabad

II

Referring to the picture of a family that a family member wishes to trace, (September 1979) the gentleman appears to be a China trader from his 'Chinese Khokha'.

JAMSHED PAVRI
Vancouver, Canada

'Pride and Prejudice'

Did A. Faizelipour feel better after his emotional and somewhat unbalanced tirade against the Parsis ("Pride and Prejudice, Readers' Forum, Parsiana September 1979)?

He accuses "people" of charging (Muslim) Iranians exorbitant rents, never treating them as human beings, "abusing" their "God and religion" and so on. Who are the "people," he refers to? Parsis exclusively?

To make such sweeping statements against the Parsis as a whole is not only invidious but obviously untrue. If anything, the Parsis have had sentimental and traditional ties with Iran and its people spanning centuries.

And while one agrees entirely with Faizelipour's sentiment that people of all faiths should live in harmony, perhaps he would care to comment on the "love and respect" shown to the followers of minority religions in Iran at this very moment.

DINA NAYAR

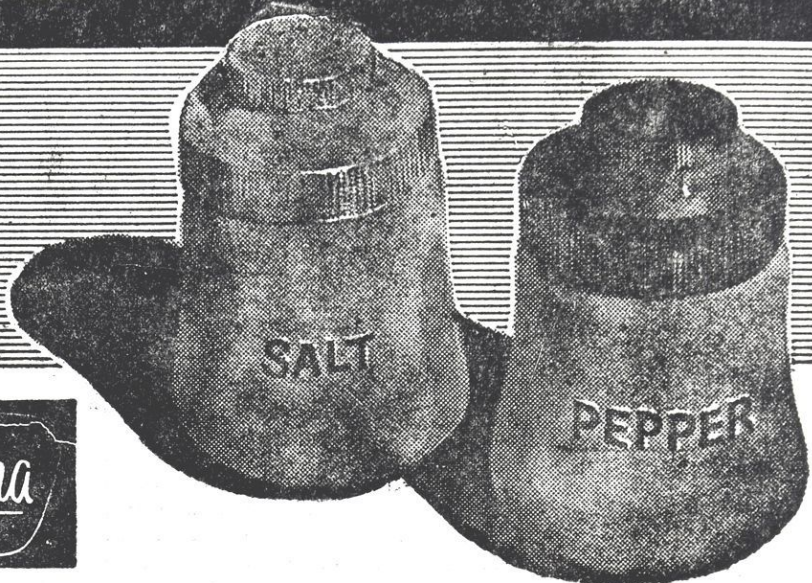
II

Having read the letter of A. Faizelipour in your issue of September 1979 I ask if you are bound to publish letters even if they are far from the truth? Do you believe that Parsis are so anti-muslim or anti-Iranian as described by Faizelipour? The fact that you publish such a letter makes me feel that you agree with its contents.

If the writer has experienced ill treatment from anybody it may perhaps be due to his own nasty behaviour and he may have well deserved it. But he cannot generalise. The Parsis are definitely not so rude or uncultured as to abuse others as alleged. The advice of Faizelipour to "all people of all faiths" is uncalled for.

A. F. TARAPOREWALA
Madras

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III

The letter from A. Faizelipour was uncalled for. Did he express his exasperation against Indians or simply against the Parsis. He should learn how to live in India by taking lessons from the Parsi refugees of 1,300 years ago. He talks of Indian Parsis going to Iran for jobs. If the jobs are easily available in Iran, Faizelipour would not be here.

F. F. MULLAN

Udvada

"Friends of the Trees"

I read with interest D. J. Cama's views on why we should not keep a fire in agairies any more ("Friends of the Trees", Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 1979).

At the cost of one's traditions one might be able to argue that wood be replaced by some other fuel. That might perhaps serve to conserve wood to a certain negligible extent. But to go so far as to suggest that the Fire itself is without utility and ought to be put away with is, in my opinion, most shortsighted.

Historically, Zoroastrians have worshipped God through His natural elements of which Fire is one. Among other things, Fire in agairies: symbolises the truth contained in the eternal cycle of Creation and Destruction; serves as a vibrant centre of focus, by concentrating upon which, we are helped in eliminating worldly distractions for the given moment of prayer — thereby liberating the Self from the chains of the Ego; and reminds us that our mission in life is to grow from weak embers, to burn bright, giving warmth and light to people and things around us, and to glow contentedly as the flame dies.

While socio-cultural reform goes hand in hand with what we popularly call progress, one must be ever more cautious before seeking to break away from one's traditions. After all, it is our great traditions and the spirit they symbolise that have kept us one of the foremost communities in the world even today.

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

Encourage Them

Although I am only 14 years old, I feel very strongly about my religion — Zoroastrianism. The Parsi community is getting smaller day by day. So many Parsi boys and girls marry outside the community and bring up their children as non-Parsis. This is

mainly because the Parsis themselves have never encouraged them to initiate their children into the community. It is ridiculous to expect all the Parsis to marry in the community. When they do marry outside, even if they want to bring up their children as Parsis, conservative relatives raise objections. This is especially so, when Parsi girls marry outside.

Many girls on marrying outside, would like their children to be Parsis but feel that they would always be treated as outsiders. Should we not, as a community, try to encourage the growth and spread of our religion? I am not suggesting that we take in converts. But surely we could accept a child of one non-Parsi parent and one Parsi parent as a Parsi. And surely we could encourage other Parsis who have married outside, to bring their children within the folds of our community.

We should be proud to be Parsis. Unless we realize that we must learn to accept children of non-Parsi married to Parsis, as Parsis we will eventually become extinct.

AZMY BHARUCHA

Bihar

On Record

I have been collecting old gramophone records on the Parsi community which I believe reflect a heritage that is worth preserving. In all I have 16 records which includes a number of marriage and wedding songs, social songs, comic songs, ashirwards, etc. I would now like to transfer my collection back to the community. Should anyone be interested they may contact me directly, at 138, Temkar Street, P.O. Bombay Central, Bombay 400 008.

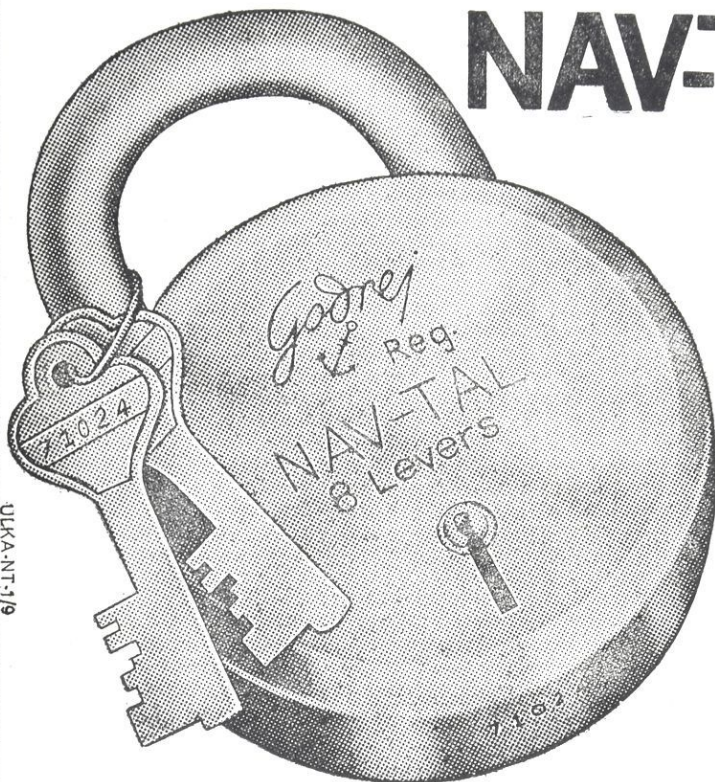
A. RASHID EBRAHIM

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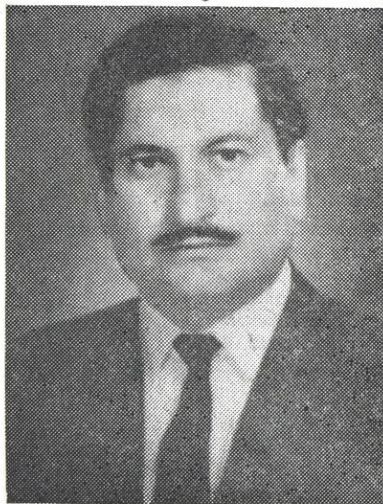
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Events and Personalities

At the Helm

Jamshed Nusserwanji Guzder, a prominent figure in the business and industrial life of the city for the past 30 years and trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, has been elected as the president of the Indian Merchant Chambers (IMC) for the year 1980. He had served as the vice-president of the 73-year-old chamber, which has over 1,900 companies, firms and individuals as members and more than 170 associations representing different trades and industries affiliated to it, during the previous year.



Guzder: head of Indian Merchant Chambers

Guzder says that during his presidency, the Indian Merchant Chambers will tackle the burning problems facing the business community, and endeavour to bring about an economic revival of the country, according to a *Business India* magazine report. "The main problems which are retarding industrial growth in the

country today are the government's policy of industrial licensing, the present monetary policy of the government, the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP Act) and deteriorating industrial-labour relations," Guzder is reported to have said.

Guzder is on the Board of Directors of a number of companies covering a wide range of industrial and manufacturing activities, states a bio-data by the IMC. He is closely associated with the Wadia group of companies, being the president of National Peroxide Ltd. and a Director of Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd. In addition, Guzder also serves on the Board of several other Public Limited Companies, such as Calico Mills, Herdillia Chemicals, Boots, Bakelite Hylam, Citurgia Biochemicals, and Vulcan Laval among others.

The Home Coming

"I am on the threshold of recognition," says **Dorab Contractor** a Parsi sculptor who visited Bombay recently after 18 years in England, and then adds modestly, "yet really not there." Judging from the many newspaper clippings of leading British papers that focus on him, however, he appears to have already attained fame.

An Associated Press photo-caption of his hands working on a piece of ordinary blackboard chalk writes that Contractor "is possibly the only sculptor in the world who works in chalk." Twenty five of these delicately carved pieces, presented to the Queen on the silver jubilee of her reign ("one for each year") stand in display at the Buckingham Palace, he says. According to his bio-data, he has held three one-man exhibitions in 1972, 1975 and 1977 and participated in two group exhibitions in 1970 and 1972; in early 1978 he was



Contractor: almost there

appointed as an instructor to teach creative wood carving once a week at the Thurrock Technical College, Grays, Essex and also at Gaynes Centre, Upminster and Dury Falls Centre, Hornchurch: in March the same year he was elected as a full member to the Committee of National Society of Painters, Sculptors and Printmakers. In addition, the media has praised his works in glowing terms.

These recognitions Contractor accepts graciously. However, it is when he is talking of his art itself that he is most animated and emotional. He protests against the one-dimension projections of photographs. "You should see the original... the whole structure... the curves... the intricate work..." His hands caressingly trace the forms in the air and an imaginary scalpel works its intricate

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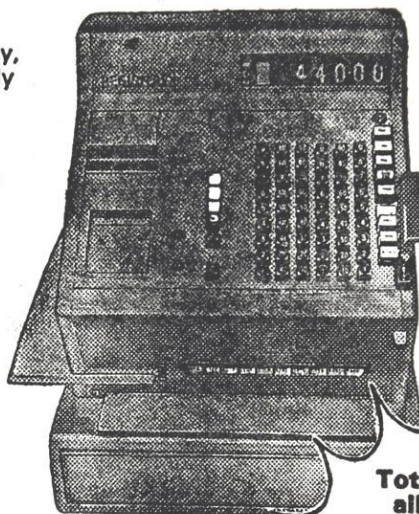
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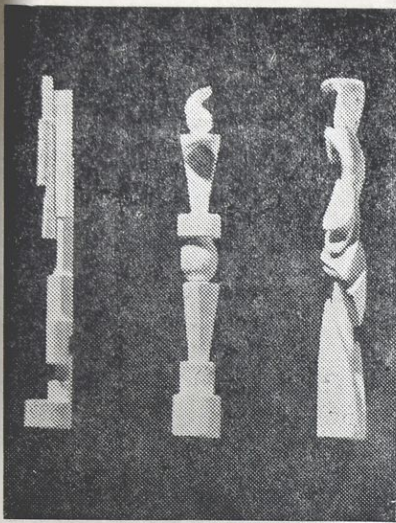


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Chalk sculptures by Contractor

way around an imaginary piece of chalk.

Then almost apologetically he regrets that he is unable to devote his full-time attention to his art but must work as a professional musical instrument restorer, that is, according to him, he repairs damaged valuable instruments like the violin, cello and the like: "My bread and butter job." He is not complaining. He likes his work. He is thankful that it allows him enough time to pursue his art. Then picking up a photograph: "You should see the original..." his hands start to lovingly trace the structure through the air.

Eighteen years ago, Contractor says he set sail for England to pursue his art and hopefully to be an assistant to the famous artist Henry More. He adds, that circumstances forced him to defer his dream as the right opening just did not present itself, but that did not deter him. He took up various other jobs and when time permitted involved himself in his art. In the meanwhile, he got married to an English girl and presently resides with her at Essex.

Born in 1929 in Bombay, Contractor studied sculpture and modelling at the Sir J. J. School of Art in Bombay for five years to obtain a diploma in modelling. After graduation, according to his bio-data, he was employed by the Archaeological Department of the Government of India, to restore major sculptures of the rock-temples of Ellora, Ajanta and the Elephanta Caves. From a very early age, he had been carving black-board chalk. his first chalk sculpture,

he recalls, was when he was nine years old. Since then he has been transforming these brittle pieces into works of art.

And now? His face glows as he speculates at the possibility of giving up his present job and working full-time at his art. "Well... maybe," he says.

Zoroastrian Bank

"It has become impossible for the middle class families to maintain their minimum standard of living, which as it is, is barely above the subsistence level," **R. A. Gagrath**, president of the Zoroastrian Co-operative Credit Bank Ltd., in a hardhitting address at the Annual General Meeting of the Bank on 11, October 1979, traced the dilemma of the middle class families to the "utter mismanagement on the part of the (Indian) Government" on the economic front.

"The sum total of the Five Year Plans has been nothing but a catalogue of increased poverty, food shortages, utter lack of cheap housing accommodations, insanitary conditions of living and growth of slums," said Gagrath. "It is the duty of the Government to manage the country's economy effectively but, to the misfortune of our country, orderly development and maintenance of living standards has been completely subordinated to political expediency and self-interest." Gagrath also frayed the Government for its inability to maintain proper law and order in the country and the "woefully unimaginative" budget of February 1979 which he felt was "positively detrimental to the economy" and which led to all-round "inflationary pressure on almost all commodities of necessities of life."

The results of the bank for the year ending 30, June 1979 were, however, according to Gagrath, "very satisfactory". Total deposits rose from last year's level of Rs 82,81, 471 to Rs 89, 61, 552 while total loans and overdrafts were up from Rs 30, 13, 844 to Rs 38, 37, 392. Net profits for the year were Rs 3, 41, 263, 31 as against last year's figure of Rs 3, 12, 104. 64. Total reserves at the year end were Rs 20, 88, 046, against Paid up Share Capital of Rs 5, 91, 975. The 3,645 share holders of the Bank will receive dividends of 12% or Rs 3 per share which have a face value of Rs 25.

During the year two new members joined the Managing Committee of the Bank. They were **T. R. Andhyarujina**, a leading advocate and **H. P.**

Ranina, a tax consultant, author and advocate.

Valued Contributions

A Bengali-Hindu by birth, **Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee** has authored 10 books on the Zoroastrian religion in addition to several others that he has written on our religion in Bengali. In early November 1979, at the age of 91, Chatterjee suffered a heart attack which caused great concern among those in the community that knew him. Mahyar B. Patel, a close friend and associate of Chatterjee, submits a brief life-sketch of the "Zoroastrian-by-choice."

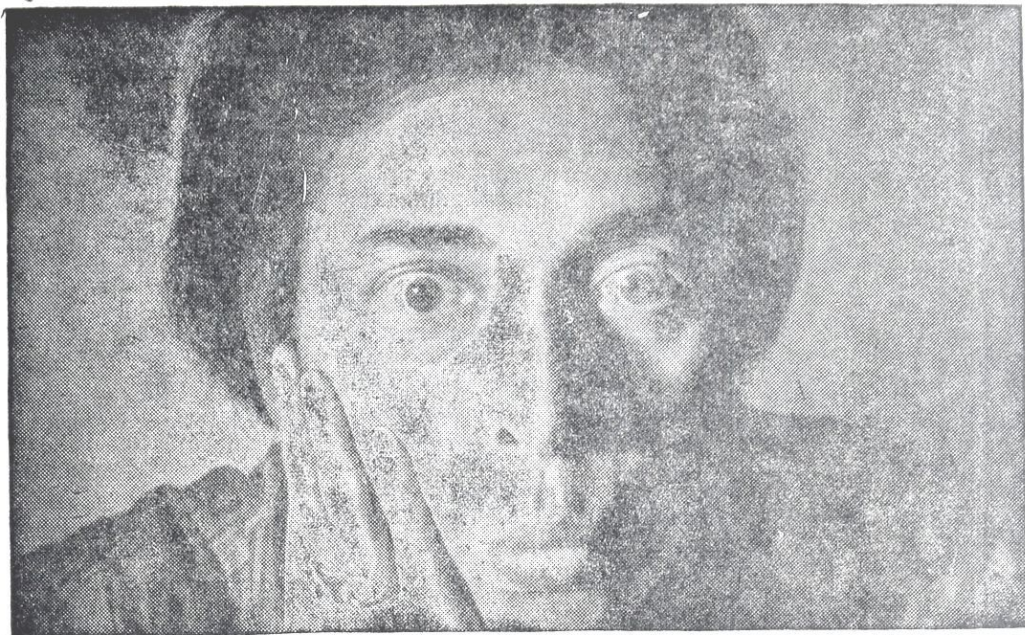
Patel writes that Chatterjee, who was born in 1888 in Sungar village in a district of Dacca, graduated from Calcutta University in 1912 with a Masters degree in Sanskrit. In 1917, he joined Government service and it was during the years between 1924 and 1929 when he was posted at Behrampur in the district of Murshidabad that he was first drawn to the message of Prophet Zarathushtra. At his request Ardeshir N. Billimoria, editor of *Cherag Magazine*, provided him with a number of books and information on the religion. Meanwhile Chatterjee started to teach himself Gujarati, Persian and the Avesta language from primary books.

Not satisfied with the existing translations of the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion he sought to interpret the Gathas in light of a comparative study with the Vedas. He saw similarities between the *Spenta* and *Angra Mainyu* of the Gathas and the *Satwa* and *Tamas Gunas* of the Vedas. He believed that Zarathushtra was the first Universal Prophet who enjoined severe monotheism, aniconism, caste-equality, universal brotherhood and militancy. He also believes that the Sufi doctrine owes its existence to the Gathas of Zarathushtra.

In his book *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra*, Chatterjee writes:

*Zarathushtra is mother to me,
He is father to me.
Zarathushtra is my friend,
He is my beloved.
Zarathushtra is my all-in-all.
None else I know
—None*

In 1947, Chatterjee resigned from the government service when he was the Deputy Collector. With the partition of India and Pakistan he left all his property back in Pakistan and came to reside in India. At his new



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TIMES ART

residence at Barasat, 15 miles north of Calcutta, the pictures of Zarathushtra, Sri Ramachandra and Sri Krishna are enshrined in what is known as the 'Rudra Mandir' and therein Chatterjee recites passages from the Gathas, the Prisni and the Gita in his daily prayers.

Patel adds that Chatterjee was felicitated twice by the community. First in 1967 by the Parsis of Calcutta who presented him with a shawl of honour and a silver salver inscribed with a message of esteem and affection. Again in 1972 the community in Calcutta honoured Chatterjee, reportedly on behalf of the entire community, with an address in which he was thanked for his contributions in the field of Gathic literature. The list of books authored by Chatterjee are:

Ethical Conceptions of the Gathas—1931, Gathas—1932, Prisni Gatha—1934, Ramachandra and Zarathushtra—1935, The Hymns of Athraavan Zarathushtra—1967, Athraavan Zarathushtra—The Foremost Prophet—1971, Message of the Gatha as Reflected in the Masnavi of Moulana Jalal-ud-din Rumi—1971, The Gospel of Zarathushtra in the Words of Moulana Jalal-ud-din Rumi—1972, Visnu and Mazda—1975, The Origin of Sufism—1978.

Annual Reports

A number of anjumans and panchayats in India are showing greater social, religious and cultural awareness in extending their activities beyond managing and administering trust properties. Recently the Delhi Parsi Anjuman initiated and sponsored a socio-economic survey of the community in Delhi (see article in this issue); in Poona a committee to supervise and attend the religious ceremonies performed under the auspices of the Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) has been established according to the annual report of the PPP for the year ending December 1978; and in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of the Twin city reports in its tri-annual report for the years ending December 1975 to 1977, that in addition to an upward revision of the salaries of the mobeds, agiary and Anjuman staff and Nassasalars, the Anjuman has also insured the life of one mobed and one chasniwalla at an annual cost of a little over Rs. 1,000 and further covered two other mobeds with a monthly cumulative deposit of Rs. 75/-

The PPP annual report also highlights two public lectures of Zoroastrian interest, a *Kirtan*, and sports

and games for children organized by the Public Relations committee, now in the second year of its existence. Other activities of the PPP included financial assistance to deserving applicants of the weaker sections of the community through the Education and Doles Fund, presentation of awards to seven outstanding students and two sportsmen, and the securing of wool from the Bombay Parsi Panchayat for the Zoroastrian ladies who weave kustis for a living. The report adds that 24 new members signed up to the body to give it a total strength of 703 and that eight well attended meetings of the Board of Trustees were held during the period.

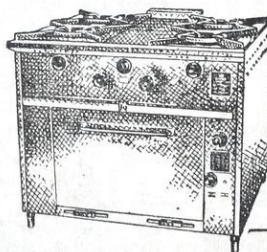
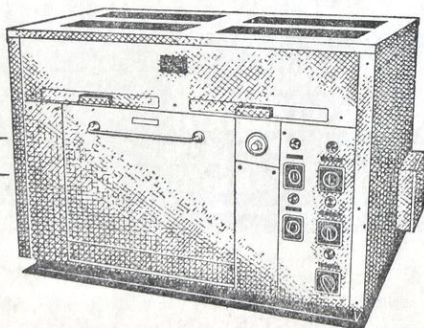
Assets of the Panchayat recorded in the audited statement of accounts, are over 16.5 lac rupees, up by about 1.3 lac rupees over the previous year's figures; while the income for the year was around 1.65 lac rupees, only marginally higher than 1977.

The report from Secunderabad and Hyderabad, records that the Anjuman has been able to obtain exemption for all the Anjuman's trust property from the Andhra Pradesh Building (Lease, Rent and Eviction) Control Act, 1960. The exemption was sought "in view of the improved economic conditions of most of the tenants of the

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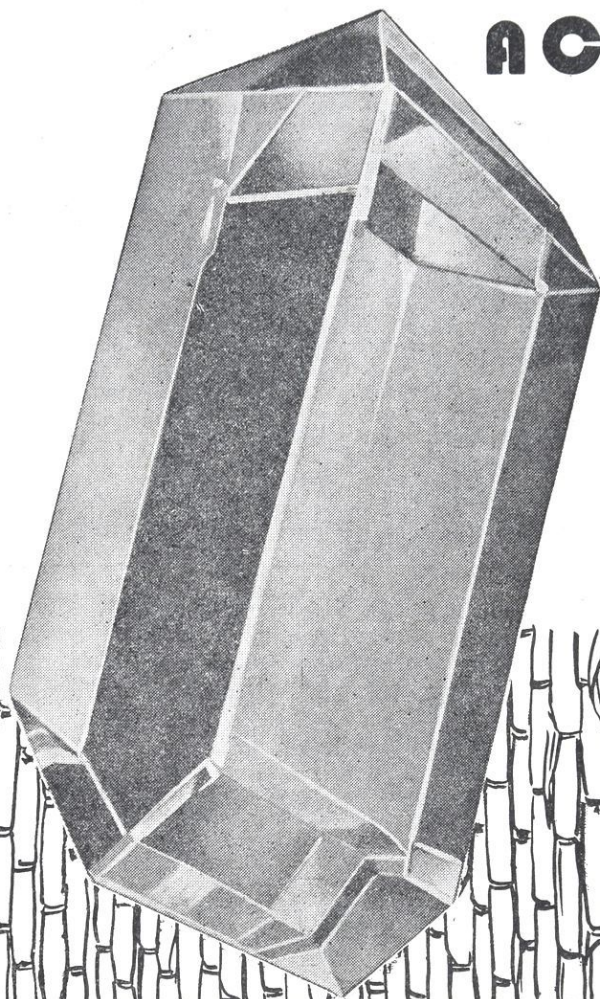
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Anjuman's Blocks and the necessity for upward revision of rents." Subsequent to obtaining the exemption, revised rent of various blocks went into effect on 1/12/77. The report adds that members of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat have also made a representation to the Minorities Commission seeking similar exemption from the Rent Control Act of various States for charity trusts. To date, however, there is no report of the BPP having obtained such exemption.

The report makes special mention of a total sum of Rs. 13,000 donated to the Chief Ministers Fund, by the Anjuman, the completion of a shop block from a Rs. 35,000 donation of Ms Z. R. Ranji in memory of her late husband Dr R. D. Ranji, the hosting of the Second Conference of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of South India on 26 and 27 February 1977 and 16 jashan ceremonies and 17 lectures held under the auspices of the Anjuman, among other events. During the three year period, 32 Managing Committee meetings and 3 General Committee meetings were convened.

The audited statement of accounts for the three year period show the balance sheet assets of the Anjuman rise by about Rs. 56,000 to stand at around 15.86 lac rupees in 1977. The statement does not contain a consolidated income statement but rather reproduce 15 individual income and expenditure accounts of the various funds, including the General Fund, and 21 separate building and property related accounts managed by the Anjuman.

New Housing Projects

In keeping with the recent trend among the Parsi Anjumans of India to treat housing as a priority issue, the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad has initiated a Rs 8,50,000, two stage housing project for the residents of the twin city. The Anjuman has issued a community wide appeal for funds to meet part of construction costs for the first stage of the project which is estimated at Rs 3,50,000.

Presently the Rayomond Committee, under the auspices of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP), is in the philanthropic market of the community to raise funds for the construction of building on land owned by the BPP; the Poona Parsi Panchayat has submitted plans for the approval of the city municipality for the construction of housing blocks in the city, and the Anjuman of Lucknow issued an

appeal for funds to enable it to complete the construction of the three remaining blocks of the six block project it has started on its own premises.

The appeal notice from Hyderabad states that presently the Anjuman houses 30 families within their compounds and an additional 15 families outside in charity blocks at a nominal rent. In view of the "sky-rocketed" rents which have created a housing problem "not only for the poor but even the middle class families" the Anjuman decided to construct 4 double story blocks, "8 three-roomed tenements", in its compounds.

The Anjuman has put in Rs 1,00,000 from its own resources and a "philanthropic lady has donated Rs 80,000." To meet the balance of Rs 1,70,000 the Anjuman "appeals to all Trusts and Institutions and generous minded Zoroastrians to extend their helping hand." The Anjuman is prepared to accept "any amount given as loan to be repaid by instalments in 10 years, two years after receipt of the amount." Those who donate Rs 40,000 or above have the option to name a block in memory of their "dear ones".

The second stage of the housing project calls for the demolition and reconstruction of the existing blocks which are now nearly a hundred years old. The project will be started only after the present one is completed and is expected to cost an additional Rs 5,00,000.

Donations or loans should be made in the name of the "Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad" and sent to the Anjuman offices C/o. E. J. Tarapore, Hon. Secretary, 125 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Secunderabad 500003.

Documentary on the Parsis

A documentary film Tariq Gawah Hai, or "History is Witness", on the Parsis and their religion has been initiated by the V. C. Enterprises, an organization that claims to be "creators of advertising short films, documentaries and T.V. films," and is scheduled to go into production once enough funds are collected to make it financially feasible. Dadabhai N. Kapadia, who is associated with the project, explains in an appeal note that presently there is no movie film record of the "sufficient part" the Parsi community has played "in the development of political, economic, cultural and social affairs of India". Tariq Gawah Hai he believes will fill the void.

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The film will be made either in black and white or colour depending on the resources they are able to muster. The black and white version is estimated to cost Rs 30,000 and the colour version Rs 70,000. The production staff will comprise of only Zoroastrians the letter adds.

Members to the advisory board of the project are Piloo H. Mody, former M. P. and president of the Akhil Bhartiya Deenbandhu Congress—Cultural Division, Dr. Peshotan B. Warden, founder of Akhand Parsa and ex-editor of *Parsiants*, Mahiyar B. Patel, Secretary of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman and Noshir S. Pochkhanawala, an industrial consultant.

Noted industrialist Naval Tata is reported to have already contributed Rs 10,000 to the project from the Navajbai Tata Trust. Donors are requested to send cross and order cheques in favour of "V. C. Enterprises" or "Akhli Bhartiya Deenbandhu Congress—Cultural Division" to V. C. Enterprises, 7/1 J. K. Building, H. G. Road, Gamdevi, Bombay.

Agiary Maintenance Fund

Appealing to the generosity of "Parsis all over India and the Charitable Trusts of our community" the

Delhi Parsi Anjuman. D.P.A. aims to augment the Maintenance Fund of the Agiary to meet the "steady all round escalation of costs." Apart from the general maintenance of the agiary building, the Anjuman also pays the salaries of the two newly appointed mobeds in addition to providing them with free boarding and lodging, writes N. B. Captain honorary treasurer of the D.P.A.

Further, the Trustees are also considering the construction of separate priests' quarters in the near future, an undertaking, they note, "which will involve heavy capital expenditure." In addition the Anjuman has also agreed to grant an ex-gratia payment of Rs 15,000 over three years to the widow of Head Priest Ervad Daraius Bagli who died early in 1979 after serving the capital city for more than 25 years.

Names of all persons who donate Rs 1,000 and above will be inscribed on a marble tablet placed inside the agiary. Drafts, and cheques should be made in favour of "Delhi Parsi Anjuman" and sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Delhi Gate, New Delhi 110002. Captain adds: "donations will qualify for tax concessions under section 806 of the In

come-Tax Act, 1961."

Igatpuri: Holy-fire inflation

The Igatpuri Zarthosty Anjuman has appealed to the community for funds in order to keep abreast with the inflation in the price of fire wood that is used to keep the fire of its agiary aglow. An appeal note in Gujarati explains that the price of wood is presently three times what it was a year ago and that this has placed a tremendous stress on the limited funds of the Anjuman.

Donors may send cheques in favour of the Agiary's President, Maneksha N. Botawalla to the Igatpur Zarthosty Anjuman, Igatpuri.

SPOTLIGHT

Ms Dilnawaz Variava was one of the three Indians among the 20 foremost wild life conservationists who were awarded the Order of the Golden Ark for 1979. The award which was created by the founder president of the World Life Fund, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, is in recognition of special services to conservation...

Mr Homi Mehta chief manager, Central Bank of India, Hyderabad region, won the best member recognition for 1979 awarded by the Indian Society for Training and Development. The award is for his overall contribution in furthering the Society's activities in the area of human resource development...

Mr Namdar Feredoon Kermani was recently appointed as the Assistant Police Commissioner for Bombay. The former Police Inspector, who started his career with the police force as a sub-inspector in 1947, has worked on many successful cases and has been in charge of a number of police stations all over the city. As Assistant Police Commissioner he is in charge of the Police Welfare Division...

Mr Rusi K. Daruwala has been appointed as the new Chairman of the General Insurance Corporation of India. Daruwala, who started his career as an assistant in the Actuarial Department of the New India Assurance Company, was the General Manager of the Corporation before his recent appointment...

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"FIRE PEOPLE" OF PAKISTAN

Though the Pakistan Parsis number around five to six thousand and they have made a substantial contribution to the country. In an article in the May, 1977 issue of the Karachi monthly, *The Herald*, Khorshed Laskari wrote about the Zoroastrian community in Pakistan. We carry here extracts from her article "The Fire People."

The Parsis first began trickling into the Pakistan region in 1825—nearly twenty years before the British annexed Sind. They made it in the fast prospering Karachi. They went about the task of ameliorating their own community. For over fifty years the Eduljee Dinshaw family have led in building low cost houses for the poor and middle-class Parsis. The Lady Dufferin Hospital and innumerable public dispensaries as also the NED Engineering College were set up by the Dinshaw family. Sir Kavasji Katrak was another prominent philanthropist of Karachi who gave away large sums for housing and other welfare projects.

The Katrak Hall and the Katrak Building for the Sind Red Crescent Society are two of his munificences. The Cowasjee family has also founded various charitable institutions. The century-old Bai Virbaijee Sopariwalla Boys School and the Mama Parsi Girls School, both now open to all communities, were started by Parsi philanthropists. The BN Minocherhomji Parsi General Hospital, started in 1935 moved into its own premises later on with the help of donors who continue to aid it regularly. The beautiful Clifton Parade and Pier, opened in 1921, was a gift of Sir Jehangir Kothari, a rich businessman and intrepid traveller, to the Karachi public.

There are now a little over 5,000 Parsis in Pakistan concentrated mainly in Karachi. Several new settlers came with the opening of job opportunities after partition. Some migration to US and Canada, especially among the young, is taking place these days for higher education and employment in foreign countries.

Lahore and Quetta have small Parsi colonies of about 150 Parsis each. The Bhandaras in Lahore and the Markers in Quetta are leaders of

the community. The Parsis, both men and women are well-educated. They show a preference for business and industry and professions such as law, medicine, and teaching. Some have retired from the army as officers, and a few young men are now serving as officers, or studying as cadets in the armed forces. Very few Parsis are serving in high government posts. Mr S. Poonegar is a PCS officer at Quetta. Two Parsis have been in the diplomatic service for many years with postings all over the world. They are ambassadors Mr Jamshed Marker and Mr J. G. Kharas. Mr Justice Dorab F. Patel was appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The Parsis of Karachi have taken a keen interest in civic life. There have been several mayors, health officers, Chief officers and engineers in the Karachi Municipal Corporation. The most outstanding was Mr Jamshed Nusservanji Mehta, known as the "Maker of Modern Karachi." He served as the head of the municipality for thirteen years until 1934. He was known all over the sub-continent as a dedicated social worker and philanthropist. He was regarded as the father of the Scouts Movement in Karachi. He was also elected to the Sind Assembly, though he refused to join any party.

Parsis were pioneers of the modern hotel business in Pakistan. The Beach Luxury Hotel of Karachi, started by Mr Dinshaw B. Avari, is thirty years old. Hotel Metropole was established soon afterwards by the late Mr Cyrus F. Minwalla, and is now run by his son Mr Darius Minwalla, who is also connected with Hyatt's Regency in Karachi. Mr D. B. Avari has now established Avari Hotels Ltd., which includes the Karachi and Lahore Hiltons.

Parsis have shown scant interest in politics. However, in 1976 the Pakistan People Party issued a ticket to a Parsi, Mr Hoshang H. Broacha, to represent all the minority communities of Karachi, and was elected unopposed to the former Sind Assembly.

Parsi women in Pakistan are marching with the times. Teaching, medicine and nursing had long been favoured professions. Now both married and unmarried women are employed in offices in large numbers as stenographers and secretaries to supplement the family income. Some Parsi girls are air-hostesses with PIA and other airlines.

Several women are running their own business, like hairdressing, confectionery, sari embroidery and interior decoration with great success.

Rashna Homji, a Parsi girl from Karachi gained plaudits as a solo dancer with the Royal Ballet in London.

Dr Ms Vera C. Cowasjee is a Ph.D in Archaeology and holds the distinction of being the first Asian lady to get this degree from the Institute of Archaeology, University of London. Her subject is the art history of Iran, with special reference to the Achaemenian Period.

Principals of both the Parsi schools are women—Ms Dina Mistry at BVS and Ms Mani Contractor at Mama School.

The most notable group achievement of Parsi women in Karachi is the systematic administration of the Karachi Zarathosti Banu Mandal. This organisation for women was founded in 1912 with the joint aims of social meetings and welfare work. In recent years its sphere of activities has been greatly expanded with generous donations earmarked for various welfare projects. Energetic sub-committees have been appointed for each department—Poor Welfare education, Medical Relief Rehabilitation and Child Welfare. The best physicians, surgeons and specialists willingly render free service for poor patients. The Banu Mandal now has its own spacious premises known as the Manijah Mehta Hall donated by the son of a devoted past President in her memory. Situated in the park of the Katrak Parsi Colony, it is a convenient and pleasant place for work and play. There is a monthly function for which members are charged a nominal fee.

It may be a cooking session or a flower demonstration, a lecture or seminar, a picnic, an educational excursion to factories or archaeology sites as far afield as Mohenjodaro.

The Mandal is a registered social welfare body and its work was lauded by the visiting government inspector, as was reported at the annual general meeting. The Managing Committee is composed of a dedicated band of ladies rendering selfless service. The Banu Mandal is often approached by APWA, Red Crescent and other organisations for help in collecting funds for regular relief work or in times of national emergencies.

Other Parsi organisations of Karachi

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are the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association founded mainly for literary activities. It has a library. The Karachi Parsi Institute played a great part in fostering sports in the city, holding cricket matches and tennis tournaments. It serves as a recreation club for members and their families.

The Parsi community has a 67-year-old Gujarati bi-weekly paper, *Parsi Sansar* edited originally by Mr Perzeshaw Dastur and now by his son, Mr Meherji Dastur. Besides some general news, there are articles of interest to Parsis and reports of community functions. Pages in English are also included occasionally.

Parsi men and women have always taken a keen interest in eastern and western music. The pianist Mr. Ferose Buchome took up the study of music seriously. He went to Europe on a scholarship and studied music under the celebrated Alfred Cortot. On his return he wanted to set up a Conservatoire of Music in Karachi. He has given many piano recitals and arranged musical evenings under the auspices of the Music Foundatoin of Pakistan, of which he is the director.

In the early years of this century, a chair existed at Columbia University, New York, for the study of

Iranian languages and literature. Here a brilliant Parsi took his education and was installed as the High Priest of the Karachi Parsis in 1909. He was Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr M. N. Dhalla, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., a most distinguished personality, wise and learned, who served the Parsis in all parts of the world through his eloquence and writings.

Extremely well-read, widely travelled and broad minded, his well-balanced views and authoritative teachings were of immense value to those willing to learn. He died in 1956 and even today his books on all aspects of Iranian civilisation are frank as he himself was during his ministership. Dastur Dr Dhalla not only studied the past, but was a keen observer of the way of life of the Parsis of his day whom he strove to divert at the right path when necessary. "Righteousness rests on the individual's piety, and not on a scrupulous observance of ceremonials..." Again, Zoroastrian virtues have made the modern Parsis great. The community has secured a pioneer place in the social, intellectual, and industrial life of the teeming millions of India."

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QUEBEC

Small is Beautiful

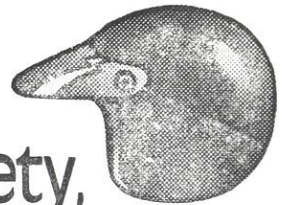
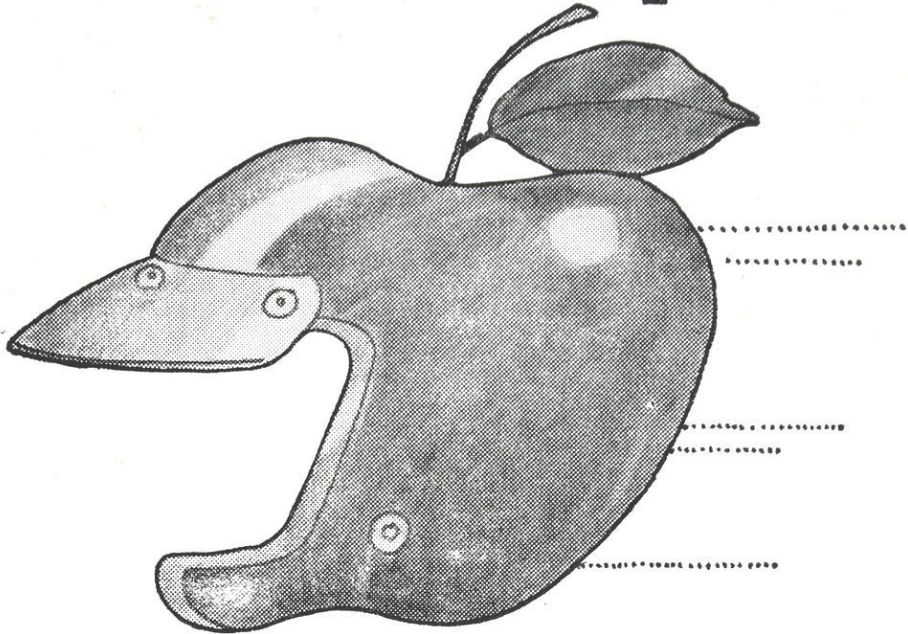
"Our strength is our smallness," says Ms Dolly Dastoor, president of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec who was on a recent visit to Bombay. Dastoor estimates that there are about 150 Zoroastrian families, many of whom have taken up citizenship, living in the Canadian province though not all are members of the Association. Most of them Dastoor adds, are highly qualified professionals and a number of them have also established their own business there.

The Association, one of the oldest on the North American continent, was established in 1967. Apart from the regular meeting and functions arranged to celebrate festive days, the association has prepared cassette recordings of Zoroastrian prayers, the quarterly publication of *Gavashni* journal, the compilation and publication of a directory of Zoroastrians living in Quebec, invitations to and visits by Zoroastrian scholars to talk about the religion, and social and cultural contact with other associations in North America.

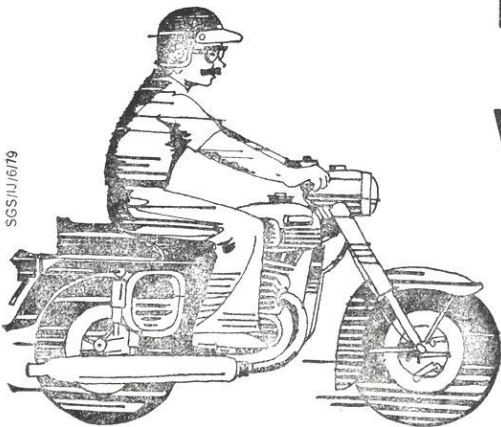
"Being out there we really want to preserve the religion...but we are faced with odds...the culture is quite different," Dastoor explains. To mea-

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sure up to the task she believes the association "will have to create the environment, which is very difficult" and will involve taking steps that may appear unorthodox. In regard to inter-communal marriages, the Association accepts the non-Parsi spouses and children of such unions into the community regardless of whether the husband or wife is Zoroastrian. Though no request for a Navjote ceremony of a person of non-Zoroastrian parentage has been received as yet, such a request in the future will in all probability be okayed by the Association. "We are not trying to become radical," Dastoor states, "We are concerned about preserving the religion...we have to look at the future."

Presently the association is considering the feasibility of having a place, "a little centre," of its own, but Dastoor adds "there are so many problems...who will look after it? Who will finance it?...we are so small." Yet she is hopeful and confident in the future of the community in Canada. To illustrate the degree to which the community has integrated into the "multi-cultured" Canadian community she points out that greet-

ings are beamed over TV and radio stations on 21 March each year to mark the Zoroastrian New Year.

AUSTRALIA

The first-small-giant-step

With the establishment of the First Building Fund Committee the Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales, Australia, has begun to realize the creation of a Zoroastrian Foundation in Australia. Purviz Kolsawalla, president of the Association, focuses on the embryonic vision in the March issue of the newsletter of the Association: "I would like to emphasise again the self reliance and effort to be put in by our community to get this project off the ground and achieve our cherished dream. There are no 'soft' options in this issue and constructive help and generous donations from all of us, along with the blessings of Ahura Mazda, will get the desired results."

Members of the Building Fund Committee are: Farrokh Mistree, Minoo Batliwalla, Purviz Kolsawalla and Dr Peshotan Katrak.

The newsletter also includes for the interest of its readers a speech made in 1906 by Ms Annie Beasant, the

noted freedom fighter and theosophist, which we reproduce here:

AWAKE O ZOROASTRIAN

"O my Parsi brothers our Prophet is not dead. He has not perished. He is watching over the religion that he founded: ever seeking to raise it from its present degradation, to give it back its lost knowledge, its lost powers. What nobler work for the Zoroastrian of today than to permeate his brethren with the ancient fire, to relight its blaze on the spiritual altar of their hearts: What nobler work than to study his own Scriptures, and to go forth and teach the ancient learning with the authority and power that can only be wielded, by men of the same faith with those he addresses. The fire is not dead; is only smouldering on its ancient altars; white-hot are the ashes, ready to reburst into flames. And I dream of a day when the breath of the great Prophet Zarathushtra, shall sweep again through His temples, fanning the ashes on the altars of those ancient flames, and every altar shall flash into fire, and again from heaven the answering flames shall fall, making the Zoroastrian religion once more what it ought

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CANADA

Did you know

Did you know that a 'Zarathushtra's Temple' has existed in the North American continent since the 16th Century? That one branch of the 'great migration' from Iran might have reached Japan? That the Zoroastrian influence is apparent in the Dead Sea Scrolls? These enlightening it-might-interest-you articles are carried by the newsletters of Quebec and Ontario.

'Zarathushtra's Temple'

The article, "Zarathushtra's Temple in the New World," by Phiroz Dastoor of Brossard Quebec, appears in the ZAQ publication *Gavashni*. Dastoor writes that 'Zarathushtra's Temple,' which took millions of years to build, stands at a height of 7,136 feet and is said to guard the Angel Creek of the Grand Canyon Valley in the U.S.A. The 'Temple', however, is not really a temple where people go to pray, but is only a name given to one of the many towering mountainlike structures that the Colorado River and the forces of nature have carved into the Grand Canyon Valley over millions of years. When the first Spanish immigrants visited the Grand Canyon around 1540 they "started naming some of these awe inspiring structures rightly after the (American) Indian tribes," says Dastoor. "Sometimes, the grand structures were called by mythological names of Gods and prophets of the Old World. The size, shape and colour have no relationship with the names."

The book, *Grand Canyon*, by B. H. Granger which mentions the 'temple' comments on the prophet thus: "Zarathushtra was the founder of what was for generations the national religion of the Perso-Iranian people. He is believed to have lived around 700 B.C. He was the founder of the wisdom of The Magi, rejecting the myriad gods of his age in favour of concentration on the spirit of God."

"For location of the Zarathushtra's Canyon, Zarathushtra's Temple in 'The Heart of the Grand Canyon' Dastoor writes "see a beautifully coloured map of Grand Canyon in National Geographics Vol.154, No. 1,p.32 (1978)."

Zoroastrians in Japan?

"Were There Zoroastrians in Japan?" Jamshed K. Pavri asks in the title of his article in *Gavashni*. The

book *Hi No Michi*, which translates to "The Way of Fire", by Seicho Matsumoto suggests that the answer is 'yes'. Pavri states that the book presents enough evidence to lend credibility to the theory that a section of the Zoroastrian religion did reach Japan via China. "The book of course has many things which are not easy to agree with," he adds "but related observations do indicate the presence of Zoroastrians in Japan."

Pavri also points out the popular reception the Japanese market accorded to the issue of the book. Since its first publication by Bungei Shunju Sha Publishers of Tokyo in November 1975 seven editions hit the market by July 1976. Further N.K.H.—T.V. started to broadcast programmes based upon the book in April 1976.

Dead Sea Scrolls.

The influence of Zoroastrianism on the Dead Sea Scrolls, believed to be the earliest known record of the Bible and other Hebrew texts written between the 1st century BC and the first half of the 1st century AD and discovered in the caves near the Dead Sea, is indicated in the book by J. Lewis, *Religion of the World Made Simple*. Pulti Byramjee submits comments from the book, Appendix B: 'The World's Great Sacred Books,' in a newsletter of the ZSO.

"These important documents refer to a small community which had withdrawn from the Hasmonean Kingdom and established themselves in monasteries in isolated situations. Here they lived lives of renunciation and discipline while waiting for the End of the Age. This would take the form of a War of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness. In this struggle God would intervene and destroy the wicked."

The Manual of Discipline tells us that "the influence of Zoroastrianism is clearly seen here for there is a cosmic conflict between the Powers of Darkness and Light. All men must belong to one or other of these powers. The conflict goes on not only in the world but in the heart of man. Thus the doctrine reflects a basic dualism, closely connected with subsequent doctrine of Original Sin. Note also that every man is endowed at birth either with the Spirit of Light or the Spirit of Darkness... Zoroastrianism is also reflected in the doctrine of a Day of Judgement and the punishment of the wicked. It should not be supposed that this is an essentially Hebrew doctrine, nor is it purely Christian. It is an importation from Zoroastrianism."

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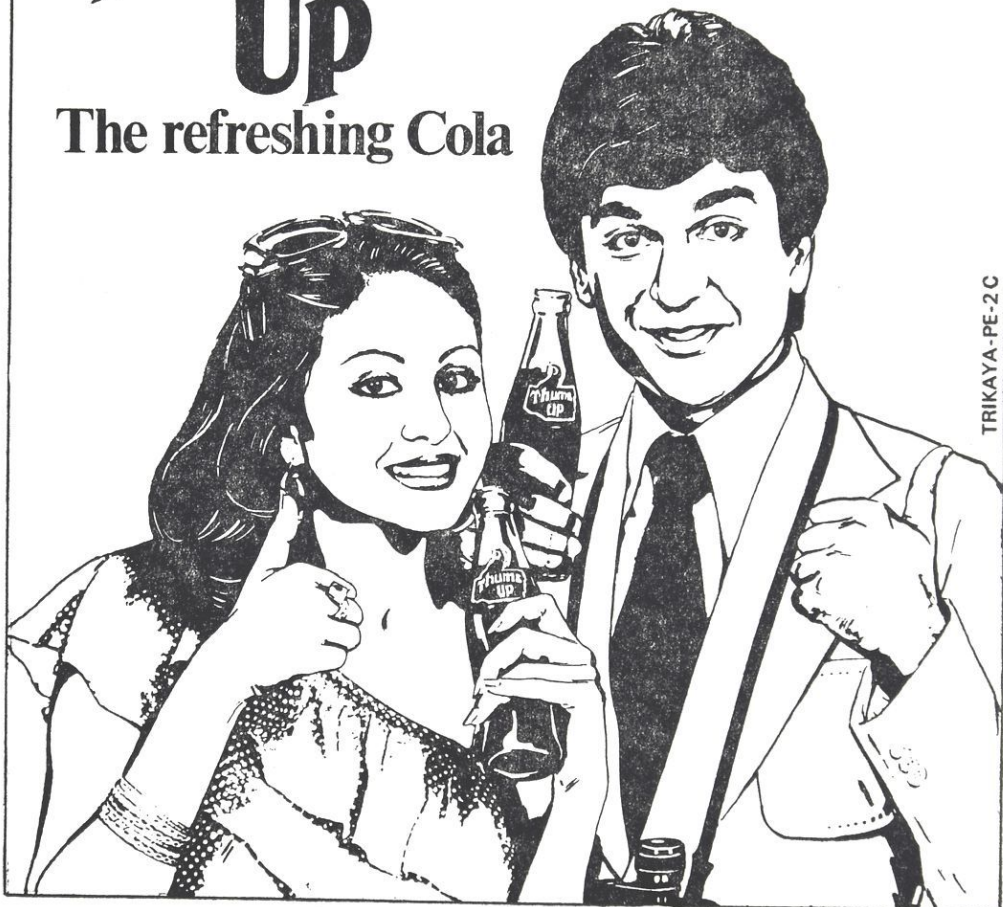
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The Case of the Short-sighted Parsi

When the creator of fiction's most enduring sleuth, (Sherlock Holmes) turned detective himself, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle did more than save damsels from specked vipers or young Lords from spectral hounds. In real life, Sir Arthur rescued a coloured man from criminal charges framed by a biased police force. The persecuted innocent was George Shapurji Edalji, a solicitor living in Great Wyrley near Birmingham.

As the surname suggests, Edalji was of Parsi descent. In spite of being born in Britain, he was somehow regarded by the local residents as an immigrant with no moral and social sense. So when certain bizarre crimes took place in the neighbourhood, the police force reasoned that the culprit could be only the 'sinister' Asian.

The crimes were out of the ordinary. In Great Wyrley, a number of horses and ponies had been attacked at night and slashed with a sharp instrument. The mutilated animals were then left to die. Coinciding with this savage outbreak of cattle-ripping was a stream of anonymous letters in which the gory deeds were praised. "There'll be merrier times in November," some of the unsigned letters exulted, "when we'll begin with little girls!"

Village gossip had already branded the alien inhabitant as the offender. A reporter from the *Express* and *Star* wrote: "Many are the theories propounded in the local ale-houses why George Edalji goes out in the night to slay cattle and a widely accepted idea is that he makes nocturnal sacrifices to strange gods."

On August 18, 1903, the police arrested George Edalji on fabricated charges of ripping a pony the previous night. He was later tried by a bigoted magistrate who accepted laughable testimonials as truth and finally sentenced him to a staggering seven years' penal servitude. "Lord, have mercy on us," cried Edalji's mother as her son disappeared behind bars.

Then, in 1906, Edalji was inexplicably released. There was no word of pardon. The home office did not say whether he was guilty or innocent. For Edalji, living in this limbo of 'free-but-guilty' was agonising. He had been struck off the roll of solicitors and could not practice while under police

supervision. In despair, the unhappy lawyer wrote a letter to a man he believed would save him—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The creator of Sherlock Holmes was gifted for the occasion. His short stories had demonstrated a unique method of scientific deduction. After all, it was Conan Doyle's own experience of life which led him to portray so vividly a character with whom he had much in common. But more important than intellectual acumen were qualities of heart. He had earned a reputation as a fighter for the underdog, detesting colour prejudice as much as he detested racial or religious antipathy.

They met by appointment in the foyer of Grand Hotel, Charing Cross. Sir Arthur found Edalji reading a newspaper which he held close to his eyes and rather sideways. "Mr. Edalji," he enquired, "Don't you suffer from astigmatic myopia?" The swiftly drawn conclusion was as accurate as any of Holmes' own. "Surely, this point was raised at your trial."

"Sir," replied Edalji, "I wanted to call an optician as witness but my legal advisers said the evidence against me was so palpably ridiculous that they wouldn't bother."

Conan Doyle reasoned that if Edalji was so short-sighted in daylight, he would have to grope his way outdoors at night. To expect such a man to stalk ponies and maim them at midnight was absurd. Convinced of the lawyer's innocence, Sir Arthur set

about to prove it to the world. He devoted around a year's work to the case. His literary activities were shelved, his political ambitions side-lined and he generously met all the expenses a fact-finding study entailed.

On January 11, 1907, the resolution of the mystery unfolded. *The Daily Telegraph* published an article by Conan Doyle in which the lid over the Edalji case was ripped off. The author effortlessly demolished the evidence against the young Parsi gentleman, asserting that he had been persecuted purely out of animosity towards coloured people. He condemned the strange manner in which the prisoner had been set free without a clearcut acquittal. The home office, he declared, was aware that Edalji was innocent, but would not own up its mistake.

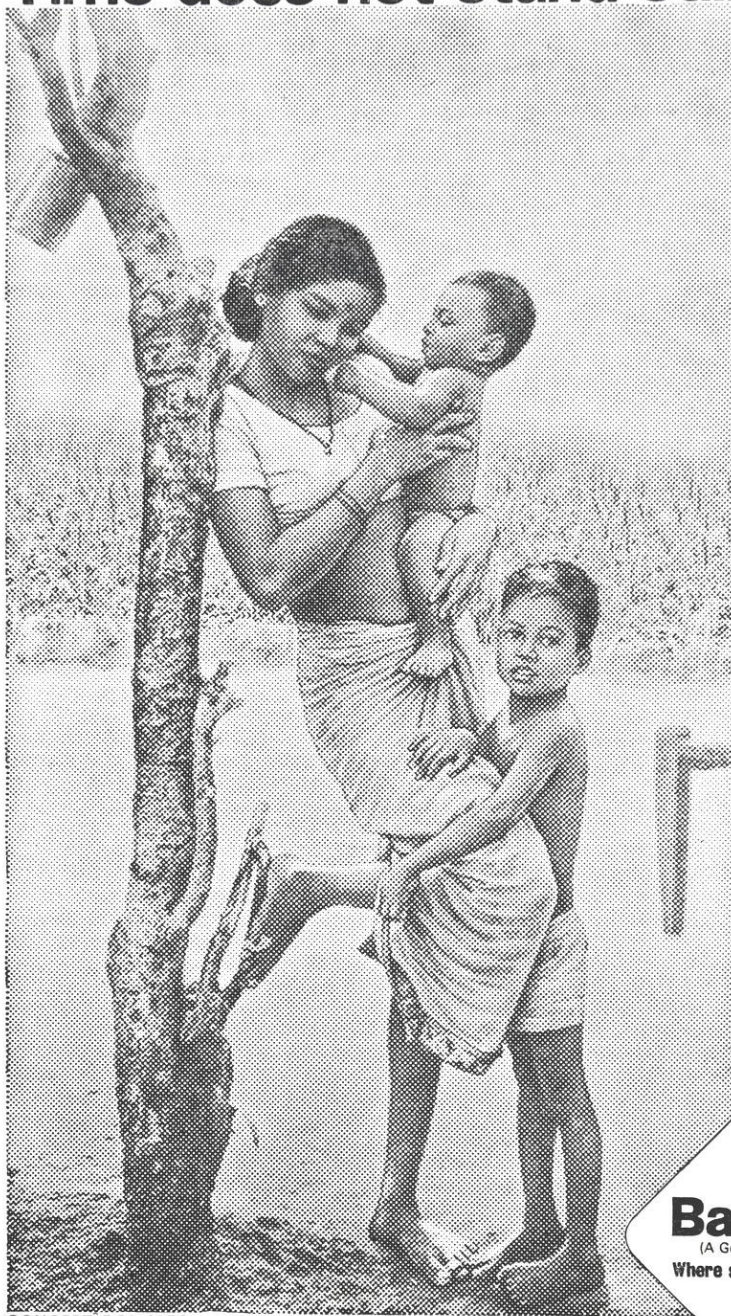
In powerfully-written prose, he sought to rouse the Britishers' fabled sense of fair play. "The door of officialdom is shut in our faces," he affirmed. "Now we turn to the last tribunal of all, a tribunal which never errs when facts are laid before it, and we ask the public of Great Britain whether this is to go on." The impassioned columns animated Sir Arthur's compatriots to take up the persecuted lawyer's case wholeheartedly. Street demonstrations and a flood of letters to the editors testified to their support. Overnight, George Edalji became hero of all Britain.

The public outcry compelled the home office to act. A committee of three men was set up to examine the question whether it was really Edalji who ripped cattle or wrote anonymous letters.

Sir Arthur did not realize he was crusading against the monolithic might of British bureaucracy. The three-man committee ignored his vital findings and came up with a report seeking of bias and diplomatic compromise. While conceding that Edalji was innocent of cattle-ripping, they alleged he may have written the indecent letters. Result: a pardon but no compensation for the illegal imprisonment.

If Sir Arthur was not pleased with the imperfect resolution of the Great Wyrley mystery, the chief protagonist, George Edalji, was more than content. He had been welcomed back to the roll of solicitors and *The Daily Tele*

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graph even raised a donation of 300 pounds for him.

A happy epilogue to the story soon followed. Conan Doyle was married to his beloved Jean Leckie on September 18, 1907. Among the invitees were celebrities like Jerome K. Jerome, Bram Stoker, James Barrie and a guest whom everybody welcomed George Shapurji Edalji, the talented and virtuous Parsi lawyer of Birmingham!

The Times of India
13 Jan. 1980

Memories

At the junction of Perin Nariman (Bazar Gate) Street and Rustam Sidhwa Marg (Gunbow Street), stands a 100-year-old monument erected in memory of **Bomanjee Hormusjee Wadia**.

According to the Parsi Panchayat, Wadia was a justice of the peace, and for 11 years he officiated on the commissioner's court of requests, predecessor of the small causes court. Besides, he was a member of the board of education.

He was also said to be the first sheriff of Bombay (1859). Wadia died on July 3, 1862.

Desiring to enshrine his memory in a lasting monument, a committee formed for the purpose chose to erect a combined ornamental fountain and clock tower and entrusted the work of designing it to the then municipal chief engineer, Reinzi Walton.

Walton styled his work on Persian architecture of 2,500 years ago. Then on three sides of this square structure, he had engraved cuneiform writing selected from a copy of the rock inscription at Behstoon in Persia (Iran) of the same period.

The records of the Parsi Panchayat show that the fountain, clock tower and its machinery cost the committee Rs. 19,451-76. They were handed over to the Bombay municipal corporation in February, 1876.

The writing on the monument (facing Victoria Terminus) both in English and Gujarati says it was erected to the memory of Wadia in 1880.

The fountain had long ago fallen into disuse. But the clock on four sides of the monument impresses a passer-by with its accuracy and its clear face with Roman numerals. It is always a pleasure to set one's watch by this ancient clock.

One wonders whether the Bombay

municipal corporation will repair the fountain, as it has renovated another near Fort Market.

For, it is not just a fountain and clock tower. Something of ancient Persia lives on here.

The Times of India
28 Jan. 1980

The Bombay Bawis

Meet (Ms) Ichhaporia. Peculiar to Bombay, the Parsi girl stands out by her deathly white skin and bawla accent. She still likes to wear brooches and lace blouses and absolutely refuses to part with her stretchlon pants. There is another kind of bawli—the genteel, sophisticated one—grand-daughter of Sir Bawaji, niece of Lady Bigshot. She hangs around the Willingdon pool by day and meets up with the caviar crowd by night...and speaks English with a French accent.

Society Magazine
November 1979

The Complete Parsi

In an interesting letter "More Parsees" *Mid-Day*, Sept. 13) Mr. Noshir H. Nagarwalla says that if



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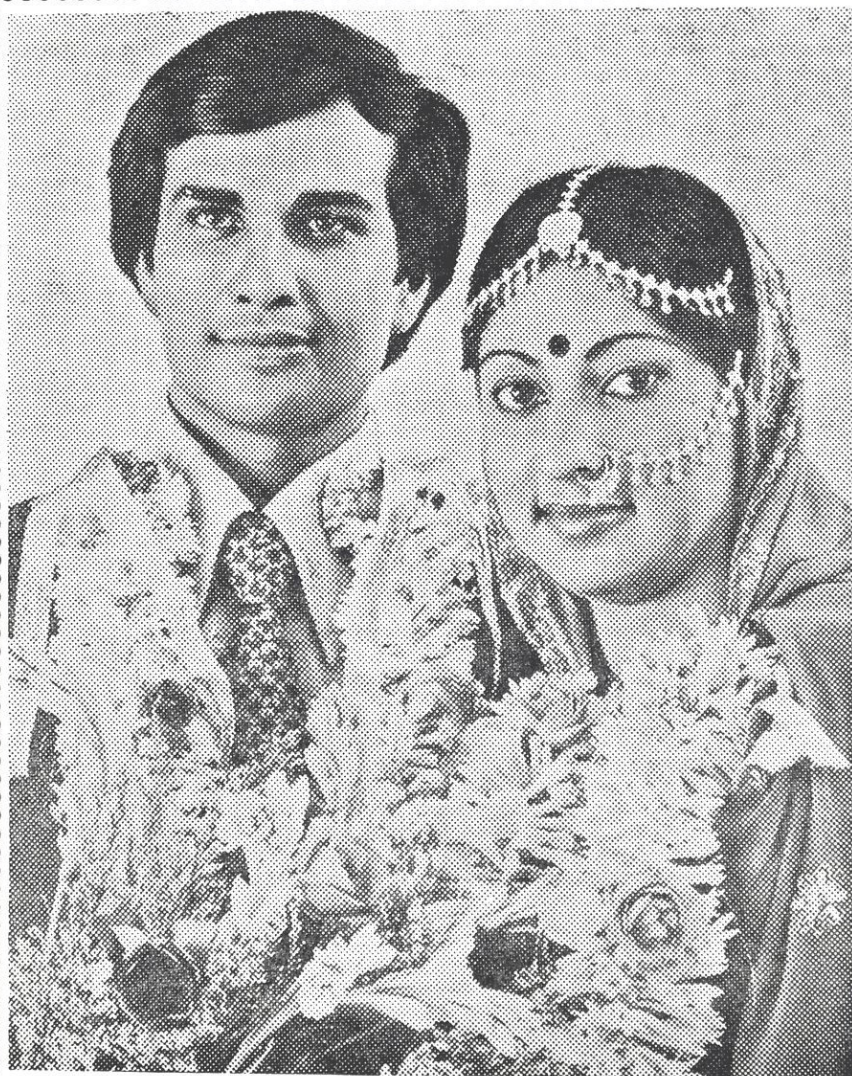
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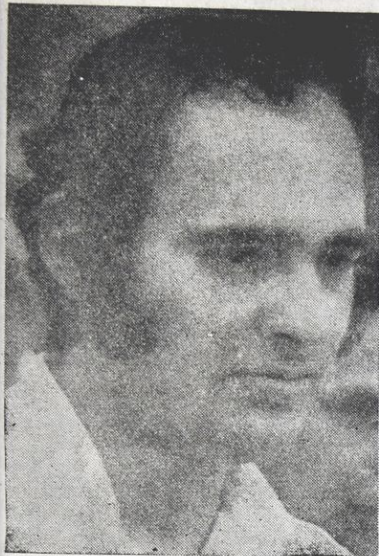
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tone up administration and improve the standards of public life? And Sanjay is loaded with typical Parsee characteristics—from head to foot.

Ashok Dube
Bandra
Mid-Day
20 Sept. 1979

IN THE NEWS AND SPOTLIGHT

Do you know any Parsi who has won distinction in any special field of endeavour or has merited a mention in the press? If you feel that such information will be of interest to our readers please send it to the Editor, Spotlight or In the News, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Items are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

IN THE NEWS

Two social workers, **Ms Jerbanoo Deboo** and **Ms Gool Daruwalla** who have, over the years, been collecting funds for various charitable organiza-

tions by touching up old greeting cards for resale, have contributed Rs 1,501 to the Morvi Relief Fund from the proceeds of sales of re-circulated Divali cards according to the 'City Lights' column in the *Times of India*. The "two disarmingly simple, unassuming women" as they were referred to, reportedly started this novel form of social work back in 1967 to assist the victims of the Koyana earthquake. Last year they are reported to have distributed Rs. 7,665 to various charities.

Ms Zarin Daruwalla a prominent exponent of Hindustani classical music who plays on "a most difficult instrument" the sarod, was featured in an article in the *Times of India*, Sunday Magazine Section. Daruwalla is reported to have displayed a gift for Hindustani classical music at a very early age having won a number of awards including the Birla gold medal at the All India Music Conference at Calcutta in 1958. "Not content to rest on her childhood laurels" the report adds, she has, by hard and rigorous practice and under the guidance of leading authorities in the field "risen to occupy a special place in Hindustani classical music. . ."

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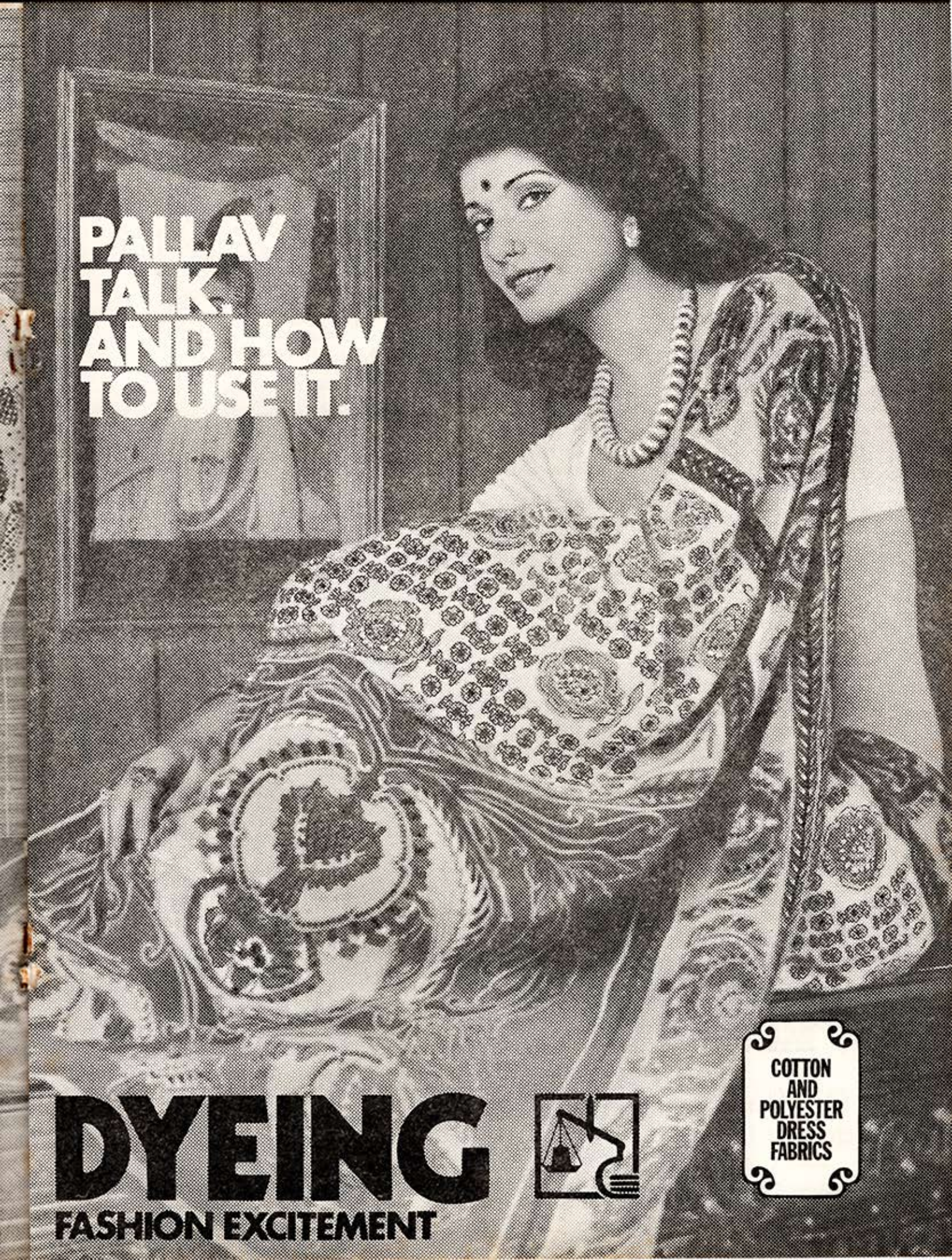


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The Year of the Monkey



In the early hours of the morning of 21 March, the year will "turn" from 1358 to 1359 and the world will move into the Year of the Monkey, at least by the Fasli calendar. The year of the goat which would by then have just been over will return after a span of 12 years after the horse, rat, tiger and other animals have completed their yearly stint through the planet. Though these animals have been an endearing feature of Navroz the significance and origins of their association with the Fasli calendar remain relatively obscure and in the sphere of speculation in the Bombay community.

Ervad Sorabji, the Irani boyewala at the Dadiseth Agiary at Bombay's Fountain area speculates with reservations that the custom must have been borrowed from Chinese astrology. "I don't know when the custom was first introduced into Iran but I suspect that it was existent even during the time of the Sasanians," he says.

"It must have come from China," says Mahyar Patel, secretary and treasurer of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, and most of the Irani Zoroastrians interviewed agree with this view. G. R. Asgarian, the Iranian financial manager of the Iran Air office in Bombay, however, protests against the suggestion. "It is purely Iranian," he states and then adds; "however, the custom is so old and at that time there was a lot of cross-cultural influence between the Iranians, Indians and the Chinese that it might be possible that it has a common cultural base." He believes the practice existed even during the times of Darius the Great.

The literature on Navroz provided by the Iranian Consulate in Bombay and available at the libraries of the Iranian Cultural Centre, Bombay, and the Cama Oriental Institute makes no mention of associating animals with the new year.

All agree that the custom is based on astrology. Sorabji explains. "Just

as the Romans named the planets after their gods, the Chinese named them after animals. So when we refer to the year of a particular animal we are actually referring to the year of the particular planet it is associated with." Patel suspects that the animals correspond to the 12 Zodiac signs and not the planets. Asgarian points out that the animals are the symbols of the Zodiac signs equivalent to the more popular signs like a lion to Leo, or fish for Pisces, scales for Libra etc. None were, however, able to elaborate on the correspondence between the animals and the Zodiac signs or planets.

What might be expected from the Year of the Monkey? "All this is really astrology and not religion," Sorabji pleads. He points out that the fortunes of the year depend on the characteristics of the planet and not of the monkey. "But I don't know how good all this is," he adds. "Presently we are in the year of the goat which is supposed to be the best year of the twelve. But this year was really bad. See what has happened in Iran."

A *Times of India* report on the Chinese new year (4678) which fell on 16 February 1980 writes: "Astrologers say the Year of the Monkey will be inauspicious, bringing floods and disasters followed by a period of tranquility and peace."

Members of the Iranian Consulate in Bombay, the Iranian Cultural Centre and Irani Zoroastrians contacted professed little knowledge beyond awareness of the custom. Are these animals represented by any symbolism on the Navroz table? "None," or "I don't know," was the general consensus of the answers.

Most Parsis contacted were almost completely ignorant of the custom. "I'm hearing of it for the first time," said one. "Isn't it Chinese?" said another. "What's this monkey business about?" queried yet another.

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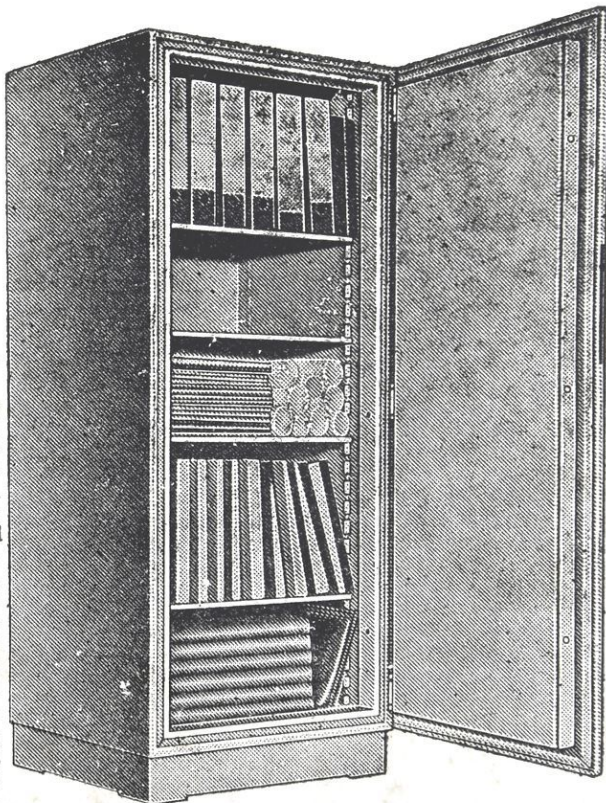
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Shernaz Kermani : Bound to Win

Gustasp Irani

"It all started when I was 16 and considering participating in the regular swimming sports of our school," says Shernaz Kermani, who has been paralysed below the waist and confined to a wheelchair since the age of two. "My hydro-therapy instructor, however, introduced me to a sports event for the handicapped." Fourteen years later, Kermani has participated in two Olympic Games for the Handicapped, two international meets, won four gold, four silver and three bronze medals in swimming, track and field events in international competitions, and has been honoured with the highest Indian sports awards: the Arjun Award 1979 of the Central Government and the Shiv Chatrapati Award 1979 of the Maharashtra State Government. She dismisses these achievements with a casual "I am one of the few lucky ones," though upon being congratulated for her achievements, she is all aglow as she reaches from her wheelchair and offers a firm hand shake.

The eldest child of Gover and Din-yar Sharpoor Irani (Kermani), the managing partners of Kermani Transport Company, Kermani lost the use of her legs after suffering severe meningitis fever and paralysis. When she started swimming at the age of 11 as a form of therapy, she says, "my parents, my mother in particular, had always hoped that I could walk again. But deep down in me I could feel nothing in my legs and I suspected I would never walk again." After her mother died when Kermani was 16 she started to view her swimming as sport and not hydro-therapy.

"There was no organization to help us . . . the Government provided no facilities . . . we were very much on our own."

Kermani recalls the problems she faced when she had participated in her first international event, the 1969 Tel Aviv Olympics for the Handicapped: "At that time we had to

spend our own money or collect our own funds . . . there was no formal organization to train or help us . . . the Government provided no tangible facilities . . . we were very much on our own." Did she win any medals? "None," she says and then with a shy smile adds, "actually I came last in all my events."

Since then, Kermani has participated in the 1972 Olympic Games at Heidelberg in Germany and the 1974 International Stoke Mendeleville Games in London where she won her first international medal, a bronze in the 100 metres wheelchair sprint. In 1977, Kermani and the entire contingent of Indian athletes had gone to Toronto to participate in the Toronto Olympics when "on the advice of the Indian Ambassador to Canada, we had



Kermani : Award winner

to boycott the games to protest South Africa's participation. It was really disappointing," says Kermani. "But since I was already in Toronto I thought I might take advantage of it," she adds. According to her she appeared for a competitive examination and won a scholarship to study German at the Foreign Languages Department of Philadelphia University. It was while she was studying here that she availed of the opportunity to participate in the Pan American Games of 1977. During this meet she won four golds — three in swimming and one in the 400 metres wheelchair race, — four silver — table tennis, javelin,

shot putt and the 100 metres wheelchair sprint — and two bronze — discus and precision javelin.

Keeping in shape is very strenuous, especially before an international competition, says Kermani. In 1974, the All India Federation for Sports and Rehabilitation for Paraplegics (persons paralysed below the waist) was formed with the objective of promoting sports for the handicapped

"Of course no amount of training can guarantee that you will win an event until you have actually won it."

and preparing contestants for international events. Six months before any such event athletes assemble in Poona, where the main centre of the organization is located, for rigorous training, says Kermani. "Every morning we go through one hour of weightlifting, then three hours of swimming practice and in the evening are taken for a one-mile hike around the army camp where the centre is based."

Even if there is no competition Kermani keeps fit with a daily one-hour swim at the YMCA pool in Bombay. Though the pool has a separate time for the handicapped, Kermani prefers to swim during the regular public hours. "At first the others were conscious of my presence but now they accept it quite naturally," she says. "Of course no amount of training can guarantee that you will win an event until you have actually won it," she adds. "Anything can happen. You might get the nerves, or you might get a cramp in your arms during the race, or you can get a flat tyre." Then suddenly remembering, she strokes the wheels of her chair that advertises its journeys across the globe with stickers that cover its backrest. "This is my racing chair," she says.

Sports aside, Kermani also talks about the problems of being a paraplegic. "Social and psychological

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barriers aside, it is the architectural barriers that are the greatest problem for us crips (a term she uses to refer to cripple and paraplegic like herself)." By architectural problems she refers to climbing and descending steps, getting in and out of public transport or the kind of terrain that they have to cover in their wheelchair. Accordingly, she derives a sense of achievement in that she has toured a greater part of Europe and USA on her own.

"Abroad," she observes, "they are so much more aware of our problems than in India, and they have so many more facilities." For instance, she points out, that in Switzerland there is a special booth for the handicapped at all railway stations to help them with their special needs. She notes that after helping a handicapped person onto a train they paste a sticker onto the compartment so that the booth at their destination knows that there is a person who will need help to de-train. In contrast, she recalls, the first time she travelled to Poona alone. The ticket inspector on that journey demanded that she pay extra for her wheelchair as baggage charges. "Why should I have paid extra? My wheelchair is my legs," an animated Kermani



Kermani hurling the javelin

"Why should I have paid extra? My wheelchair is my legs".

protested. "I told him I was not going to pay, not because I could not afford it but because it was a matter of principle. I told him he could arrest

me or do what he liked but I was not paying." She won her case.

Now at the age of 30, Kermani envisages herself getting more involved with the rehabilitation of less fortunate paraplegics than herself and less involved with sport though not completely divorced from it. "At my age I realise that there are only a few years of competitive sport left. But then, I achieved more than I ever hoped for," she says.

Kermani is grateful for the encouragement her parents, brother, sister and friends have always given her. She sees her enrolment in Queen Mary's High School, from where she passed her SSC in 1968, as an important factor in enabling her overcome the social and psychological barriers.

Were these barriers formidable? Kermani considers for a while. "When I came to accept the blunt truth that I would never walk again, my biggest problem at the time was that I would be dependant on others for the rest of my life. But gradually I came to realize that everyone is dependant on someone, only the degree varies, and I came to terms with myself." But even now she observes; "we crips just hate to be carried bodily, it reinforces our dependency too strongly."

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The Smouldering Embers of the Kadmi Priesthood

Gustasp Irani

In 1720, the Zoroastrian community in Surat received the revered Dastur Jamasp 'Valayati' (of the motherland) of the Kerman agiary in Iran, to mediate the controversy over the correct positioning of the feet of the dead. By the time he had returned to his native land he had thrown the Indian Zoroastrian community into yet another and more bitter controversy, this one over the two different calendars followed by the Zoroastrians in Iran and India (see box). Since then it has almost become a tradition for the Kadmis, who adopted the Iranian calendar, which is a month ahead of the Shenshai calendar, to look towards Irani mobeds for religious guidance and service.

"Previously it was believed that only Irani mobeds were qualified to perform Kadmi prayers and ceremonies," says Ervad Sorabji, the 60-year-old Irani boyewala at the A. D. Dadiseth agiary in the Fountain area of Bombay. The tradition, however, over the last 25 to 30 years has been fading rapidly with the decline in the number of Irani mobeds and today suspends over extinction on a slender thread of three Irani mobeds in India. "After us I suspect there will be no more," says Sorabji.

The peak in number of Irani mobeds in India, Sorabji estimates, was during the early twentieth century when there were about 75 practicing in Bombay. "When I came to India in 1935, our number was about 45 (in Bombay)", says Sorabji. "Since then some have died, others have stopped practicing as priests and many have returned to Iran, and there are no young Irani Zoroastrians to take their place or likely to do so," he adds.

While most of the Irani mobeds in India had come from Iran—"Over 90% had become Navars and Maratabs in Iran"—today even in that country there are not enough mobeds to serve the community there. "Iranians are now coming to India to look for Parsi mobeds to come to Iran. I don't think they are able to produce

Navars or Maratabs anymore," says Sorabji.

Sorabji links the decline in the number of Irani mobeds to the economic prosperity of Iran. Previously, since Iran was a poor country and there was a demand for Irani mobeds to perform Kadmi ceremonies in India the Iranis found it beneficial to come to India. However, as the economic conditions in Iran started to improve many of the Irani mobeds started to return to their native country mainly around the 1950s. Many of those who returned to Iran, Sorabji believes, left the priesthood

"If I should get a chance to study further, I will definitely stop being a priest"

for more lucrative employment. Those who remained as priests have either died or have now become old. Meanwhile, the younger generation of Irani Zoroastrians are opting for better paying jobs in commercial activities over priesthood. Hence while the number of priests both in India and

Iran keeps declining the Kadmi section of the community has to increasingly turn to the Parsi priests for service.

Ervad Dinshaw Ardeshir Irani, a 50-year-old Irani mobed attached to the A. D. Dadiseth agiary, was hesitant to commit himself. "I do my duty and don't get involved," he says. He adds that the life of a priest is "very hard" and he would not blame any young Irani or Parsi for not wanting to become a priest. The third Irani mobed, Ervad Rayomand Valayati clarifies that he is not really Irani: "My father is a Parsi, only my mother is Irani." Twenty-year-old Valayati, who has been practicing as a priest for the last five years, says he became a priest because he was interested in the religion. "But now I realise that it is a very difficult life and more difficult to make a living off. I am also interested in electrical engineering and if I should get a chance to study further, I will definitely stop being a priest," he adds.

To underscore this reluctance among the youth in the community to become priests, especially among the Iranis, Sorabji points out that a charity box was placed in the A. D. Dadiseth agiary years ago with the objective of presenting the money collected to any Irani who should become a mobed. "It has been so many years that we don't even know where the keys to the box are. Now the box is filled over and there is no one qualified to present it to", says Sorabji.

None of the three Irani priest know of any community organisation or Anjuman which looks after their interest in particular. Dinshaw Irani says that he has received Rs 300 per year over the last two years from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman but is otherwise unaware of any scheme that applies to the Irani mobeds. Mahyar Patel, secretary and treasurer of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, points out that over the last four years the Anjuman has been distributing a



Valayati : 'a difficult life'



Sorabji : 'searching for the bride'

total sum of Rs 3,000 every quarterly equally between 10 deserving mobeds. "No distinction is made between Irani or Parsi priests in this scheme," he says.

Though Parsi Kadmi mobeds have been able to fill in the void created by the decline in the number of their Irani counterparts, there still remain certain customs and rituals characteristic of the Irani community that Irani mobeds are called upon to perform. For instance, at an Irani wedding the mobed, with candle in hand, goes 'searching for the bride.' Six times he will ask the bride if she wishes to marry the man chosen to be her future husband and six times, she will find an excuse to differ an answer. Only on the seventh occasion does she consent and the marriage

how to do them," says Ervard Framroze Ardeshir Behramkamdin, a boyewala at the Banaji Atash Behram at Charni Road in Bombay, but admits: "I suppose it won't be the same as an Irani priest performing them."

If a section of the community will have to surrender a tradition for want of any Irani mobeds to maintain it, the priestly class is apprehensive that the Kadmi and Fasli sections of the community will be faced with a similar crisis in the not too distant future. Presently there are 12 Kadmi and four Fasli full-time practicing mobeds, according to one estimate. Including part-time priests Behramkamdin estimates that there are around 30 to 40 Kadmi priests. Unlike the proverbial final burst the priestly class suspect inglorious extinction. "Soon there will only be Shenshai priests left," says Behramkamdin. Estimates the number of Shenshai priest in India today vary around 300 to 400.

"Why look at it as a problem only from the Irani, Kadmi or Fasli angle, it is a problem with the entire priestly community as a whole," says Dastur Minochehr-Homji, high priest of the N. M. Petti Falsi Atash Kadeh at Bombay's New Marine Lines. "Young Zoroastrians don't want to become mobeds, because there is no status or respect, and in the modern world status and respect are equated to economic wellbeing. So the problem will remain until the community starts paying their priests more and improves their economic condition."

Behramkamdin and Sorabji concur with Minochehr-Homji. "Why should

"Why should we mobeds want our children to become mobeds and suffer as we did?"

we mobeds want our children to become mobeds and suffer as we did? There are no regular working hours for us, no paid leave, no day off in the week. Above all we earn so little and there is no guarantee of our earnings," says Behramkamdin. "Of course," he adds, "we make them Navars and Maratabs but..." Sorabji refers to the case of his own two sons: "One is an engineer and the other a MBA and both are earning well. I can't except them to become mobeds."

"For years we have been trying to draw the attention of the community to this problem (of a decline in the number of priests) but nothing seems to be happening," says Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa high priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram at Princess Street Bombay. It is not that the community is unaware of problems. One session of the three papers was devoted to Zoroastrian priesthood at the Third World Zoroastrian Congress held at Bombay in 1978. Also, smaller Anjumans and Panchayats in India like the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and the Delhi Parsi Anjuman are taking positive steps to improve the lot of their priests (see 'Events and Personalities'). Further practicing priests have access to local anjumans, panchayats and organisations in almost all the community centres, including Bombay which has the largest number of priests, for financial and monetary assistance. However the problem remains.

"Unless the community applies itself seriously the number of priests will continue to decline," says Minochehr-Homji. Otherwise, he believes the sheer forces of market economics will correct the problem. "There will come a time when there will be so few priests and the demand for their services so great that the community will have to start paying them better. Then only will things improve." By then, however, the tradition which was once Irani, and perhaps Kadmi and Fasli also, may be beyond the pale of redemption.

Six times the mobed will ask the bride if she wishes to marry her future husband and six times she will differ an answer. Only on the seventh occasion does she consent.

ceremony proceeds. Presently only Sorabji performs these ceremonies in India. Dinshaw Irani and Valayati say that they do not know how these ceremonies are performed. "Perhaps we Parsi mobeds will be able to perform these ceremonies if we are taught

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The Trinity of Calanders

Though held together by the common bond of religion the World Zoroastrian community is split into three segments over the calendar. The Shenshais, who constitute the largest in number, start their year presently towards the end of August; the Kadmis, who comprise of a large section of the Irani community and also some Parsis, start their year a month earlier; and the Faslis, of relatively recent origin, begin the year on 21 March. Because of the unadjusted 'leap day' in the calendar of the Shenshais and Kadmis their new year day recedes by one day in every four years.

The differences in the calendars, according to scholars, traces to the forgotten adjustments for the 'leap day', or, in the case of the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian calendar, the 'leap month' once in every 120 years. According to Mary Boyce, in her book *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, the Zoroastrian community that remained back in Iran after the Arab invasion of the country no longer made the 'leap month' correction, or intercalation adjustment. The community that settled in India made only one such intercalation adjustment in the year 1129-31 which accounts for the one month difference between the two calendars.

In 1720, when Dastur Jamasp Valayati, of the Kerman agiary in Iran, visited India he pointed out this difference. Sections of the Indian community felt that the local community should adjust their calendar to conform with the one followed in Iran and this led to bitter disputes. In 1746 a section of the priests and lay community in Surat adopted the Irani calendar which was called Kadmi from the Persian work *Qadim* for old.

Boyce writes: "At its height the dispute between the Shenshais and Kadmis produced so deep a schism that it necessitated the founding of

separate places of worship. In 1783 a wealthy philanthropist, Dady Seth, had a Kadmi Atash Behram constructed with (Dastur) Mulla Kaus as its high priest." Presently in Bombay, in addition to the Dadiseth Atash Behram which is located at Fanaswadi, the other Kadmi fire temples are the Banaji Atash Behram, opposite Charni Road station, the Dadiseth Agiary at Fountain area, the Saher in Agiary at Warden Road and the Vachhagandhi Agiary at Hughes Road.

The Fasli movement, according to Boyce took shape in early twentieth century when Khurshed R. Cama, on the strength of his religious scholarship and popularity advocated that the most logical calendar for Zoroastrians was one which was in harmony with the seasons and started on the day of the spring equinox, on 21 March. In 1937 Nasserwanji Maneckji Petit built the only Fasli place of worship existing even today, the N. M. Petit (Fasli) Atash Kedah at New Marine Lines.

Presently the Fasli calendar has found its greatest champions in the community settled in the North American continent. Newsletters and reports from the community there suggest that there is a concerted effort within the community to adopt this Fasli calendar. Dr. Jehan Bagli, editor of *Gavashni*, the quarterly publication of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, Canada, who is actively involved in promoting the Fasli calendar, writes to *Parsiana*: "The response of those who make a realistic effort to understand it (the Fasli calendar,) is very good. The process (of change) has to be very gradual, because matters such as these in today's age cannot be brought overnight. The shock of such a change can do more harm than good.

"Historically it took 150 years before the Gregorian Calendar was accepted by the Church of England. I therefore, do not expect overnight

results. Almost all Associations of North America celebrate Peteti, Navroz functions still in August. However, the most important thing is that several of them have started performing Ghambar Jashans as per the Mazdayasna (seasonal calendar) calendar which is of course the same as Fasli. I believe it will change very gradually."

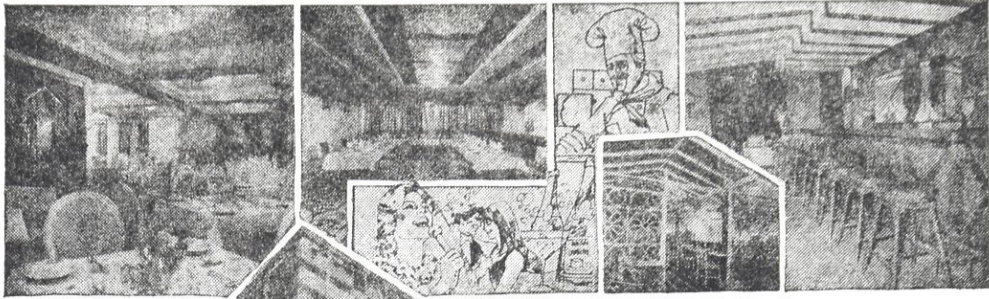
The problem that the different calendars create from the religious point of view is that their rojes (days) and mahs (months) fall at different times. For instance, the days of the 'muktad' prayers for the dead according to the three different calendars fall at different times of the year. The question of a mobed performing ceremonies for more than one section of the community is a sensitive one in the priestly class. "It is morally wrong," says a high-priest and scholar in Bombay, who does not wish to be identified because of the delicate nature of the issue. "There cannot be two rojes to one day...it is a matter of principle." However, there are some mobeds who do indulge in this practice.

The priestly community nevertheless emphasises that the difference between the Shenshais, Kadmis and Faslis is a difference of calendar, and not religion. There is no difference in the prayers or ceremonies of the Shenshais and Faslis, they point out. Only the Kadmis differ in their prayers, but as Ervand Framroz Ardeshtir Behramkamdin, boyewala at the Banaji Atash Behram points out "this is only marginal. Our thornans teach their students both versions."

The question of which calendar is the most authentic remains unresolved. The Dastur-scholar observes that the Fasli version is a new one, superimposed on the community, and the Sheshshair and Kadmi versions have failed to make the intercalation adjustments. "All three are wrong," he says.

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Delhi Survey : Profile of the Delhi Parsis

The Parsi community in Delhi, while maintaining a higher standard of living than the general population of the city, is showing a growing propensity to marry outside the community and is faced with the possibility of a decline in its numbers. The observation is made by a recently published interpretation based upon a pioneering socio-economic survey of the Delhi Parsi community conducted in 1978 and sponsored by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA).

"This survey has arisen out of three main social concerns and not out of academic interest," note the authors of the interpretation, Aspi Moddie, Ava Khullar and Piloo Jungalwalla. These social concerns are listed as: "The hypothesis of declining numbers; the hypothesis of economic decline; (and) the extent and implications of mixed marriages, and a possible loss to a number of Zoroastrians."

The survey shows that the Parsis while having a smaller number of youth, also have a larger proportion of aged members in comparison to the general population of Delhi. According to the Delhi Census of 1971, over a third of the Delhi population comprise those under 14 years of age versus one sixth for the Parsis, while Parsis over 60 are thrice in number as compared to the general urban population — 13.8% to 4.2%. Figures for the non-Parsis related to Parsis through marriage, classified as NPRs, who were also included in the Delhi Parsi survey, corresponds more closely with that of the general population — 35.3% of their numbers under 14 and 5.3% of those over 60.

"In context to the concern over the decline in numbers," the interpretation notes, "the general reader wishes to know (if) there is a real threat of the kind of extinction predicted? The data pertaining to the

age structure of the community, the small size of families, the birth rate, number of children in households, etc. show a definite trend towards lesser birth per 1,000 Parsis."

As regards inter-community marriages, the survey notes that in 1978 about two thirds of all Parsi marriages were mixed in Delhi as against one thirds in 1969 and only one sixth in 1949. The interpretation points out that when a comparison is made between the levels of occupation, education and income between husbands and wives, Parsi wives and non-Parsi husbands show the closest similarities. "The Parsi female's choice of non-Parsi husbands is nearly always from a similar high socio-economic group," the interpreters comment. "Could the economic motivation be the dominant motivation here? If so, the community needs to place greater emphasis on the education, professionalisation, and economic growth of its young males if it wishes to turn the rising tides of inter-marriage."

The reasons for the economic decline is more difficult to ascertain. "Without a base-line study, trends are not possible to assess", notes the interpretation. The figures, however, show that 63% have monthly incomes of less than Rs. 1,000. Yet if the earnings are taken from the viewpoint of household earnings then about 64% of families earn over Rs. 2,000 per month. The explanation, the interpretation surmises, is because there are two or more earning members in a family.

Other statistics indicate that the Parsis and the non-Parsis related to Parsis through marriage compare very favourably with the general population in their level of education. Parsis who have studied to the bachelor degree level amount to 37.6% while for the non-Parsis related group the figure is 34.2% as against only

7.9% for the general population. Commenting on the proportion of dependency of the old in the Parsi community, the interpretation notes that this "also poses the problem of higher economic means for maintenance (and) more living space for young married couples. One may expect the Delhi Parsis to show an increasing percentage of old age dependents in the coming years. This is another clear problem for the community's future."

On the problem of housing the interpretation observes, "what the sur-

"The Parsi female choice of non-Parsi husbands is nearly always from a similar high socio-economic group. Could the economics motivation be the dominant motivation here?"

vey does not highlight is that 50% of Parsis and NPRs live in rented houses, hotels and as paying guests. The community needs to do more for itself in this important aspect in terms of social action; learning from the more acute situation in Bombay which, it is reported, is a main cause of delayed marriages and population decline."

The interpretation is based on a 131-page research study conducted by the Centre for Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, and sponsored by the DPA at a cost of Rs. 3,000. "To the extent that the Delhi community could organize such a research study undertaking, it may serve as an example for other representative sections of the Parsi community to do the same," the interpretation observes.

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The survey, according to the interpretation, was a product of a suggestion calling for such a socio-economic study at the "North Zone meeting in early 1977." The meeting felt that the study was necessary because "in discussing matters of concern, the community did not have sound research based data; and this sometimes led to speculation without facts."

"In discussing matters of concern, the community did not have sound research based data; and this sometimes led to speculation without facts...."

Response to the survey is reported to have been 91%, not without the

encouragement and efforts of the Parsi Advisory Committee members and other involved Parsis. In addition to supplying data on the 557 Parsis of Delhi surveyed, the study also included information on 113 non-Parsis related to Parsis by marriage. In all, the original study includes 36 tables of which 9 are reproduced by the interpretation paper. These tables include information on the distribution of the community by age; education by sex; occupation; income (individual and household); marital status; migration by age, sex and marital status; dependency ratio and decade-wise Parsi marriages within and outside the community. Also included in selected tables are statistics of the Bombay Parsis obtained from the Bombay census of 1971 to establish some basis of comparison.

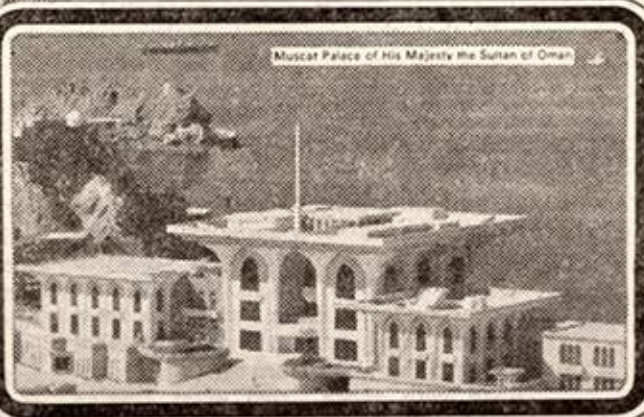
The interpretation concludes by posing questions that beg answers. "Can the community think of some practical social security for the old in the families with relatively low incomes? Can the rich Parsis and NPRs help Parsis and NPRs with family incomes below Rs 1,000; at least to provide a health insurance scheme for the old, and an education insurance scheme for the young below 16? Where do we go next?"

"The study is not meant to be of academic interest. It is meant to highlight the community's social problems on a factual basis, eliminate unfactual speculation, and present specific problems for solution through social action. The days when 'gambhars' and 'nataks' were considered social action are over. There are harder problems ahead."

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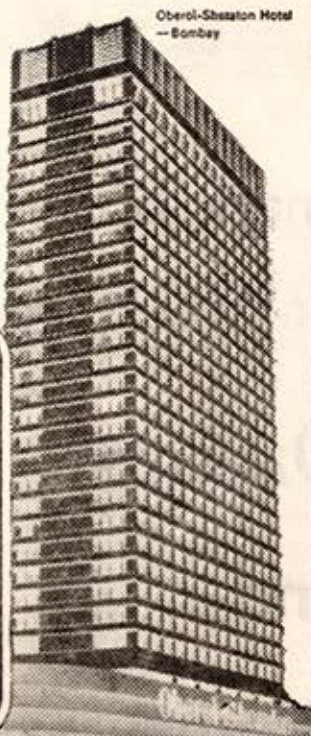
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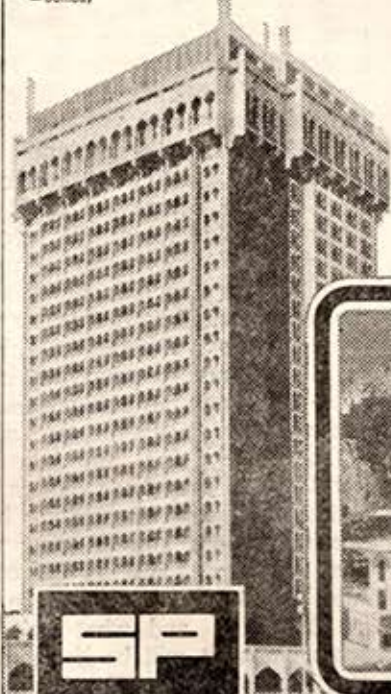


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Image of Zarathushtra : Dreams and Reality ?

"The image of Zarathushtra we know presently is a dream image of a Parsi painter," writes Feroze Cama, a long-time resident of New York who takes interest in Zoroastrian scholarship. A more likely and closer resemblance of what the holy prophet might have looked like, Cama believes, is that of the person in the fresco reproduced above, which some Western scholars have identified as most probably a portrait of Zarathushtra. The fresco was found during an early twentieth century excavation of Dura Europos, an ancient city located in present-day Syria and believed to date back to 240 AD.

"The fresco was first identified as Zarathushtra by the late Professor Micheal I. Rostovtzeff, an internationally respected scholar of Iranian, Roman and Hellenistic (Greek) history and one of the excavators of Dura-Europos," writes the associate curator, Ancient Art and the Dura-Europos collection, Yale University, in a letter to Cama. Professor Rostovtzeff's own comment on the fresco and a second one found at the same site are: "the figures of the two prophets of Mithraism — probably Zarathushtra and Oshanes — are of great interest, for they may be regarded as prototypes of the figures of the Magi in Christian art (reference to the three wise men at the time of Christ's birth)... These most interesting figures unique in their kind, in the usual Perso-Palmyrene (people of the ancient city of Palmyra North East of Damascus) dress, wear the Mithraic tiara (headgear worn by the followers of the God Mitra), both are bearded and wear a drooping, short, black moustache, both have the Iranian type of face.

"In the left hand they hold a white roll and in the right a black cane with a flat top. It is evident from the rolls that they represent teachers or learned men, and from the ebony canes that they are Magi or magicians... There is no doubt that the persons represented in the paintings must be regarded as Magi, or prophets, those who were the authors or interpreters of the several books of Mithraism. Since Zoroaster was regarded as the originator of the Mithraic mysteries and Oshanes was his most famous pupil, we may speculate that the two Magi of Dura are to be identified with those two great Iranian prophets." Rostovtzeff's comment ap-

pears in the Preliminary Report of the Seventh (1933-34) & (1934-35) Season Work on the Excavation at Dura-Europos, edited from lectures delivered by Rostovtzeff at Yale University. The report was sent to Cama by the Washington D.C. Library of Congress in response to his request for information on the portrait of Zarathushtra.

Cama's interest in the subject was first aroused while reading Jim Hick's *The Persians*, published by the Time-Life Books, wherein appears a portrait claimed to be that of Zarathushtra. Since the picture was printed through the courtesy of Yale University, Cama wrote to the University to check its authenticity. He believes that the image of Zarathushtra as we presently portray him has evolved from the fact that "as the Zoroastrians who settled in India also adopted the Indian customs and dress, the prophet's costume also attributes to that." He, however, clarifies that "I do not imply that the present-day dress of our mobeds and dasturs should be changed to conform to that in the photograph. I also do not imply that the pictorial representation of the person of Zarathushtra be altered to conform to that depicted in the photograph.

"My intention is that our present and future generations should get some idea that the investigations and researches into the life, times and teaching of Zarathushtra are far from complete and we must continue to dig up more information and also analyse scientifically the diverse nature of information and opinions presented by various scholars." Cama quotes from a letter he received from Dr Carl von Ziemensky of St Joseph College, Philadelphia "It would be the greatest achievement of my life to initiate an expeditionary search for the remains of Zarathushtra or at least for the oldest evidence of his legacy... We have to penetrate into the past and bring up the jewels. New documentary revelations are needed."

Cama feels that "the followers of Zarathushtra may have hidden his remains to prevent desecration by conquering nations and it may still be lying hidden... just as the coffin of John the Baptist was found in a cave in Cairo... and what a glorious achievement it will be if the discoverers themselves are Zoroastrians," he writes.

LEARN and EARN



Z-QUIZ-7

How much do you know about your social, cultural, religious and economic heritage? Most Parsis are brought up on myths which they continue to believe till the dokhma. To help readers gauge the extent of their knowledge and also to keep them informed and enriched, *Parsiana* restarts the Z-Quiz on behalf of the sponsor of The Lost Generation Essay Competition. The entry with the highest number of correct answers will receive Rs. 75, the next, Rs. 50 and the third, Rs. 25. In case of a tie, the amount will be split among the winners.

Send your replies to The Editor, Z-Quiz, C/o Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay—400 001 by 15 May. Answers will be published in our next issue.

1. Which are the twelve animals associated with Navroz?

2. What do the terms Fasli, Kadmi and Shenshai stand for or signify?

3. Is a Zoroastrian Irani a Parsi?

4. In what dialect do the Zoroastrian Iranis speak? Does it have its own script?

5. Who was the first man according to Zoroastrian mythology?

6. In which year was the Zoroastrian Association of Europe (Incorporated) founded?

7. Which two cities were the abode of the Udvada fire before it was moved to its present location?

8. Who was the first Indian (Parsi) Chairman of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay, equivalent to the present-day position of Mayor, and when was he elected to the post?

9. In 1934, for the first time, 14 Indians were appointed as Justice of Peace in Bombay. How many of them were Parsis?

10. When was the first agiary in Delhi built and who was the first high priest of the capital city?

There were two winners with all 10 correct answers for Z-Quiz No. 6 (*Parsiana* July 1978 supplement). The winners are K. D. Chagman and B. S. Surti. Ms K. F. Seervai, with 7 1/2 correct answers, finished as the runner-up.

Below is the solution to Quiz:

1. Can a Parsi couple adopt a child under Parsi law?

No. Parsi law does not recognize adoption.

2. What is the Geh Sarna a recital of?

The Gathas.

3. When is a Parsi male referred to as a var-raja?

At the time of marriage. The term means husband-king.

4. What is the name for the central well in the towers of silence?

Bhandar.

5. Why is the kumkum red pigment on the forehead long and vertical for a man and round for a woman?

According to Sir J. J. Modi, the long vertical mark of the male symbolises a ray of the sun, as a handsome man is compared by Oriental writers with the sun, while the beauty of a woman is always compared with that of the moon.

6. In which town or cities in India are non-Parsis permitted to pay their last respects to the dead after the Gen Sarn ceremony?



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(B. S. Surti writes : "In every town and city in India, including Bombay, there are some Parsi individuals who permit non-Parsi to pay last respect of their deceased relatives, against the ruling of the local Anjumans." He rightly points out that the question relates to Anjumans and Panchayats that "do not object to such practices.")

7. Aside from India, which other countries have agiaries or Atash Behrams?

Pakistan and Iran.

8. What is the difference between a Khandhia and a Nassasalar?

The Nassasalars carry the body out of the house and the Khandhias carry it till the tower. The Nassasalars then take charge and carry the body into the tower.

9 Which city of the world has the second largest Zoroastrian population?

Teheran.

10. Which panchayat or anjuman has the second largest asset in India?

The Surat Panchayat.

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ADDRESS :

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I, Jehangir R. Patel. hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd (Jehangir R. Patel)

1 March 1980

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The Kshnuman Way

The present kusti which we do is not adequate," according to a 20 page printed booklet *Sarosh Khshnuman Kusti: A Complete Prayer*, by F. K. Rustomfram of Hyderabad. "Hence," the author writes "it is important that our children are taught the correct form of kusti with Sarosh Khshnuman," which appears to be the main objective of the booklet.

The book is based on a Ill-mc-Kshnoom version of Zoroastrianism which may be broadly defined as a mystical, orthodoxical approach to the religion. An introduction on the "Khushnoomic interpretation" of the sudreh and kusti, "do's and don'ts instructions on the kusti prayers and notes on the Zoroastrian religion in light of Khshnoom form the body of the publication. In addition a three page wallhanging chart giving the specific actions to be performed while saying the kusti prayers, the 'Mathra' to be recited, in the devnagari script, and the thoughts, 'Mithra', in English, accompanies the booklet.

"The audience intended is the child who is approaching the Navjote age," writes Rustomfram "but to explain the kusti prayers to it (the child) is the job of the parent. In order to do so the parents themselves have to switch over to this version (Sarosh Khshnuman) of the kusti." Accordingly, the writer addresses himself to the general Zoroastrian audience. The book, however, goes beyond the kusti prayers, it also offers the reader an insight into Khshnoom (see extracts).

Rustomfram writes, in a letter to *Farsiana*, that the book is free of cost and that readers may write to him at 201, Chirag Ali Lane, Hyderabad, 500001 for a copy.

EXTRACTS**Sudreh**

"Let us examine this simple garment (sudreh) a little more closely. Cotton refracts or breaks up the sun's rays entering our body dirtily. Our body gives out waste matter incessantly and the sudreh helps in preventing the friction between the sun's rays and the waste matter. Hence, our personal emanation (aura) is not impaired. The sudreh also acts as Naf-e-Bavra, a spiritual fortification or shield around our body against

pollution. When this Naf-e-Bavra blooms as we recite the prayers sincerely we are brought nearer to Sarosh."

"....the kusti absorbs the blissful vibrationary colours, spreads them in the close environment of the body and thence to the Keherp and to the soul."

Kusti

"The kusti is a sacred thread girdle made of lamb's wool. The term is derived from "Karsha" meaning a (magnetic) circuit. Khshnoom teaches us that lambs are under the joint planetary influence of the sun and Jupiter. Jupiter is...the ruling planet of our faith. The lamb symbolizes the live-and-help-live principle of nature. Also wool collects the vibrationary colours (stoata) produced by the prayer. In the case of the Avesta Manthra (prayer formula) the kusti absorbs the blissful vibrationary colours, spreads them in the close environment (aipi) of the body and thence to the keherp, the invisible body, and through the keherp to the soul."

Zoroastrianism

"Khshnoom tells us that every major religion in the world is under the influence of a planet. Zoroastrianism is under the influence of Jupiter—the planet benefic. Also Jupiter has sway over certain higher creations in the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdom... (which) are pre-eminent in their own way in their respective groups. In the course of the kusti prayers we come across references to the forefinger thrice. The forefinger is said to represent Jupiter. Zoroastrian souls are referred to as Burjisi jhium ruvans as the souls have attained a certain amount of relative precedence in comparison to ruvans of the other religions. This is in itself a proof of the status our religion enjoys as a result of the never-ending process of rebirths. Hence, it is clear that those who intermarry lose this status thus acquired and are apt to be relegated to the next!"

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Adjusting to Change

Two papers on "the Problems of Education for Zoroastrians in the present set-up" were presented at the Third World Congress held in early 1978 in Bombay. Speakers making the presentations were Dr (Ms) Aloo J. Dastur, head of Department of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay, and Dr H. N. Sethna, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.

In our continuing series on the Congress papers we carry in this issue edited versions of these two papers.

I believe that the future of our community is intertwined with that of our country and when I speak of our country, I mean only India. I would like to emphasize that we Parsis owe a great debt to this country which has given us shelter for the last 1300 years and it is the only country in which we will be able to survive for another 1300 years and more. In all other countries, it will be a washout. And even in India, our survival will depend only upon us and how we adjust ourselves to the changing situations, yet retaining our identity as a community as our fore-fathers have done so.

I will strongly urge that we follow their example, and maintain India as our home and our own country. We may go abroad for studies or business, but return to make our contributions to the progress and development of our country. Let me assure all of you, that enough opportunities exist in our country for us in almost every field.

However, in order that we make the most of these opportunities, we must tune ourselves to the changed and changing situation. We cannot live in the past and long for other conditions. I am going to confine myself only to the problems of education facing or likely to face our community in this country.

For adjustment to the changing political situations, we need to face the problems of educating our children, boldly looking to the future and not to the past. Let me only remind this audience that our fore-fathers coming

World Congress Papers

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Dr H. N. Sethna

to India, quickly adopted the Indian languages and used these languages for their normal conversation. When the British came and established the British rule, we were among the first, if not the first, to pick-up the English language.

Today it is equally necessary for us to see the writings on the wall and alter our strategies. I do not decry the importance of the English language as one of the most important international language for the future development of our country. But what we have to recognize is that we have become snobbish to the extent that



Dr Homi N. Sethna

many of us take pride that we do not know any Indian language. In fact we tend to look down on Indian languages with contempt. We should take urgent steps to avoid this gargantuan blunder. It is already isolating us from the main-stream of Indian thought and culture. Our approach to educational problems, should be such as would keep us in the main stream of life in India.

In the bygone days, we were the most educated community. Today the situation has changed completely.

Firstly, the number of graduates from the other communities has increased so enormously (the job opportunities have also grown enormously) that we no longer hold the position of prominence as having the largest number of graduates. Secondly, the standards of education and examination have so deteriorated that the number first and second class graduates far outnumber the pass class graduates. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that graduates from our community are not finding jobs as easily as in the past.

However, if one analyses this situation, one finds that:

We have set our goals wrongly. We aspire mainly for easy clerical jobs. Wherever we may be, in rural or urban or metropolitan area, we want that all children—irrespective of their capabilities—go to college, get a degree and then get a job in a Bank—preferably the Central Bank of India—earlier it was almost a Dharmashala—and get a posting in Bombay city. This whole attitude must change.

We have become lazy. The quality of hard work seems to be disappearing. Especially from our boys. Nobody has achieved anything without hard and dedicated work—even for the geniuses it is 95% perspiration and 5% inspiration. For us ordinary persons, it is 99.9% perspiration.

We have lost our emphasis on dignity of labour. Our educational approach—and that of others in the country also—has been lopsided. Glamourising the so called college or higher education and degrading the vocational education which tends to develop skills and crafts. Our children must be made to realise that there is nothing to be ashamed of in doing manual work.

We have therefore to recognise that college education is not for everybody. Hence, we should not waste time, effort and money of charitable trust pushing a child through college. Let us remember that our fore-fathers made a name for themselves as master craftsmen. But today it is next to impossible to find a Parsi carpenter or an electrician or a machinist and at a time when such craftsmen can earn more than a graduate can—and further when there are far more

"We tend to look down on Indian languages with contempt. We should take urgent steps to avoid this gargantuan blunder".

vacancies for such craftsmen than there are for graduates.

We have taken an aversion for such vocations even though these also provide opportunities for self-employment. It is a sad commentary on our very narrow outlook to education, because of which Parsi institutions giving such vocational trainings had to close down. I am referring to the Gamadia Polytechnic in Bombay and the Parekh Polytechnic in Surat. All these institutions used to give excellent training in so many trades, and had produced very good people but later on they were not getting enough students. The community has to think—why and how did it happen?

In the same vein, let me ask what has happened to our agriculturalists. We have in the past contributed greatly to agriculture and horticulture.

Even now there are prospering Parsi farmers but what happened to the others. Most lost out because of laziness. I believe it is necessary that the training in several rural homes that the community is conducting at Gholvad, Navsari, etc., should be biased towards agriculture and rural culture rather than towards an urban culture. We need farmers in the country. All sorts of protection and financial benefits and incentives have been offered, but we have ignored them. We have generally not generated that rapport with the farmers of the other communities. In short, we have failed to establish that rapport at the political and the social level. And I blame our educational policies for that.

Added to that we have developed a lure for the city and the city life which is greatly damaging to the socio-economic standards of the community. Our approach and attitude to education has caused this utterly false glamour for city life. Putting it briefly it simply adds upto this that "the educated live in the cities and the ignorant live in the villages". Nothing can be farther from the truth.

At this stage I should mention that our country has grown tremendously

in the industrial sector—both large scale and small scale and there is fantastic scope for new industries. I would urge those science and engineering graduates who have gone abroad, to seriously consider the very bright prospects in the country and to utilize their expertise as well as managerial and entrepreneurial skills for the development of our country. I can only forecast a very bright and lucrative future.

However, this brings me to another aspect, the pitifully small number of boys who are going in for science and engineering. We need a number of scientists in the research laboratories all over the country, but we hardly get a Parsi boy or girl willing to make a career in pure sciences. Similar is the case with engineering. Today when many more and newer engineering disciplines like nuclear, telecommunications, electronics, etc., are available, our boys and girls are not taking advantage. These require hard work but then our boys must be prepared for it. I cannot but help mentioning that our girls as a rule have done much better in scholastic endeavour than the boys.

A similar situation prevails in medical and life sciences. We have

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often been identifying medical and life sciences as non—mathematical, if not anti—mathematical. This is wrong. Today we have active research work going on in the various units of the DAE and of other research institutions in the country on bio-engineering, molecular biology, bio-physics, etc., where physics, mathematics, engineering and biology blend together.

I believe the Panchayats can do something more positive than simply conducting aptitude tests. They should organise and provide guidance bureau which could give up-to-date and detailed information on the careers in the various areas. It should also encourage vocationalization of education in our Parsi schools, at the same time educating the parents also in the value and usefulness of vocational training.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore I will stress that our educational programmes and strategies should be such as to :

Bring us and keep us in the mainstream of the social and political life in the country.

Enable us to utilize the wide ranging of talent that is bound to exist in any community by channelising and encouraging those gifted with manual dexterity to become master craftsmen.

Selectively channelise the gifted students to special institutions which our Panchayats and educational trust can establish. A good pattern could be the Dnyan Prabodhinee in Poona, which runs a special school for gifted children of very high IQ.

Uptodate our charity schools so that they can provide the best of modern academic and especially vocational education to children from the economically poorer sections.

Provide ample opportunities for children from the rural regions to make proper adjustments and to acquire such skills in agriculture, horticulture, etc., which would harmonize them for life in the agricultural environments.

Provide guidance in respect of the newer emerging areas of science and technology, or medicine or agriculture so that our children especially the gifted ones, wherever they may be, can be identified and guided to become experts in these fields for which demand is expected 5 or 10 or 15 years from now.

Finally make them into fine human beings, sensitive to the happenings in and around their surroundings who would be ever willing to do their duty and fulfill their obligations to their community as a true Parsi and to their country.

TOWARDS SECULARISM

Dr (Ms) A. J. Dastur

The Constitution of India underlines and emphasises the rights of minorities as no other constitution in the world does. The Constitution of India recognises the right to freedom of religion and the cultural and educational rights for the protection of the interest of the minorities. The articles are clear and specific and several schools and educational institutions even before the adoption of the Constitution were conducted by groups and associations of minority communities including the Parsis.



Dr (Ms) Aloo J. Dastur

These schools used to receive Government grants. In 1954, the Government of Bombay issued an order that schools which were managed exclusively for children of a special religious denomination would no more qualify for grants unless they admitted children without reference to their religion. The matter went to the Bombay High Court and a full bench gave its verdict in favour of the Government. The gravamen of their argument was that old trusts, even hundred year old trusts, can and should be changed to move with changing times. Since then, these schools which catered exclusively to Parsi children threw open their doors to all communities. This has benefitted them as now a larger number of pupils are on the rolls and Parsi children have to be more alert and scholarly due to keen competition from others.

Thus, following modern trends in education put forth in Europe and America, our schools, too bend towards non-religious education, with emphasis on ethics and universal truths, rather than religious tenets. The

“Following modern trends in education... our schools, too bend towards non-religious education”.

old established Parsi schools are no exceptions.

When we talk of education for Zoroastrian children, do we imply, do we mean to imply, that there is or should be some new design or philosophy of education? Do we, again, consider or intend to make them a unique or distinctive band of pupils and students to be given a different type of education? A modern state seeks to equalise the opportunity for education to all its people irrespective of status in life or wealth.

Formerly, education, certainly higher education, was a preserve of those who could afford it; here, an important question is whether it is right that good, sound, desirable education should be available to those who can afford it; and those who cannot may be left out. Such an attitude in our own days is just not possible. And since the least common multiple of education is training for life and living, there must be a fair opportunity provided to one and all to acquire this training.

Today, when substantial numbers of Zoroastrians have settled in distant lands, their children must and will accept the style of life and living of their different environments with their different value systems. If Zoroastrian ethics are to be cultivated then the duty falls on the parents and the family. The study of religious tenets and their significance is a domestic or group obligation; modern education systems keep religion and religious practices out of school curricula. In that sense, education has become secular and non-denominational.

While we emphatically plead for universal primary education, at the higher secondary stage the aptitude of the child has to be taken into account. His ability, his capability to work with the head or hand or heart is or should be of primary importance.

The university system can also be very lop-sided. A few decades ago the emphasis was in the liberal arts and a cultured citizen was one who emerged from the portals of the university armed with the degree in arts. With independence, the focus was on science and all young men who

“Parsi children are somehow loath to use their hands, they rather prefer soft, white collar jobs to more lucrative manual labour”.

believed they were intelligent switched over to science and technology, specially engineering. More recently, commerce has become popular; next comes law. It is the general tendency to move with the crowd that sways even our young people.

There is one aspect of our attitude to education and work which is too obvious to go unnoticed. Parsi children are somehow loath to use their hands, they rather prefer soft, white collar jobs to more lucrative manual labour. There is social snobbery in this attitudes; perhaps,

time and necessity will modify it. In this process they have lost both the meaning and purpose of life. After all, education is really a search by the individual and society to understand what life is.

Taken a step further, education is to make individuals more useful members of society. One of the best ways is to get familiarised with the environment, hence, my plea that Zoroastrian children cannot have a ready-made design of education being Zoroastrian. They will have to fall in line with the design provided by the varied social milieus, in which they reside. The child must not consider this process as something alien to his experience; rather it must involve his interests and his feelings. To this extent variations are respected.

In education quite a bit depends on the individual, too; children take in as much as they can in different proportions according to their inborn capacity and acquired capability. Education must enable every individual

to find his best self. Routine and stereotyped curricula do not, cannot bring out the best in the pupils or students. Mass education cannot in reality cater to individual needs; but experimentation with new methods of teaching and adoption of a variety of means may and do appeal to the better more intelligent individuals.

For all children, including Zoroastrian, a sound system of education is one which appeals at every stage from the primary to the highest to the intellect and emotions of those taught. It must have a moral content and enable the teachers to make value judgements. Secular education is not devoid of moral considerations. Other concepts central to the sphere of education are knowledge, comprehension and intelligence, where one or more of these is lacking, then a fair substitute is education by the use of skills. The hand then in a manner replaces the mind or intellect. The focus continues to be on producing socially useful individuals.

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Here Comes the Bride

The life of Dastur Dhalla-IV

Both professionally and personally Dastur Dr Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla lived the religion of the good life. Born and bred in poverty, he grew up as, in his own words, a "narrow-minded, orthodox to the core". Later his determined quest for knowledge led him to the shores of America where he obtained his doctorate degree in Iranian languages from Columbia University in New York. An outstanding scholar whose contributions to the religion rank him among the top scholars on the subject both in India and abroad, he was the compassionate and revered high priest of the Karachi Parsis.

Aek Atmakatha is his autobiography, published by the Dastur Dr Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi and translated from Gujarati into English by Gool and Behram Rustomji. This is the fourth extract from the book which is being serialized by *Parsiiana*.

THE STORY SO FAR

Born into a poor dastur family in Surat on 27 August 1875, Dhalla lost his mother at three. In 1878 his family, which included three elder sisters, moved to Karachi when an uncle arranged a job for his father. At six Dhalla started his schooling and by eight he was wedded to five-year-old Cooverbai, the daughter of a wealthy family that traded with Bengal and China.

His failure to pass his matriculation proved to be a severe disappointment to his family and his refusal to answer an invitation to come to China, notwithstanding his failure, only served to heighten their dejection.

The son of a relative was to be initiated into Navarhood in Navsari. I was invited to spend a fortnight there. I was most eager to go to Navsari because that would afford an opportunity to see and meet my beloved. That of course, in the presence of elders-never alone!

Our meeting was always supervised and chaperoned. The senior members of the family would enquire about the welfare of my folks and lengthen the conversation with meaningless gossip. Of what value was that to me? My mind and heart would cling only to the fascinating form in front of me. In such a state of absorption if a question was shot at me unawares, I stuttered and stammered.

Near the compound was a sweet-water well where our women-folk went in the evenings to fill their pitchers. Before pipes carried water into homes this was the only mode of conduction. Thus our women reaped the benefit of an hour or two of fresh air. Even the well-to-do availed of this opportunity. The village-well of those days served the purpose of modern ladies' gymkhanas or clubs. Miserable daughters-in-law, tortured by the tyranny of a harsh mother-in-law or troubled by the taunts and tantrums of a sister-in-law, found relief in pouring out their tale of woe into the responsive ear of an equally wretched friend. Both found solace in each other's narratives. Others laughed and joked and sang and were merry as they filled their pots and went their way. The stop press items of newspapers carrying the latest news reached but a few homes, hence the main-spring of gossip and rumour was that village-well. At least forty to fifty companions gathered thus every evening. I stood daily under the shade of a tamarind tree and watched the cavalcade of companions pass by with pots and pitchers balanced on their heads or hung at their waists. One amongst the hundred was distinctly outstanding. My gaze was fixed upon this captivating beauty in the full bloom of her youth, with pitcher balanced on her head, gliding

gracefully along, her cheeks flushed with a crimson glow of consciousness, her features radiant with a sweet smile, stealing sly glances at me. This bewitching water-bearer was my wedded wife.

The time for departure was drawing near. There was still a little time for the train to arrive so we settled on a bench awaiting its arrival. By chance-or rather by contrivance we sat side by side and that too at the furthest end of the bench. Respecting the presence of the elders, with whispers and glances, through slight touches and imperceptible flirtations, we rapidly exchanged sentiments of love and affection. The bell tolled, the train arrived. There was a hustle and bustle; the guard blew his whistle and even while I looked, my heart's delight, wrapped in white Chinese satin, receded from sight. To me she seemed like an angle in the sky, this lovely creature of unparalleled beauty of form and features. But her image was absorbed in my being. My heart held its beloved within its deepest recesses. Upon my mind was sculptured the beauty of her form. Spiritually I was a born iconoclast, mentally I became an idolator. With such beautiful and unforgettable memories I left Navsari.

Self Confidence

Between December 1893 and January 1894 Bombay was in a state of agitation and excitement. The great patriot, Dadabhoi Navroji, had come to Bombay to preside over the ninth session of the Lahore National Congress. In the Bible it is stated: 'Knock and it shall be opened to you' Lal Mohan Ghosh had knocked twice on the doors of the British Parliament but they were not opened to him; so, disheartened, he retreated. With the persistence of a Navsari-ite, Dadabhoi also knocked. He knocked again and again, repeatedly and ever louder, and only when they were opened, did this 'black man' of Lord Salisbury rest. In clubs and friendly circles this was the main topic of conversation.

Born and bred in poverty, Dadabhoi Navroji by the strength of his character and the wealth of his

"One day while she was bathing I stealthily poured a tumblertful of taro all over her. She raised a mighty hullabaloo..."

knowledge conquered poverty. He had succeeded, then why shouldn't I? He had become renowned, then why not I? All day long such thoughts filled my mind and did not let me rest that night.

My trip to Bombay was not in vain. I returned a new man. An undreamed of self-confidence was born in me.

Self education

On returning to Karachi I started seeking some employment. A job was not easily available and when one did come my way, it was to be an honorary apprenticeship. I was a Class member of the Municipal Library at the Frere Hall. I realized that nothing could be achieved in this world without higher education. I had attained no such education nor was I willing to do so, because that would entail the compulsory study of

my detested subject—mathematics. If only I could find a school where I could study the subjects of my choice! I wanted to advance my knowledge of English, history, Persian, science and other allied subjects, but such a school did not exist. So I resolved to educate myself.

I surmised that if I continued my reading—scholarly reading—my aim would be achieved. I started reading I read a great deal and with great concentration. With utmost care I chose my reading material and selected my books. No one's advice was sought but the contents of each library book were conned carefully, the preface read and the pages scanned through. Eagerly did I devour history, biography and stories of travel. Within a span of five years I was attracted to books of deep philosophy. Though the library was replete with novels, I never read them. It was particularly surprising as I had become the editor and proprietor of a magazine that contained mostly fiction.

On the Zoroastrian New Year's Day of 1894 the *Gulshan-e-Danesh* (the Garden of Wisdom) was published under Parsi patronage and my editorship. I was twenty then. My salary as an editor was Rs 5. As it faced a deficit in the very first year, the pro-

prietor refused to continue its publication, so I took its liabilities upon myself. I, too encountered a loss; and, what was more important, within a very short time I lost all interest in writing the love-stories of Mehera and Silla. My mind was drawn to subjects relating to God, the spirit.

At the end of the third year, I discontinued the publication of that magazine. After all the accounts of the press had been settled a deficit of a hundred rupees was due. Through the very special favour of a Hindu friend, I was loaned that amount at an interest of an anna per rupee per month. Within a year I paid an interest of Rs 75, yet the amount borrowed remained intact.

At last I decided to set aside my sense of shame and reveal the tale of my troubles to my uncle. Everyone in the family had been against this enterprise from the start. With great enthusiasm I had sent a copy of its first issue to my father-in-law at Bombay. I received strict instructions from there never to send such trash to him again. From China came the admonition that I should abandon such vain endeavours and even as that stage consider going to China. My uncle was not angry. With a slight reproach he immediately gave me the

Continued on page 58

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At that time the Lord of Justice would surely hold me accountable for her failings being her husband and the custodian of her behaviour!

Religion teaches man lessons of truth and devotion. It holds before mankind the ideal of universal resurrection of the Day of Redemption. Yet that same religion raises

"To ward off sin I used to put on a deep, white night-cap . . . my (wife) told me I look like a corpse-bearer."

jihads throughout the world, pitches man against man, divides communities into sects and castes and creates bitterness and misunderstanding between loved and loving ones. Religion alone was sowing the seeds of separation in the soil of our love-filled lives. True, it was according to my concept of religion at that time. Conventions and consecrations like the utilization of taro were religion to me. My co-mate was no worshipper of conventions. I was in the ranks of the faithful—my partner was an infidel. Why were we so different?

Both of us had been born and bred in conserorthodox. My father-in-law was even more orthodox than my uncle and my father. My life's companion had to live a dual existence in her childhood. She had to wrap her 'mathabanoo' (scarf) in two styles. As long as father was home it had to be tied just two fingers above the eyebrows. The moment father left for the shop the mathabanoo travelled upwards and loose, high-set, un-parted hair adding beauty to the features, came into view. Women wore long-sleeved vests like men. These loose vests were decorated with laces, ribbons and frills. Should my lady dare to follow such fashion and her father chance to spy it, that apparel immediately found a burial. Between the 'sapat' of olden days and the shoes of modern times, the slipper had established a place of prestige. Had my lady to go out in the presence of her father, she would leave the house in 'sapat' and then adorn her feet later with slippers hidden in some secret nook or corner. Such were the strict and stern codes of behaviour in which she had been reared. On reaching adulthood, when her thoughts and emotions functioned freely and independently, all obligatory rules and restrictions of childhood were immediately disregarded and discarded.

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"The village-well of those days served the purpose of modern ladies' gymkhanas or clubs."

money. However, the following day I received a lengthy letter from him on the malady of incurring debts and the disgrace and dishonour that accompany a debtor.

Here Comes the Bride

Child-marriage was not a Parsi custom. In ancient Iran child-marriages were unknown. After coming to this country, among the many Hindu practices adopted by the Parsis, this custom of getting children married at an early age was adopted. Thus very young children were wedded; but, until they reached puberty, the boy and girl lived with their parents. Only after the girl came of age did she leave her parental home to go into the home of her in-laws.

Forty-five years after my uncle had settled in Karachi the auspicious occasion had arrived to welcome a daughter-in-law into our home. On the dawn of my twentieth birthday,

my bride stepped into our home.

Asho Zarathushtra counsels a couple on the threshold of marriage to let their love be pure and abiding and vie with each other in devotion. With my whole mind and heart and soul, I loved my beloved. She returned my affection with a deep and sacred devotion. It seemed impossible to find another couple in the whole, wide world so deeply devoted and so passionately in love. But...

The more we lived together, the more did we know each other, understand each other. It was not long before we realized that our thinking was not in harmony. Our principles of life were completely different.

In order to vanquish the devil and to crush his evil intentions I would apply the 'waters of the Golden River'—'taro'—three times religiously to my face, hands and feet early in the morning.

To derive the maximum benefit of its miraculous effect, I would apply a cupful of it three times over my whole body from the scalp of my head to the soles of my feet before bathing. Not only did my good lady refuse to use 'taro' but she even dared to dissuade me doing so, with entreaties, that I was harming my skin unnecessarily by the application of so unclean a substance. One day while she was

bathing. I stealthily and suddenly poured a tumblerful of taro from above all over her. She raised a mighty hullabaloo and every one came running, anticipating some calamity. When I placed my case before them, they declared my deed as correct from the religious standpoint, yet my uncle did not approve of my behaviour.

According to the Vendidad shorn hair is considered as desecrated as pared nails. I also believed that it was sinful to move about bare-headed or to sleep with the head uncovered. In order to ward off sin I used to put on a deep, white night-cap like the one mobeds wear. My good lady told me I looked like a corpse-bearer in that cap. To suppress the source of evil, instead of the white cap I donned a cap made of checked cloth. Not pacified, my dear wife said I looked like a cook in that headgear.

My wife persuaded me to go my way and to let her lead her own life. But how could that be? I was her rightful husband and as such was responsible for her joys and sorrows. If she did not use 'taro', disregarded the rules of piety and purity, flouted customs and conventions, it would result in heinous sin and after death her soul would lose its way and be unable to cross the Bridge of Doom.

Continued on page 57

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A Western Response to Zarathushtra

Dr Dale Bishop

One of the most frequently asked questions of me has been, 'how did you happen to get interested in our religion (Zoroastrianism), especially as we are such a small community?' In fact, it might be asked, how is it that some of the finest scholars of the stature of A. V. Williams Jackson, Karl Geldner, W. B. Henning, Mary Boyce, to name only a few, how is it that they have devoted lifetimes of work to the study of a religion, which today claims only a small number of followers. The answer, I think, lies in a well-known aphorism, an aphorism that certainly fits well also the Parsi experience in India: It is not the quantity but the quality that matters and in encountering the thought of Zarathushtra, western scholars have agreed that they have encountered the thought of a first rate mind, the world's first great prophet and the world's first great philosopher, to borrow a description given by Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin.

But what is it about Zarathushtra's teachings that distinguish them as uniquely profound? I will try to pinpoint some of the aspects of Zoroastrianism which have so inspired western admiration and which I believe still speak in a meaningful way to the human situation, East and West. The first of these insights which springs to mind is Zarathushtra's recognition of the reality of evil in this world. I hate to start on such a negative note.

It is generally agreed that Zarathushtra lived and taught his message in the region of Eastern Iran at a date for which, at least among western scholars, there's no agreement. We can tell from the Gathas, however, that he lived in a settled pastoral society, one which was prey to the ruthless depredations of nomads. The effects of the mindless and destructive fury of these nomadic plunderers are poignantly described in the Avesta, where in the *Meher Yasht*, for example, we read of a man, his family, and his cattle being led down the dry and dusty path of captivity.

Evil presented itself to Zarathushtra in the most stark and blatant form. Zarathushtra called this wanton vio-

lence, *Aesma* which is akin to Persian "*Kheshm*" which means anger or fury. In the Avesta, *Aesm* is often characterised by the epithet, '*Aesma of the bloody club*'. In our own day, in Zarathushtra's home-land we might aptly substitute the epithet '*Aesma of*



the summary trial and firing squad'. This is not a gratuitous insertion, but is in fact very pertinent to the topic of my talk, for it is in part at least, that Zarathushtra's unique understanding of the nature of evil,

We miss an aspect of Zarathushtra's greatness, if, ... we overlook the beauty of Zarathushtra's poetry, a beauty, which itself, conveys a message.

that is, its irrationality, that has drawn the attention of western scholars.

Zarathushtra didn't try to explain evil away. He didn't deny its reality. He frankly admitted its existence and activist as he was, he exhorted his followers to get on with the business of eradicating it from this world.

I'm touching the fringes of a controversy which was introduced by western scholars. This is the problem of dualism and monotheism. My own feeling is that the term dualism is capable of so many interpretations as to be practically meaningless and its application to Zoroastrianism is misleading at best, and mischievous at worst. If Zoroastrianism is dualistic, then so must be Christianity, Judaism and Islam, for all three, to a greater or lesser extent regard evil as a reality of this world, propagated by an evil spirit.

But as Zarathushtra recognised the reality and nature of evil in this world, he also taught that evil is, by its very nature, finite and self-destructive. In the long run, it cannot triumph over *Asa* the good, the best Truth. This world, at its worst, is a place where both good and evil exist and at its best, that is, when it reaches the state of renewal, called the 'making wonderful', as ultimate potential, it will be a place where only good exists. Evil's victories are always short term ones. The good, because of its inherent Truth and wisdom, will have the ultimate victory. This victory, however, cannot take place without the co-operation, the right choices of human beings.

Thus, on the one hand, Zarathushtra rejected the idea that evil is illusory. On the other hand, Zarathushtra rejected the idea that the world is an essentially evil place, a place from which one should seek escape, a release. At various points in its long history, Zoroastrianism has been confronted with both extremes in belief, and yet the central message, the middle way as it were, remained essentially intact. It is this middle way which William James, the great American psychologist of religion, characterised as healthy-minded, as opposed to what he called the religion of the sick soul.

But the question may be asked, indeed has been asked, how is one to identify the good. I, along with many earlier students of Zarathushtra's religion, consider him to have been the world's first philosopher, but if we

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look to the Gathas for an elaborate philosophical system explaining in detail what exactly is good or giving a proof or elaborate exposition, such as we might find, say, in Aquinas's "Summa Theologica", we shall be disappointed.

The Gathas are hymns of devotion, emotional outpourings of a man who had a vision, a vision of the cosmic forces which govern the world, which move history forward. They are also compositions of great poetic merit, which follow ancient standards of prosody, and yet are vivid, lucid and original in their imagery. We miss an aspect of Zarathushtra's greatness, if, in straining to get the meanings of the Gathas, we overlook the beauty of Zarathushtra's poetry, a beauty, which itself, I believe, conveys a message. To call Zarathushtra a poet is in no way a derogation of the quality of his mind. Poetry can convey levels of reality, can touch springs of human understanding, which dry philosophical discourse cannot penetrate.

**The reason so many
disagree about the
teaching of Zarathushtra,
is that there is no con-
sensus on an acceptable
translation of the
Gathas.**

Let me cite a brief example from *Yasna Hah* 30 verses 2 to 6. I should digress here briefly to say that one of the reasons so many people disagree about the teachings of Zarathushtra, is that there is no consensus on an acceptable translation of the Gathas. Each scholar has his favourite, usually his own. The translation I will use is, appropriately, my own.

"Listen with your ears to the best things, see with a lucid mind, the two choices, for the decision which each man must make for himself, aware beforehand of the great trial which is to follow for us. There were two primeval spirits, who as twins declare their nature as good or evil in thought, word and deed. Of these the beneficial one, chose correctly; not so the evil one. And when these two spirits confronted each other in the beginning, they created life and non-life, so that at the end, the worst existence would be for the followers of the lie and for the truth-holder, the best

mind. Of the two spirits, the lie-follower chose to do the worst things, the most holy spirit chose Truth. He clothed himself in the stoney vault of the Heavens, so also do those who choose to satisfy the Lord Wisdom with true deeds. Of these two, the False Gods did not choose correctly, for while they were deliberating, confusion came upon them so that they chose the worst mind. They rushed off into mindless fury with which they now plague our mortal existence."

This passage in which the major theme is choice, both the choice of the two spirits and the choice which each man must make for himself is characterized by the use of interesting parallels. Unfortunately it's very difficult to convey this in a translation. In stanza two, the choice is laid out. In stanza three, the antipathy of the two spirits is heightened or highlighted, I should say, by the use of parallel structure within each line of the verse. In stanza four, the additional contract of beginning and end is added to that of lie-follower and truth-holder. Five is largely concerned with the correct choice of the Holy Spirit. Six, with the incorrect choice of the *daevas*. Throughout, the sense of opposition is emphasised by the use of these poetic parallels. The poetic structure strengthens the message by re-inforcing the stated theme of choice and the two alternatives of that choice.

Nevertheless, despite this wonderful poetry, we have to face the fact that the Gathas leave many questions unanswered. The composer of the *Denkar*, the Pahlavi religious encyclopedia, recognised the problem and thus divided the corpus of Zoroastrian scriptures, which was much larger in ancient times than what has survived, into three categories. *Gasanig*, *Dadig* and *Hadumanstig* that is, Gathic, that part which is derived from the Gathas themselves; the *Dadig*, legal sections such as the vendidad and the *Hadamn-stig* or the ritual sections of the Avesta. The latter two were considered to be the supplementary texts, texts which explained to the believer, how the lofty principles of the Gathas could be applied to everyday life, what should be the laws governing society, how should one punish sinners, what is the proper way to conduct worship of the deity. These are by no means trivial questions, for the adherent of a religion need to have principle translated into practice. And thus over the years, the priests performed their yeomen's task.

This division of the scriptures, no

matter how well it served the need of the Zoroastrians through the years, nevertheless bewildered and misled western scholars. Since most of the first orientalists were intent to getting to the heart of things, they paid little attention to the rites and the legal and ritual prescriptions of the Zoroastrian scriptures. They discarded as late priestly accretions those texts that didn't accord with their own vision of what the Prophet should have taught.

One scholar, James Daomeseter, famous as a translator of the Avesta, laboured under the delusion for several years that even the Gathas were not genuine. At one point, he asserted that the Gathas must have been a forgery by a member of the school of the Platonist Philo of Alexandria of the 1st. century B. C. Fortunately, this was a temporary and uncharacteristic aberration in an otherwise distinguished academic career. A far more typical approach was that of Martin Hang who counselled the Parsis to pay attention only to the Gathas, for these were after all in his view, the pristine and uncorrupted form of real Zoroastrianism and to a certain extent this has been a general

theme in the western response to Zoroastrianism.

The late and lamented Prof. Zachner's views on this matter are perfectly encapsulated in the title of his famous book *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*. Professor Zachner it is clear, greatly preferred the 'dawn'. Again in Professor Gershevitch's distinction between Zoroastrianism and Catholic Zoroastrianism, we see a more subtle perhaps, but nonetheless faithful rendering of the same basic scheme of Zoroastrian history.

**If we cut off the Gathas
from the rest of the
Avesta, we risk missing
the general spirit of the
religion**

Although these scholars differ greatly from one another on many points, they are in general agreement on the scenario. After Zarathushtra, it's all down-hill: accretion of foreign beliefs, priestly legalism, etc.

It is only in recent years that among Western scholars, an appreciation for

the total Zoroastrian experience appears, the leading exponent of this approach being Professor Mary Boyce of the University of London. Prof. Boyce has emphasized the continuity of tradition as against discontinuity and decline and in so doing, she accepts the evaluation of the writer of the *Denkard* passage. The *Denkard* encompasses all three aspects of the religion: The *Dadig*, the *Hadumans-tig* along with the *Gasanig*.

If we cut off the Gathas from the rest of the Avesta, we risk missing the general spirit of the religion as it is developed over the years. We also risk falling prey to the fallacy of projecting what we hope to find in the Avesta from what actually is there. This gap between expectation and reality has influenced western views towards the prophet and his religion. To some, he was the first protestant, the rebel against priestly authority, to others, he was the first rationalist. One scholar depicted him as a drug-inspired shaman, another as a crafty politician. In fact the history of western scholarship of Zoroastrianism tells us as much, sometimes more, about western intellectual history than

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This affliction of projecting one's own expectations upon the scriptures is the well-known supermarket approach to religion

it does about Zoroastrianism itself.

This affliction of projecting one's own expectations upon the scriptures has not been restricted to western scholarship. It is the well-known supermarket approach to religion. Alas, Zarathushtra does not fit neatly into any of the categories, we so carefully prepare for him. To the latter two categories which I mentioned, he does not fit at all. But it is perhaps a testimony to the stature of the man that so many have tried to enlist his teachings in their own particular crusades. Zarathushtra, it is clear regarded ignorance as a manifestation of evil and thus implied in his understanding of Truth, the ultimate good is the use of man's rational faculties in determining

what is right and just. He laid down the great moral imperatives and left it to those who followed him to apply these principles to the living of our everyday life. The process has continued through the ages and it goes on today. It is what makes a religion dynamic, not just a set of empty and outdated legalisms, but a way of life. Sometimes the choices are easy but often they are complex and difficult. But it is perhaps consoling to remember, I think, that the most significant questions are those that defy pat and easy answers

Finally, Zarathushtra has captivated the attention of the West, because he was perhaps the first universalist in his approach to religion. Zarathushtra's vision of history is a cosmic vision; his depiction of redemption, is a redemption for all mankind, his God is not a national God or a tribal God, but a God of the Universe.

Thus his legacy is one to which the whole world can lay claim. By insisting upon the universal character of Zarathushtra's teachings, I have no intention of entering the continuing controversy among the Parsis over

conversion and inter-marriage, that is a question the Parsis themselves must decide. What I'm saying is simply that since Zoroastrianism has profoundly influenced the world's great religions, including my own, Christianity, the import and validity of Zarathushtra's message is a legacy from which the whole world will continue to benefit. As a scholar of Zoroastrianism and an admirer of its tenets, I proudly claim that legacy.

Dr Dale Bishop is an Associate Professor of Iranian studies at Columbia University, New York. In 1979 Bishop had visited Bombay, to, in his words, "study Zoroastrianism as it is practiced today among the Parsis". During his stay he delivered two talks on the religion "A Western Response to Zarathushtra" at the Birla Auditorium on 8 May, 1979 under the auspices of Zoroastrian Studies extracts from which have been reproduced above, and "Eloquence in the Avesta" at the Cama Institute of Oriental Studies on 31 May, 1979.

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Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu,

Died: Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu, 91, high priest of the Seth Hormasji B. Wadiaji Atash Behram in Bombay for almost 30 years, former principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Madressa and the Surat Boy's Orphanage, professor in English and noted author and orator, on 30 October 1979 at Ahmedabad after a prolonged illness.

"The community has lost a very brilliant man... there is no one to replace him," says Dastur Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram in Bombay. "He dedicated his entire life to the service of the community... He never accepted any gift or present or ashodad,"... writes Shrivastav Vakil in the prestigious Gujarati daily, the *Bombay Samachar*. Vakil, a leading lawyer and director of the Tata group of companies, was closely associated with Dabu ever since his first job as a teacher under Dabu's principalship in 1936.

Two condolence meetings were convened in Bombay in memory of Dabu, one jointly by the Cama Institute of Oriental Studies and the Rahnuma-Mazdayasni Sabha at the Cama Hall on 16 November and the other by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) at the Framji Cawasji Institute Hall on 3 December. At the second meeting B. K. Boman-Behram, BPP chairman, referred to Dabu as "a great scholar of religion, an educationalist,

a highly knowledgeable person, a philanthropist... he left a great treasure of religious literature." H. B. Kapadia, joint secretary of BPP, compared Dabu to a "king at the head of the dastur clan... an intellectual light for all."

Jal Heerjibehedin, editor of *Kaiser-e-Hind*, appealed to the large gathering at the Cama Hall to start a Provident Fund for the dasturs and mobeds as a "fitting tribute to a man (Dabu) who dedicated his life to simple living and service to the community through simplified religious teachings." Among the many prominent personalities who spoke at the meeting was Erach Nadershah, president of the Rahnuma-Mazdayasni Sabha, a body created for religious reform, and former chairman of BPP.

A number of condolence meetings were also held in community centers outside Bombay. An editorial in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, the Gujarati daily, credits Dabu with a "great part in rekindling the faith and sincerity of Zoroastrians during the time of religious decline." The *Kaiser-e-Hind* editorial writes that "Dabu's presence will be felt as long as the community exists."

According to a life-sketch of Dabu prepared by the BPP, Dabu was born on 20 April 1889 in a poor family in Navsari and became a Navar and Maratab by the age of 12. He started to practice as a dastur almost immediately and side-by-side he studied at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Zarthoshti Madressa from where he passed his matric in 1906 with a first class. After graduating with a Masters degree in English in 1912 from Wilson College, Bombay, (he also studied Avesta and Pahlavi) he was appointed as an assistant professor of English at Fergusson College, Poona, where he worked for a year.

He then worked for Dr Annie Beasant, a leader of the Theosophist movement in India and the world, and was the head master of the Kanpur Theosophist High School run by the Annie Besant Educational Trust and later the Aligarh Dharmasamaj High School.

"He was a theosophist from his youngest days and he never made a secret of his views," says Vakil. "He believed in reincarnation as the only logical explanation to life after death

and was a strict vegetarian."

In 1919, Dabu was appointed the principal of the Surat Parsi Orphanage where he served for nearly 27 years till 1946 when he took over as principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Madressa at Andheri, Bombay. Two years later, in 1948, Dabu was installed as the high priest of the Wadiaji Atash Behram. Prior to his appointment, the position was hereditary from father to son. Dabu retired as the high priest in 1977 due to his age.

Ervad Framroz M. Antia, the boyewala at the Wadiaji Atash Behram, spoke of the "simple life" of Dabu. "From eight to ten every morning he would sit here," says Antia, pointing to the row of chairs in the foyer of the Atash Behram. Here he would meet those who came to visit him or discuss matters with him. Later, he would retire to his room to his writing and study, and in the evenings would go to perform clerical ceremonies. "He never accepted a paise. He always advised those whom he served to give his (clerical) fee to charity," says Antia. Vakil estimates that in this manner alone Dabu donated about Rs. 5 lacs to charity. He recalls that the income-tax department filed a case against Dabu for non-payment of tax on earnings he had not accepted. However, with the assistance of leading lawyers like Nani Palkhiwalla and others, Dabu won his case. Antia adds that Dabu had also reduced his own salary which he received as high priest.

As an author, a religious author in particular, Dabu contributed articles regularly to *Chirag* Magazine, a Zoroastrian Theosophist publication, from early twentieth century upto 1945 when the magazine stopped publication. In 1946, he started to write a regular column in the *Jam-e-Jamshed*. The Gujarati daily notes that during the 30 years of his association with the paper he wrote 1,403 religious articles of which 303 have been published in book form. Through his writing on religious subjects, notes a *Bombay Samachar* editorial in 1977 when Dabu retired from high-priestship, Dabu "brought home to the Parsis the fundamental teachings of our religion. Inevitably he had to tread upon the corns of pseudo scholars and occultists... Dabu fought evil in a straight forward manner. He never

pulled his punches. He not only called a spade a spade but even went to the extent of calling a hypocrite and a charlatan without any trimmings of language."

Dabu's son, Noshir, writes to *Parsiiana* that his father was in the "truest sense a friend, philosopher and guide to all of us."

Dabu is survived by his son, Noshir.

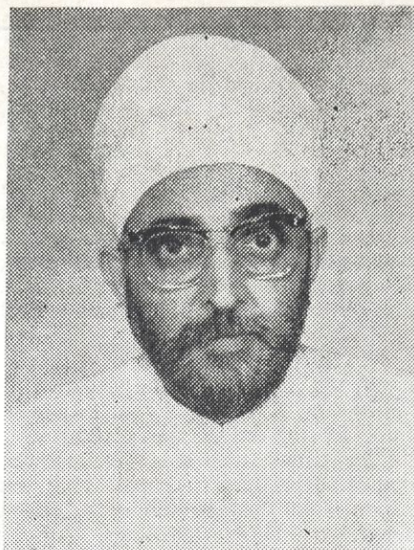
Died. Minocher Dadabhoy Karkhanavala, 53, director of the Chemical Group of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and noted exponent of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, of injuries sustained in a car accident on 17 November 1979, at the Military Hospital in Delhi.

Distinguishable by the priestly pagri that had become a part of his everyday attire, Karkhanavala held a number of senior positions at BARC, was connected with a number of scientific and educational associations and organisations which included president of the Indian Thermal Analysis Society and Chancellor's Nominee of the Senate of the University of Poona. At the time of his death he was also a director of Indian Rare Earths and a Member of the Board of Management of the Nuclear Fuel Complex, both public sector undertakings. According to the bio-data of Karkhanavala provided by BARC he had done much pioneering work in introducing new scientific methods in the country and developing new processes and materials. He is also reported to have published over 100 research articles in scientific journals in India and abroad.

While on an official tour of Jodhpur in North India, Karkhanavala sustained serious head injuries when the wheel of the jeep he was travelling in came off and the vehical overturned. He was admitted to the Jodhpur hospital and later shifted to Delhi where he died without regaining consciousness. Karkhanavala's body was rushed down from Delhi to Bombay so that the last rites could be performed in strict adherence to Zoroastrian practice. The funeral was thronged with prominent personalities, notable among them was Dr Homi Sethna, director of BARC, colleagues, and associates who came to pay their last respects.

News of Karkhanavala's death was featured in the leading daily papers in Bombay. "In Karkhanavala's death the Parsis lose a religious scholar and the country a brilliant scientist," noted a column in the orthodox Gujarati daily, the *Jam-e-Jamshed*.

In Bombay, five condolence meet-



Minocher Dadabhoy Karkhanavala

ings were held in memory of Karkhanavala. These meetings were held under the auspices of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) jointly with the Cama Institute of Oriental Studies, the Dadar Jashan Committee, the Trustees of the Banaji Atash Behram, the Athornan Mandal of Bombay and the Rustom Baug Association. In addition, meetings were also convened in Udvarda, Bulsar, Navsari, Poona, Bangalore and Surat where two such meetings were held.

"He was a very religious minded man who had some very definite and somewhat rigid views of the religion," says Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram in Bombay. "He was highly —what is known as—orthodox. Even during his college days he always wore a pagri," says Kaikhushroo Dastur, head of the Legal Department of the Bank of Baroda, and well known Ill-me-Kshnoomist who shared many platforms with Karkhanavala on religious discussions and lectures. "He was the greatest champion of Dokhmaism... sometimes he used to carry a model of the dokhma," adds Dastur.

Even when addressing a gathering of Zoroastrians in Los Angeles, USA, Karkhanavala dwelled on the evils of Parsis marrying outside the community even though several community members had brought their non-Parsi spouses along.

Born on 29 November 1926, Karkhanavala obtained his B.Sc. in Chemistry in 1947 from Elphinstone College in Bombay and his M.Sc. in 1949 in the same subject from Wilson College where he was working as a

demonstrator. He obtained his Doctorate degree in Chemistry from Pennsylvania State University, USA in 1952. In 1953, he returned to India to be the Head of the Physical Chemistry Section, Chemistry Division at the AEET/Chemical Laboratory AEC and in 1958 he was appointed the Head of the Solid State Chemical Division at BARC. During his tenure with BARC he also served as the Head of the Chemistry Division and Chairman of the Committee on Steam and Water Chemistry.

According to Dastur, Karkhanavala's religious inclinations were strongly influenced by Karkhanavala's father whom Dastur described as "a white bearded, staunch orthodox Zoroastrian." Karkhanavala's father reportedly withdrew his son from school for one year so that he could go through the training to become a Navar and Maratab without any outside influence. Though he was not a practicing dastur, JamaspAsa notes that Karkhanavala made it a point to personally perform all the religious ceremonies of his family.

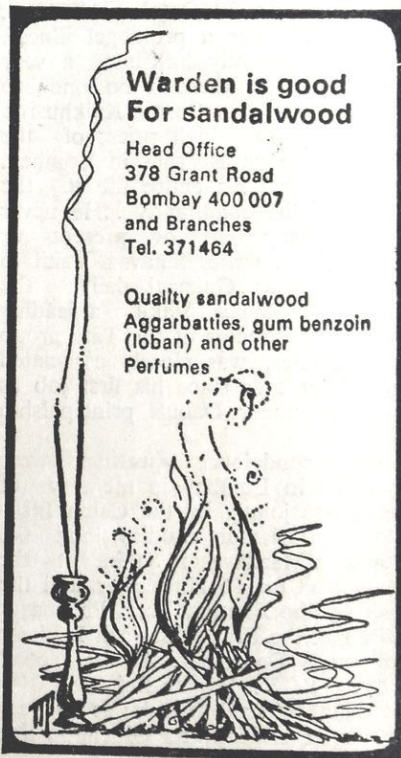
"Science is incapable of understanding nature, religion goes beyond science in explaining nature," was an often repeated observation of Karkhanavala according to Dastur.

Karkhanavala is survived by his wife, Siloo, son, Khurshed and daughter, Armaity.

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Mr. ARUN JAIN, REPRESENTATIVE INDIA
HOTEL AMBASSADOR NEW DELHI 110003
Tel: Off: 690391 Res: 252480
Telex: 3277 or 2703 Cable: CONRESORT

REGD. OFFICE: P.O. BOX 2063, HOTEL SOALTEE OBEROI, KATHMANDU