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Parsiana

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In Memoriam
Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,
Director

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NAVROZ REFLECTIONS

Navroz, the spring festival, is celebrated in almost all Irani Zoroastrian households all over the world. Gustasp Irani, who was born in India and spent four years in Iran, writes on the festival.

Gustasp Irani

Perhaps I am too close to the tradition that Navroz represents to really appreciate its significance. In the quaint haunts of mud huts of Kutchabogi, a village in Yazd, my revellings in the past was interrupted on a number of occasions with the realization that but for the decision of my ancestors, only three generations away, to migrate to India, I might have still been a part of those very roots I had come to discover. Yet paradoxically I became aware of Navroz only when in my late teens after my schooling days. I emerged from the protected haunts of a Jesuit run boarding school in Bangalore moulded in a tradition of Christmas and New year.

My first Navroz I viewed with skeptical indulgence; slightly taken aback that the peculiar practice of starting the year on a day other than January I should apply not only to the 'heathen' Chinese and Hindus but also to me and yet fascinated by the rituals of preparing a Navroz table.

What has changed, and for what it may signify of my changing attitude to the occasion, is that gradually non-traditional items like college text books, old newspapers, files from the office and project reports have found their way onto the conventional table alongside the enduring fruits and nuts.

The symbolic offering of modern and traditional lifestyles is striking in that even in Yazd, a lifestyle which withstood the hardship of Islamic discrimination for centuries, has almost collapsed in the onrush of the economic prosperity of the twentieth century. Rustom, about 90-years-old, was the last of the known family tree still living in Yazd. Even his children had left to make their lives in the larger commercial cities of Iran. Rustom insisted on showing us his pomegranate orchard. It was plucking time then. Fruits drooped and spilled over from the trees all around. Rustom's eyes gleamed with appreciation and pride. Selecting the best trees he hauled his aged limbs, amid our

protests, with apparent ease to pluck the choicest fruit. Unknowingly I paid him the ultimate compliment: "These are the best pomegranates I have ever eaten," I said in my broken Farsi and earned an enthusiastic kiss. Even at that moment I suspected I knew why the pomegranate with coins pierced into its shell, features so prominently on the Navroz table and other Irani ceremonies: it was the chief cash crop of Yazd and a man's orchard represented his wealth and prosperity.

But this was no more and Rustom was living in the past. He was bewildered and confused and could not understand why his children no longer wanted to return to Yazd and look after the land. "They want me to sell the land and go and live with them."

More bewildered and confused must have been the reaction of my great grandfather if on the eve of his departure to India he had looked into a crystal ball and seen one of his descendants, only three rungs down the genetic ladder, viewing Navroz as a 'pagan' custom. But crystal balls were, and still are, hard to come by and the very suggestion of such a idea would have been absurd, perhaps as absurd as my imaginings that my great grandchildren will be shocked to learn about Christmas. So confident in the future, he packed all his earthly belongings and his 12-year-old son on one donkey and his wife and newborn daughter on another and set out across the deserts of Central and South-Eastern Iran for the port of Bandar Abbas from where he set sail for the promised land.

Once in Bombay he went about the business of setting up his first 'Irani Duckan'; a tin-shack structure on the pavements of the city from where he served only tea for a start. Grandad, or 'Bomasji' as we addressed him in the 'dhari' equivalent, had more stories to recall but I lacked the patience to listen to tales of a lifestyle so alien to my own and yet so frighteningly close. Bomasji never grew out of Yazd; it remained his eternal unit of comparison to the rest of the world. When the first man stepped on the moon, he recalled how his village marveled at the wonders of science and technology when they saw a bicycle for the first time.

Perhaps the transition from one lifestyle to another was too rapid for us to communicate meaningfully. What almost got lost in the transmission was the meaning and significance of Navroz.

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Events and Personalities

Navroz Celebration

With a well-attended programme of music, dance, felicitations and prize distributions the **Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman** of Bombay celebrated Navroz on 21 March at the Rang Bhavan open air auditorium in Bombay. "Within its limitations, the Anjuman continues to help the weaker section of the community with the education of its young, the medical requirements of its ailing, the economic succour of its needy, the amelioration of its priests and by solving other diverse problems facing the members of the community, both individually and collectively," according to an address prepared by the president of the Anjuman, Noshirwan Muluk Irani.

However, since Irani was indisposed due to ill health, reportedly caused by a blood clot that may require him to go to USA for an operation, the address was read by Jamshed Burjor Aga, vice president and trustee of the Anjuman.

The Anjuman felicitated in absentia Mirza Soroosh Tirandaz Lohrasbe, representative of the body in Iran since the last 50 years, and Ms Shernaz Dinshaw Kermani, winner of the highest sports awards in the country and State, who was, at the time, participating in the national sports event for the handicapped in Poona.

Prizes of the Dr Major Aderbad Behram Irani Memorial Elocution Competition, 1980, hosted by the Anjuman in memory of its former president, on 23 February 1980 were also distributed. The first prize winners, Ms Army N. Guzder, age group 6 to 12: "At Home With My Family" and Ms Pirooza R. Siganporia, age group 12 to 18: "Who is a Mazdayasni Zarathosti?" made presentations of their prize winning speeches. The Anjuman hopes that in the coming years the elocution competition will get a better response in a larger number of contestants.

Earlier in the day members of the Anjuman committee were scheduled to meet with the Consul General of Iran in Bombay but the meeting had to be cancelled as the Consul General had not returned from his visit to Iran.

Spotlight on Delhi

In addition to their quarterly journal *Dipanjali* the **Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA)** has started publishing a monthly newsletter. Piloo Jungalwalla, noted religious author, sends us a copy of the March issue, the sixth in the series.

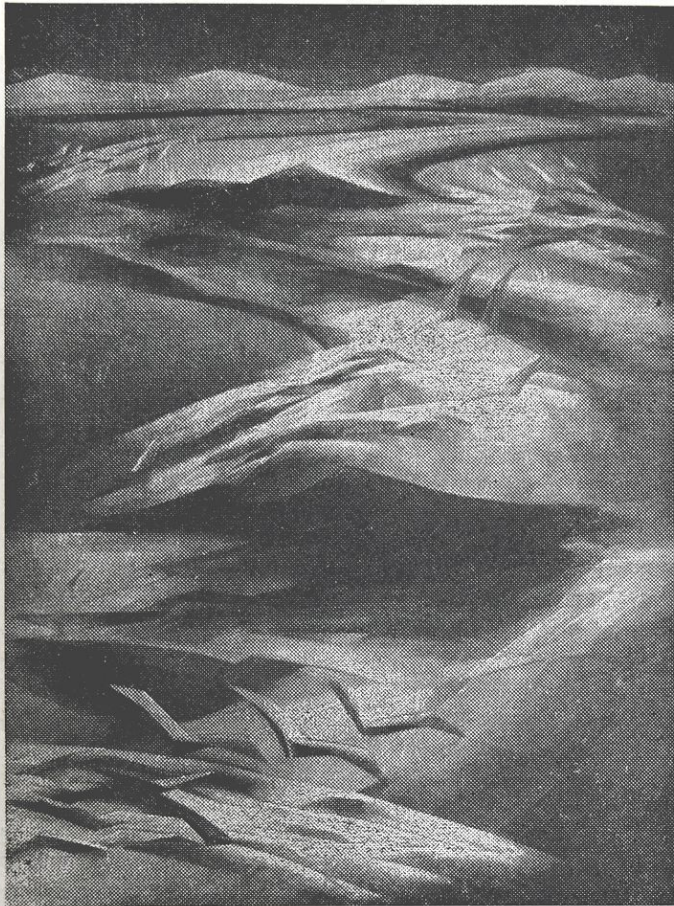
The focus of the newsletter is on

the third visit of Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) to the Capital city. With a "full schedule" of two lectures and a number of informal and group discussions, Mistree is reported to have "left the Delhi Parsis quite ravaged — Mentally." Topics of his two lectures on 1 and 2 March were "Ethical Values in Zarathushtra's Teachings" and "Early Parsi History," both held at the Bhinwandiwalla Hall under the auspices of the DPA.

An offer to "have the DPA educate and support two priests if they would be allotted to the Northern Region after completion of studies," was



Maneck J. R. Gyara (right), president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat, who was honoured by the Surat Municipality, along with six others, for services to the city in the fields of education, social work and public life, receiving the 'manpathra' (Scroll of honour) from the mayor of Surat, P. G. Mabalkar. A former councillor of the Surat Municipality, Gyara is an active member of a number of government and non-government institutions in Surat.



"Of Clouds and Air"
Painting by Sabavala

Book Of Painting

A collection of **Jehangir Sabavala's** paintings have been compiled into a recently published book; *The Reasoning Vision: Jehangir Sabavala's Painterly Universe*, published by Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd., New Delhi. The book is a "maiden venture" for the publishers, writes Sabavala, and should the book succeed commercially it might encourage the publishers, and others also, to start a series on "contemporary Indian talent."

Born in 1922, in Bombay, Sabavala studied art at the leading schools of art in Bombay, London, and Paris. He has held 20 one-man exhibitions, including two in U.K., has participated in a number of national and international exhibitions and his paintings are being preserved in a number of collections, both private and institutional.

reportedly made by Shiavax Nargolwalla, president of the Anjuman, at one of the informal discussions. The report adds: "Khojeste felt that if any strings were attached to the offer it would be impossible to accept." At the same meeting a member of the Anjuman, Fali Nariman, promised Mistree guidance in registering Zoroastrian Studies as a research institute while two other members, Baspy Nariman and Freney Billimoria organized a fund collecting committee which hopes to meet a target of Rs. 2,000 every month for ZS.

Another highlight of Mistree's visit was a "demonstration of his meditation techniques," notes the report. "He sat on the edge of a sofa with his legs crossed and his eyes closed—totally relaxed—and recited the *Ashem Vhu* in a voice that resounded through the room and made one feel calm, peaceful, and proud to be a

Zoroastrian."

A purse of Rs. 1,300 was collected by DPA and presented to Mistree the report records.

Pace Setters

A face-lift has been given to the newsletter of the **Poona Parsi Panchayat** (PPP), which has discontinued the old practice of cyclostyling its publication in favour of printing. A comment on the All India Federation of Zoroastrian Parsi Anjumans and Panchayats which appears in the two page publication reads:

"It is well known to everybody that the Federation after a very active year in 1977/78 has unfortunately run into difficult waters since the withdrawal of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP). Efforts are however, being made during the last several months to keep the Federation as a complete unit. It is the wish of every-

one that BPP rejoin the Federation for the prosperity of the Zoroastrians of the entire world. Let us extend our hope that this may come to pass and the BPP take its rightful place in leading the World Zoroastrian Community."

The newsletter also reports that two talks, one by Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, chairperson of the Maharashtra State Finance Corporation, on 16 November 1979, and the other by Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies on 9 February 1980, were held under the auspices of the Public Relations Committee of the PPP.

Other features of the newsletter are items on the activities, meetings and announcements of the PPP, news on the social events in the city and a roll of honour under the caption "We delight to honour" where outstanding achievements of members of the community are highlighted.

Learn and Pray

Schemes to prepare children of athornan (priestly class) parents for their Navar and Maratab ceremonies along with their other educational requirements have been introduced by the **Boys' Town Public School, Nasik** according to a circular prepared by **Keki P. Mehta**, managing trustee of the P. N. Mehta Education Trust which runs the school. Mehta appeals to the community to encourage their children to join the school and take advantage of these facilities and also the various financial incentives offered by the institution.

The school reportedly offers various forms of assistance in the form of concessional fees to total allfound scholarships to poor but deserving Zoroastrian students regardless of whether they are of a priestly or non-priestly family. Children of middle-class athornan families may also avail of these incentives.

Further, students passing their SSC from the school will be provided with hostel accommodation at the school should they decide to study further at local universities. The offer also extends to athornan students of other institutions. In addition the school offers a number of "learn and earn" schemes whereby these university students may work at the school during their free time. Those students studying towards a degree in education will be offered the opportunity to teach at the school.

Mehta points out that these proposals are in line with the specific desire of the founder of the Trust and School, Pirojsha Nusserwanji Mehta, who had made provisions in the Trust so that concessional fees and total allfound scholarship could be offered to Zoroastrian students.

Children's Book

A colourful book for children on the Navjote, written by **Piloo Nanavutty (Jungalwalla)** and illustrated by **Ms. Mehroo J. Wadia**, has been published by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. The book, the second in the series on "Our Religion," explains in simple language the legend and religious origin of the ceremony, the different rituals that are involved, the significance of the sudreh and kusti and the commitment that the wearer of these items makes to the 'Good' life.

Earlier the first book of the series on the prophet Zarathushtra by the same author and artist and published by the DPA, had been entered in the International Children's Book Fair, held at New Delhi between 10 and 19 November 1980, according to a report

sent by Nanavutty. The entry was reportedly the only Parsi contribution to the fair. Commenting on the "unique aspect" of the book Nanavutty notes: "The lettering of the text was carved out by hand and then coloured by the artist. Thus, each page was printed as a single block. There was no type set, no proofing."

Both books have been printed at the Indraprastha Press, Children's Book Trust and cost Rs 5 per copy.



Mickey Patel's Exhibition

One of the many works of Mickey Patel displayed at Gallery Chemould, Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay, between 26 November and 7 December, 1979. This was the fourth one-man show held by Patel in addition to his participation in group shows in India and abroad.

Journal of the Cama Institute

Four lectures on the 'Ancient Iranian System of Writing' by **Dastur Dr. Hormazdyar K. Mirza**, constitute the text of the recently published **Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute**: 1979 No. 47. The lectures were delivered under the auspices of the Institute as Government Fellowship Lectures in August 1977.

"The author discusses the Iranian traditions regarding the transmission of the Avesta texts... seeks to show that the Avesta was handed down by oral tradition for generations, and was

committed to writing at a later stage. He surveys also the scripts used in Iran during the Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian times," writes A. N. Chinoy, president of the Cama Institute, in the preface to the 151 page publication. Titles of the four chapters of the book are: "Oral and written transmission of the Avesta texts," "Cuneiform, Aramaic, and other scripts," "Origin and some problems of the Pahlavi script," and "Origin and some problems of the Avesta script."

Mirza substantiates his argument that the Avesta texts were handed down orally by pointing out, "there is no word for 'to write' and 'to read' in the entire Avesta. (These) words in later Iranian languages are derived from the roots which are used in the Avesta in their original and literal meanings." The word for 'to write' he points out derived from the Avesta base which corresponded to 'to adorn, to decorate, to paint,' while 'to read' from 'to ask, to inquire, to converse, to discuss, to negotiate, to council. Later he believes, the Avestas had been committed to a written text which might have been existent even during the time of the Achaemenian.

The series of four lectures are a scholarly presentation of a specialized field of study, often slipping into quotations from the original ancient Iranian languages with corresponding English translations. Chinoy observes, "In his last two lectures Mirza traces the origin of the Pahlavi and Avesta scripts... (and) hence these have direct bearing on the scriptures of the Zoroastrians."

The Journal is published by **Dastur N. B. Minochehr-Homji**, high priest of the Petit Fasli Atesh Kedah, **Dastur K. M. JamaspAsa**, high priest of the Anjuman Atash Behram and **N. E. Eduljee** on behalf of the **K. R. Cama Oriental Institute**, 136, Bombay Samachar Marg, Bombay 400 023.

Well Baby Clinic

"The helping hand helps and having helped, helps on," with this adaption from Omar Khayyam, a pamphlet of the **Helping Hand Committee** of the **Time and Talents Club** announces the opening of the novel Well Baby Clinic for healthy babies at St. Sebastian Goan High School, Girgaum, Bombay since 27 September 1979. "Believing that prevention is better than cure," the clinic is reportedly, "to cater to the needs not of a sick baby but of a baby that is well, with the aim that it continues to remain so."

The committee considers itself "very lucky in obtaining the services of two lady doctors, Dr (Ms) Erin

Broacha, a consulting pediatrician and Dr (Ms) Jyoti Parekh, a well-known and experienced practitioner." writes J. K. Daruvala, chairperson of the committee. The doctor will advise and enlighten the parents on the various aspects of baby care.

Services of the Well Baby Clinic are open to the public on the first and third Thursday of every month from 3 to 4 pm.

Annual Report

The running of the Motlibai Wadia Adaran, and of the night security service, and the publication of a quarterly journal *Contact* in addition to various social and cultural activities, have been listed as few of the activities of the **Malcolm Baug Zoroastrian Association**, Jogeshwari, Bombay, by E. P. Bharucha, president of the association.

The forty-ninth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 1979, apart from noting the activities of the association, gives a detailed explanation to the management of the various assets and funds that the association controls. Balance sheet assets of the Bai Motlibai Wadia Adaran are valued at over Rs. 6.7 lac. Income for the year was around Rs 77,000 which was around Rs 15,000 below expenditures incurred. The deficit was met by income from the Trust funds. Assets of the association were over Rs 53,000 and income for the year was around 6,500.

SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Katy Keki Baam is the first woman to be appointed a judge in the 32 year history of the Bombay City Civil and Sessions Court according to



Baam: first lady judge

a *Times of India* report. Baam, 39, who has been practicing at the bar for the past 15 years, is also the joint

secretary of the Indian Federation of Women Lawyers and a part time lecturer of Business Law at the M. M. K. College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay.



Wadia : Gold Medal Winner

Temul M. Wadia of Porbandar, who was honoured by the Gujarat State for his services to the Home Guards as a Staff Officer, was presented the Chief Minister's gold medal by Sharda Mukherji, Governor of Gujarat, on Republic Day. The report sent by Wadia adds that he, Wadia, an active Rotarian, has also been elected as the governor of the Rotary District 306 at a meeting on 26 and 27 January 1980 which was attended by 66 clubs of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh...

Eight-year-old **Ness Wadia** was presented an award for gallantry by the Rotary Club of Bombay, Mid-Town, for saving a nine-year-old girl from drowning at the swimming pool at Wankhede Stadium, Bombay, according to a *Mid-Day* report. Wadia, who is a student of the Cathedral and John Connon School, received his award from the club's president, Khalid Ansari, at a function held on 12 December 1979...

Rashid D. Bamanbehram, noted press photographer, was awarded a silver medal and a certificate for bravery by the Bombay Parsi Association on 16 February 1980 at a function at Albless Baug for his show of bravery in a number of fires, house collapses and other accidents at the risk of his life the *Times of India* reports. **Nayosan Bamboat** and **Darayus Damania** were also awarded certificates for bravery at the function for their part in saving ten cars from a fire at the United Motors...

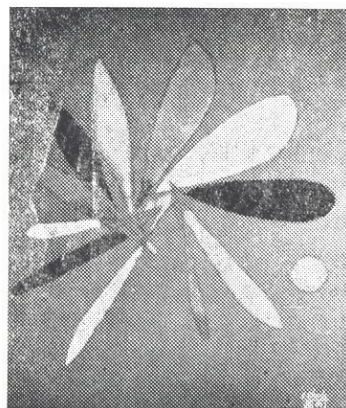
Vispi S. Dastur, Honorary Secretary of E. I. P. S., India's Stamp Journal, Regional representative of India

Study Circle, U. K., and member of the Government of India's Philatelic Advisory Committee, won two Vermeil Gold medals and a bronze medal at the recently concluded International Stamp Exhibition at New Delhi, according to a report of the Exhibition sent by Dastur. **M. P. Polson**, past president of the Empire of India Philatelic Society, was also awarded a bronze medal at the exhibition. **Phiroz M. Medhora** president of the Society, was a member of the International Jury, the report adds...

Kashmira Patel teamed up with Sailaja Salokha to win the women's doubles title for Maharashtra State at the National Table Tennis Championship held in February this year, according to the *Sunday Statesman* photo-caption report...

Cawas P. Postmaster has been awarded a Ph.D. degree by the University of Bombay for his thesis "The prosthetic bacteria with special reference to the hyphomicrobia," according to a 'City Briefs' column of the *Times of India*. Postmaster worked under the guidance of Dr Y. M. Freitas through St. Xaviers College, Bombay.

Twenty-three-year-old **Darayus Adi Confectioner**, a deaf student, has been admitted to a B. S. degree course in computer science and computer accountancy systems at Gallandet College, Washington D. C., USA, reportedly the only accredited college for the deaf, writes Rummy R. Daruwalla a 'friend and well-wisher' and Ms R. R. Pavri, teacher of the deaf under whom Confectioner Studied.



Moon under Leaves

One of the 21 paintings displayed at Shrivax Chavda's one-man exhibition at Taj Art Gallery, Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, between 19 and 25 February 1980. This was the 36th one-man exhibition held by Chavda.

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Looking after the here-after

"Sixty eight per cent prefer cremation, 19% bequeathal and 13% burial," according to the results of the survey on 'Funeral Arrangements' conducted by the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) among its members (see *Parsiana* November 1979 issue). Statistics of the survey, reported in a ZAGNY newsletter, are based on 54 responses to a questionnaire circulated by the association.

Other results are that all, but one, of the respondents, 98%, "do not object to cremation on religious grounds," and "would like ZAGNY to establish some religious guidelines for funeral services." Further reactions to ZAGNY's role in acquiring burial grounds for the community, making arrangements with memorial societies and establishing its own memorial society were also favourable — 77%, 80% and 82% respectively.

Consequently the Board of Directors of the association have decided to take two decisions as an initial course of action. First, "a list will be compiled of funeral homes in the metropolitan New York area that provide cremation and burial facilities. An important consideration will be the availability of chapel facilities for performing appropriate Zoroastrian ceremonies." Second, "our (ZAGNY's) dasturs will be requested to provide religious guidelines for funeral services and recommend the minimal ceremonial requisites."

In British Columbia, meanwhile, 44 new burial plots have been acquired by the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC) with the final payment of Canadian \$ 5,000 on 3 December 1979. The twelfth annual report of the society which carries the news makes special mention of the "munificence of five Irani Zoroastrian families — Dabestani, Iranshad, Kabolys, Parsi and Varza — who donated (Canadian) \$ 6,000 in all" towards this purchase. With the addition of the new lots the Society now holds 116 fully paid up burial lots.

The report adds that the Society has been able to enter into an agreement with the cemetery where the burial lots are located "to install a bronze plaque with our Farvahr em-

blem and wording — Zoroastrian Community Burial Section' — mounted on a granite slab in the middle of a flower bed in one corner of our section."

A somewhat different approach to the question of looking after the dead of the community in Quebec, the quarterly publication of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, *Gavashni*, has carried two consecutive editorials on traditional ceremonies following a demise in the Zoroastrian family (September 1979) and the traditional rituals following the disposal of the deceased (December 1979). In these two articles Dr Jehan Bagli, a qualified Ervad and editor of the magazine, attempts to explain the various ceremonies and rituals in light of Zoroastrian doctrine and theory. Having established these grounds he adds: "We shall next approach the subject of how Zoroastrians can adapt the rituals to suit the conditions available in the Western world and at the same time preserve the fundamental principles and adhere to the guidelines described in our traditional literature."

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A rich fare of scholarly discussion on the various aspects of the Zoroastrian religion and tradition was presented by six noted scholars at the Third North American Zoroastrian Symposium held in New York on 7 October 1979. A report on the symposium—Historical Perspectives of Zoroastrianism—has been sent by Jehan Bagli, editor of the quarterly publication of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, *Gavashni*. We carry extracts from the report which is slated to appear in the magazine.

Dr J. Amighi, a social anthropologist, associated with University of Missouri, on *Changing Forms of Zoroastrianism*.

During her talk, Amighi elaborated how the social system was influenced by religious scriptures, and that the

scriptures had continuously changed with time. Quoting Prof. Zehner, she said, that "Scripture of the earlier times were unintelligible even to the priesthood of the later period." In recent times the youth of Iran refer to evil around them and thus turn away from the religion. However, the presence of evil today makes it no different from the early times of Zarathushtra himself. She observed that in the Gathas he speaks of the presence of evil around him. Thus, struggle against evil has prevailed since the Gathic age and that Gathic philosophy has survived unchanged over millenia.

Amighi then stressed the fact that Amesha Spentas — the attributes — through which Ahura Mazda is expressed are not just aspects of God. These are stages attainable in life and as such they represent means by which humans can reach Ahura Mazda.

She then referred to historical aspects of how the religion of Mazda was the way of life of Achaemenians. The religion declined with the fall of the dynasty, and rose again during the Sasanian times. It was here that we see major institutionalisation of the religion. The religion became the way of life of the elite. It was this social group that built monuments, and temples.

Speaking on scriptures, such as *Vandidad* and *Dinkart*, she suggested that they must have come into existence at a time when it was possible to coerce people into following a way of life by imposition of laws. This appears evident from some parts of the text. Finally, speaking on the openness of the religion in the earlier times, Amighi said that laymen can always participate in the performance of rituals but the role of leadership always resided with the priesthood. Also, that anyone, irrespective of his social status, can espouse the righteous way of life, and achieve spiritual purification.

Prof. W. Oxtoby, University of Toronto, on *One Heritage, Two Environments, Zoroastrianism in India and Iran*.

Oxtoby started out with the historical horizon of Zoroastrianism in Iran in Achaemenian times and that in India in the vedic times, but due to lack of factual and docu-

mented evidence, he quickly came down to the 14th-17th century period. It is in this era that the Rivayuts provide a documented evidence of communication between the Zoroastrians of Iran and those of India.

He stated that the Zoroastrians of Iran, mainly those of Yazd and Kerman, have survived essentially unchanged to the modern times. In contrast, those of India have undergone a marked social change. This latter finding is supported by the outside evidences from the European travellers who came into contact with the Zoroastrian traders in Gujarat, and from the inside evidence in Kissa-i-Sanjan.

During the early migration there was not a big difference between the Zoroastrians living in the villages of Kerman and those in the villages in India. However, this changed fast, as the Zoroastrians of India moved into the cities—particularly Bombay—and soon became urbanised and cosmopolitanised. At this point the Iranian community looked towards the Indian community for their social improvements. In the 1970s however, because of the rise in oil revenues in Iran, the advantage was reversed.

The earliest documented evidence of Zoroastrians arriving in India and settling in Diu comes from the writings of Dastur Hormazdiar. Then they set sail for Sanjan, off the coast of Kathiawar. It is here that we come across the documented evidence of Kissa-i-Sanjan. The document is dated much later than the actual arrival of Zarathoshties in Sanjan.

Two important points brought out by Oxtoby were:

That there is no mention in the text of the Kissa about proselytising (converting) or otherwise of the indigenous population. This is particularly important, since many times the reason for non-proselytising custom followed by the community is often blamed on a promise to that effect given to the King of Sanjan.

That the incidence of dissolution of sugar in a bowl of milk, used as a metaphor to explain the integration of Zoroastrians in the Hindu community has never been mentioned in the Kissa either.

The pattern of life of the Zoroastrians who arrived in the Indian villages was summed up by the unquestioned position of priest in the society and the striving for economic advancement in a close knit society. As the community became dominant economically, the Zoroastrians migrated into Bombay where they developed a profound appreciation of their early Iranian heritage and culture.

Prof. E. Yarshatar, Columbia University on *History of Iran in the Legends of Zoroastrianism and later Literature*.

Yarshatar outlined the history starting with Peshdadian dynasty, and going down to Kyanians, Achaemenians, Parthians and Sasanians. He pointed out that all Peshdadian and Kyanian kings could not have been Zoroastrians but Mazda worship did prevail much earlier.

He suggested that the 'Factual History' of the Zoroastrians starts from the time of Alexander. Parthian kings, in times following the Achaemenian dynasty must have been Zoroastrians. This is evidenced by their names and other relevant terms, in their historical literature. The Parthian dynasty lasted for some five centuries, and during that time, the early legendary history of Iran was read repeatedly through Zoroastrian literature. This is how the Mazdayasna legends of Iran became associated with the religion of Zarathushtra.

Prof. D. Bishop, Columbia University, addressed the symposium on *Language and Literature of Zoroastrian Scripture*.

Bishop started out with the evaluation of various Avestan and middle Persian literature which are well studied. These studies have raised many points of disagreement among scholars. What is agreed by all scholars is the fact that, the 17 Hymns in the middle of Yasna or Yazashne of today, which are known as Gathas, are the only authentic teachings of Zarathushtra. He raised at this point a streak of doubt, by saying that it is not known for a fact, whether they were composed by the prophet himself. For many centuries, the Avestan literature was transmitted orally. It is believed that during this period the efficacy and potency of prayers continuously increased. The oral traditions were not only the means of instruction, but also were believed as a source of power which when released can destroy sins, drought, diseases etc. In general, the prayers were believed to be a weapon against Evil.

A book of scripture that is quite controversial in its acceptance is Vandidad or Vi-daeva-data which means the "law against the daevas or demon". It was written in prose when the language of Avesta was in a state of decay. Thus the Avestan quotes in it, are the ones composed in much earlier times. As for its translation into English, the one by Darmesteter is quite reliable. Bishop then went on to describe the subject matter of some of its chapters. For example, Chapter 2, deals with Yima or King Jamshid.

Chapter 3 is about the earth personified as a maiden longing for cultivation. Chapter 19 gives an account of the temptations offered by the opposing force. Finally, the last chapter describes the defeat of Ahriman, and victory for Ahura Mazda.

Prof. K. Irani, City University of New York, on *Philosophic Strands in Zoroastrian Theology*.

Irani pointed out in his talk the distinction between the natural reality that is incorporated in the Gathas and the supernatural reality that appears in later Zoroastrian scriptures. The Gathas incorporate within them, an approach to religion, that can be practised through qualities of righteousness, tolerance and thereby leading to an ethical way of life. In contrast, the later scriptures have incorporated within them specific dogmas and rituals. For example, the Vandidad is largely ritualistic in nature, when it speaks of rules for purification of defiled elements. Similarly, rituals are found in Yashts that are not mentioned in the Gathas. In essence, the later Zoroastrian scriptures were written for a period, in the span of human evolution, to bring the religion of Zarathushtra to the people of that time. Thus, these later scriptures could be subject to change to suit the changing times. There is very little mention of rituals in the Gathas, and hence he concluded with the question "What religious significance should Zoroastrianism give to rituals so as to correlate the ethical act to a moral situation?"

Sir H. Bailey, University of Cambridge, U. K. on *Zoroastrian influence in Khotanese Literature*

This was a very highly specialised talk on the philological implications of the language of Khotanese Literature. The talk was little understood by this writer.

Tradition bound

The importance of language as a means of perpetuating a tradition has been noted by the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), where Gujarati classes have been started, and in New York where Avesta classes are being offered. Ms Putli Mirza of Ontario will be conducting the Gujarati classes and Professor Dale Bishop of Columbia University, New York, will be conducting the Avesta language classes, according to newsletter reports of ZSO and ZAGNY.

The Gujarati classes are for children between the ages of five and 13 and are being organized as "a part of the Heritage Language Programme

of the Ministry of Education." notes the ZSO news bulletin. The classes will be held every Saturday evening and will cost \$7.50 for 10 lessons.

"Professor Dale Bishop has very graciously offered to teach a course in the Avesta language on a regular basis," writes the ZAGNY newsletter. "We of the Zoroastrian community of New York are indeed fortunate in receiving this offer from Bishop, who is one of the world's most renowned scholars of Avesta language and Zoroastrian scriptures. There is already a very heartening response to this offer. . . It is envisioned that the classes will be held every two weeks either in the evenings or on weekends at a convenient location."

Another tradition, meanwhile, is being revived by the ZAQ which is using its magazine *Gavashni* to keep the heroes of ancient Iranian legends alive in the imagination of its readers. Under the caption "The Stories from Mazdayasna Tradition" the magazine has started to serialize the ancient legends of Zal, Rustom, Sohrab and a host of other mighty Iranian warriors.

The story of ZAMW

The establishment of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington is announced in a letter by Adi J. Davar its president. "The story" of the association is compared to that "of our forefathers who settled nearly 1,400 years ago around Sanjan... their spirit for the survival of their faith and heritage, while contributing signally to the society which they call home."

An accompanying news item writes that there are around 80 to 100 Zoroastrian families originally from India, Pakistan, Iran and Africa settled in Washington D. C., Maryland, Virginia and states adjacent to them. Early in 1979 a talk by Khojeste Mistree of Zoroastrian Studies "sparked some of these Zoroastrians" who decided to create an organization where the activities of the community could be centralized. A meeting around 21 March, attended by about 80 persons, approved a draft constitution and by-laws of a newly proposed association which was later legally incorporated in June 1979.

Members of the first elected committee of the Association are Adi Davar, a senior executive with the World Bank, president; Dinshaw Joshi, ex-trustee of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and senior engineer with the World Bank, vice president; Ms Kamal Tengra, also with the World Bank, secretary; Kersi Shroff, a lawyer

now with the US Government, joint secretary; Sam Bhathena, a biochemical researcher with Georgetown University, treasurer; Russey Sumari-vala, senior vice president with United Way which is a leading charitable organization in the US, co-opted trustee and Nani Palkhivala, former Indian ambassador to the U. S. A., the association's first patron member.

"Since coming into existence, this new association has already organized jashans, social gatherings, classes on religion, culture and history for both children and adults, and talks by eminent authorities," according to the news bulletin. The association is also reportedly trying to establish links with the various community centres all over the world.

"As the momentum gathers, the association hopes to set in motion a vibrant group of activities, including their dream of establishing the first Atash Behram in the USA... fitting for a community living around the capital city of the most advanced country in the West," the news item adds.

Mid-term election at ZSO

A new Executive Committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) was elected to office at the mid-term elections held by the Society. New office bearers are: Minoo Khoorshed, president; Yezdi Antia, vice-president; Sam Vesuna, treasurer, Sabar Balsara, secretary; and Bahram Parsi who continues as executive officer.

A report of the elections in the ZSO newsletter reads: "(An) extraordinary general body meeting of the members of the ZSO was called for October 28, 1979, to accept the resignation of the president, vice president, treasurer and secretary, and to elect new office bearers in their place. Karanjia's (former president's) resignation was prompted by his ill-health but he, too, shared the feelings of his co-executives that a new team of office bearers, totally committed towards the Darbe Mehr project, be elected."

Chicago Directory

A new directory of community members in and around Chicago has been published by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. The directory has a total listing of around 104 addresses and also includes the addresses of persons previously connected with the association but now moved to other parts of the continent. The address of the association is 626 West 56th Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.

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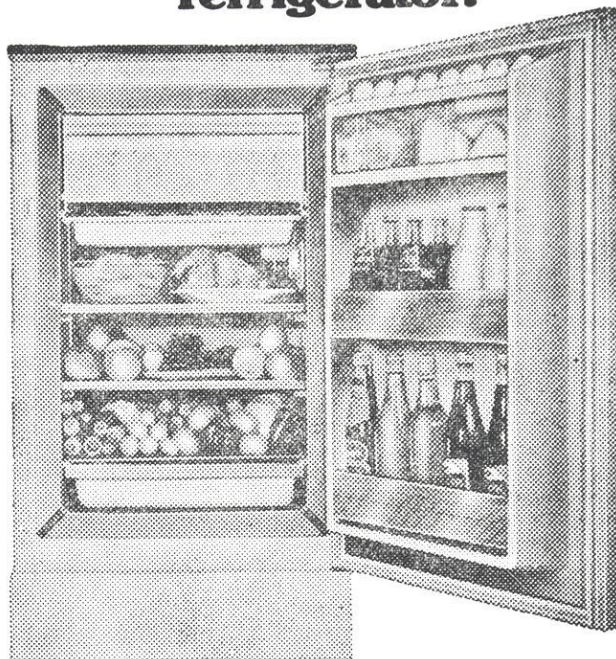
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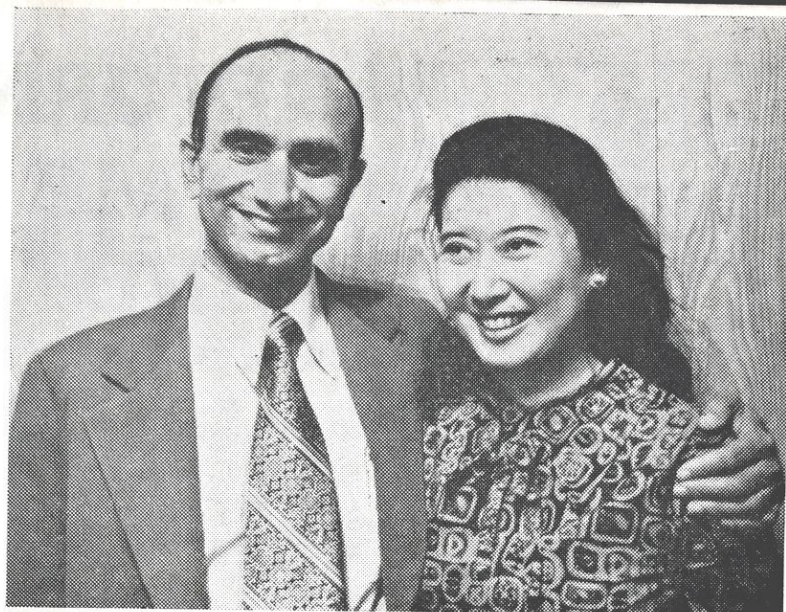
Arnavaz Mama

Fresh from his laurel-gathering trip to Nagpur, Singapore's millionaire perfumer Dadi Balsara was basking in the warm glow of communal approbation. The town had instinctively responded to this lad who had grown up in her midst, the son of a Zoroastrian mill employee, now a world traveller returning with a Rs. 75,000 gift donation to her Anjuman. He and his wife Christina were feted and both presented with a shawl in recognition of this sentimental home-coming, according to the Nagpur Times.

A fair, balding middle-ager sans paunch, quick-stepping, fast-talking Balsara is a marketing man who, having made the grade with his products, is now ready to take centre stage. Introducing himself as the managing director of Perfumes of Singapore Pvt. Ltd. and Souvenirs of the Orient Pvt. Ltd. and President of Balsara and Lee Inc, California, Balsara proceeded to enlighten us upon the various fields of activity each of them cover:

"We manufacture jewelry from semi-precious stones at Balsara and Lee. There's a lucrative market for it in the US, Latin America, Australia and Japan. . . As for Souvenirs of the Orient, it produces hand-made ceramics, decorated plates, beer mugs, lamps and things like that in Borneo. Do you know what we use as raw material for painting? Can you guess?" he asks and continues without waiting for an answer: "Sea shells, barks of trees, various coloured leaves. . . copies of ancient Ching and Ming porcelain is our speciality. . . I am now going into the production of scarves and ties and, if my negotiations with Lakme materialise, cosmetics in Singapore." His 'Dadi' boutique in Shalimar Hotel, Singapore, is but one of many outlets for all these products.

Perfumery, however, is what he is



Christina and Dadi : Fortune from fragrance

really sold on. Claiming that "perfumes originated in the orient. Singapore not Paris will be the ultimate queen of the industry," Balsara went on to describe the perfumery business that belonged to

"In this business what you sell is a name, a dream."

his wife Christina Lock, "a bird photographer of repute, an heiress with an island of her own (now taken over by the government) and a perfumery business in Singapore that was going to seed." The company was called Perfumes of the Orient Pvt. Ltd. and it had three main products, *Mayling*, *Chinta* and *Kwanyin*. "The packaging was mediocre and the whole marketing approach was very conservative," says Balsara, a student of psychology. "Those Chinese names had such a provincial air! You cannot compete on an international level that way."

Infusing his own brand of vitality, Dadi the chemist changed the products; Balsara the visualizer perfected its shelf appeal. "In this business what you sell is a name, a dream," expatiates Balsara: "The slogan must first capture the buyer's attention; next the total package must be attractive—the bottle as well as its cardboard cocoon. Until these are good enough, the product doesn't even stand a chance. Then, if the perfume measures up to her expectations and 'his' approval, the product begins to

move." The 'Dadi' range of perfumes include *First Lady*, *Original Bali*, *Dadi-7* and the ubiquitous *Singapore Girl* which is marketed as a tourist attraction: "Take a *Singapore Girl* home with you!"

Shoring up Dadi's demand for public acclaim are his other attainments: "I'm a black-belt Karate" says he, adding "and the only Asian vice president on the board of the World Union of Karate Organizations, Japan. The rest are all Japanese." A one-time practising palmist cum astrologer, Dadi Balsara carries with him a briefcase full of eulogising journals but no official bio-data and alas, no visiting cards. He talks of his commitment to the practice of Kundalini yoga and his addiction to the practice of tithing: "Eight per cent of my total income is spent in the service of lepers and the blind, two per cent goes to other deserving causes," he says. "It is very necessary to do good wherever we can."

But for all his brash super salesman approach, Dadi seems almost pathetically fond of his community. Those wide protruding eyes do not pierce but plead. He's been a long time away from home and the euphoria of the visit affects not only Dadi but his wife Christine who says "I never met so many nice Parsees before." Speaking for himself, Dadi repeats the sentimental refrain "I was born a Zoroastrian, I have lived a Zoroastrian, and I will die a Zoroastrian." Does that include the grand finale of the dokhma? "But certainly, if I am anywhere near one. . ."



RETURN TO MY NATIVE LAND

Hoshang Merchant

I was the sea-driven one
Who landing built a sun-temple
Laughed at a cunt-king's milk teeth
Then cow-hoof on head
Went about my sunset marriage
Casting my dead skyward

I was the one who on plantations
Secretly kept wives
And sat on the village council
I harnessed water-power
Sailed a raft to China
Struck iron ore, a million from old bottles
I worshipped Victoria

Who tasted my fruit
And knighted me
I invested my dark children with Sudrehs
Took ever whiter wives
Who danced, drank, played Canasta
The Chinese made their frocks and dice
Some followed Blavatsky, saw spirits

I was busy building the great peninsular railway
Some killed tigers, whence the adage:
Killing tigers in my pyjamas
(Whence Groucho took it).
Some took to transmigration, some to banking
Buying up pieces of rock from Aden to Zanzibar
A 100 000 labored on my cotton

('Einstein was a German Zarthoshti')
Some kept men marching on their stomachs
Some kept mad princes in pence
Some devoted to Iran, fallen women or boys:
Even in dire straits bowlers
Our scandals covert, our law British
One plotted against Parliament

No more Parsis at Oxford
No more British citizenship
No more Clubs and cocktails
No more plantations:
Given to Gandhi when our cocoa kids
Joined the torching labor
No more

Failing to gain guarantees
We changed to homespun
Saluted the rising sun—
Liberated women ran off with niggers
The conscience-stricken went into slums
The conscienceless married into wealth
Money more money readymoney

Our comedy never ended:
 She waits each 4 for her busdriver lover
 He beats her up each 10 of the clock
 She delivers each September
 Twelve to a team
 —All fashioned in a patois our own.
 Where was the Word?

Given me the Avesta
 Purged by fire
 By Alexander conquering
 Conquered by Arab—
 Till the land, father sons, kill an enemy
 Thus spake Zarathushtra
 Our masters and slaves took revenge linguistically

I played for stocks in their tongue
 Loved Pola Negri and Chaplin
 Screamed nightmares and poems
 Signed birth, marriage, death certificates
 Divorce-papers and suits in their tongue!
 Most loquacious of animals, I, the Parsi, was
 Tongueless

I covered up:
 Tooled around in sedans
 Dozed post-Dhansak at the Ripon
 Ordered in servantesse
 Loudly intoned an Avesta unknown to god or beast
 By sea, river, fire; even Mary's shrine
 Valiantly transplanted Zal and Zohak to Gujarat

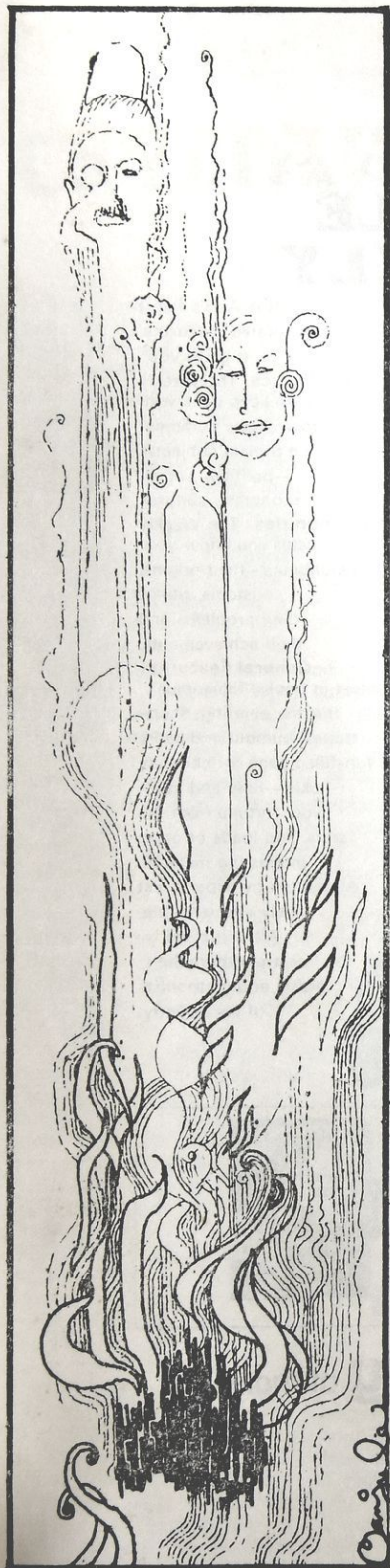
Why conquer the world when a drop abolishes it?
 Our daughter-in-law, a new Indian Empress
 With our son made the bomb:
 Wipe out thy neighbour—
 What defoliation couldn't, sterilisation took
 So it became that we, a master-race
 Were victims of the whip we held

Ever the lord and ever the jew:
 What is your memory, your dream and nightmare?
 What hour of the day can you cherish?
 Who'll re-imburse your slave; snatch your wealth?
 Who decolonise your heart?
 What land can you claim
 You who don't even have graveyards?—To New Haven?
 You sons of wanderer-gentlemen whose sons wander again

Finale:

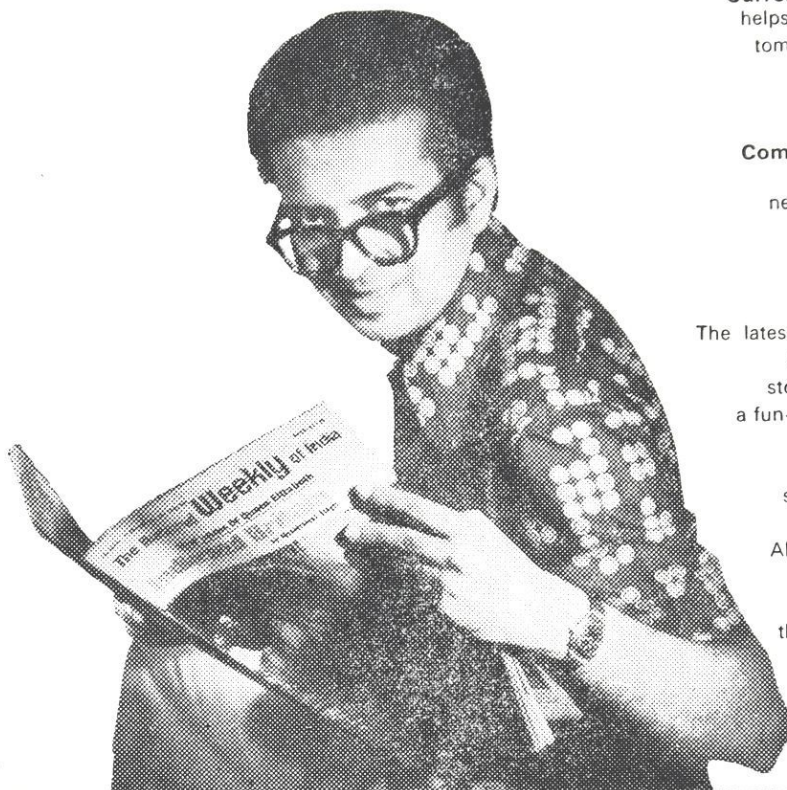
Droning priests descend a well
 Where birds perch
 The body/a naked stone
 Its soul shivers on a hair-thin bridge
 (In Heaven philanthropies don't wash:
 It perpetuates poverty)
 Intoning—

I am the sea-driven one
 Who landing built a sun-temple
 Laughed at a cunt-king's milk-teeth
 Then cow-hoof on head
 Went about my sunset marriage
 Casting my dead skyward



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Calcutta's Gentle 'Shepherd'

Bachi J. Karkaria

On Jamshedi-Navroz this year the Parsis of Calcutta honoured Ervad Bapuji Hormusji Desai, panthaki of the D. B. Mehta Agiari. Though, on such occasions, it is mandatory to be excessively cloying, the adjectives used in the *manpatra* presented and by those who rose to speak were all fully deserved by this gentle man of God who has served the community for fifty years. The most recurrent epithet was the word "humble"; rightly so, for Bapuji has been an object lesson in self-effacement, a virtue almost extinct in this, the stridently "Me" generation.

Now 72, quite toothless and very grey under his *paghdi*, Bapuji came to Calcutta as a callow youth of 21 and worked in the agiari under the saintly, Ervad Burjorji Dastur. Then, 15 years later, he succeeded him as one of the *atash adaran's* four panthakies. During this half century, his total commitment (he never married), his readiness to give spiritual guidance, moral support or just a quiet word of advice and, most of all, his gentle kindness have literally made him a "Bapuji" — father figure — to the community and a true shepherd of his flock, if I may borrow a Christian metaphor.

A jashan, a wedding, a Navjote, a *varshi*, if you have any doubts about their performance — and Calcutta Parsis, being a non-ritualistic species, have many such problems — just phone your friendly *panthaki*. And here Bapuji scores over the keepers of grand agiaris in Parsi strong-holds such as Bombay. For, here, the whole community is his panthak (the second, *kadmi agiari* has been turned into a *dadgah*). One, because we are a small, close-knit anjuman and, two, because he makes it his business to care, Bapuji has become the spiritual anchor that every true dasturji should be but too often isn't. Calcutta, thanks to its integrated Parsis and its committed priests, mercifully has escaped the contagion of mutual indifference so sadly evident elsewhere.

Mr. J. B. Madan, one of the community's eminent members, made a laughter-drawing reference during the felicitation to the fact that "we

also ask Bapuji to pray a *tandarosti* for our horse running in this Saturday's race". But, underlying the joke is the secret of Bapuji's popularity. As the same speaker put it: "When we hear him pray in times of joy, we know that God's blessing will be granted, his earnest prayer in times of sorrow is, to the bereaved, a guarantee that the soul will cross the *chinvat* bridge."

Nowhere more has this "all part of the same family" feeling on the part of Bapuji been more evident than in his brave — but again characteristi-

"We also ask Bapuji to pray a *tandarosti* for our horse in Saturday's race."

cally quiet — stand on inter-community marriages. "I do not condone such unions, but I consider the children of the community as my own. A father cannot, should not, deny a

boy or girl his blessings and mar the happiest day in his or her life." Thus, without any of the flamboyance or fanfare of other progressive priests, whenever requested, he prays the *tandarosti* from the Avesta and showers the couple with the traditional *ashirwad*. On the basis of the same feelings, he also says prayers for those deceased who have chosen to be cremated. I mention this in spite of his request not to. His reluctance to publicise these facts springs not from any guilt but from the fear that ugly, mindless controversy will hamper his work. I feel that Bapuji's fears are unfounded because the Calcutta Parsi community is strong enough and sensible enough to withstand the external pressures of bigotry.

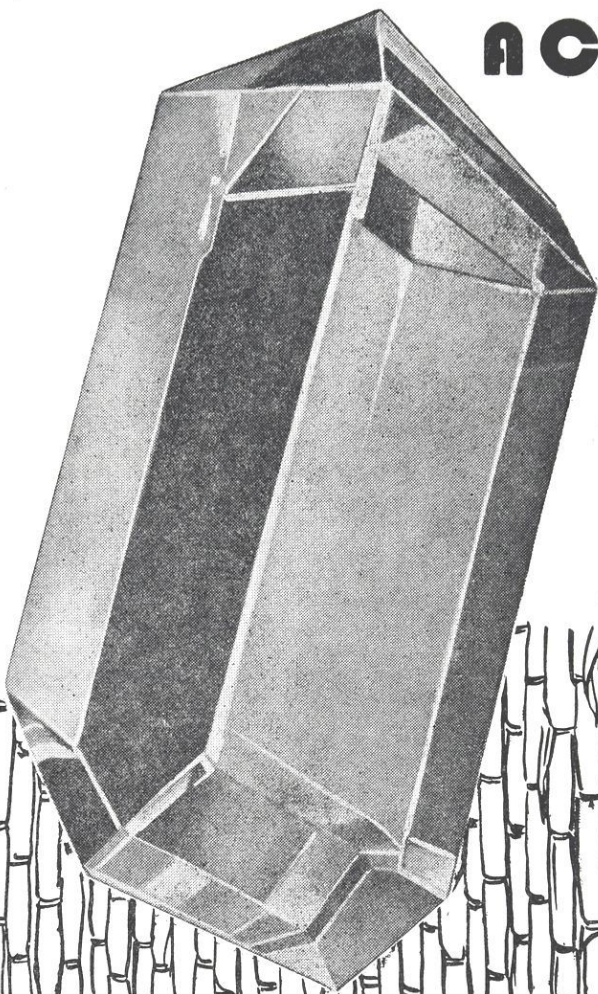
Ardeshir Batlivala, a Trustee of the city's Anjuman made special reference to a point which has been Bapuji's special contribution — and his only sore point against the community: religious education. For years together with Rustam Saklath, another gentle soul, and Dr Godrej



Bapuji at mike : Others (seated left to right) : Dali Bhesania, Batlivala, Adarbad Dastoor and Adi Rabadi.

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"The Calcutta Parsi community is strong enough to withstand the external pressures of bigotry."

Karai, another dedicated worker, now both dead, he conducted classes not only to teach the Navjote prayers, but also to explain to children what the great religion of Zarathushtra was all about. Thus equipped, they could better appreciate the wisdom of their prayers and take pride in their enviable heritage.

In his reply to the *manpatra* — with uncharacteristic aggressiveness — he chastised Parsi parents for giving such low priority to religious education. He mourned the fact that the classes had to be discontinued three years ago because only two students were bothering to attend, compared to the 50 or 60 pupils in the past. Speaking to me later, he emphasised how much more vital religious education was for a community, like Calcutta's, so distant from the milieu of the majority of its coreligionists. He expressed the sorrow he felt when tourists from Japan, Germany and the States, walked into the agiari in search of the wisdom of Zarathushtra while our own people said their children had no time for such things.

But a father has the right to chide his children. It doesn't mean he loves them any less. Gazing upon the huge turnout of Parsis who had come to the function as an expression of their gratitude for his service, overwhelmed, perhaps not by the Rs 35,000 that had been contributed by the community for him, but certainly by the love and respect expressed in the speeches, Bapuji must have, that evening, been convinced that he made the right decision 50 years ago. He must also have given thought to the workings of fate which snatched away his father suddenly, leaving the responsibility of the family on his young shoulders. Thus he had left his home-town and his unfinished education in mechanical engineering to come to Calcutta to instead work as a priest and repair the hearts of men. Surely, that was a "calling" in the true sense of the term. The fact that, for the Calcutta Parsi, Bapuji is synonymous with all their religious needs is proof enough that this small, gaunt and selfeffacing man has answered the "call". Totally.

Bachi Karkaria, a former writer on The Illustrated Weekly of India, is presently a free lance writer in Calcutta. Her family owns and publishes Navroze, a bi-lingual weekly in Calcutta.

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THUS SPAKE ZOROASTER

The Gospel According To PUNCH

Jonathan Sale

Bearing in mind the number of hands which have been theologically chopped off, and of bodies executed in a spiritual way at dawn, it might seem that the last thing Iran needs is larger doses of religion. So anyone planning a holiday among the mad mullahs of Teheran would have been upset to read the other day the announcement that, of three minority religions just officially recognised by the Iranian regime, one is known as Zoroastrianism. Where, one may ask, does it stand in the philosophical spectrum, and which bits of people do its adherents cut off?

The answer is that, far from being a fly-by-night cult invented by Charles Manson after breakfast, Zoroastrianism has been in business long enough to have influenced Christianity and Judaism (the other two religions with Iran's Design Centre Award) and is tolerant enough to remove nothing but dirt from its followers. There are 30,000 Zoroastrians in Iran (where it started), nearly a hundred thousand in India (where they fled in the ninth century AD, now trading under the name of Parsis) and even Britain provides a home, to the tune of 6,000 devotees.

The Mecca of London's 1,000 Zoroastrians is 88 Compayne Gardens, NW6, near the Finchley Road Tube. This lacks a fulltime priest and the fulltime sacred flame (of which more later) which he would tend to prevent it from becoming a fire risk, but can run to weddings and the Zoroastrian equivalent of Bar Mitzvahs.

"It is," said one of the members, "a social gathering place with a room for private prayers." How does their religion affect their lives? "We observe physical cleanliness." So do we all, I should hope, Christian, Jew and non-believer alike. But when Zoroastrians have a wash, they really have a wash. There are three sorts of ritual wash, one performed at sunrise and after using the lavatory, the ritual bath taken on special occasions, and the sacred bath of priests involving water and sand. It might not do any harm if Zoroastrianism overtook Islam in Iran; the

Ayatollah Khomeini sometimes looks as if a sop wouldn't hurt him.

Even the non-ritual daily bath should be undertaken in silence, to emphasise that the waterlogged person is concentrating on bodily and mental purity; that rules out my children. What rules me out is the



"Dentistry is a fascinating challenge. I hope that some of you Young Zoroastrians will accept it."

fact that some of these rituals involve the rubbing and the drinking of *gomez*, which is not an errant Mexican but nothing less than bull's urine. Bull's blood would be bad enough; do they really, in London NW6, swill down wee-wee from a bull?

It is not, one gathers, bull's urine as such. "Yes, it is urine, but it is from a special white bull in the Himalayas with no black hairs at all. Prayers are offered to the urine whereby its constitution changes, and it is preserved for twelve years. Ordinary bull's urine would be contaminated, but this is *consecrated* urine."

As well as laying down the contents of bulls' bladders for a decade, Zoroastrians have a tradition of leaving

dead bodies on towers for the vultures to dine off, as a last act of charity to the world of Nature. The Parsis who carry on this custom in India are annoying the neighbours, because modern medication is preserving limbs far longer and discouraging the birds of prey from finishing up their dinner; hands and feet tend to get dropped as human bombs on nearby balconies. How about English Zoroastrians? Can the rest of Compayne Gardens get a rate reduction on the grounds of a digital barrage? Fortunately, no. "We either bury or cremate."

If all this seems alien, I should mention that the Zoroastrian community can run to a Zoroastrian string quartet (including Minoo Madon on First Violin), and young Zoroastrians go camping and parachute jumping and organise New Year discos (although of the two Zoroastrian New Years, neither is on January 1st.)

They have just started their own magazine, complete with "Uncle Minoo's Kid's Corner"—another Minoo—featuring a colouring competition; winning entries are "displayed on the notice board in Zoroastrian House". There are articles on careers: "Dentistry is a fascinating challenge. I hope that some of you Young Zoroastrians will accept it."

There are cooking hints: "Making Chapaties". And—since the scope of the magazine is such that even *Now!* might envy—there are handy tips on disposing of the dead: "The dead body is viewed by a dog. The eternal substance in the dog's eyes is powerful enough to keep away evil spirits." This is not quite as bizarre as it sounds; what better way for an English dog-lover to go than under

What better way for an English dog-lover to go than under the comforting gaze of Fido and Rover.

the comforting gaze of Fido and Rover, in life as in death, the eternal substance in a dog's teeth being strong

Do they really, in London NW6, swill down wee-wee from a bull?

enough to keep away intruders?

It may be necessary at this point to answer questions now forming in the minds of unbelieving readers as to the truth of the above. Is it a fantasy? Have we sub-let these two pages to the Monty Python team? After all, if *Punch* has a fault, it is in its theological coverage, which is less than thorough when it comes to Mithras and some of the African cargo cults. But I say unto you, that it is all Gospel, if that's the word, truth. Failing that—I cannot vouch for the efficacy of bull's urine and dog's eyes—it is all believed to be true. Anyone who doubts that, clearly lacks relevant references such as the S-Z telephone directory, containing the number of the Zoroastrian Association, and *The Encyclopedia of Ancient and Forbidden Knowledge* by "Zolar, the Dean of Astrologers".

So now a big hand for the prophet you've all been waiting for—Zoroaster, alias, and more correctly, Zarathustra. He dates back to around the seventh century BC and was either a native of Iran or a dissident Mede who fled there to escape the contemporary version of the KGB. He took a strong line against the nomadic way of life, urging that folk settled down with the Persian National Building Society, and rationalised the current theological scene. This was complete anarchy, with different demons setting up shop all over the place. Zoroaster rationalised and indeed nationalised all this to make a sort of religious British Leyland under one "Wise Lord". There was some suffering involved; the good demons were not only downgraded, but also shifted into the ranks of the competition, that is, of the forces of Evil.

Ahura Mazda (one of the few deities to sound like a light bulb) had under him archangels such as Righteousness and Devotion. Opposed to this winning team were the Prince of Darkness and his executives like Zaurvan, the Demon of Decrepitude. At crucial periods of the struggle between the two factions, a Messiah appears, one of these being, according to Zoroaster, none other than Zoroaster.

Although he gave himself a good press, he received an even better one in the centuries after his death. Demons, it was said by reporters not

on the spot, had fled at his approach and miracles surrounded his life; many of these, alas, seemed to have been carbon copies of St Luke's Gospel, stolen before it was even out of copyright.

The Greeks gave him the credit for teaching Pythagoras everything he knew about life and theorems,—divinely inspired that the square on the hypotenuse etc. The Jews and the Christians claimed him for themselves, declaring him to be a mistaken identity with their prophets Ezekiel and Baruch. He was first credited with the definitive works on magic, and then, poor fellow, denounced for these very same books. Although his crucial teaching was "good thoughts, good words and good deeds", with which there is no argument unless you are Adolf Hitler, Nietzsche in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (music by Strauss) portrayed him as the first of the great all-time immortalists. Nietzsche was in his turn widely misquoted by the Nazis, proving that there is a God, even if it's not Ahura Mazda.

Meanwhile, back in the seventh century BC, Zoroastrianism became the equivalent of the Church of England, giving way only when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great. It made a comeback during the third century BC, and lasted until the Muslim conquest, when the bulk of the population was persuaded that Islam was the religion of the future, just like today.

Some Zoroastrians, as you will confirm by consulting the notes you have doubtless been making while reading this article, emigrated to India, and the members of the Association at Compayne Gardens come from both Indian and Iranian branches. The separation seems to have been geographical rather than spiritual, since both share a belief in essentials such as the sacredness of fire, which they use as their symbol—the mark of Zoroaster. That, incidentally is the reason for one of the chief denials of pleasure on the part of Zoroastrians; they don't smoke.

Whatever the theological doubts over Zoroaster, and the questions about the historical accuracy of the early legends, one thing remains certain. However desperate any addict of the seventh century before Christ might have been, wandering round the demon-haunted planes of Persia after the newsagents had shut, he could never have scrounged a fag from Zoroaster.

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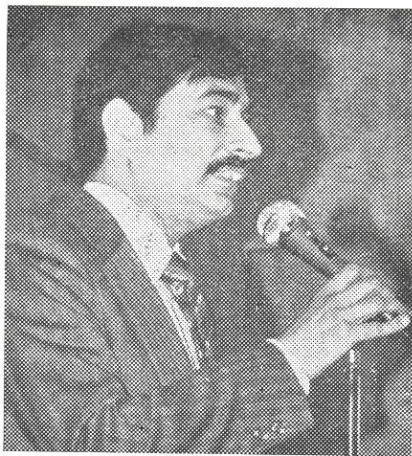
Social and Cultural Survey

Dr Lovji Cama

Six papers on the "Social and Cultural Survey on Zoroastrians in the recent past and suggestions for the future" were presented at a single session of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in 1978. Speakers presenting the papers were Dr Lovji Cama, presently the president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and research scientist with Merck & Co. USA, E. F. Desai, former joint secretary of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP), S. D. Nargolwala, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and vice president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, Manoucher Mobaraki, member of Gorooh Zartoshtian Taft va Tavabe, Tehran, Iran, R. S. Gae, former joint secretary to the Law Ministry and B. H. Antia, noted Bombay solicitor. Dr Farhang Mehr, Chancellor of Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran, also spoke briefly at the session.

As the papers are of considerable length we reproduce in this issue of *Parsiana* an edited version of the paper by Cama which focusses on the communities of North America. The other papers will appear in our forthcoming issues.

What I intend to do for this presentation is not to deal with the entire Zoroastrian community but with the recent past, present and future trends of a small but growing segment of our community settled permanently outside Iran, India and Pakistan. I will concentrate particularly on the social, cultural and religious problems of the Zoroastrian community residing in North America (Canada and U. S. A.) of which I am a part and have the most knowledge about.



Cama : Making it work

Socio-Demographic Characteristics
Prior to 1960 there were very few Zoroastrians in North America. These Zoroastrians were isolated, most of them married outside the community and their children grew up as non-Zoroastrians. By and large they were unorganized as a community. With a few exceptions, generally they have not maintained their identity or passed it on to the next generation. If things had remained unchanged more Zoroastrians would have disappeared into the melting pot of American society.

The present Zoroastrian population in the U. S. A. and Canada is made up of individuals who came in the sixties and later. Many came as students and later settled down,

others came with their families seeking a better life. A great majority of them are college educated professionals like doctors, engineers, scientists and pharmacists. In many ways it is a homogeneous group with similar aspirations and problems and a greater similarity in the way of thinking than that found in the average population. It is a dynamic community which appears to have decided to retain its identity and survive. They are determined to remain as Zoroastrians and pass on their Zoroastrian heritage to their children. They want to make sure that the community survives beyond the second generation.

This determination to survive and maintain its identity is attested in the fact that Zoroastrian Associations are forming all over the North American continent. The leaders of these Associations have a sense of destiny and determination to make Zoroastrianism survive in North America.

"....while men seem to go back to the home country to get married, single women find it more difficult to do the same."

The total number of Zoroastrians in North America is estimated at about 4000. About 20% of the marriages are mixed marriages. The ratio of men to women marrying out is almost 2:1 but it merely reflects the fact that more single men have immigrated to the U. S. than women. An additional factor is that while men seem to go back to the home country to get married, single women find it more difficult to do the same. Fifteen percent of the adult population consists of single persons. There are on the average 1.25 children per couple, with no significant difference between marriages where both partners are Zoroastrians and those where only one is a Zoroastrian. These data are for the Zoroastrians living in and around New York and may vary slightly in other parts of North America.

Now let us consider the socio-cultural and religious problems that face our North American Zoroastrian community.

Religious Problems

There are two aspects of every religion; the philosophical/ethical and the ritualistic/ceremonial. The philosophy and ethics teach a person how to live his daily life. They give life a general direction. This is the most important part of religion but often the most difficult part to understand and live by. This is the personal aspect of religion.

The rituals and ceremonies act as a binding force for a religion. These are performances in which the co-religionists come together, performances which also give legitimacy to the important events of life such as birth, Navjote, weddings and death. Rituals are what one hears and sees and takes part in. For those whom philosophy and ethics are dimly understood ritual alone binds them to their religion. In Zoroastrianism there are two kinds of rituals and ceremonies. Those in which the lay public has some involvement such as Jashans, Weddings and Navjotes and ceremonies for the dead. Others like the Yajashne, Vendidad and the Bui ceremony are reserved for the priests and in which the lay public is at best an onlooker.

These two aspects which make up any religion must be understood and practised if our religion is to survive in any particular place. What then is the status of these two aspects as far as the North American Zoroastrian Community is concerned?

Because in America we feel, that an understanding of our religion is basic to our survival there is a great interest amongst us to learn more about our religion. Two symposia in Toronto and Chicago and a seminar in New York within the last two and a half years attest to this fact. These were attended by 150 to 300 adults each. Considering how scattered our community is, this is an excellent response.

We also see a new development which is of recent origin. Iran has become a political and monetary force to contend with. Iran had encouraged its people to go back to their Zoroastrian roots. Since Iran had a clear alliance with the West there is a great interest in things Iranian, in North America. Amongst these, is a renewed interest in Zoroastrianism at U. S. and Canadian Universities.

One can therefore safely say that the community will have available from within itself and from the outside many scholars and teachers who

will be able to explain Zoroastrian philosophy and ethics and through research throw new light on it.

Now let us consider rituals and ceremonies. Those in which the lay Zoroastrians participate and which are most important to them, can fortunately be performed outside of an Agiary or Atash Behram. Amongst the immigrants are a large number of ordained priests. They are of course not full-time priests but are willing and able to perform the ceremonies of Navjote, Weddings, Jashans and Geh-Sarna when necessary. They have performed these ceremonies here many times.

Thus we see that the North American Zoroastrians have available to them both these aspects of religion which have been mentioned before. This is true for the major centres of Zoroastrianism in North America such as New York, Toronto, Chicago, Montreal, Philadelphia etc. There are Zoroastrians scattered across North America, where they are alone and to them some of these two aspects may not be easily available. Their problems are not different from those of Zoroastrians who live in small towns or villages away from the large cities.

The community in America does not yet have places of worship in the traditional sense (i.e. an Agiary or Atash Behram). A religious centre, the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe-Meher, has just been inaugurated in the New York area. Among other facilities it has a worshiping room. The worshiping room has been made to look like a small Agiary. The Afarghan does not have a permanent consecrated fire but the fire is lit whenever there is a congregation. Other activities such as religious classes for children and adults, indoor and outdoor sports, social functions, Navjotes and Weddings, which were formerly carried out in rented places will now take place at the Guiv Darbe-Meher. The Madam Morvarid Guiv Library in the Darbe-Meher will house the reference books, magazines and archives of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York.

The Toronto area which has the largest concentration of Zoroastrians will also have a similar centre soon. In both cases the magnanimity of Arab Rustom Guiv has made these possible. Thus even the problem of places of worship is being solved in North America.

Social and Cultural Problems

The main problem is the miniscule size of the community scattered over a large area. This makes it difficult

for us to come together often. Zoroastrian families do not see each other on a daily basis nor do their children go to the same school or get to play with other Zoroastrian children. While the majority of immigrant Zoroastrians have other Zoroastrians as their close friends, it is not true of the generation that is growing in America. Though children growing up here are conscious of their Zoroastrian identity they are not fully aware of it due to the absence of interaction with other Zoroastrian children.

"There is a certain danger of being assimilated while assimilating another culture, and this we must guard against."

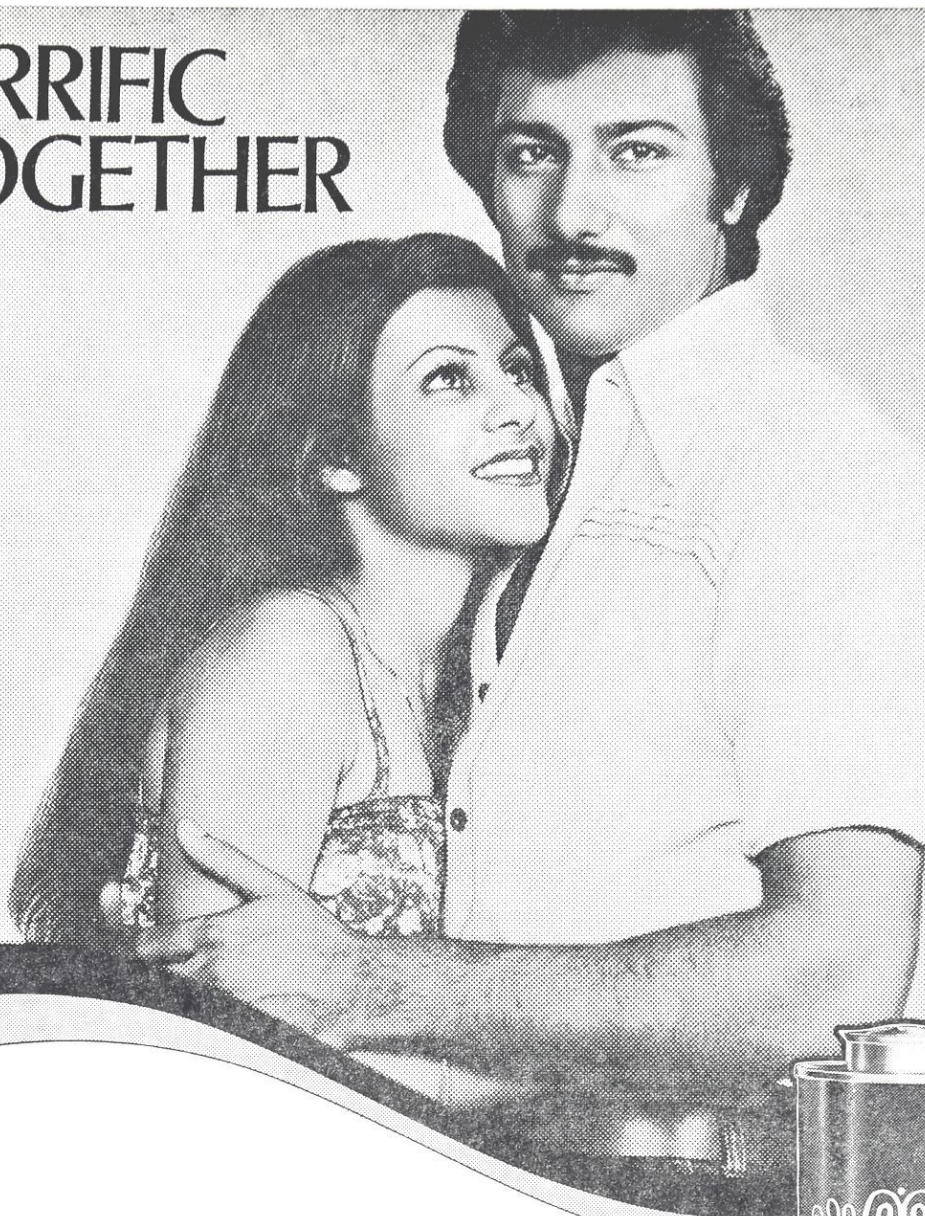
At present the family is the only source from which the children get their exposure to Zoroastrianism. The children do not have frequent exposure to ritual and ceremony, and some do not know what an Agiary or Atash Behram looks like. Living in a Judeo-Christian society they are likely to be influenced by those ideas and may succumb to them, if a proper knowledge of Zoroastrianism (its digressions, its similarities and its contribution to Judeo-Christianity) is not explained to them.

Zoroastrians have always adapted and assimilated the culture of the society in which they have lived and contributed to the cultural achievements of those societies. There is a certain danger of being assimilated while assimilating another culture, and this is something we must guard ourselves against. The best safeguard against this is the development of a pride in our own heritage and culture and our ancient history coupled with an appreciation of the universality of our religion. This should not be difficult as we Zoroastrians have a lot to be proud about; the important thing is that this must be imparted to our children.

Future trends—The adaptation to a new society

It is always difficult to predict the future, especially during the formative years and these are the formative years of Zoroastrianism in the North American continent. Yet certain definite trends are emerging and there is no question in my mind that the Zoroastrian community in North America will be different in many respects from those in the home countries of India, Pakistan and Iran.

TERRIFIC TOGETHER

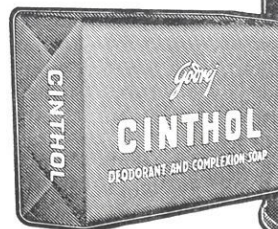


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But this is no different from the changes our society underwent when we moved from Iran to India centuries ago.

Religious Trends

Greater emphasis will be given on the ethics and philosophy of Zoroastrianism as expounded in the Gathas, rather than on the rituals and ceremonies.

Weddings, Navjotes and Jashans will be performed and are currently being performed in the same way as in India. In time, one expects that a standard English exposition will become a part of the ceremony.

An abbreviated ceremony for the dead will of necessity be evolved. A new set of customs and rituals for the dead will be developed. The problem of the rituals and ceremonies for the dead is not a pressing problem because of the relative young age of the population. Nevertheless this issue must be resolved in the near future as the community cannot go on having the ceremonies performed in the home country. The next generation will find this less practical or meaningful a procedure.

Performance of Navjotes of children of mixed marriages

The priests in North America at the present range from very liberal to relatively orthodox. The liberal priests have no objection to performing the Navjotes of children of mixed marriages irrespective of which parent is Zoroastrian. As long as the priest is convinced that both parents want their children to be brought up as Zoroastrians he will perform their Navjote.

The children of mixed marriages have a right to be Zoroastrians irrespective of the sex of their Zoroastrian parent and will be assimilated into the fold if they so wish. From my personal experience in the classes on Zoroastrian religion and history in the New York area, I find no difference in the commitment and interest shown by children born of mixed marriages and of fully Zoroastrian marriages. One expects that when both parents want their children to be Zoroastrians then they have already committed themselves to pass on the Zoroastrian heritage to their children.

Acceptance of non-Zoroastrian spouses

On a social level one already sees a considerable degree of acceptance of non-Zoroastrian spouses. Non-Zoroastrian spouses have even become leaders of the community in some cases. In the New York area many have given their time, their money

and their hearts towards the activities of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York and recently have been involved in the setting up and functioning of the Guiv Darbe-Meher.

The mutual acceptance of non-Zoroastrian spouses on a social level

"Zoroastrians here do not consider the acceptance of children of mixed marriages or of non-Zoroastrian spouses as active conversion."

may very well lead to a formal acceptance into the religion at some future date. In my opinion a majority of the Zoroastrians here do not consider the acceptance of children of mixed marriages or of non-Zoroastrian spouses as active conversions of aliens to the faith. It is more an adjustment to the realities of our new homeland and a necessity for our survival.

Future Priests

At the present our priests are all immigrants from India or Pakistan. For the future we have the following choices:

1. To continue to look for the supply of priests to the Madressas in India.

2. To accept that priestly functions may be performed by knowledgeable Zoroastrians.

3. There are many priest families settled here. A small number will want their sons to become priests and will send them back to India to study the priesthood. The Community here could then utilize the services of these second generation priests.

4. The last alternative is a very interesting one and we should give particular thought to it. I have mentioned before the interest in Zoroastrianism in the Western Universities. We should induce one such university to set up a department of Zoroastrian studies. Ideally this university would already have a department of ancient Iranian studies or Iranian languages. To such a university one could then send, every year, a few of the best of our priests to do graduate or under-graduate work. After graduation these priests could serve the community back home or stay on here to act as priests. To me this seems to be an ideal solution which will benefit our community everywhere and will in a real sense uplift the quality of our priests. Prof. Hinnels at Manchester University and Prof. Richard

Frye at Harvard University have made suggestions along these lines.

North American Zoroastrians of the Future.

They will have a minimal knowledge of Gujarati or Persian, their language will be English. The next generations will have less personal ties with India, Pakistan and Iran. There certainly will be a great deal of communication between New World and Old World Zoroastrians and they will continue to influence each other. In fact channels of communication must always be maintained if Zoroastrianism is not to split into two.

The generations of Zoroastrians which will grow up in America will differ significantly from the immigrant generation. A New World Zoroastrianism is emerging in North America with the following characteristics:

"The racial character of Zoroastrians will change slowly but not totally."

1. Zoroastrians in North America will emphasize the ethics and philosophy of their religion more than the ceremonies.

2. The simple prayers and ceremonies will remain as they are but will be better understood. Many longer and complicated ceremonies will be rarely performed.

3. The religious education of children and adults will be more formalized and will be of greater importance to the individual.

4. The fire temple will be substituted by a simpler replica, though in the distant future an authentic fire temple may appear.

5. The priesthood will interact more closely with the lay Zoroastrian and will have to communicate the meaning and substance of the prayers and ceremonies.

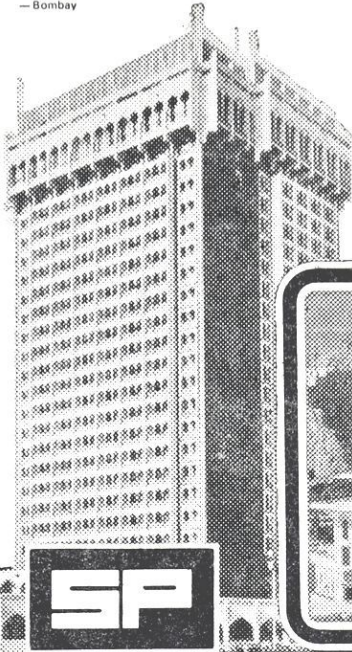
6. The racial character of Zoroastrians will change slowly but not totally.

7. Western customs and attitudes will replace Indian and Iranian customs and attitudes.

Zoroastrians in North America can be looked upon as an experimental community. The home community can watch it as it grows and adapts itself to its new homeland. There will be successes and failures but the communities outside of North America can perhaps learn from these. The changes that are adopted by Zoroastrians in America may perhaps indicate the trend for the future.

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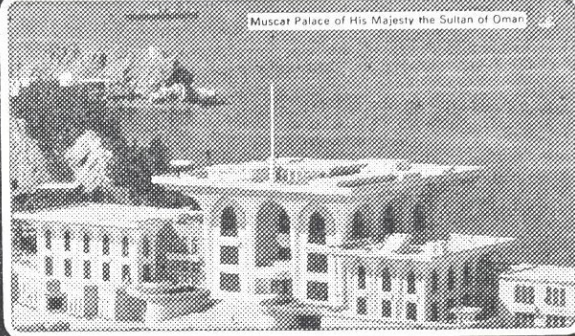
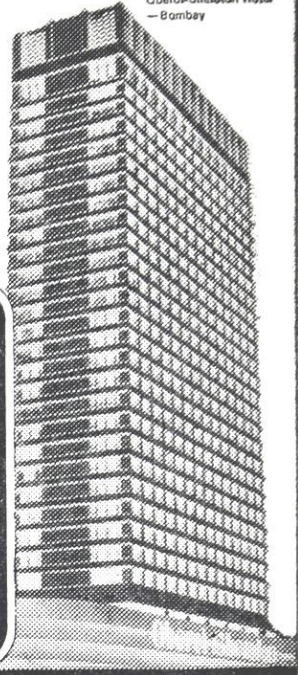
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Both professionally and personally Dastur Dr Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla lived the religion of the good life.

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 fifth extract from the book which is being serialized by *Parsiiana*.

THE STORY SO FAR

Born in a poor dastur family in Surat on 27 August, 1875, Dhalla moved with his family to Karachi in 1878. At six Dhalla started his schooling and by eight 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 only served to heighten their dejection. Dhalla became the editor and later the proprietor of a fiction magazine which discontinued publication after three years of sustained losses.

When Dhalla's wife came to live with him after his twentieth birthday, differences between himself and his wife began to surface over their different approaches to life—his conservative and hers liberal.

The eight years between 1894 and 1901 were years of employment; but they were years of enlightenment also. My uncle had taught me to rise at break of day. The rituals of bathing and praying were quickly completed, and I was soon wrapped in reading, writing and study. Prior to leaving for the office, I put in at least three hours of hard work at home. On my way to work, I stepped into the library where I read all the local English newspapers, the *Times of India* and all the Gujarati papers of Bombay to get world news.

Day by day my inclination for religious study grew and I read increasingly on the subject. Every month I sent for books worth ten to fifteen rupees from Bombay. To receive a packet of books was my greatest happiness. My opinions upon religious matters were being formulated gradually and I became eager to write books on religion and to deliver speeches and lectures on the subject.

During my youth our community was divided into three main streams of religious thinking. The first and largest group comprised of those who had faith in ceremonies and conventions and were known as the orthodox group. The second group — the reformists — were those who were endeavouring to clear away the cobwebs of superstitious beliefs and practices that had been cast over the religion of Zarathushtra by the passing of time and to revive its pristine purity. Parsi theosophists who made up the third group were striving to understand our faith through the teachings of their society.

At that time I was an orthodox to the core. In 1896, the second edition of Ervad Behramji Dordi's book entitled, *The Parsi of Today — their Life and Religion* was published. I had given a review of it in my *Goolshan-e-Danesh*. As that article gives a clear glimpse of my views in those days about the social and religious problems that were being discussed then, a few sentences from the review are quoted. "Today's so-called reformists, who are eager in every way to imitate the Europeans, who, by the philosophy of their wavering minds disturb the firm faith of our youth; who by the arrogance of their unbridled

thinking are bent upon destroying the most beneficial influence of ceremonies — that same grand religion and its sacred ceremonies for whose preservation our fore-fathers sacrificed their lives and their possessions and endured untold hardships; that same perfect religion and its highest ceremonies, these so-called reformers are ruining voluntarily; they who are abandoning chastity and purity and adhering to filth and uncleanness — for such as these, this lengthy discourse is worth reading and assimilating by every Baste Kustian. We are confident that if the reader is truly religious and wise and if his mind has been poisoned by these presumed reformists he will find much to learn and to know from these pages." At that time I was twenty-two.

I had already read the ancient history of Iran. I had also read an account of our history after our advent into this land. I had studied the religious controversies that had been waging in the community from time to time during the last hundred years. As I had no knowledge of Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazend and Cuneiform writings I had carefully conned the Gujarati and English translations of our religious books. I was aware of Zoroastrian literature, Parsi history and religious and social controversies. I believed that I was now ready to serve the community through my writings and speeches.

In 1895 I commenced writing my first book. Just as businessmen perform the puja before commencing their account books for the financial year at Diwali, I awoke at midnight, had my bath and, at dawn inscribed the words: "In the name of God" in red ink on a clean sheet of paper and wrote the first few lines of my book which was to be entitled *Ravan-ni-Rahbari*: "The Soul's Guidance".

In 1897 this 120-page book was printed and published. Its contents included subjects like Ahura Mazda — His dual aspects — the Good Mind and the Evil Mind; prayers — the language of prayer; the soul and the spirit; happiness here and here-after; purity of mind and body; sin, death etc. The thought content was good as such as would meet with the approval of the orthodox sect. I had stated that

"In clear words I had stated that a touch or glance of a woman during her menstrual period rendered all things impure."

the ancient language of prayer was miraculous and prayers in that tongue alone could be efficacious. All other prayers or hymns were of no value.

The following year, 1898, another booklet, consisting of 58 pages, *Athornan-ni Araastagi*: "The Adornment of Athornans" was published. This book was dedicated to my revered uncle.

In this book I touched upon the greatness of the Athornan fold. I referred to the purity of the Athornans of olden days, their wealth of knowledge, the beauty of their qualities, placed them upon a pedestal of piety and held them up as paragons of virtue. Our existing Madressahs were unable to supply the community with capable and educated Athornans. Educated Athornans refused to follow the profession due to paucity of funds and other facilities to provide for the upkeep of such learned mobeds. Without a thought about the hereditary privilege of priesthood and of

their attempts to keep the business within the family yielding no place to new-comers, I tried to hold the Behdins responsible in every way.

In 1900 I published my third book *Pavitraini Paidari*: "Footholds of Purity". In this I discoursed upon the rules and regulations of cleanliness. I had read and appreciated the teachings about a woman during her menstrual periods as given in the *Vendidad* and other books. In clear words I had stated that the touch and glance of a woman during that period renders all things impure and that it is harmful not to observe the rules regarding menstruation. I sang praises about the benefits of 'taro' and affirmed that the presence of a certain salinity in it makes it a destroyer of germs and an effective prevention against diseases when applied to the skin. Besides this, during that period, I printed small pamphlets costing 4 annas each about ceremonies, etc. and had them distributed free of charge in every home.

At the same time as becoming a writer, I emerged as a speaker also. The first lecture of my life was fixed for Jamshedi Navroze of 1895 on 'The Glory of Fire'. In Karachi that was not the age of speeches and sermons and there was no society under whose auspices lectures could be given.

Later, an enterprising young Irani from Bombay, Mr. Dinshaw Meherwan, founded a society called the 'Bazme Jashane Rooze Ghambar'. Under the auspices of that association I delivered many other lectures. Prior to that, I had to personally shoulder the expenses of printing and distributing handbills advertising my lectures.

Before my talk, a song composed by me in praise of the Almighty was sung by a group of young girls to the accompaniment of the harmonium and the fiddle.

Now that I was delivering lectures frequently I ordered a wooden platform to be constructed. During that period Khurshedji Cama, Darashaw Chichgar and later, the fiery speaker Jehangir Vimadlal and others spoke from this platform. Twelve years later Khan Bahadur Nusserwanji Mehta had a platform made with railings on three sides of it which he presented to the YMZA for the sermons on Hamkara days. Prior to that many a lecture was delivered from my old platform.

I delivered two lectures upon the subject of communal ghambars. The community disapproved of these talks. These feasts were being organized through the ghambar funds establish-

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ed by the generosity of Seth Edulji Dinshaw. At the jashan ceremonies which were being performed to commemorate the approaching seasons, besides the officiating priests and one or two organizers, there were hardly five people participating in these religious ceremonies. Yet, at the time of the ghambar dinner which followed, the hall would be crowded with young and old alike. In ancient Iran most of the inhabitants depended upon agriculture for their livelihood. Thus these functions were hailed with deep devotional feeling and the villagers from neighbouring places congregated and through prayer and ceremony pleaded to Ahura Mazda to send sufficient rainfall, favourable weather and a rich harvest. As means of communication were limited in those days, these religious festivals served as meeting places for fostering friendships. With changed conditions ghambars do not fulfil these purposes.

"As Parsi children grow up they become theosophists first and Zoroastrians afterwards."

Today's ghambars serve no other purpose save to supply tasty courses of meat and potatoes, dhanak and kachumbar. In Bombay and in other cities, lacs of rupees of the community are invested in ghambar funds. That the interest from these vast funds could be utilised more fittingly to relieve the poor of the community was the purport of my talk. Such remarks hurt the feelings of the more conservative section of the community.

From the platform my serious controversies were controversies with Parsi theosophists. Re-incarnation, vegetarianism and other allied topics would have priority in their talks. They went out of their way to state emphatically that the precepts of re-incarnation were to be found in the Zoroastrian scriptures and that the Zoroastrian religion forbade flesh-eating. That both these contentions were false was the basis of my lectures and articles. As the altercations increased, the Secretary of the Bazme Jashne Rooze Ghambar, in 1900, invited the opinions of two dasturjis of Bombay and of the learned Seth Camaji on re-incarnation. In reply the head dastur of Wadiji's Atashbehrām, Dastur Darab Sanjana, wrote, "Parsi theosophists are preaching theories contrary to Zoroastrian teachings. They are thus incurring a mortal sin. The Anjumans of Bombay and other places ought to take effective steps against it." Dasturji Kaikhushru

Jamaspiji of the new Atashbehrām wrote: "The literature of the Theosophical Society is based from beginning to end on the Hindu religion. To try to assimilate the precepts of such alien faiths into our religion is a fallacy. There is not the slightest reference to re-incarnation in Zoroastrianism." Seth Khurshedji Cama stated: "Parsi children are not receiving any education about their own faith, hence as they grow up they become theosophists first and Zoroastrians afterwards. In the Zoroastrian scriptures there is not a single word about re-incarnation. Barring the mistaken Parsi theosophists, no true scholar of Zoroastrianism has ever stated that the Hindu philosophy of re-incarnation is a part of the Zoroastrian religion."

Regarding vegetarianism my contention always was that those who for reasons of mercy and compassion, of sentiment or health, or with the pious conviction that flesh-eating hinders the soul's progress, wish to abstain from it they are free to do so. But they should abandon the obstinacy of writing and saying that it is prohibited according to Zoroastrian scriptures, for this is completely unfounded. Because of this their monthly magazine, *Cherag* which was being published in Bombay, taunted me as "the white-turbaned butcher."

Religion divides people, it engenders ill-feeling and tears friends apart. However tolerant people may be, the bond of affection between them loosens, frank discussions become scarce and the two keep some-what aloof. It was so in my case too.

In religious matters I was as narrow-minded as I was conservative. Once a Muslim teacher of Persian told us that the gates of heaven are open only to the faithful. Similarly I read in the works of Christian priests that without the intervention of Jesus Christ no one could cross the threshold of heaven. I too believed that Ahura Mazda's blissful abode was for Zoroastrians only and the gates of heaven are closed to those outside our fold.

During that period whichever book or pamphlet I published did not bear the Christian date but only the Zoroastrian Roj, Mah and Sal. I followed this practice in all my correspondence also.

Mornings and night I prayed a great deal. I took good care to have my meals in silence. I performed my ablutions and necessary prayers after every call of nature. I was anxious that my wife should do the same and reap its benefits; so I wrote out the entire Baj prayer in bold letters and

"I wrote the entire Baj prayer in bold letters and pasted the sheet of paper onto the door of the lavatory."

pasted the sheet of paper onto the door of the lavatory. But she had no desire to practice such customs nor to credit good deeds in the Book of Judgment hence she gave no countenance to it.

As time passed I was increasingly attracted to the path of ceremonials and I believed that the greater the number of ceremonies performed, the larger would be the quota of happiness showered upon me. I harboured a secret desire that should wealth come my way I would reserve a room in my home for ceremonies and hire a priest who would pray night and day and perform ceremonies continuously so that I could reap a wealth of virtue and the Almighty would pour down His benediction on me. Such an arrangement we saw later in the homes of some wealthy families in Bombay. They had created a veritable little agari in their home.

My uncle never wished to see anyone follow the priestly profession. My own ideas ran in another direction. Often would I tell my wife that I would initiate every son that we may be blessed with into the priestly fold. She considered my views impractical and such as would ruin the future of the child.

Since childhood I had been reared in the physically unclean environment and morally impure atmosphere of Chic Galli. Our bed-room was in the rear of the house in an attic just above the kitchen and toilet. Adjacent to it was a five-feet wide sweepers' alley. On the westerly side where a window was built-in to ventilate the room, our neighbour, had tethered his horse and camel. All night we had to inhale the odour of their excretions. Our first born son began his life here.

Even today I could paint horrible pictures or write pitiable and miserable accounts of the life-story of the heterogeneous society of Chic Galli, replete with superstitious beliefs and black magic, slaughter and strife, illicit and objectionable behaviour, secret and open immorality—the atmosphere defiled by curses culled from Urdu, Sindhi, English, Surti and Gujarati. That was not the age of charity chawls built in respectable surroundings on principles of peace and comfort. In 1897 I left Chic Galli.

Pure Spice

Manjula Padmanabhan

The Crow Eaters: by Bapsy Sidhwa, Sangam Books, 283 pages, Rs. 15.00

Running through the fabric of Bapsy Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters* is a very strangely coloured thread. But for it, this would have been the interesting but run-of-the-mill saga of a Parsi family in early twentieth century Lahore. It centres around the adventures of a Faredoon Junglewalla — Freddy for short — his adventures and passions and how they affect the lives around him. It is not always a perfectly coherent story, the texture of the narrative being frequently uneven and rough-cut — yet, running in and under the shifting colours of this book is a streak of humour so original and succinct that it is able to lift the entire context of the book from the humdrum to the surreal.

The story opens upon the hero midstride in his life, surrounded by his troop of admiring progeny and proceeds as a series of flashbacks to earlier portions of Freddy's life interspersed with its current events. He is one of those charming rascals one occasionally meets in literature whom one cannot resist liking despite his numerous serious defects. In a sense he is a typically oriental adventurer: his loyalty is to his family and community; his religion is the consummation of his desires; and his morality that sly mix of piety and total unscrupulousness which allows him to seek divine help even while plotting cold-blooded murder.

Drawn into the ambit of his colourful life is a cast of many minor characters, including his seven children, his dutiful yet sharply characterised wife Putli, the fire-breathing dragon of his mother-in-law, his social sphere of business contacts and friends in the underworld. We see him progress from a young fortune-seeker who leaves his village in Central India, with his meagre possessions and budding family packed into a bullock cart, to make the long trek to the promise of a better life in the North. Arriving at Lahore he is enchanted by that city's ambience and determines, with many false starts, to set himself up as the owner of a provisions store.

We see him suffer and rejoice in the growing pains of his children. And our last sight of him is as the prosperous, wordly-wise patriarch, calmly and irreverently contemplating his imminent departure from this vale of tears.

What distinguishes this work from any ordinary fictional biography is the author's choice of perspective. It isn't simply funny or ribald; there is that about the humour which is positively bizarre, and in a genuine, idiosyncratic manner.

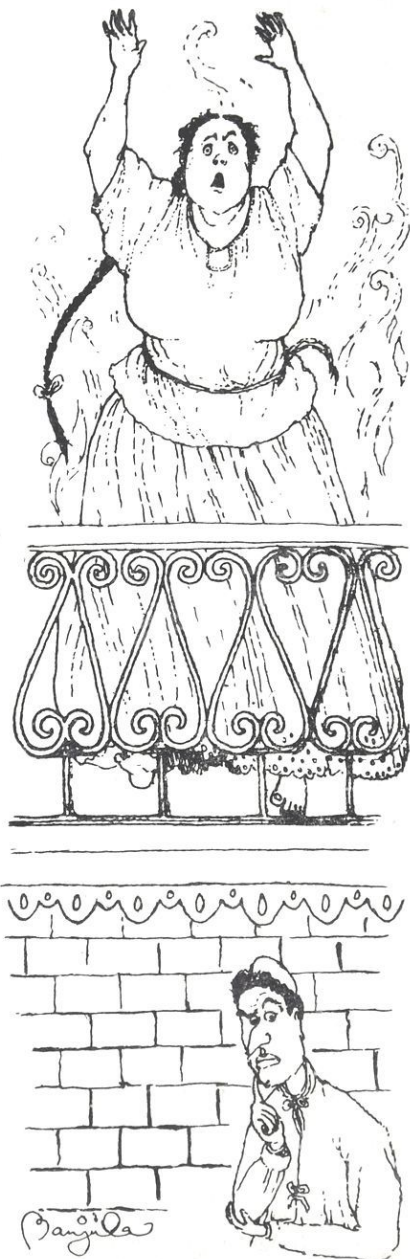
We get the first taste for it in the description of Freddy and his endeavours to keep his love life vigorous during the bullock cart journey, despite the disapproving presence of his wife's mother. He despatches her to savour the joys of nature while he rushes back to the cart to attend to his wife. Meanwhile a lively cockerel, who is an established member of the entourage, becomes attracted to the activities taking place in the cart and upon making investigations, discovers there is no perch more convenient to ride on than poor Freddy's amorous bottom!

What distinguishes this anecdote and the others of its kind throughout the book is that the author stirs in these little packets of pure spice without any preamble, nor any of the cloying cuteness which normally surrounds the subject of sex in Indian writing, humorous or otherwise. Whether she writes about the personal habits of turn of the century Parsis or of Freddy's plans to incinerate his mother-in-law or of that formidable

"She takes common place events and forces us to look at them again in the cosmos of the extraordinary."

lady's dreadful indiscretions while in London, Sidhwa retains a professional detachment, as of a consulting physician writing cool, dispassionate notes on the miscalculations of her colleagues. She reports upon the various ribald events in the lives of her characters without appearing to pass any judgement. If we are amused, well and good; if we are shocked or upset, it only means we have failed to realize that in India, the bizarre is commonplace. Sidhwa realizes it and writes about it with an eye for the most savage encounters, yet at no time does she leave us space to doubt that what she says could be the truth.

Take the example of the marriage of Billy, Freddy's son. It is almost sadistic in its choice of detail. Billy, the love-lorn youth, we are told, "had grown to manhood—and his ears had grown with him. The lint-like cartilages had hardened and stuck out like teapot handles. His straggling five-haired mustache now made a substantial smear beneath the bumpy crag of his nose; and above it triumph-



ed the centre-part in his hair. Oil-glossed, blue-black, the hair waved away to end in a squiggly froth of curls." The girl he is taken to review for marriage, "looked pathetically anaemic and flat-chested in a welter of gold ornaments and a yellow sari. She glanced at them shyly and at once they saw, even in the dim light, that she was pock-marked... Putli at times had anticipated much worse. Her imagination had presented her with a string of hobbling, hunch-backed hare-lipped monsters. This wasn't too bad." Subsequently Billy falls in love with this girl's younger sister and their wedding and honeymoon are described in hair-raising detail. But for all that there is in this episode that is hilarious and ludicrous, hardly any of it is unusual for India. It is Sidhwa's special virtue that she can take these commonplace events and force us to look at them again to appreciate their true place in the cosmos of the extraordinary.

Where the book falters most however, is in the linking up of these marvellous little vignettes to make a homogenous package. Much of the novel is strung together haphazardly, forc-

ing us to slow our pace to muddle out some unimportant footnote in the narrative, while the main action loses momentum. Tiny discrepancies in scale crop up, not enough to shake one's credulity, yet enough to irritate: in the story of the fire for instance, so much time is wasted gathering all the bit-actors and main characters together for the final scene, that it is difficult for the reader to believe that the house would not have already been burnt to cinders before the resolution is effected. Slightly tighter writing and one may have ignored the time-lag required for all the events to take place and yet leave the end intact.

Then there is the problem of language — always the bane of the Indian writer in English. It is difficult to translate the pithy idiom of colloquial Gujarati or Hindi to the staid frequencies of English. The author sidesteps the issue by restricting herself to long passages of reported action and descriptions, except where speech is unavoidable. But stylistically, this makes for heavy reading.

Where she scores the highest is in her depiction of the Parsi community.

It is rare to find such a level of easy familiarity with a community's customs, along with the detachment to be amused by its peculiarities. Sidhwa pokes outrageous fun at what anyone can recognize as patent Parsi-isms, yet she is never too vulgar or self-critical to lose perspective. She writes of the community as a drop of a different hue in a glassful of multicoloured liquids: not yet so distinct as to be completely alien, but touched by a spark of freak genius which makes us seek out its lights from among the multitudes.

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The Parsi Poets

Polly Chenoy

'Poets always seem to get a raw deal,' according to Adil Jussawalla, a leading Indo-English poet. Publishers, for commercial reasons, shy away from handling their works and many inspired words are sung unheard. Recently, however, four Indian poets, two of them Parsis, Jussawala and Gieve Patel, added a new dimension to publishing in India when they formed a poet's co-operative: "Clearing House", which will try to rectify the past discrimination against poets by giving their works priority. Here Polly Chenoy reviews two works published by "Clearing House", 'How do you Withstand Body?' by Patel and 'Missing Persons' by Jussawalla, and also 'Crossing of Rivers' by Keki Daruwalla, which is published by the Oxford Press.

COMPASSION AND SUFFERING Gieve Patel

Denise Levertov once said: "When I speak as a poet, it is the same as to say I speak as a human being." This statement could be attributed to Gieve Patel for his poems are filled with a concern for human problems—the physical aches, pains, and needs of the body, the dilemma that confronts people, and the mental anguish lodged within each one of us. Though Gieve Patel takes refuge behind irony and a kind of self-mockery, the reader is sensitive to his great compassion for the suffering of the world. And this would not be possible without the aid of the imagination. To quote Levertov again: "The imagination of what it is to be those other forms of life that want to live is the only way to recognition; and it is that imaginative recognition that brings compassion to birth."

This is evident in his poems especially in *Public Hospital* where he pretends to be impatient, preoccupied, and sharp, yet "I embrace the people." He may "plunge,/Splice, violate,/

With needle, knife, and tongue" but "At end of day... Watch the city streaming/By the side of my hands." In a poignant poem *How Do You Withstand Body*, the poet's concern for the body's anguish, its screaming pain is almost tender. With something approaching awe he asks: "How do you withstand, body,/Destruction repeatedly." This is the theme of most of his poems, that the body is able to

withstand the shock, turmoil, and the trauma of life today:

*I walk today
An integral man,
Yet suspect I am
Battered and ground.*

His lament is heard in *Audience* when

*Each moment, and moment after
moment,
Somewhere, a private act of menace
Is performed. A thin continuous cry
Hounds the universe...*

and haunts our 'minds as well. It seems as if our nerves are being stretched and we feel the constant pain of the body. But in *Continuum* he questions: "But why isolate, you say, mere anatomy/In the poet's abundant chamber?"

As a medical practitioner, Gieve Patel must have seen much suffering especially in rural areas, and his brooding compassion is evident in poems like *Rural*:

*Puzzled old man
Whose list of complaints punctuates
My cursory look-over,
What to do for you!*

Along with his brooding compassion, one senses the poet's feeling of helplessness when

*The tarmac outside my clinic
Flows thick and befogged spirits
Drop in in me, demanding
A simple, eternal whisk to safety.*

Despite his compassion and his concern for the suffering of the world, Gieve Patel does not believe in being humble! *The Arrogant Meditation* is an assertion on the right of being bold and aggressive. Too much humility has been our bane and therefore

*It must come again,
Arrogance, to pack heart space
impenetrable.*

The effect of Gieve Patel's poems is powerful. The tightly packed lines, the strong syllables, the hammer strokes of words all show great vigour and energy. The bluntness with which



Patel

**The tightly packed lines,
the strong syllables, the
hammer strokes of words
all show great vigour and
energy.**

he approaches his subject matter is appealing and he certainly does not believe in sparing the reader's sensibilities!

In this pain-filled universe, he has shown the triumph of the human being despite being submitted "To varieties of pain". A truly serious poet, Gieve Patel in his 33 poems brings a deep awareness to his readers of human suffering.

Both Adil Jussawalla and Gieve Patel have to be highly commended for starting a poets' co-operative, "Clearing House" thereby giving poets an opportunity of getting their works published without their losing their originality and individuality.

SEARCHING FOR LOST IDENTITIES

Adil Jussawalla

An earlier reviewer's assumption that Jussawalla's title of his first book of poems *Land's End* appeared to be prophetic and that the book showed not only his range but also the limits of his work has been inaccurate. Now with *Missing Person* published in 1976, Adil Jussawalla has proved the reviewer wrong and proved to the world of poetry that despite a gap of 14 years between his first book and *Missing Person*, his range and work have acquired tremendous breadth and new dimensions.

His world is now peopled with lost individuals searching for an identity "You're your country's lost property/ with no office to claim you back," the miserable "bite the dust" and the ruthless trample over all. In *Scenes From The Life* he hauntingly portrays the lack of communication in modern life and civilisation. Once language had meaning and people could share each others' joys and sorrows and hopes. There was communion. Language was a power "spoking your valleys with light" but today language has lost all its mysticism and meaning and has become, what Robert Duncan says, counters to be manipulated. In Section 3 of the poem, Jussawalla skillfully makes the reader aware that "A—'s a giggle now" and "an er... a cough" and nothing more. Language has been so distorted and manipulated (and there is a severe indictment of the study of linguistics "Curled in a cortical lobe (department of languages),/an unspeakable family gibbered") that it is now nothing more than meaningless sounds and words like 'Duty', 'Patience', 'Car'. What was originally an anthem swelling to a crescendo has now dwindled into a mere trickle of words which have no life. What is even more desperate is



Jussawalla

His world is now peopled with lost individuals searching for identity.

the fact that nothing helps. Once, some kind of ideology restored a man's faith in himself and in the world around him, but today he is

*Lost, running from acid to Marx,
he sees the world in twos
and says
'Who helped me in a fashion
no longer function true'.*

All throughout *The Scenes From The Life and Points of View* we are exposed to the negative values of modern civilisation: mass communication which indoctrinates the masses, a glutting of desires through material goods, a spiritual malaise blighting the land, a paralysis of will and a life gone sterile. In *Points of View* he portrays the anti-hero who lives like a robot, and who has lost all initiative and will, and who is unable to live intensely. He is an inauthentic man. Nothing has meaning for him anymore—not love, sex, or religion. He is "empty even of original sin" and wanders in "his mountain of condoms". But occasionally, our anti-hero is able to break "out/in a rash of yowls" and defy crippling authority. Similarly in *Scenes From The Life* despite the hopelessness and helplessness of the individual, life has something more to offer than mere rootlessness, un-

certainty of self, and of man's indifference to his fellow creatures. He realises and trembles with the realisation when "a mirror shakes in recognition." To become whole again, man must strip himself of all the layers of civilisation and go back to the natural, the elemental self. And finally, however fitful, hope "which periodically triggers/some men to act" is a "bright tide revolving inside me, a door" which opens somewhere, but "Its not very clear". Though his poems are cries of despair set in a bleak landscape, Adil Jussawalla shows that hope is never dead.

As a poet and as a craftsman, Jussawalla has proved that to him English is not a foreign tongue for he uses the language with ease, skill and dexterity. He knows how to handle the instrument and can make it work with great facility. He uses all the devices of his craft: alliteration, rhyme, epigrammatic lines, incantatory modes, nursery rhyme chants, and in poem after poem makes the reader aware that he is completely at home in "that foreign tongue". *Scenes From The Life and Points of View* (a powerful indictment of today's society), the dramatic monologue *The Exile's Story*, and the chilling *Raising of Lazarus* are all a tribute to his poetic genius.

In *The Raising of Lazarus* there is "God's hateful hiss of air as through a tin..." (strong syllables, harsh sibilants containing anger and disgust) and one line in particular, though an understatement, strikingly done: "I had forgotten what it was to die". He speaks strongly of an indifferent God who pulled him back to life but left him, once more, to go through the painful process of living and of dying.

A word of caution however. Jussawalla, despite the range and depth he has displayed in his work, his latest book, must now show that he can sustain this achievement. His writing must be more prolific or else his work will remain thin and his output slender.

FLOOD TIDE OF MATURITY

Keki Daruwalla

Unlike Gieve Patel, Keki Daruwalla does not feel deprived "Being neither Muslim nor Hindu in India." In fact, with the publication of his new book *Crossing of Rivers* (1976, Oxford University Press) he should feel confident that he has forded the river on a flood-tide of maturity and landed ashore successfully. With his literary stamina, intellectual strength and social awareness in addition to a sharp perception of the environment



Daruwalla

The strength and vigour of his poems prove his continuing ability to face problems squarely.

depth of feeling, economy of language and originality of insight, Daruwalla can truly rank as an outstanding Indian poet writing in English today. When so much of verse (and bad verse at that) is being written today, it is refreshing to come across Daruwalla's poems uncompromisingly honest and unflinchingly direct.

At a meeting of the Poetry Society in Hyderabad, Daruwalla was asked if he would care to discuss his influences. Politely, but firmly he dismissed the question: "I have no influences and what I write is entirely the way I feel. This is not to say that when I was young I did not absorb the poetry of others, but to say that I write like Eliot or someone else is incorrect." And he was right in denying that he was influenced by this or that poet. The striking originality of his work is his most characteristic feature and the strength and vigour

of his poems prove his continuing ability to face problems squarely.

The first section of the book is entitled *The Waterfront* and the main theme is the river Ganga flowing through Banaras, the city which would have confused Dante had he visited it. In a narrative style he unfolds his experience of riding along the Ganga and watching "the ghat amphitheatre unfold(s) like a diseased flower in a dream. All throughout one feels the ambivalence of the poet in his attitude to the Holy City of Banaras and to the sights he sees. The entire city reminds him of a 'ghostscape' and the images he etches are surrealistic.

In the Vignette poems, the images are even more striking and his revulsion to the sights around him more prominent as he gazes on "the town itself" which "is a bas-relief of death."

There is such a sense of despair, death, decay, blight and waste in the poems on Banaras that travelling through these poems, the reader is aware of a sense of oppression, a Kafkaesque nightmare where there is no light or any relief. "The city broods on nothingness" or "The city broods, a dark grey spur of fate/ chalked with passive colours." White, which is the symbol of purity, becomes leprous and death-dealing. But the despair is never total for fiercely the poet rages against this passivity and these neutral tones of greys and whites and the constant sense of burning:

*If only seasons changed here
and leaves of blood flowed down
the river in autumn! If only ice
came crashing down in June!
If a patch of earth along the ghats
could nurse
grass shoots instead of wizened
stone!*

From fierce rage he turns to offer a prayer, a form of benediction, a release from the heat-filled oppression of this dolorous city and says: "I hope somewhere along this city dreams are flowering..." that waters murmur, quails rise from bushes, palm-fronds wave and that someone "reaches for the shells of his childhood."

It is a relief to leave the burning, burning, burning ghats of Banaras and turn to the section of the book "*Crossing of Rivers*" with its healing, life-giving waters, waters either placid or foaming, and the landscape peopled with fisher-folk, hill tribes and their dogs, their lives and superstitions, their disappointments and sorrows. Where the poet rightly says:

*In every season
comes a crossing of rivers.*

Finally, in the third section of the book, *In My Father's House* we return to the haunting terrors, but this time to the superstitions and magic lore which the rational mind dismisses, but which the subconscious is terrified of, and which rebounds with death dealing accuracy on the wrongdoer, however unintentional the motive. The burden of guilt is carried in *Death Of A Bird* when the male monal, a king, a "firedream" is shot down wantonly. This wanton killing leads to a number of tragedies such as the pony falling down a thousand feet below and is swallowed up in the roaring river. But

*His scream
climbed up the gorge, a nightmare
fang
which ploughed my blistered dreams
and sowed
begging children.*

The expedition is haunted with terror and the act of sex brings no relief from this superstitious fear. With the queen monal dropping dead at their feet, the woman cries out in agonised fear: "We are accursed!" *Haranag* is again a theme on superstitious fear which the mind is unable to reject, but for once, the man is filled with rage and hacks at the snake for "no fear of sin could keep my arm away." But the woman continues to be fear-riddled.

Crossing of Rivers is a book to be proud of. Daruwalla's work possesses a fine blend of freedom and discipline, metrical rhythm and the word order of prose, compact and harsh, with alliterative phrasing and relaxed movement. His insight into Hindu myth and legend are amazing and his knowledge of Islam and its ritual no less amazing. At the same Poetry Society meeting, both Hindu and Muslim listeners were captivated by this keen insight and wondered how he came by it. Though he has crossed the river and landed on shore, we hope that this stepping stone will lead to bigger and finer adventures. Shabhuallah Daruwalla!

Rashid D. Bamanbehram

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Died: **Phiroz Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy**, 63, chairperson of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) for 14 years, of brain haemorrhage on 9 February 1980 in Bombay.

Identifying himself totally with the BSE for over four decades, Jeejeebhoy was reportedly responsible for modernizing the market's activities. He was instrumental in publishing a directory, which gives information and data about companies on various stock exchanges, introducing computerization and during the latter part of his life was involved in the Stock Exchange building project of which he was the conceptual and financial architect.

"Market people recall the tact with which Jeejeebhoy was able to resolve the major crises the market faced at least on three occasions in the last two decades. On all these occasions Jeejeebhoy contributed a great deal to bring normalcy in market activities," according to an *Economic Times* report.

"The loss due to the death of Jeejeebhoy will be felt not only by his family and friends but also by the financial circles of the country," said L. K. Panday, member of the BSE, at a specially convened meeting by the governing body of the BSE to condone Jeejeebhoy's death and place on record his many services to the exchange according to the *Financial Express* report. Among those who paid tribute to him at the 9 February meeting were Mathuradas Shamaldas, president of the BSE, and Laldas Jamnadas, member of the body and chairperson of LIC, UTI and GIC. The market remained officially closed on 9, 11 and 12 February as a mark of respect to Jeejeebhoy. The Ahmedabad and Delhi exchange markets also remained closed on 9 February.

Another condolence meeting was held by the working committee of the Stock Exchange Badge Holders Association on 18 February, when a resolution noting Jeejeebhoy's service in the best interest of the exchange, his enforcement of discipline and systematic working of the exchange and the enhancement of the prestige of the institution during his tenure, was passed.

In a statement to the press, the Share Bazar Staff Union, representing the gumastas, are reported to have observed that what law could not provide them, Jeejeebhoy provided by using his good offices, that he was their security in ensuring fair employ-

ment and service conditions.

"He served the interest of all connected with the Stock Exchange without fear or favour. He was in the right sense of the word an institution by himself," reports the *Free Press*



Jeejeebhoy

Journal. The van carrying Jeejeebhoy's body was parked in front of the Stock Exchange building for half an hour before proceeding to Dongarwadi.

Born in 1915 in Deolali, Jeejeebhoy studied at the Zoroastrian Boarding High School from where he passed his matric in 1931, according to a life sketch with the family. After studying arts for a year in St. Xavier's College, Bombay, Jeejeebhoy joined Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics and obtained his B.Com. in Actuarial Science in 1935, placing second in the Order of Merit. The following year he reappeared for his B.Com. with specialization in Advanced Accounting and Auditing.

In 1937 Jeejeebhoy joined the Stock Exchange Office and worked for two years on the Morison Stock Exchange Inquiry Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay according to his life sketch provided by his family. In 1939 he went to England to study further and joined St. John's College, Cambridge University and also London University. Completing three year courses in one year he obtained a M.A. in Literature from Cambridge University and a B.Com. in Finance and Banking from London University simultaneously. The following year again he obtained a M.A. in Economics from

Cambridge and a B.Sc. in Economics in Statistics and Demography from London University. Commenting on his scholastic achievements one professor writes "I can recall no previous instance when such rapid progress was made with so much competence..." while another refers to him as a "pupil under circumstance somewhat out of the ordinary."

"I recall him reading from the very beginning," says his elder brother Dosoo. "Shakespeare was his favourite author... he was also a great lover of music and though he did not take a single music lesson he was a first class violinist."

On returning to India he rejoined the Stock Exchange as an assistant to the chairperson of the Exchange, K. R. P. Shroff, and was promoted to secretary in 1946. On Shroff's retirement in 1966 Jeejeebhoy was appointed as the chairperson of the Exchange.

"He was loved by all who worked with him because of his human approach. Jeejeebhoy was respected in Government circles. He was a man of high principles to which he held fast," notes a *Financial Express* report.

Jeejeebhoy remained a bachelor. He is survived by his two brothers Dosoo and Nani.

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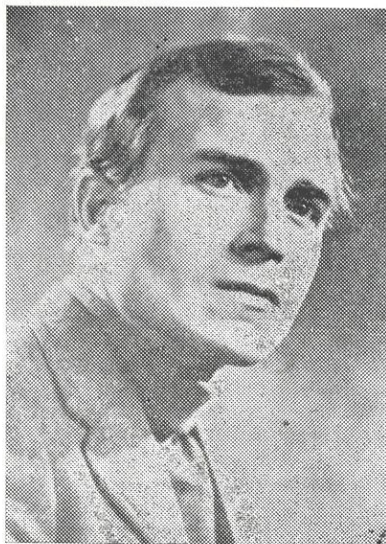
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Tribute to Kulke

Walter Liefer



Kulke : German Parsi Historian

Eckehard Kulke, German historian and author of the book *The Parsees in India*, died on 3 April, 1978 in Freiburg, Germany at the age of 36. A student of political science and sociology at Kiel, Munich and Freiburg, Kulke did research on the Parsi community in Bombay between 1966 and 1969. On 19 April, 1979 a meeting was held under the auspices of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute to commemorate Kulke on which occasion Walter Liefer, former Consul Consultant General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bombay read a paper entitled "The Bombay School of German Historians and Eckehard Kulke." Amongst those present at the condolence meeting were Kulke's wife, Juliane, and brother, Hermann. We publish extracts from Liefer's tribute to Kulke

In 1975, I had the opportunity to edit an anthology "Bombay and the Germans". One of the articles was called "Bombay School of German Historians." This title must have struck people as somewhat surprising and strange but I felt that we are entitled to give to a number of German historians or scholars, the name of "Bombay School of German Historians". They wrote in the atmosphere of this city or were influenced by the tradition of this part of India in some of their works on historical or related topics.

Today, we are honouring a man known for his scholastic rank who died one year ago in the active and promising part of an already rigorous life full of research: Dr Eckehard Kulke. Kulke was a young savant who has contributed not only to the history of the Parsis of India but who was also staying here in Bombay for his research work about this subject. I therefore feel that according to the

historical research and due to his outstanding book *The Parsees in India* dealing with the historical development and with the modern situation of this group, Eckehard Kulke belongs also to the Bombay School of German Historians. His book about the Parsis is the first work in German language in the sociopolitical field devoted to this community.

The author (born June 26, 1942 in Berlin-Schoeneiche, died April 3, 1978 in Freiburg) who studied political science and sociology in Kiel, Munich and Freiburg, had done his research work on the Parsis here in Bombay from 1966 to 1969. For this purpose he had also taken courses in Gujarati at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. At the same time he collected at the British Museum Library and at the India House Library material for his thesis "Position und Rolle der Parsen im sozialen und politischen Wandel Indiens" ("Position and Role of the Parsis in the social and political change of India"). We see that always his thoughts were round this subject on the historical development and social change of the Parsis. After he got his Ph.D. from the University of Freiburg he worked in a special department of the German Research Society on a regional project in Dhanbad, Bihar.

At the end of the year 1977 he delivered a lecture about the Parsis in the Swiss capital, Berne. Perhaps it is

an omen that in his last public lecture he should talk once again about the community he studied so intensively.

His book about the Parsis is not only his magnum opus, it is in general an outstanding work about the Parsi community and about the role they could play in the Indian subcontinent in the socio-political development. The work is dedicated to "Juliane" his wife. Eckehard Kulke offers us an analysis of the cultural, economic, social and political change and gives a colourful portrait of the community which made a remarkable contribution to public life in India in all its aspects during the last centuries.

Dr Kulke wanted only to write about the change which took place in course of time. But he did more: he not only discussed the many problems, but also started to discover the reasons, the sources of this process of a social change.

According to Toynbee's word about the "creative minorities" in the fifth volume of his *Study of History*, Eckehard Kulke also wanted to find out such a minority and the role played in India. He remarked about the Parsi community that it "has gone through a remarkable process of group-internal change and has influenced in turn, as an active participant, the process of social change in Indian society. Without aiming at the general theory on the role of minorities in social change, this book could — aside from filling the information gap on the contemporary Parsis—still provide material to the formulation to such a theory in the future". Dr. Kulke asks himself why it happened that the Parsi community lived relatively unnoticed for over a thousand years but showed immediately a sudden dynamisation and became therefore agents of change in the wider Indian context.

Kulke starts his book with an analysis of the monotheistic character of the Zoroastrian religion in the Achaemenian period. This chapter mentions more or less the regular contact of Persia with the Indian subcontinent and it ends when the Parsis entered India as the consequence of the Arab invasion of Iran. Here in India the Parsis accepted some conditions which gave the first social change, for the ruler of Sanjan had asked them to give up their language and take on the idiom of the region and to exchange the Iranian garb for the Indian dress. In a genuine psychology, the Parsis were well suited for



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"Kulke not only discussed many problems, but also started to discover the reasons."

some hundreds of years into the portrait of India, which was a country full of isolated groups. Therefore the Parsis did not produce any of the minority complexes we see in Europe. Kulke says "While among the European Jews, the self-isolation contributed to the genesis of anti-Semitic emotions, the Parsis conformed with their self-isolation only to the norms of the society surrounding them, which sanctioned thousandfold self-isolation."

On the other side this distance from one group to the other supports the conflict-thesis of the American scientist L. Coser: "The closer the relationship—the more intense the conflict."

The isolation ended for the Parsis with the arrival of the British. Then the Parsis as a marginal group had a chance and the destiny to leave their secluded life, a life without environmental conflicts and problems and choose instead a new field of economic and social activities. Kulke found that three main points were the essential results of this fact which happened because the upper classes of Hindus at that time could not do the same due to social, cultural barriers and partially due to a divergency of interest. The results are according to our author:

"The cooperation between the minority and colonial powers, which was especially effective due to converging interests, caused an improvement in status for the whole minority in the Indian society.

"The Parsis were the first Indian community to enter into close commercial and intellectual contact with the British. With this, they gave up on the one side, their traditional isolation on the periphery of the Hindu society, and, on the other side, they paved the way for a reorientation of the community towards the dominant reference group and its value system.

"The community became concentrated in the trading centres on the west coast, especially Bombay, so that the Parsis today are the most urbanized community in India (1941: 89 per cent, 1961: 94.2 per cent)."

The degree of urbanization is for the author an important factor. Next to the Parsis the Jains have a percentage of 54.1 and the third highest degree is with the Muslims: 26.6%. These demographic characteristics

could lead to many considerations. Another factor is the permanent trend towards migrating to Bombay. A problem, too, is the birth rate, which since 1916 has declined slowly, but which since 1955 is showing that the number of births is outnumbered by the death figures. Kulke feels that besides these problems the limitations of the family size, the attitude about inter-community marriages are also some of the factors of high importance.

A scholar like Eckehard Kulke can only give the facts. The facts of the small birth rate of the most advanced group in India is similar to the situation we have to face in Germany. The

"He classifies four streams in the religion: orthodoxy, Parsi theosophy, reformers and agnostics."

help, the remedies? They could be of political, of religious, of psychological, of human, of economic value. We of course feel it is a problem of people of all these disciplines, they all can contribute to the discussions, to the actions: scientists, teachers, sociologists, people of the churches, outstanding personalities devoted to public and selfless work.

An important role was played always by the Parsi Panchayat. Such

a council can be traced back to 1642 at Navsari. There was once a very important election in the history of the Parsis—in 1787, when a Panchayat was elected on the first day of that year. After the election the Governor provided the council with official jurisdiction. Kulke saw in this special power an attempt of the British to integrate the Parsi community into their political system in the sense of "indirect rule". But the fact of the jurisdiction of 1787 has offered to the author a very interesting explanation: the political methods of the year 1787 could have indeed helped to create a new political responsibility in the community. The growing reputation of the Panchayat for the next decades resulted in the foundation of schools, institutes, hospitals and housing projects. In Bombay were also founded many donations and aid for social and religious funds. At the same time we find a new field of Parsi action in the press, in the cultural organisations from dramatic societies to theatrical companies, even in sports.

About the press Kulke may be quoted: "Before the Marathi newspaper *Dig-Dursan* appeared in 1837 and the first Hindu-Gujarati newspaper *Vartaman* in Ahmedabad in 1849, there were already four (in 1837) and six (in 1849) Parsi-Gujarati newspapers respectively in

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"In the Zoroastrian religion there never was any denial of life, on the contrary, he finds only clear affirmation of life."

circulation: 1822—*Bombay Samachar* Fardoonji Marzban; 1830-43 *Mumbai Vartaman* Nowroji Dorabji; 1832—*Jam-e-Jamshed* Pestonji Maneckji Motivala; 1832-50 *Mumbaina Chabuk* Nawroji Dorabji; 1844-52 *Samachar Durpan* Nowroji Gae; 1845-46 *Chitranjan Durpan* Behramji Jamshedji Gandhi.

"The initial stages of a native press in Western India were, therefore, almost exclusively dominated by Parsi journalism, which, as a result, played an important role in integrating the Gujarati-speaking elite in that region."

Another field of Parsi activities was specially found in the Indian economy. The foreign observer of the economic scenery of Bombay cannot understand how the economic development in the whole of India was extremely influenced by this small group of Parsis—in trade, finance, shipping, cotton mills, etc.

Kulke deals also with Parsi charities, which are for him the most important factor in the Parsi lead in the field of education. He sees more the positive aspects in educational foundations and not so much in the extensive welfare

systems, where he shows some doubts. On the other side, this educational system was at first to a greater extent the most effective agent of the socio-cultural change taking place in the last century, which also later on proved to be the moving factor for all the other communities in India.

Eckehard Kulke classifies four streams in the religious and intellectual life of the Parsis: orthodoxy, Parsi theosophy, reformers and agnostics. Freemasonry is mentioned only shortly.

" 'The Parsees in India' is written in a serious, sincere, honest and fair spirit."

In the beginning of the book Kulke discussed the Zoroastrian religion. At the end he analyses factors favouring social change. Here once again he mentions the religion. Kulke says that in the Zoroastrian religion—here at the end of the book sometimes called Parsism—there never was any denial of life, on the contrary, he finds only a clear affirmation of life and he discovers a power that asks for an active part in shaping the world. The whole universe is in confrontation between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, between the Spenta Mainyu and the Angra Mainyu where Man is called to stand of his own free will on the side of the Good Principle. Because religion imposed no taboos, the Parsis

with their religious-cultural heritage were prepared for a modern outlook and to become at one time the most modern community in India. A precess was set in motion. And the builders, the makers, the planners in the Parsi community gave their contribution to a modern time about which E. Kulke says: "The social status of the community, its role in the social change of the Indian society, was thus based on the combination of factors mutually influencing each other: economic, social and cultural contacts with the British; occupational and income structure; economic success; educational standards and language ability; high degree of westernization; feeling of group identity; elite consciousness and high valuation by the environment; group solidarity, mutual help as well as their own comprehensive welfare system; high standard of living; family and community unity; distribution of newspapers; emancipation of the women; hygiene and health; loyalty to the political authorities; influence within the political system; marginality; etc."

This work *The Parsees in India* is written in a way as only an outstanding scholar could write: in a serious, sincere, honest and fair spirit. He is of course at a certain distance, but, inspite of this, his heart is in the centre of the world he is talking about. This book is a treasure house of arguments and of explanations and it should be read and reread.



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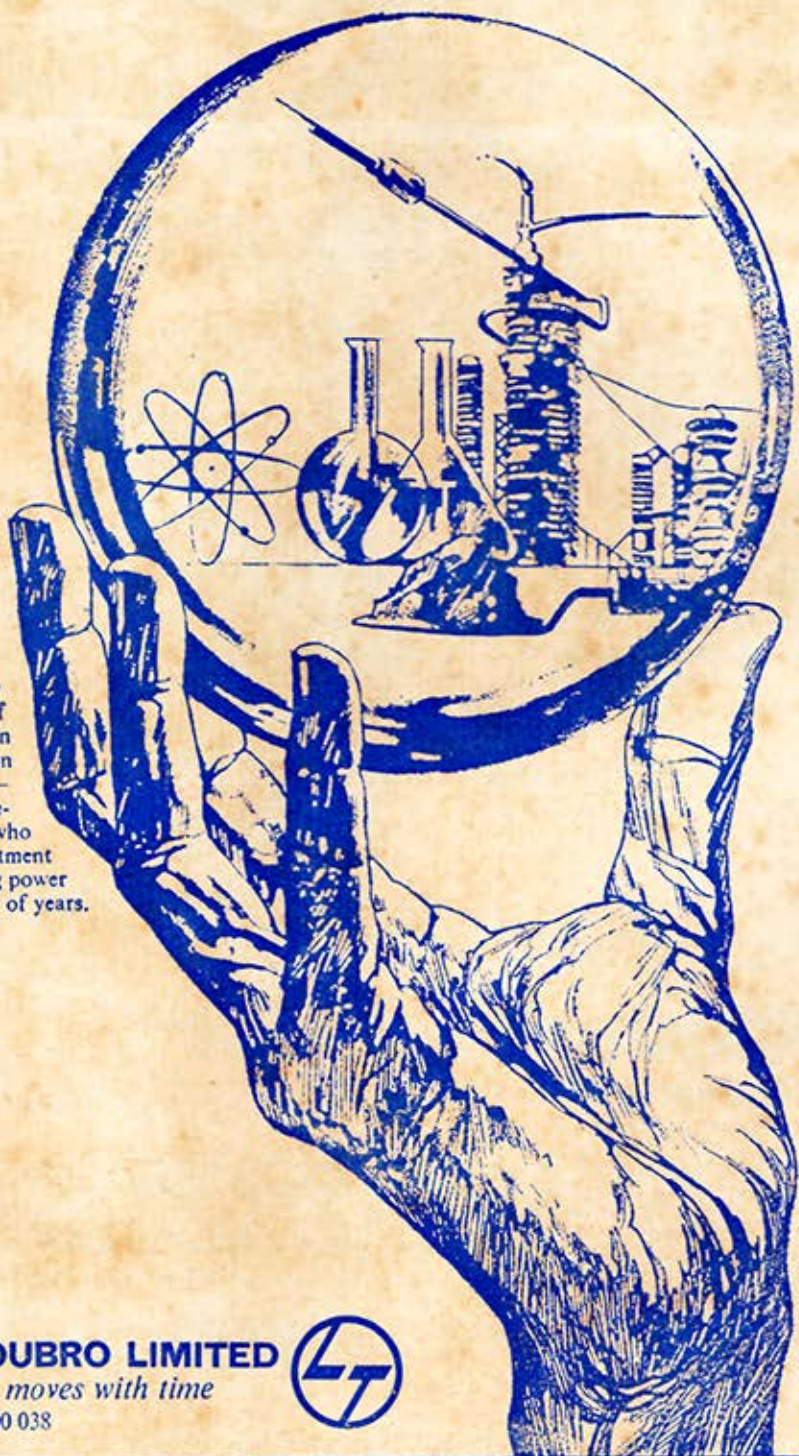
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