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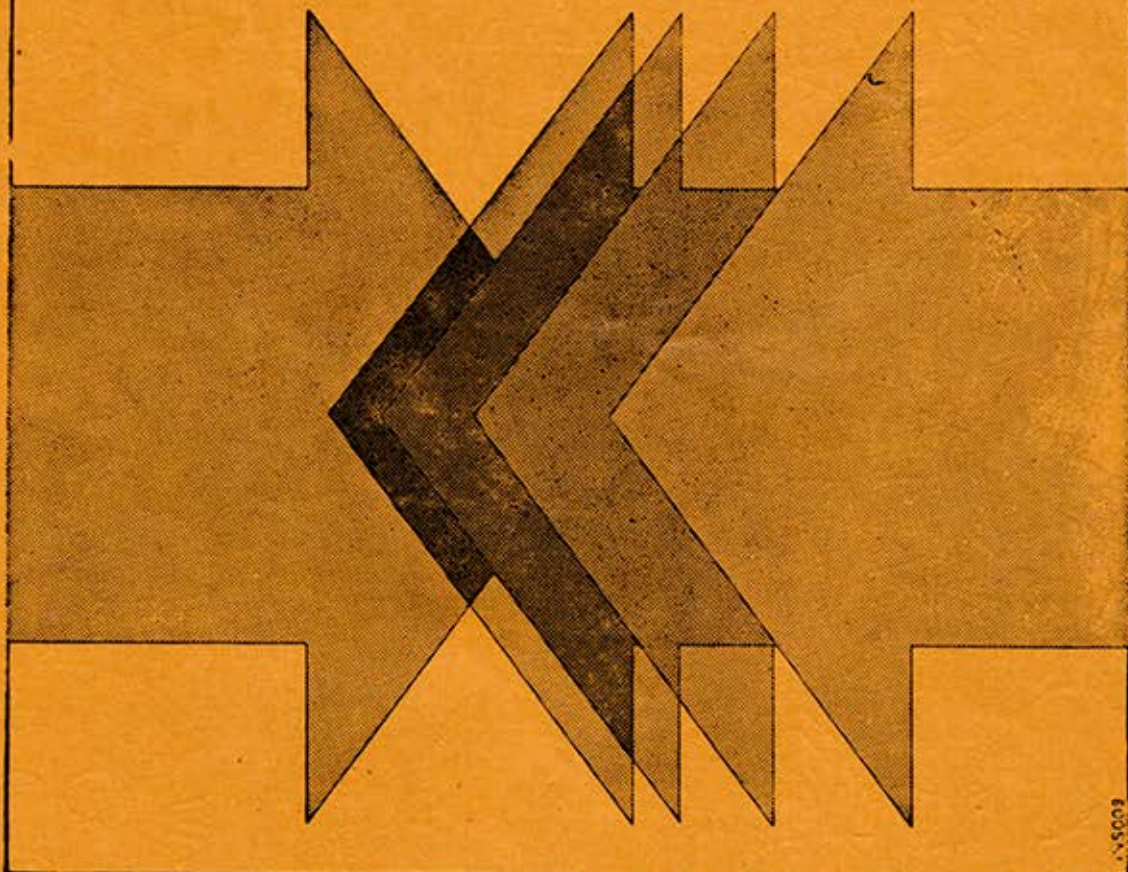
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Parsiana

May 1981 Volume 3 No. 11

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Cover: The Athornan Boarding Madressa by Anant Kulkarni.

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Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel at C/o H. L. Roachat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A, Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay-400 001 and printed by him at the Bombay Chronicle Press, Sayed Abdulla Brelvi Rd., Bombay 400 001. All rights reserved. Address all editorial and business correspondence to Parsiana G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Phone: 268730.

Annual inland subscription: Rs 30 for one year (12 issues); Rs 55 for two years (24 issues); Foreign subscription rates: Seamail Rs 50 one year, Rs 90 two years; Airmail Rs 100 one year, Rs 180 two years.

For U.S. personal cheques add \$2 to cover bank charges.

For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 3 for bank charges. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favour of Parsiana. Single copy price Rs 5 and Re 1. All rates subject to change in postal rates.





In Memoriam

Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

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

CER's Stand

It is very unfortunate that people are misinformed regarding the Committee for Electoral Rights' (CER) stand. To begin with, it was at the suggestion of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) that a few eminent members of the community were asked to guide the BPP in the management of their affairs. It is unfortunate that their findings have not yet been published. It is now common knowledge that the functioning of the BPP is autocratic in nature and cannot be tolerated in a democratic society.

The Committee of United Zoroastrians' (CUZ) oft repeated theme of "Religion in Danger" is totally false.

Why does CUZ instil fear into people when there are no grounds for them. Even if one wished to abolish the Dokhmas, it cannot be done, as the grounds of the Tower of Silence have been given to us under stipulated conditions only.

Why complicate matters and create

controversies over imaginary issues? People at present are only reacting to a situation that does not exist.

Why should our small community be torn into factions? Why can we not learn from previous experience and remain united, helping and co-operating with each other?

On behalf of CER, I say that CER definitely stands to preserve not only the identity of our people by conserving our religion as per the tenets of the Zoroastrian faith, but it will also bring about moral, social and economic enhancement which will enrich their lives and also that of posterity.

It is the system that we wish to improve, for slackness only degenerates society. We need healthy, wise and energetic people on the Anjuman Committee and I sincerely hope that in future they work as a team, having a common goal and always put service before self as a true Mazdayasni Zoroastrian should.

DR. YASMIN K. VAJIFDAR

'Absolute Rubbish'

Browsing through the January and February issues of *Parsiana* I find that the contents are full of the local Bombay Parsi Panchayat elections.

The February 1981 issue consists of just 12 pages of absolute rubbish which even Parsis in Bombay will not care to read.

You should not dilute your standard. This is indeed most regrettable.

If your future publications are going to consist of this rubbish and ignore feature articles and news about Parsi associations from abroad, you might as well keep my Rs 30 and forget about posting me the issues for the rest of the year.

PROF. F. J. SAGAR
Madras

Less of the BPP

If I may make a suggestion, you should devote more space to Parsi news and less to BPP *rodra* and infighting.

A. H. SETHNA
Calcutta

'Vanishing Parsis'

In the *Parsiana* December '80 issue, (*News From the Media*) Mr Taleyarkhan asserts that the Parsis are not a race. The Oxford Dictionary clearly defines "Race" as "group of persons having common ancestors, kindred people, ethnical stock etc." We are definitely a race with common ancestors. Besides, our prominent features,

colour, size, shape, intellect, adaptability and many other traits, are peculiar to Parsis. Many Parsis have a genealogy longer than the English Queen, and I am proud to count myself amongst them.

CAPT. R. J. KATILA

Eden at Udvada

Since more than two years, I have been making an attempt to have a park at Udvada on a barren piece of land leading to the Iranshah, and a flowering shaded avenue from the railway station to Udwada.

Three forest officers of Gujarat, who are members of our community have taken up the cause. Gaps on the road from the railway station where there are no trees will be planted with flowering plants.

I also suggest that we should take the opportunity to have revival meetings in the month of *Adar*, when large numbers visit Udwada.

It is my request to the learned theologians of our community to give lectures on the philosophy of our ancient religion. This would be an excellent opportunity for Parsis to offer prayers, and know and hear about religious philosophy and receive enlightenment.

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Events and Personalities

Madressa's Diamond Jubilee

A gymnasium, residential accommodation for teachers and students, and a hall, have been planned as part of a building extension programme during the **Athornan Boarding Madressa's** diamond jubilee celebrations currently underway.

To raise the necessary finances, a *natak* has been planned and appeals for donations are being made to well-wishers, notes Ervad Rustom Panthaki, principal of the Madressa located in Bombay. A circular appealing for funds states that Rs 1,00,000 has been earmarked by the Athornan Mandal, the Madressa's parent body, for the purpose.

The gymnasium and the hall could be utilized by any Parsi at a nominal charge, says Panthaki, while the residential facilities could be used by teachers and students from outside Bombay, who wish to study further and practice *Yozdathregari*. Panthaki recalls his student days at the Madressa, when no such facilities existed. "I had to sleep on the verandah of the Agiary", he says.

One student costs the Madressa approximately Rs 3,500 to maintain for a year. According to an appeal for funds, this includes free lodging, bo-

arding, tuition fees, stationery, laundry, medical care, sports and welfare activities. A boy enters the Madressa at the age of six or seven, completes his *navar* and *maratab* ceremonies and then his formal academic education—S.S.C. with Avesta, graduating from the Madressa at about 16 or 17 years of age, explains Panthaki.

"The course is a strenuous one", cautions Panthaki, soon after one of the youngest boys complaining of a pain in the neck had been consoled by him. "Combining study and prayer is difficult: the boys start their day at around 5 a.m."

At present there are 40 boys in the Madressa, 35 preparing for their S.S.C., and five at the college level, states Panthaki, adding that further studies in Avesta Pahlavi and religious subjects is encouraged, and the training could be provided to many more deserving students, if funds were available.

Established in 1919 at Golanji Hill, Parel, Bombay, the Madressa was shifted in 1924 to its present site at the Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar. During its 60-year span, the Madressa has given the Parsi community *Dasturs*, *Boywallas*, *Panthakies*, *Yozdathregars*, *Mobeds* and religious

teachers, says Panthaki. Udvada high priest, Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza, who now teaches at the Madressa, was in the first batch of students who graduated from the Madressa, says Panthaki.

Youth League's Ghambar

In the Gujarat city of Baroda the newly formed **Parsi Zoroastrian Youth League** organized a Jamshedi Navroz function at the Parsi Dharm-sala at Fateganj. About 500 Parsis attended the programme and contributory dinner, notes Jimmy Havewala, a trustee of the Baroda Parsi Anjuman.

"The morning of Jamshedi Navroz witnessed the young boys and girls of the Parsi Zoroastrian League offering *Machi* to the sacred fire in both the Agiaries at Sayajiganj and Fateganj," notes Havewala. "In the evening, a variety entertainment programme followed by a contributory dinner was organized by the League in the compound of the Parsi Dharm-sala at Fateganj. About 500 Parsis attended the programme and dinner."

"Mr Phiroz Surti, President of the Parsi Zoroastrian League, welcomed the audience and outlined the activities of the League. He observed that

The Athornan Boarding Madressa, (inset) Panthaki.



Initiates at the Madressa praying before a meal.





Manthra Spenta: Irani (left) depicting the dual concepts of Angre Mainyu and Spenta Mainyu.

A scene from *Manthra Spenta*: helping spread religious understanding through dance.



it was a matter of great joy and pride that the League, during its existence of six months, had been able to arrange five interesting and well attended programmes.

"Mr Surti said that the League had contributed in bringing the Parsis of Baroda closer resulting in their understanding the problems of one another more sympathetically. It had brought a new wave of awakening among the Parsis.

"He made a special reference to the services rendered by Kersi Kavina, Aspi Vajifdar, Arnawaz Havewala, Nargish Patel, Hutokshi Shroff and Havewala to make the programme a grand success.

"Mr Surti said that the task of compiling a directory of Baroda Parsis had begun and Jal Patel, trustee of the Baroda Parsi Panchayat, is taking keen interest in it. He enlisted the support of all the local Parsis in the compilation of the directory. He thanked the trustees of the Baroda Parsi Panchayat for rendering valuable assistance to the League in its various activities."

Manthra Spenta Ballet

A ballet depicting episodes from the *Shah-Nameh*, performed by Bharata Natyam exponent **Khurshid Irani**,

was the highlight of the Jamshedi Navroze celebrations hosted by the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman at Bombay's Sunderbai Hall, on 21 March.

Titled *Manthra Spenta*, the dance choreographs the story of the legendary Iranian monarch Jamshid, his goodness and wisdom, which later changed to arrogance and pride, encouraging the Arab king Zohak to invade Iran. Zohak's reign of bloodshed and terror was finally ended by Jamshid's nephew Faridun who overcomes the evil Zohak and chains him atop Mount Demavend.

In the fifth scene, the dance focuses on the life and times of Zarathushtra and depicts the concepts of *Angra Mainyu* and *Spenta Mainyu*, performed to the recitation of the *Ahunavaiti* and *Ushtavati Gathas* by Ervad Dr Peshotan Peer in the background. The climax of the ballet is the victory of the valiant Asfandiyar over king Arjasp of Turan, after successfully completing the *Haptkhan* (seven obstacles) to reach Rooyin-Dez, the palace of Arjasp.

Irani's initial apprehension, that a "Zoroastrian theme in Hindu form might not be well received," was belied by the encouraging reviews in the cosmopolitan and Parsi press.

"The audience, about 700 or 800 strong, responded well," notes Irani, adding, "we got a phone the next day asking us to do a repeat performance for children to spread religious understanding". Irani hopes more sponsors will come forward to encourage the ballet as she strongly feels that "its time something was done about Zoroastrianism, otherwise it will die out.

"I was always interested in philosophy, spiritualism and Zoroastrianism, therefore I found it interesting doing the ballet." A graduate in Botany from the Institute of Science, Bombay, she is at present doing research for her Ph.D. degree in Fine Arts (Dance) from Bombay University, and also managing her own dance school, the Khurshid Nritya Kala Mandir at three different centres in Bombay. Her interest led her to research, write, choreograph and direct *Manthra Spenta*. "It involved four or five months of research. I had to learn the *Gathas* to get the exact translation of all the words to direct the specific movements of the ballet, and I have to write four scripts, one each for the story, dance, music and lighting," explains Irani, outlining the laborious process.

It is while explaining the intricacies

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The Newsletter Network

The vast distances between various Zoroastrian associations of the world are slowly being narrowed by mimeographed two-to-eight page newsletters. *Gavashni* the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAO), was the first to charge a subscription and recently permitted other associations to send their news for publication. In Australia, the Australian Zoroastrian Association newsletter has started to accept advertisements at the rate of Australia \$40 (approximately Rs 377) for a full page.

In addition to informing members of community events and developments, providing historical and religious snippets, the newsletters also provide an effective medium for various community fund raising drives. Appeals for contributions for community centres, deserving students, hospitalized community members, establishment of foundations, housing, sports, are some of the worthy causes undertaken by the newsletters.

The publications also generate career and business opportunities by listing job vacancies, goods and services marketed by community members.

The most regular newsletters are from the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, edited by Jamshed Pavri and one of the first associations, to have a newsletter, the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, the Australian Zoroastrian Association, the Borivili and Suburban Zoroastrian Association and the Poona Parsi Panchayat. The Borivili and Suburban Zoroastrian Association newsletters, the first of its kind in India, was edited by A. F. Cama who recently expired in Bombay and whose loss will be greatly felt both within and without the Association.

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, which is emerging out of hibernation, has started a newsletter edited by Keki Gandhi for the various member anjumans as well as for distribution abroad.

The opening up of a "source of dialogue between our scattered community... we consider as a first necessary step for our survival as a sepa-

rate ethnic community in our new adopted environment", noted the first Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia editorial in *Gavashni*, summing up the need of Zoroastrian communities all over the world.

The Zoroastrian Association of Alberta

The Zoroastrians of the west Canadian province of Alberta, have formed the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA), reportedly the fourth and the newest Zoroastrian association of Canada. The Association was formally registered on 17 December 1980, though it was in existence since June of the same year, notes a letter from the Association's president **Neelun Erach Austin**.

Austin notes, "The ZAA is perhaps quite unique compared to the other Zoroastrian Associations throughout North America, as it comprises of membership from two of its main cities: Edmonton (capital of Alberta) and Calgary, which they call "Chapters," with equal participation from both the cities on the Executive Committee, and with the President alternating each year between Edmonton and Calgary.

"The Zoroastrian community in Alberta is still very small; there are only about 17 families in Calgary and about 12 in Edmonton. They have had several very successful functions and get-togethers and the enthusiasm appears to be growing.

"The ZAA's first Executive Committee for the year June 1st, 1980 to May 31st, 1981 was elected as under: **Neelun Erach Austin**, president; **Marezbán Jehangir Canteenwalla**, vice president, Calgary Chapter; **Ruby Pilsum Master**, general secretary/treasurer; **Zubin Dastoor**, social secretary, Calgary Chapter; **Hushtasp Russy Bhungara**, vice president, Edmonton Chapter; **Zerxes Piroshaw Talavia**, assistant secretary/treasurer; **Sheroo Homi Elavia**, social secretary, Edmonton Chapter.

Singapore Committee

Rutton M. H. Patel has been elected president of The Parsi Association of Singapore for 1981 at the Annual General Meeting held on 28 March, notes a release from the Association. Other office bearers elected for 1981 are: **Jamshid K. Medora**, vice-president; **Cyrus K. Medora**, secretary/

treasurer; **Khushru J. Khajotia**, **Jamshed R. Jamasji**, **Noshir J. Mistry** and **Khorshed B. Vakil** committee members.

Also elected to the Committee of Management of the Parsi Lodge Charity are **Nargis K. Medora**, **Bheram R. Vakil** and **Rutton M. H. Patel**, according to the release.

The first official newsletter of the Parsi Association, Singapore, has been published by the new Committee. The newsletter contains local community news, a recipe corner entitled *Jamwa Chalo Ji* and a quiz for which a cash prize of Singapore \$5 will be awarded. Comments, criticisms and contributions towards the newsletter are invited, notes the Social Secretary **Khorshed Vakil**.

An Appeal for Aid

The Zoroastrian Association of Quebec's quarterly newsletter *Gavashni* (March) sends out appeals for financial aid to two handicapped students. **Darayus Confectioner**, a deaf student needs assistance in meeting the cost of \$3,615 (approximately Rs 30,366) for his education at Gallaudet College, Kandall Green, Washington D.C. "Darayus" is a deserving case. His father is a retired Marine Engineer, and his mother—a deaf housewife—and he has a deaf sister. Coming from such an environment, Darayus has shown great courage and confidence to venture into a foreign socio-cultural environment. He has been awarded scholarships from Sir H. N. Mody Trust, Time and Talents Club, Sir Dorab Tata Trust, A.S.F. Patel Charity Fund. However, all that money amounts only to a part of his annual expenses, and is in need of financial assistance.

Ratan K. Vakeel, also handicapped by a hearing impairment needs help in pursuing further studies in the special education of those who are hearing-impaired. Vakeel attended "special schools before she was integrated in a normal school in England. Since completing her studies in England, she has completed a two year course in General Education at the Community College of Denver. This enabled her to register as an undergraduate student at the University of Denver.

"The choice of this University was, 'because it has one of the most advanced

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"A FEDERATION THAT WORKS"

Through a series of deft manoeuvres aimed at revitalizing the beleaguered Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, delegates of the various anjumans unanimously elected Nani Palkhivala, the eminent jurist, to head the community's apex body.

(As this issue of Parsiana goes to press, it is learnt that Palkhivala who had initially agreed to accept the presidency, has declined the post.)

The vote to elect Palkhivala, India's former ambassador to the U.S.A., was taken at the extraordinary general body meeting of the Federation held in New Delhi on April 12. Prior to the vote, the delegates amended a clause in the constitution stating that the chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) was the *ex officio* president of the Federation. The Federation has been without a president for over three years following the abrupt withdrawal of the BPP over some critical remarks on the Panchayat's election system made at the Third World Zoroastrian Congress in 1978 by Shiavax Nargolwala, the controversial head of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman.

Several of the delegates voiced their apprehension at amending the constitution for fear of offending the anjumans who have withdrawn from the Federation, and asked for more time to debate the matter. Jamshed Italia, head of the Secunderabad and Hyderabad Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman and a vice-president of the Federation from the South Zone who did not attend the meeting, cabled labelling the meeting "illegal, unconstitutional and not binding."

Ardeshir Batlivala, of Calcutta, a Federation vice-president from the East Zone, felt the delegates should "wait and inform the others that this matter has been adjourned." Hoshang Debara from the Agra Parsi Anjuman and Dadi Mistry of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman concurred with Batlivala, while Shapur Dalal who represented the Jamshedpur Parsi Association stated he would abstain from the voting as he had not received instructions from Jamshedpur. Dalal, a former resident of Jamshedpur now residing in Delhi, was requested to represent the Jamshedpur Parsi Association at the last moment when the association was unable to send a local representative.

Nargolwala and Keki Gandhi, the



Palkhivala: volte-face

Federation's honorary secretary, countered the arguments with Nargolwala claiming the meeting to be "fully legal and constitutional."

"Mr Italia has not paid the subscription for the current year, therefore he has no *locus standi*," said Nargolwala. "Bangalore has passed a resolution to resign from the Federation. We are not forcing anybody to resign but once you have withdrawn, then obviously your argument that they should be given more time to consider is not valid. The BPP has circulated to all the anjumans with the exception of Delhi, a draft constitution of a parallel body."

In the past, the Press attended the Federation meeting at the will of the delegates and often against it.

Noting that the mandatory 30 days notice had been provided for the amendments, as well as mention had been made of the changes in the December Executive Council Meeting, Nargolwala said the concerned anjumans "should have called a meeting. They can call a meeting to withdraw from the Federation but not to consider the change in rules. How can you be allowed to blow hot and cold. Are we always to be blackmailed and

stifled? We cannot be taken for a ride for years together."

Referring to the internecine wranglings of the Federation, Gandhi asked, "If two people disagree, should the community suffer? There are repeated efforts being made to stifle the Federation for what reason I don't know. Since 1978 the Federation has been without a president. The president is the heart and mind of the Federation. It is in the interests of the Federation to have a man like Mr Palkhivala as its president."

Dr Ratan H. Sagar, president of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Allahabad said the matter "should not be kept pending," while Hoshi Press, a Delhi resident representing the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds noted "that for a long time everything is getting postponed... there is a lot of filibustering on the part of some people, as Gandhi says, I don't know why. The Federation will lose its creditability. The time has come to grab the bull by the horns and act."

The "some people" that both Gandhi and Press were referring to included Mistry, who at one time was Nargolwala's most ardent supporter in the Federation as well as in the Delhi Parsi Anjuman. But as the differences within the Federation arose, Mistry, who initially tried to act as a peacemaker, slowly became the spokesman for the more moderate element in the BPP, namely BPP Trustee Jamshed Guzder as well as the anjumans of the South. Mistry's estrangement from Nargolwala, which was apparent in several of the earlier executive council meetings, surfaced at the April 11 and 12, executive council and general body meetings.

"I support the (constitutional) amendments wholeheartedly," said Mistry. "But the manner (in which they are sought to be implemented) is not acceptable." Mistry said the amendments "were not discussed even in our own anjuman." He further pointed out that of the seven anjumans represented, only "four anjumans are represented by delegates who are wholly from them." Mistry questioned what knowledge of Jabalpur had Major Percy Nazir, a Delhi resident representing the Jabalpur Parsi Anjuman who favoured proceeding with the amendments. Nazir made mention of an *aramgah* wall that was in dis-

repair and the steps being taken to have it repaired.

But it was Jal B. Khodaiji, the young representative of the Lucknow Parsi Anjuman who, when asked his opinion on the amendments, best expressed the views of many of the anjumans who were indifferent or fatigued by the internal squabbling of the Federation. "We have to chose the Federation that works. When is the time going to be right for work to start and legalities stop. Work is taking a back seat."

When the amendments, with certain sub-amendments, were finally put to the vote, Mistry and Dalal abstained, though Dalal supported an amendment that he had proposed permitting the meeting to vote Palkhivala to the presidency. Mistry, while abstaining on the resolutions, voted in favour of striking out the clause that permitted the president of the Federation, with the support of 20 percent of the members present, to stop a discussion if he felt it was controversial. Then came the vote for Palkhivala which was supported by all the delegates.

In other developments, the Federation appointed the noted Bombay law firm of Gagrut and Company as legal advisors to the Federation. Their ser-

vices would be without charge. Nar-golwala noted.

A resolution was passed that the Press which included amongst others, *The Bombay Samachar*, *The Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Kaiser-E-Hind* and *Parsiana* be invited to "all the meetings of the Federation." In the past, the Press attended Federation meetings at the will of the delegates and often against it.

High priests, scholars and eminent people from the various professions "would also be invited to attend the Federation meetings, particularly, the workshop sessions."

A quarterly newsletter would be published and circulated to the various anjumans in India and abroad. The executive council also censured Furrokh Bamji, the Editor of the Federation journal, *Rahe Asha*, for his editorial criticizing the functioning of the Federation and attacking the Editor of *The Bombay Samachar*. A letter of apology would be sent to *The Samachar*. An editorial board comprising of Ava Khullar, of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Mistry and Gandhi was constituted.

The Federation also resolved to send Rs. 300 a month for the next two years to the Dadar Athornan Madressa in Bombay, to bear the cost

of one student for the period.

The delegates discussed the leadership role of the Federation and whether it should be a purely recommendatory body or a central decision making body with a large central fund.

In an effort to come to grips with the community's myriad problems, as well as to acquaint delegates with the conditions prevailing in the other anjumans, workshop sessions are scheduled to be held whenever the Federation meets.

Zonal conferences, it was recommended, should also be held to coincide with the Federation meetings. The conferences would acquaint the local community members with the functioning of the Federation and also acquaint the delegates with the problems of the area.

Even though the number of delegates attending the Federation meeting was the smallest in recent times, the meeting accomplished more than any other in the last three years. With its house slowly being restored to order, the Federation appeared once again to become the most vibrant and influential body in the Indian Zoroastrian community.

But with Palkhivala's abrupt *volte-face*, once again a dark shadow has been cast across a promising future.

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The Workings

Keki J. Gandhi

During the Federation Meetings held in Delhi on the 11th and 12th April 1981, a workshop session was organised on the afternoon of the 11th in which representatives of the various anjumans and some of the Trustees of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman participated. At this workshop session, representatives of the various anjumans were requested to describe local situations which demanded immediate consideration and solution, as well as any situations at the national level which they would like tackled effectively.

The recommendations are given below without identifying specific problems with any particular anjuman in the belief that similar problems exist or may arise in the future. The anjumans are at liberty to consider and implement these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Assets and Institutions of Anjumans

The Federation should collect data on the assets of the various anjumans of India, and the institutions managed by them, especially in the case of the smaller anjumans. As the Parsi population is dwindling and in some cases is non-existent, appropriate measures should be taken to administer the assets of defunct anjumans.

The alternatives such anjumans must consider, are whether to maintain the institutions at considerable cost, or put them to alternative uses or as a last resort, dispose them off and utilise the proceeds for the welfare of the community.

The Federation recommends that this exercise should be carried out at the Federation level and if the concerned anjuman requires any assistance, the Federation should request a neighbouring anjuman to assist.

Marriage

To tackle the situation of late marriage, not marrying at all, and marrying outside the community, the Federation recommends the exchange of data between anjumans on the subject.

Apart from financial and housing difficulties, attitudes toward marriage and procreation need to be studied and tackled suitably. For this purpose the Federation is in the process of formulating questionnaires, adequate

copies of which would be made available to individual anjumans on request to enable them to get the questionnaire filled.

The Federation will have the data analysed by professional experts and suggest steps to resolve the situation.

Exchange Programme

To foster greater understanding and togetherness in the community as well as to acquaint Parsis with the conditions of other anjumans, the Federation recommends exchange programmes under which members of the community reside with families from other anjumans. This programme would be particularly beneficial for younger people.

Career and Social Opportunities

To combat the diminishing numbers of Zoroastrians outside Bombay as well as to solve the problem of housing in Bombay, the Federation recommends that various anjumans keep each other informed through the Federation's newsletter of jobs, career opportunities, civic amenities, housing, etc. available.

Diminishing Priests

The Federation should seek the guidance of the learned high priests and invite their opinion as to how anjumans outside Bombay can best cope with the problems of non availability of full time priests for attending to the spiritual needs of the community, looking after the Agiaries and performing religious ceremonies.

Minorities Commissions

Zoroastrians scattered over various parts of India are facing socio-economic problems due to their small populations. It is, therefore, essential that anjumans in various states seek representations on the minority commissions of their respective states. The Federation should seek representation on the central minorities commission.

Leadership

The leadership role of the various anjumans should be augmented or supplemented by the Federation. Each anjuman should list its priorities after discussions within the anjuman and communicate them to the Federation for establishing priorities on a national basis.

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Organization or Oblivion

At the Third World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in January 1974, four papers were read on "The Setting up of an Organisation to provide a link between World Zoroastrians and Continuity of Action after each World Zoroastrian Congress". The speakers were, Professor Erach Dinshah Munshi, one of the founders of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York, Keki Ruttonshaw Bhote, an active member of the Zoroastrians in Illinois, U.S.A., Farangis Shahrokh Engineer, who formerly held senior government posts in Iran and now resides in California, and Rustom Suntook, a Bombay businessman active in community affairs. Parsiana publishes below, edited versions of these papers. Readers should note that these papers were presented prior to the formation of the World Zoroastrian Organization in London, in 1980, by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated).

A New World

Prof. Erach Dinshah Munshi

The objectives the World Zoroastrian community wants to achieve in establishing an organization to provide a link between world Zoroastrians and continuity of action after each World Zoroastrian Congress, in my opinion, are: To widen the scope of inquiry on major issues and provide interaction between members of the community in India, Iran, Pakistan, Europe, North America and Australia.

To set up communication centres in major countries of the world which would facilitate a free flow of information on vital issues and which would help enhance mutual co-operation between various community groups in matters of common concern.

To advance the development of a rich religious life.

To secure a larger identity for our religion, to widen the spiritual horizons of members of our world community, and to reaffirm our spiritual roots and values in the face of reli-

gious disbelief and indifference.

We do need certain changes in our religious thinking. In the past 50 years, the survival and growth of all major religions of the world are being affected by society becoming more urbanized and industrialized.

The central authority of each religion, is questioned on secular matters by many intellectuals, and it has be-



Munshi: 'think big'

come a fashion to be indifferent, and in some cases unnecessarily critical, of religious practices and philosophies.

The advanced education system cannot hold back our young boys and girls from experiencing a wider and new world.

In all the democratic countries of the world, society is becoming more and more open, and due to advanced education, increased mobility and an extensive interaction between members of various communities, the thinking of individuals is shifting from 'my community's interest and welfare' to 'my country's interest and welfare'. In other words, the young generation of today wants to be part of the macro picture of world society, world

economy, world affairs and world religion.

In North America boys and girls think big and think great. The advanced education system cannot hold back our young boys and girls from experiencing a wider and new world.

In the simplest sense, an organization is a structure of individuals, or a group of different units designed to establish an effective work relationship in order to achieve the desired objectives and goals. Our major goal is to survive, grow and to perpetuate the practice of our religion.

Our Zoroastrian community is spreading out in various parts of the world. And the future trend shows that more and more Zoroastrians will

Our major goal is to survive, grow, and to perpetuate the practice of our religion.

settle down in western countries. Today, the first generation of the Zoroastrian community in Europe, America, Canada, and Australia has already formed viable Zoroastrian Associations. These associations have been doing an exceptionally good job in uniting and serving the needs of community members abroad.

We have to bear in mind that the individuals who have settled down in these countries are professionals, and are very well placed. It is fair to assume that members of each association have different social needs. But, the religious needs remain the same for members of all the associations.

Organization, as one of the major social institutions serving human needs, is a valuable tool for achieving community goals, provided the human resources of the community are well organized.

An International Zoroastrian Organization

Since the community in India is still the leading community in the world, and since it commands a great reservoir of human resources and huge investments in various religious insti-

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tutions, the Board of Trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat must shoulder the responsibility of (setting up the Headquarters and) providing continuous leadership to the world Zoroastrian community in the area of religious affairs.

An Organization of Head Priests will provide the Headquarters with guidelines pertaining to religious issues. The Organization will also establish a link between itself and Zoroastrian associations of the world.

Federations can be formed in an advisory capacity, which from time to time will advise and consult the Headquarters and the Organization of the Head Priests regarding religious matters.

Certain inflexible policies on the religious front have proven self-defeating and sometimes do more harm than good.

In order that the International Zoroastrian Organization (IZO) functions effectively, all the units must constantly interact freely with one another and with the Headquarters.

Since policies are guidelines to action, the Headquarters must develop a set of central policies which are not only effective, but which can generate co-operation among all units. It must be observed that sound policies are not inflexible. Certain inflexible policies on the religious front have proven self-defeating and sometimes do more harm than good.

Whether we accept it or not the composition, vitality, and structure of the community have changed drastically in the past 25 years. We also notice that there exists a polarization between the affluent and the poor of the community.

IZO and Religious Education

In America, Zoroastrians have a deep hunger for genuine religious experience and awareness and we need help to find the richness of our noble and ancient religion whose tenets today are as sound as they were some 6,000 years ago. We are concerned for the youth of our community and are trying to assist them in their quest for authentic religious fulfillment through religious classes, seminars and group discussions.

In the absence of sound religious leadership, some of us have started manipulating Zarathushtra's teachings and code of ethics to suit our vested social interests. Due to confusion and sheer helplessness in not getting the right type of religious understanding,

some have made an ideological departure from traditional thinking.

If children are deprived of proper religious education and are simply forced to conform to religious teaching, then their attitude toward religion and religious teachings would be one of indifference. IZO with help from the Headquarters must nominate some outstanding scholars of our religion for the purpose of carrying out extensive research on the basic philosophies of our religion.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In order to strengthen the viability of the IZO we should take steps to formulate central policies on major religious issues and community problems in the light of the needs of the world Zoroastrian community. We do not want one *mobed* performing the Navjot ceremony of a child of mixed marriage, whereas another *mobed* refusing to do so.

A proper emphasis should also be placed on a study of comparative religions. It is true that the more deeply a person probes into his own religious faith, the more he is able to understand the religious faith of others, conversely, the more a person explores religious convictions other than his own, the more he deepens his understanding of his own religion.

Due to the availability of opportunities of a better life, more and more Zoroastrians will be settling down in the western world. This means there will be more and bigger Zoroastrian associations flourishing abroad. They will need religious centers for worship and cultural activities. Not only this, but for the first time we are realizing that there is a tremendous growth of interaction between the Zoroastrian communities of India, Pakistan and Iran.

The more a person explores religious convictions other than his own, the more he deepens his understanding of his own religion.

There should be a free and constant exchange of information on important religious matters between all associations on a regular basis.

We should establish research foundations with the help of which grants are made available to outstanding scholars to visit various countries on lecture tours.

Study courses in Avesta should be made available to those who are interested in studying our religion.

In order to increase greater parti-

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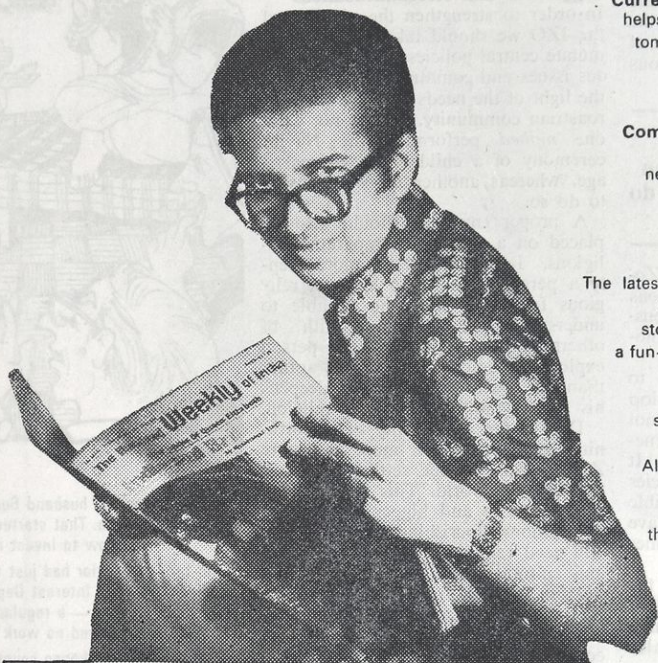
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icipation on the part of community members, the Headquarters should form *ad hoc* committees which will submit reports on the findings of some specific religious issues and intricate community problems. Each committee must be headed by a Trustee who in turn would recruit members of good standing from the community to do the job.

I think the time has come to establish a world library on our religion, Columbia University and Yale already have a fairly good collection, and should also create a pool of professionals representing all major industries which will serve the needs of Zoroastrians regarding professional information and help.

We must bring about certain constructive changes in our religious practices. In my opinion the most effective way to establish a link between world Zoroastrians is for us all to become better Zoroastrians.

It is true that our religion is passing through the cycle of degeneration, and reformation. But I say with deep conviction that Zoroastrianism will take rebirth by itself like the phoenix, as it must have done many times during its 6,000 year history.

Window to the World

Keki Ruttonshaw Bhote

To many learned scholars the odds of Zoroastrian survival are rated low. Anthropologists array impressive statistics to claim our eventual demise. Cultures, peoples and religions much larger than our microscopic population of 1,20,000 have disappeared from the face of the earth. What hope is there for us Zoroastrians? Are we headed for the history books? Is the great mother religion of the world, conceived by Zarathushtra, to live on only in terms of contributions to other flourishing religions? The weight of statistical evidence is not in our favour.

Cultures, peoples and religions much larger than our microscopic population of 1,20,000 have disappeared from the face of the earth.

Yet, I reject this despondent assessment. For 8,000 years, since Zarathushtra founded our religion, his words and his message have been engraved permanently on the sands of time. Zoroastrianism has suffered many misfortunes and many vicissitudes, but it has always risen again, like a phoenix from its ashes, to give the

world a spiritual beacon light. A divine providence has kept it alive and it is an article of faith with me that the same divine providence will keep it alive — in our lifetime, in our children's lifetime and for generation upon generation to come.

I see a Zoroastrian renaissance — a rekindling of its spirit. I see that renaissance in a modern world that desperately wants a spiritual anchor that is meaningful for today's value systems. Zoroastrianism with its simplicity, rationality and freedom from dogma can provide that spiritual anchor.

I see that renaissance in a fervent search for a rediscovery of our priceless heritage wherever Zoroastrian communities are establishing themselves.

It is the search for practical solu-



Bhote: 'Zoroastrian renaissance'

tions to our survival that should be the focus of our deliberations. We must organize to overcome the weakness of our tiny population, and so that the many talents of this gifted community can be channeled into productive effort. Above all, we must organize in order to perpetuate our heritage from one generation to the next.

Either we plan together, organize together, work together and manage together to preserve our religion and our way of life, or we go it alone, islands unto ourselves, until our anarchy drowns us into extinction.

We are living in a world where the power of the individual is receding. The slogan, "one man, one vote" is getting rapidly translated into the reality of "one man, zero influence." The entire concept of democracy is being metamorphosed from its image of

rugged individualism to one of a checkered mosaic of large, institutional, organizational blocs that represent constituencies of thousands of people. Their power is in proportion to their numbers.

Either we work together or we go it alone, until our anarchy drowns us into extinction.

And it is not only in the political field where organizational muscle has supplanted individual effort. In the fields of economics, trade unionism, civics, human relations and religion, it is organizational size, cohesion and advocacy that count, that get things done. The Catholic Church and the Bahai faith are just two examples of organizational power in the field of religion. Their organization is the binding cement.

It has been dinned into us, almost to the point of axiomatic acceptance, that Parsis are argumentative and cantankerous and that Parsi individualism would rebel against the confining restrictions of an organizational straight-jacket.

Umbrella Organisation

The supra-national organizations created must not exercise authoritarian power, overriding the autonomy of regional or local Zoroastrian organizations. The umbrella organizations should be advisory and voluntary, seeking to influence by consensus and persuasion.

The main purpose of a worldwide organization should be to secure maximum participation from as many interested and dedicated people as possible. This makes for maximum motivation and sustained interest. It is best achieved through multiple organizations such as the priesthood, theology, adult and children's education, public relations and fund raising.

For best results, there should be a gradual evolution of world organizations, rather than a superimposed revolution aimed at establishing such a world body on an accelerated and perhaps indigestible timetable.

While there is a need to build a super-structure at the top, every attempt should be made to strengthen the basic building blocs of both local associations as well as regional groupings.

While voluntarism is the key, an ambitious undertaking like a world wide organization cannot be left entirely to the vagaries of volunteer inputs. A small but highly competent staff would be most desirable to provide a focus and a momentum.

A final prerequisite is a channel of constant communication between our widely scattered Zoroastrian communities through a newsletter or publication of the world body.

Parallel Organizations

The *Dasturs* and *Mobeds* of our community should develop an organizational network that could concentrate on matters of spiritual leadership, including ceremonies, rituals, self-development and the training of future *Dasturs* and *Mobeds*.

The intellectuals in our midst, should form an organization that could conduct fundamental research in our religion and history, provide authoritative translations of many of our religious writings that are still obscure, and start an academic dialogue within the community for all interested students of Zoroastrianism.

One of the great shortcomings in our community is the lack of knowledge of the beauty of our own religion. There are many who can band themselves into an organization devoted to developing adult and childrens' education in Zoroastrian studies, prepare pamphlets, brochures and textbooks for such studies in co-operation with the two previous organizations, and develop a curriculum for academic training in Zoroastrianism.

This organizational group would be our window to the world, to publicize our religion and our heritage to the non-Zoroastrian communities in which we live, and to discuss Zoroastrianism in the context of comparative religions. It would also undertake the task of communication between world Zoroastrian communities.

This infrastructure of a world organization, cannot be constructed overnight.

This is an important task that cannot be left to chance. There should be an organization of philanthropists within the worldwide community that can raise funds that are essential to the functioning of the entire network of organizations.

Last, but perhaps the most important, would be a world federation that could be an umbrella organization for the regional federations that have emerged in India and that are in an embryonic stage in North America, Iran, Europe and other parts of the world. It would consist of the Presidents (or their representatives) of these regional federations. This central body would strengthen participation at the local, national and regional levels.

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This infrastructure of a world organization, cannot be constructed overnight. Given the infrequency of these World Congresses, given also the Parsi notoriety for non-organization, its evolution may take years. There is a gestation period in the birth of anything worthwhile. But unless we establish such a goal, plan for it, organize for it, and work for its realization, we will continue to wallow in indecision, inaction and anarchy and eventually atrophy into extinction. We must start now.

Network

Farangis K. Shahrokh Engineer

For the last several decades the Zoroastrians of the world have increasingly felt the need for the establishment of an organisation to serve as a link between themselves. They want such an

Only close contact and co-operation on a well organised basis can help our scattered members to survive as an ethnic group.

organisation to advise and guide their small and scattered groups and above all to present to themselves and the rest of the world, the correct precepts of their ancient religion and the noble philosophy and teachings of Zoroaster.

It is estimated that there are approximately 110,000 Zoroastrians left in India and Pakistan and 25,000 in Iran. More recently, an increasing number of Zoroastrians have migrated to Europe, America and Canada and other English speaking parts of the World.

In effect, this may ultimately lead to the complete disintegration of our already small community, and only close contact and co-operation on a well organised basis can help our scattered members to survive as an ethnic group.

We need a network of spiritual and social activities springing out from a large axis-like centre to keep us together. I quote the late revered Sir Rustom P. Masani: "When we think of this need for constant contacts and cohesion in the present political, social, economic and religious set-up, it seems amazing that its desirability was not thought of earlier."

With this continuing dispersal of a small community, it is not surprising that numerous intermarriages have taken place and even where a Zoroastrian father may wish to see his children adopting his faith, several factors have militated against this happening.

This is just one of the problems to be tackled, but the main issue is the desire and fervent wish of the few Zoroastrians so widely scattered over the globe to know that an organisation does in fact exist which can provide a continuing and solid link with their co-religionists in other parts of the world. This link could well be established by the formation of an active World Zoroastrian Association (WZA).

Besides the desire to maintain a physical link, the world Zoroastrians



Engineer: faith and followers

wish to see this link extended to the spiritual sphere as well. For the younger generations, there is this hunger to obtain more authentic information about their religion in a manner and language they can understand. More frequently, all that these people have access to is, an unauthentic review by some foreign scholars who are unable

The precepts of Zoroastrianism as enunciated in the Gathas and the Avesta, should once and for all be clearly laid down.

to make the correct translation or even intentionally make incorrect renditions of the philosophy of our religion or alternatively, merely stress the rituals which have been followed and established long after the passing of Zoroaster.

It is necessary that the precepts of Zoroastrianism as enunciated in the *Gathas* and the *Avesta*, should once and for all be clearly laid down. This could best be done by a team of Avestan scholars selected by the World

The time has come to pay greater attention to the Zoroastrian religion itself as distinct from the followers of that faith.

Zoroastrian Congress and their work later approved by the same Congress on behalf of all Zoroastrians. The responsibility of implementing this decision would be one of the tasks of the proposed World Zoroastrian Association (WZA).

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the time has come to pay greater attention to the Zoroastrian religion itself as distinct from the followers of that faith. It is the faith that makes us Zoroastrians what we are, so let it not be said that we did not act when we had a chance to do so.

Functions of Proposed WZA

The main function of the WZA would be to provide an effective link between the world Zoroastrians by obtaining reports and information from various world Zoroastrian groups and distributing the information to all the groups.

This will help to keep each area informed of matters affecting Zoroastrians in various parts of the world, bringing them closer together and ascertaining whether they could assist each other; it would also act as the secretariat of the World Zoroastrian Congress, actively following up all resolutions passed by the Congress, as well as collecting, maintaining and disseminating full statistics of world Zoroastrians.

The WZA can collect and maintain all data of studies on Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians and establish a centre for research studies into Zoroastrianism.

The rendition of an authentic and standard translation of the *Gathas* and the *Avesta* would be another of the WZA's tasks carried out by a group of Avestan scholars selected by the World Zoroastrian Congress.

The WZA could review books on Zoroastrianism, assist those desirous to undertake the publication of more books and consider the establishment of libraries on Zoroastrianism.

The distribution of information on matters affecting Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrians to others who may be interested; assisting in the establishment of more seats at universities for the dissemination of the precepts and philosophy of Zoroastrianism, and initiating students and other exchange programmes whereby each country or

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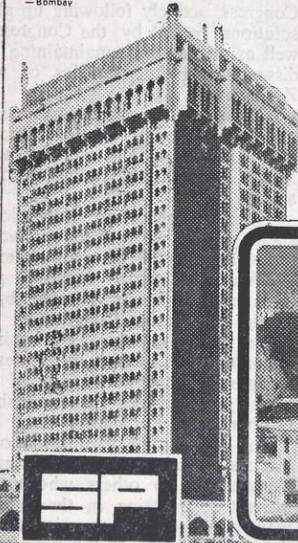
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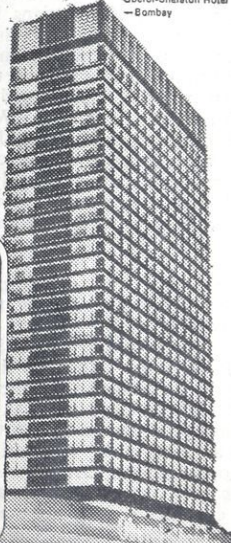
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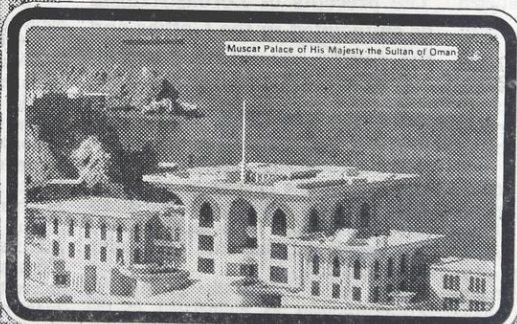
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area extends its hospitality to co-religionists from elsewhere are possible and desirable functions.

The WZA must try to bring harmony amongst the world Zoroastrians by standardising the various differing rituals now being followed.

The WZA would assist in the religious education of the younger generation of Zoroastrians by preparing and distributing tape recordings of prayers, religious lectures, etc. in different languages, and initiating the preparation of films regarding Zoroastrianism and undertaking their distribution.

Collecting and compiling brief lectures and explanations on matters affecting us and arranging for priests to visit far flung Zoroastrians from time to time, would be another of the WZA's task, as also initiating a social and cultural survey of world Zoroastrians, and studying all questions affecting our capacity to play an active part in life.

The WZA should encourage participation in national and international activities useful to the furtherance of Zoroastrianism, and organize and support the advancement of Zoroastrians and their participation in economic and social development.

The functions visualised for the WZA form a formidable list. No new organizations could possibly cope with such a task, neglected for centuries past, without the closest co-operation and assistance from various Zoroastrian anjumans, organisations and societies already established in various parts of the world.

To be fully effective, the WZA should be built up as a strong organization with dedicated workers, adequate funds and above all the best wishes and prayers of each and every Zoroastrian. Let it emerge as the fountain-head of all issues pertinent to the survival and revival of the great and noble religion that Prophet Zoroaster gave to this world, and with it the survival, progress, happiness and well being of the upholders of that faith.

Scattered Harvest

Rustom Suntook

A natural and deep-rooted affinity springing from the common faith of Zarathustra, has kept our communities abroad welded tight together. This, however, cannot lull us into any sense of complacency. Few as we are, we cannot afford to be fewer still. This is where the urgency of expanding and reorganizing ourselves abroad assumes serious proportions.

Functions

Economic: To safeguard each indi-



Suntook: survive and shine

dual economically, elevate the degree of education, and give young Zoroastrians opportunities in life, by offering them a variety of incentives for all good performances done, or promised to be done, in educational, industrial, artistic, and technical fields.

There are many aspiring young men who are extremely anxious to make their headway in industry, art and culture; but lack funds. The World Organization may report on the deservedness of each applicant for sanctioning an incentive.

Social: There could be no more effective a manner for bringing into contact all our unmarried youngsters than a world organization. Emphasis needs to be given to the successful establishment of a Young Zoroastrians' Association as this aspect of the community's move for its revival is so vital that it cannot brook any delay. Spiritual: Not until a community has founded itself primarily on the bedrock of its spiritual existence, can it command any recognition by the world around, nor can it even be known to be in existence. Our forefathers knew that until a place of worship was established, no numbers, large or small were to be of any enduring value. Were it not for their conviction, we would have long since been scattered away. This is exactly what we did in Iran too, and this is how we survived there.

This is what (Zoroastrians) in Europe, America and Canada are seeking to do today. This is why they fear that without being distinguished as a distinct community, to be respected as belonging to a distinct faith, not only would they be living as second-class citizens, (but) their progeny would die out in subsequent generations.

Around a place of worship on the other hand, they would survive and revive as a distinguished, respected community. This is why we survived and shone as a distinct, recognized community, in India and Iran.

Zoroastrians abroad have the zeal and even generally the money, but not the materials and priests with sufficient time to manage such places of worship. Simple Atash Dadgahs as in London today, would for the purpose of the moment suffice.

The Finances of the Organization

Quite a goodly section of the community is very well off, even affluent; but in the absence of awareness about the community's problems today, they do not know and have not come forward to contribute as surely they would, if made aware.

Not until a community has founded itself on the bedrock of its spiritual existence, can it command any recognition by the world around.

Each and every earning member of the community around the world through a form of compulsory contribution in proportion to his or her income, should contribute to the organization through their respective associations as should all our various trusts and institutions round the world.

The Structure of the Organization

The first and foremost procedure would have to be the linking up of all our world associations into a single world body to function from a focal point which may be any centre chosen as the headquarters for a period. When each centre like Bombay or Tehran or London or Toronto etc., assumes an importance of its own, it should function as the head-quarters for say two years alternately, so that public interest in the Organization as a really world-wide working body may be sustained.

One of its periodical functions would be the task of convening the World Zoroastrian Conferences more frequently and more regularly. Such a World Organization being the voice and forum of all Zoroastrian organizations would, above all facilitate the idea of securing from the United Nations Organization the recognition of the Zoroastrian community as a world body and the Zoroastrian religion as one of the world's prominent religions.

AEK ATMAKATHA

A MAZDA ZOROASTRIAN FAITH

The life of Dastur Dhalla XIII

Aek Atmakatha is the autobiography of the late Dr. Maneck Nusserwanji Dhalla, high priest of the Pakistan Parsis and a religious scholar of world repute. This is the 13th condensed and edited extract from the English translation of the book — 'Dastur Dhalla: The Saga of a Soul', by Gool and Behram Rustomji, published by the Dastur Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi.

THE STORY SO FAR

Born to a poor dastur family in Surat on 27 August 1875, Dhalla moved with his family to Karachi three years later. At the age of eight he was married to five-year old Cooverbai. After failing his matriculation, Dhalla sought employment while educating himself in religious matters. The Parsis of Karachi made arrangements for him to study for his masters degree in Iranian Languages at Bombay University. While in Bombay, Dhalla came into contact with several prominent Parsis of the times, with whose assistance he went to New York's Columbia University. There Dhalla studied under the guidance of Professor A.V.W. Jackson, a well-known Zoroastrian scholar of the west. Dhalla secured his Ph.D. in 1908.

Four years in the west had altered Dhalla's outlook to life and religion. He was now the propogator of new concepts, examining Parsi customs and traditions in a scientific light. Dhalla decried the community's craze for performing excessive ceremonies, and visiting temples. Dhalla claimed that Zarathushtra preached a religion of devotion in the Gathas. Dhalla explained that the 'Vendidad', considered the most important book on ceremonials, actually had nothing like prayer or ceremony in it. He denounced a life of mysticism, renunciation of the world, penance, mortification of the flesh and the monastic life.

A hundred years ago Dadabhoy Naoroji and his compatriots sipped the nectar of western culture and stepped forth into the world. Modern western education and all who belonged to the west began to be declaimed and denounced from all quarters. Our community qualified these newly-educated youths as 'waifs of society' and scorned the education they had acquired as anti-religious, dangerous, and materialistic. Parsis were not alone in thus demeaning the west. Sister communities also added their voice to it. In fact they were even more vociferous than we were.

Everywhere it was written and spoken that the east was religious whereas the west was irreligious and atheistic; that the east was virtuous, the west full of vice. The east was deemed spiritualistic while the west was materialistic.

The Zoroastrian books of later periods have labelled the north as the abode of the devil (Ahriman). Because of this we do not build our place of worship facing the north. As long as the body of a dead person is in the house, great care is taken that it's head is never kept towards the north. A babe's head is never allowed to be turned towards the north while it sleeps. While performing the *Kusti* prayer, time and again we swish the *Kusti* to the north and whisk away the evil spirit. We frequently snap our fingers to the north and scare away this demon.

Zarathushtra should be held more responsible than Jesus for the untold hardships of the downtrodden !

I had grown from childhood to manhood listening to such tirades against the sinful west. My four years of intensive study at Columbia University have taught me to witness and to understand that the western culture of the 20th century does not mean the culture of any one of the four directions of the world nor of only one of the continents of the earth, but it is a world-culture belonging to the new

age — the newest, the latest, all embracing, universal and fully experimented.

Henceforth I abstained from accusing without reason the culture of the west. I began to admire it and to view it with affection.

I was to live in London for about a month. I voyaged in the S. S. Homrick, reaching Liverpool on the 13th day and thence by train to London where I resided at a small hotel. During my stay in New York, Shapurji Saklatvala had been transferred to the London office of Tata & Sons. Within a short period of his stay in London he married an English lady and a son was born to them. On hearing of my arrival in London they came at once to my hotel and informed me that arrangements for my accommodation had been made in their own home and they took me there.

There was a tremendous change in the Shapurji that I had seen in 1905 when I left Bombay and the Shapurji of 1908. This change was apparent not only in his dress and demeanour but also in his thinking. European attire had taken the place of his deep *fentah* and long loose *dagla*. His bushy beard and long moustaches had disappeared for ever. I had known him as a ritualist. He had a special inclination towards Christianity. Now he had become an atheist. He beliefs in heaven or hell had definitely abated, but now he even found amusement in challenging the existence of God. His views on politics had also altered. He had become a socialist.

In Bombay I had seen Shapurji as a member of Pherozesha Mehta's moderate party. Now I saw he had joined the extremist party.

Shapurji arranged my lecture on Ancient Iran and its Religion under the auspices of an organisation of his socialist party. I had noticed in New York that members of the socialist party and labour organisations were indifferent and unconcerned about religion and that they were in open opposition with religious leaders and with any established church. They affirmed that since olden times when capitalists crushed the dependent lab-

our class for their own greed and selfishness, the priests always stood by the wealthy and upheld them.

It was the same in London. In my lecture I briefly sketched ancient Iranian history, the principal precepts of the Zoroastrian faith and the influence of the Zoroastrian religion on Christianity through Judaism.

During the discussions that ensued at the end of the talk an intelligent gentleman remarked that in the world due to the avarice, greed, pride and heartlessness of the rich, the poor have had to suffer a great deal. Instead of teaching people to avenge these wrongs in this world only, religious teachers have done a great disservice to humanity by holding out the vain promise that God would repay in the next world all injustices and sufferings.

The committee's suggestion was that a seat for a dastur be established at Karachi on a monthly emolument of Rs 150.

The poor have been misled by such teachings of Jesus Christ and they have done injustice to themselves, and instead of fighting against the rich and solving their own problems they have been made to suffer unnecessarily through the ages. He added that the doctrine of reaping the result of good and evil deeds has been handed down to Christianity through the Zoroastrian religion, hence Zarathushtra should be held more responsible than Jesus for the untold hardships of the downtrodden! I replied that man's greatest enemy is man himself. Through avarice, jealousy, enmity, hatred and other vices man has created unhappiness. Religion cannot be held responsible for that.

The prophets have always directed man to the path of righteousness and have stopped him from being steeped in selfishness, greed and evil. They have clearly made known to the wealthy their obligations and have given to the poor hope and courage. To the extent that man has disregarded these virtuous commandments, he has spread destruction on the world through his own pride and prejudices. Innumerable people, enduring hardships amidst the seeming inhumanity and injustices of life, have found solace through their abiding faith in a future life of reward and infallible justice.

I delivered three lectures to the Zoroastrians living in London. At the conclusion of one of those lectures an elderly barrister remarked critically that had such a learned *mobed* guided

the community 25 years ago, many an unwise youth would have been prevented from conversion. This evoked some amusement and all glances turned towards a certain gentleman.

I came to know later that these remarks had been directed against Reverend Dr Bhabha who was in the audience. He had been a Zoroastrian who was converted to Christianity. Reverend Bhabha invited me to tea at his residence. Hinting with good humour at the remarks occasioned by my talk, he spoke with such concern and feeling for the community that I was very favourably impressed by him.

Later Shapurji informed me that though the Reverend was a Christian convert, it would be difficult to find such an ardent well-wisher of the community. When some Parsi youths, coming to England to study, got involved in some trouble, Reverend Bhabha immediately went to their rescue and rendered silent service to all. He had renounced his faith in his youth, but he did not forget his beloved community. He was always eager to serve his co-religionists in whatever capacity he could.

As my work was over I prepared for my return to India. The committee had sent the amount for my second class passage from Bombay. From that amount I bought many valuable books and from the balance I bought a third class ticket for the steamer.

Just as those unfortunate dead who are condemned to the eternal fires of Hades cannot go anywhere near the precincts of heaven, third class passengers are prohibited from extending their wretched footsteps towards the happy abode of the first or second

The philosophy of reincarnation is the heritage of later Hindu religions and it is fruitless to attempt to search for their parallels in Zoroastrianism.

class inmates. Eight passengers had been crowded into my cabin. Darkness and dirt prevailed there, so most of my time was spent in reading on the deck.

Later, I lectured on the Zoroastrian religion on the ship. On 3 December 1908 our steamer anchored at Bombay.

Those who aspire for a doctorate of philosophy from Columbia University have to write a dissertation. For my subject I published a book entitled, *Nyaishes or Zoroastrian Litanies* and dedicated it to Khurshedji Cama. Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata had sent the

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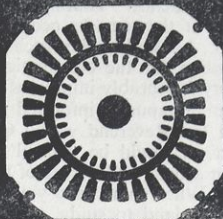
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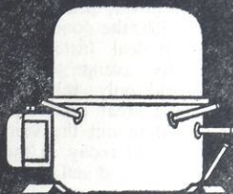
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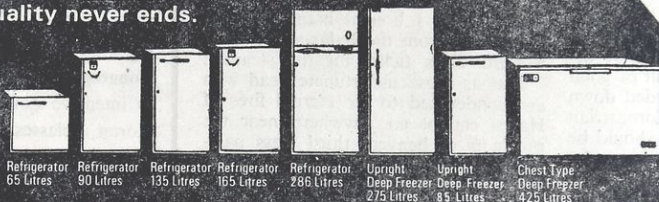
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entire cost of printing this book direct from Paris to Jackson.

Camaji and other members of the committee — Jeevanji Mody, Shorabji Warden and Navroji Patuck — expressed great satisfaction with my work at Columbia and declared that the expenditure that the community had incurred on my education had been well worth it.

For a long time Camaji had harboured a hope that a dasturship of the community be established in a growing and very promising city like Karachi. It had a very bright future. Our co-religionists had left Gujarat and settled in various places. Of these, the Parsi settlement of Karachi was the most prosperous. In economic status, Karachi was second only to Bombay and the communal population increased every year.

They had started working on this two three months prior to my return to India and had started correspondence with leading people of these places. The committee had arranged a function for me in Bombay and the Hon'ble Sir Jamshedji Jeejibhoy presided over it. On that occasion he made a joint appeal to the Zoroastrians of Sind, Baluchistan and the Punjab to establish a new dasturship for that part of the sub-continent and to nominate me as its *Dastur*.

The man who took upon himself the responsibility of a married life was dearer to Ahura Mazda than he who remained single.

The committee's suggestion was that a seat for a *dastur* for that part of the country be established at Karachi on a monthly emolument of Rs. 150 and the Zoroastrians of Sind, Baluchistan and the Punjab should help Karachi to meet this expenditure.

Gujarati has been our language ever since we landed in India more than 1,200 years ago. Yet Persian continued to be used in Iran and as it was the state language of the kings of Delhi and of their governors at Surat and at other places, many learned men of our community also wrote articles in Persian.

Azerkaivan and his intimate disciples who believed in the Muslim faith, philosophy and practices, and who had left Iran in the 17th century and settled in the Punjab, had compiled many books on religion and philosophy in Persian. They tried to explain the Zoroastrian religion in the light of Sufism and other alien philosophies.

About a 100 years ago we find Gujarati translations of books by Kheshtab, Jeradest, Afsar, Zuideh, Rooh, Makashefateh Kaivani, Jaanee Kaikhushru and others. In 1875 we get an idea of this philosophy in *Bag-e-Parsa* or the *Garden of Purity* by Dastur Jamshedji Kamdin of Broach.

Our priests excelled in ceremonial worship. With the march of time they had not moved onwards to the pathway of intellectual religion through knowledge. From amongst the approximately 800 *Athornans* there could be found hardly 25 capable of guiding the community by their written or spoken word.

Parsi theosophists declared that Zarathushtra was no ordinary human being but an Avatar of the Ameshaspenta.

In 1875 enthusiastic Zoroastrian theosophists came into prominence. In quest of knowledge these noble men conducted daily classes in their own organization, studied books and, through their own scholarship, were sincerely keen to enlighten the community. They led a simple and honest life. Self-sacrifice was their watch word. I held them in high esteem. Yet, at the same time, I was in honest opposition to their methods of transmitting their knowledge.

Theosophy means the study of religion. Who can be opposed to such divine knowledge? All the religions of the world teach spiritual enlightenment but their founders have differed in their search for its knowledge according to the country, conditions and times in which they have lived. The Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott to spread spiritual knowledge was in essence purely Hindu and Buddhist. If our theosophists would look at it in its true perspective, appreciate it or even have complete faith in it and reveal it in its true aspect, I would have no objection.

But these people believed and tried to make others believe that theosophy alone was right and that alone was the truth and without it all else was incomplete and indefinite. They have even tried to explain Zoroastrianism in that light. This attitude I could not conform to. I would not accept their assertion of possessing the sole miraculous masterkey that could unlock and unravel the secret doctrines of all religions.

From about the middle of the last century there was a controversy raging between the conservative section

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of the community and those who were known as reformists. Members of the former group whose staunch supporter was 'Mansukh', time and again accused the reformists of being bent upon suppressing ceremonials and of changing the Zoroastrian religion to a 'religion of convenience,' and under the influence of Christianity, trying to convert it into a 'protestant faith.'

Dadabhoy Naoroji, Khurshedji Cama and other learned reformists were labelled as Parsi Protestants.

Just as we did not want a Christian-Zoroastrian religion we did not want either a Hindu-Zoroastrian or a Buddhist-Zoroastrian religion.

Parsi theosophists, supporting the conservatives, claimed that they had saved the community in the nick of time from being ruined by Parsi reformists who, in the mode of Christianity, were trying to introduce reforms such as praying in a language that could be understood and the like.

Before going to America to study, my protest was that, suppose for the sake of argument, the reformists were attracting the Zoroastrian religion towards a Christian-Zoroastrian faith, Parsi theosophists were drawing it towards a Hindu-Zoroastrian or Buddhist-Zoroastrian religion.

Prior to my departure they had published many large and small booklets like the one entitled *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy*. Later, another book, *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Vishnuism* was published by Swami Govindachariya of Mysore.

Recently a Hindu professor of the Punjab has written *The Vedic Origin of Zoroastrianism*. In this book its author states that Avesta, known as the sacred language of the Parsis, is a dialect of Sanskrit or of one of its offshoots. The suffix *Ved* meaning to know is used in its various forms in the *Gathas*. Arising out of this the learned writer states: "Zarathushtra prays to Ahura Mazda and asks: 'When will I get the knowledge of the Vedic religion?'" On the basis of similar ridiculous explanations the author informs us that the Zoroastrian religion of the Parsis is an offspring of the *Rig Veda*!

All I had to say to my theosophist co-religionists was that just as we did not want a Christian-Zoroastrian religion we did not want either a Hindu-Zoroastrian or a Buddhist-Zoroastrian religion. We needed a pure Zoroastrian religion, a Mazda-Zoroastrian faith.

But the advanced philosophy of the

later religions born of the *Upanishads*, the *Brahmas* etc., and the Zoroastrian philosophy are poles apart. Avesta, Pahlavi and Pazend literature recognize a Personal God. Parsi theosophists, finding such a form of God incomplete, have attributed to the term *Zarvaneh Akerneh* — limitless time — the meaning of 'Impersonal God', placing Him above Ahura Mazda. This concept was Hindu in essence.

The philosophy of reincarnation and other principles are the heritage of later Hindu religions and it is absolutely fruitless to attempt to search for their parallels in Zoroastrianism. I declared that the far-fetched endeavours of Parsi theosophists to attribute those teaching to the Zoroastrian religion are false and do not reflect sound scholarship.

Later, when I delivered this lecture in Karachi, I explained at length how the ideals of the Hindu and Iranian elders of the Indo-Iranian era were identical but in later years when they were separated and settled in India and Iran their way of living differed in every detail.

In Iran a married life was deemed equally sacred for laymen and for priests. The man who took upon himself the responsibility of a married life was dearer to Ahura Mazda than he who remained single. Celibacy in priesthood never found a place in the 4000 year old history of Zoroastrianism.

From amongst the approximately 800 Athornans there could be found hardly 25 who were capable of guiding the community by their written or spoken word.

The life of renunciation and freedom from worldly cares never found a foothold in Iran. It has never been an Iranian belief that this world of desire is a complete illusion. To renounce the world in an endeavour to be free of its ties and temptations has never been extolled in Iran. With many such examples, as an unbiased student, I depicted the advance of Hindu religion and philosophy towards renunciation of worldly life and that of Iran as a step towards social progress.

Dependent upon the Hindu philosophy of the *Avatars* of gods and goddesses, Parsi theosophists declared that Zarathushtra was no ordinary human being but an *Avatar* of the *Ameshaspenta*. I announced that this

teaching was completely unfounded and alien and that Prophet Zarathushtra was a man of practical common sense. From this arose a controversy that I had insulted our Prophet by calling him a common man.

After some time, during the Zoroastrian Conference, when the orthodox Parsi papers of Bombay waged war against me, many misrepresentations were propagated on the basis of the above. As a result, for a number of years, I had to print and distribute amongst the entire community of the subcontinent three small booklets explaining my statements.

Khurshedji Cama had the good fortune to know that his desire to establish a seat for a *Dastur* for the Zoroastrians of north-east India had been fulfilled, but he did not live to witness the final nomination of its first *Dastur*. He died just a month before that auspicious occasion.

If the portals of priesthood had been open to laymen, the *Athornan* fold would have certainly gained a resplendent reputation.

But Camaji did not become an *Ervad* or a *Dastur* himself, but he certainly was the maker of *Ervads* and *Dasturs*. In the 60's of the last century, from a class of *mobeds* that had been neglected and taunted as *andhi-arus*, was born a new class of learned *mobeds* who for the first time in India, taught laymen to respect the religious leader and to regard him in a new light.

It goes to Camaji's credit for creating this priestly class which though lacking in material wealth was rich in learning and of sterling qualities. He had endowed them with gifts of money too, but he had bestowed on them the even more precious gift of education. Educating them on philological lines he had sent forth into the world many a bright, young *mobed*, well versed in Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazend and Cunneiform.

Thus, to the last days of his life, through monetary assistance, through his own innate wisdom and his personal upright character, he had succeeded in persuading them to be staunch upholders of the faith. My link with him was forged at the ebb of his life. During my period of study at the *Madressah* when I lived at Bombay, I had the opportunity of meeting him many an evening. Wherever there were lectures or sermons or gatherings of savants he would be present and I would also be there.

Camaji was a reservoir of tolerance. He viewed all religions and creeds with respect and he was always keen to glean whatever information or know-

ledge they had to offer. Thus, although his views were not in consonance with the teachings of the Theosophical Society, he would attend lectures or study classes organised under their auspices.

His learned disciples like *Ervad Sheryarji*, *Ervad Tehmurasp* and others did not approve of this. They argued that a strong-minded scholar like Camaji would be in a position to listen to all and weigh its worth and accept only what was of value, recognizing the real source of things. But those incapable of forming individual opinions on matters of religion or philosophy would be wrongly influenced by Camaji's presence at such meetings. It was possible that under the mistaken impression that Camaji adhered to the teachings of the societies he frequented, they too would be led to follow in his footsteps and accept their doctrines. Their fear was not entirely unfounded. Camaji attended all religious meetings, respected all their founders, listened

to all, but to the end of his life he believed only in the Zoroastrian philosophy regarding material and spiritual life about which he had written and spoken in public.

Khurshedji Cama's life was simple, pure and austere and he had high ideals. Work, industry, service — these were his sole physical and mental recreation and relaxation. In thought, word and deed he led an honest life and thus put into practice the precepts of the religion.

Yet to the orthodox he was not included within the ranks of the pious. The majority of men evaluate a person's piety not by the uprightness of his thoughts or the purity of his heart, but by the empty outward semblance of his religious practices. But Ahura Mazda's evaluation is based upon a man's innermost thoughts and ideals and upon the purity of his feelings. And from that standpoint Camaji was an ideal *Nar Asho* — the most righteous man.



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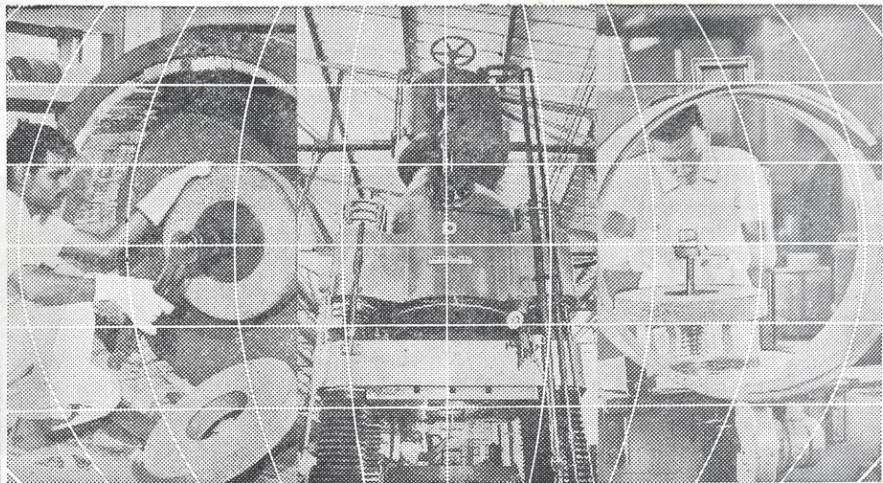
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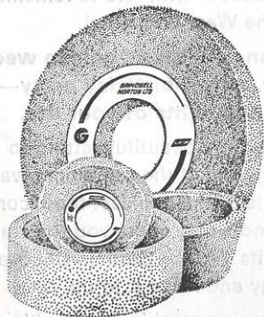
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Continued from page 7

ed programmes, in the special education, with an emphasis on early childhood education, emotional disturbances, and mental retardation, etc. Therefore I am very anxious to pursue my studies further, and to take advantage of this programme in order to help others who are hearing-impaired.

"She has held several jobs (part-time), to earn while she is studying. Financial assistance from the Zoroastrian Association of Europe (\$1,200 (approximately Rs 10,000) covered her tuition fees for the first quarter. The tuition for the next year, and the estimated living expenses are \$4,530 (approximately Rs 38,052) and \$3,000 (approximately Rs 25,200) respectively. She has \$2,000 (approximately Rs 16,800) as her savings.

"Both the above cases, to the best of our knowledge, are completely genuine and deserving your kind attention. Any financial assistance the community can render will be deeply appreciated."

Shopping for a Centre

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) is examining various possibilities to raise funds for their community centre. One member, Firoze Gandhi, had put forward the following scheme according to the newsletter: "Members are invited to purchase their everyday household products like toothpaste, bath soap, shampoo, laundry detergent, dish-washing liquid, bleach, draincleaner, etc. through Firoze Gandhi. Firoze will donate between 20-30 per cent of the purchase price of the products towards the ZAC Building Fund. Hence, if each ZAC member buys \$100 worth of products, ZAC will receive between \$20 and \$30 towards the ZAC Centre.

"The products are manufactured by Amway Corporation with complete satisfaction guaranteed. There are about 300 daily consumable household items. There are 5,000 other quality brand-name products like Zenith TV, Sony Tape Recorders, RCA Video Recorders, etc.

"To order, select the products of your choice from the Catalogue. Place the order with either Firoze, Rusi or Pravina Gandhi at 465-1473 and mail them your personal cheque for the amount plus six percent sales tax. Within two weeks of placing the order, the products will be available and will be brought to the next ZAC meeting

for pick-up. Orders of persons not present at the meeting will be home delivered by other ZAC volunteers after the day of the meeting. The above scheme was discussed in the last ZAC monthly meeting and agreed upon by the members present at the meeting. With the active participation of ZAC members, the above scheme can generate a handsome amount of funds for the ZAC."

As regards the community centre, Rohinton Rivetna, president of the ZAC notes in his progress report, "a purchase contract was signed in October 1980 for the purchase of a two acre vacant property near I-55 and Rte. 83 for \$55,000 (approximately Rs 4,62,000). When the percolation test turned out to be unsatisfactory, the owner agreed to improve the property at his own expense (approximately \$6,000 (around Rs 50,400)). This involved excavating an area of 6,000 sq. ft. to a depth of 4 ft. and filling with good black dirt. That work has now been completed and we are awaiting the percolation test report from the DuPage County Health Department. As soon as the County approves the work, we shall proceed with the closing of the contract.

"In the meantime, an escrow account has been opened with the Thorsen Title Department into which various documents have been deposited according to our attorney, Mr Mermall's instructions. When all the requirements have been satisfied, a cheque for \$36,566.80 (approximately Rs 3,07,161) will be deposited in the account. Since all the pledges have not been redeemed yet, we have taken a \$15,000 (approximately Rs 1,26,000) mortgage from the owner at 11 percent interest for one year.

"We would like to thank all our well-wishers for their generosity. It is encouraging that over 50 families have sent in their full pledged amounts, totalling over \$26,700 (approximately Rs 2,24,280). This is testimony to our Zoroastrian virtues and traditions of philanthropy and generosity. It appears that the Zoroastrian spirit is alive and well. Six families have requested payment by instalment—these pledges total an additional \$3,800 (approximately Rs 31,920). Further pledges totalling \$5,300 (approximately Rs 44,520) remain to be collected from eight families...

"We have been in touch with Dr Sarfeh. He is trying very hard to release a partial amount of \$20,000 (approximately Rs 1,68,000) in a few weeks and the balance of \$1,30,000 (approx-

mately Rs 10,92,000) in a few months. We are ever so thankful to Dr Sarfeh for his relentless efforts and are forever indebted to the late Arbab Guiv for his generosity. Now we wait patiently and hope that these problems can be overcome and we can start on our Centre soon."

In a new development, the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, is trying to lure Zoroastrians into skiing. A trip to the ski slopes at Four Lakes Village was scheduled in February, the cost for the trip was US \$14 (approximately Rs 115). For once Zoroastrians in North America will be on the downhill.

Fanning the Flames

A celebration to commemorate the 'discovery of fire,' on *Bahman Mah* and *Meher Roz* (February 1) was held at the Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr for the members of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). According to the *Shah-Nameh*, notes the ZSO newsletter of March, "King Hoshang-shah saw a snake moving in the bushes towards him. He picked up a stone to hit it: the stone missed the snake but hit another stone instead and caused a small bush to catch fire! *Mah Bahman, Roz Meher* is celebrated all over Iran as the day of the *Jashan-Sadeh*.

In Toronto, Bahram Parsi and Mehraban Homaie explained the significance of the day to those present, states the newsletter, adding that next year a larger celebration has been planned.

The ZSO newsletter also announced plans for a Persian Evening on 11 April, promising Persian specialties like *Chelo Kabab* and *Ash-e-Reshteh*, and Persian music. A Jamshedi Navroz function had also been planned for ZSO members, and the Zoroastrian Cricket Club had scheduled a dinner and dance for 25 April, notes the newsletter.

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Continued from page 5

of her "life's work," that Irani waxes eloquent. "Indian dancing is a highly developed and powerful medium of expression. It is a medium for communication with the masses through the appropriate use of costumes, sound and light effects and expressions." She feels that "Indian dance offers tremendous aesthetic joy for oneself and is itself a medium of spreading this joy to others... it is a form which expands and channelizes one's physical, spiritual and creative energies, rendering deeper insights into one's own psychological and spiritual nature."

"It is more than an art, it is a science," she continues, talking of Bharata Natyam, the dance form she chose after exposing herself to various schools of Indian dance as well as Russian ballet. "Every concept and character can be danced by some particular hand or foot movement or a facial expression. There are six different types of laughs, seven eyebrow movements, more than forty-nine eye movements and innumerable *hastas* (hand movements) and leg movements," she explains.

Irani laments the fact that today, dance is commercialised. She agrees that for most girls it is just a hobby or more often a 'passport to marriage.' Parsis, who learn dancing, she feels, make better pupils as they take the art seriously, though few take to Indian classical dancing.

She and her students have already produced several traditional dances over the years which have been enthusiastically reviewed by the press. By composing and presenting dances on traditional and contemporary themes, and by teaching at her Kala Mandir, Irani wishes "to make her humble contribution to the field of Indian

dance and culture and share it with others."

Calcutta Torch Bearers

A series of lectures on Zoroastrianism by noted authoress, **Piloo Jungalwalla** provided "another telling instance of the awakening in the Parsi community," states the 27 December issue of *Navroze*, a bilingual weekly from Calcutta.

Noting the large turnout at the three lectures arranged by the Parsi Zoroastrian Association (PZA) of Calcutta, under the auspices of the Rustom Saklath Memorial Foundation on 13 and 14 December at D. B. Mehta's Atash Adaran, the weekly cited the various classes, books and other activities being pursued by the Calcutta community.

Rusi B. Gimi, president of the PZA spoke on the occasion of the lectures, of the PZA's project "to provide religious education for adults and children of the community, and the two special courses under the direction of Mrs Tina Mehta and Mr Godrej Engineer, which were inaugurated by Mrs Jungalwalla on the 14th morning."

Mehta noted, "We are aiming our attention to young people who will be the torch bearers for the future, and for this we have Godrej Engineer who is going to spearhead the programme for children... not boringly with lectures but via the exciting media of programmes like essays and painting competitions, creative plays and stage performances, young peoples' *gham-bars* and story time... where structured religious instruction will be offered in a very novel way."

Jungalwalla spoke on *God and Nature in the Gathas*, *The Navjot* and *Kusti Prayers*, and *Sarosh Yazad*, and all three lectures are to be printed.

Behram K. Merchant, vice-president of the association, noted, "The Rustom Saklath Memorial Foundation was set up by the PZA with a view to create a sizeable corpus, from the interest of which programmes could be organised to disseminate information on the Zoroastrian religion, to create awareness of the greatness and glory of the Zoroastrian religion, and to bring out our religion's salient features, which establish its relevance today."

New Poona Panchayat President

Pesi Shapoorji Anklesaria has stepped down as president of the Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP) and proposed the name of **Rustom Burjorji Patell**, a former president of the Panchayat to replace him, notes the PPP newsletter of March. The newsletter did not state the reason for Anklesaria's resignation, but according to some reports the resignation followed a controversy over the method for disposal of the dead.

The present term of the Anjuman Committee and the trustees, is due to end in December this year, and the elections are scheduled to be held in August/September for the Anjuman Committee and in November for the trustees, states the newsletter.

The Panchayat report notes, "The annual income for 1976 (when this Committee took over) was of the order of about Rs 100,000 or so. But year after year, with careful investments of the funds and with great co-operation and very generous donations received from the community, the income last year stood at Rs 2,40,000. The total income for 1980 was Rs 3,80,000 and it is hoped that very soon some of our funds would become self-sufficient. This signifies the interest and participation of the community in the working of the Panchayat in general and also of the increasing magnanimous generosity of our donors in particular".

A list of Panchayat members is also being prepared, and will soon be available at the Panchayat office, notes the newsletter.

The PPP expects that the foundation stone of the charity buildings scheduled to be constructed on Panchayat land will be laid soon after the lands have been freed from under the purview of the Land Ceiling Act. "The papers are still pending at the Cabinet level of the State Government. In the meantime sufficient progress has been made in getting the plans passed and approved for build-

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ing charity buildings on the open space around there. We hope that the few legal hurdles which are still in the way will be cleared in a very short time and we may be able to announce the happy news of laying the foundation stone very soon."

Parsi Haute Cuisine

Jardaloo ma gosh, *kharoo bhejoo* and *masala liver*, have found their way into the world of haute cuisine. The three traditional Parsi culinary masterpieces, featured in **Jeroo Mehta's** book, *101 Parsi Recipes* have been selected by the prestigious Time-Life Book's new bimonthly series on international cookery — *The Good Cook*. Meat with apricots (*Jardaloo ma gosh*) will be featured in the 15th volume of the series, entitled 'Lamb' while the *kharoo bhejoo* and



Mehta: 'petrified of cooking'

masala liver are scheduled to appear in the 'Offal' volume of the series.

The success of her recipes lies, "in the absolute accuracy of each recipe," says Mehta. "If my recipe says half a teaspoon, it means half a teaspoon. Each recipe is tried several times in all its variations, until the most practical and tasty result is achieved." Assisting her culinary forays are her naval husband, Dorab, and two children, Cyrus and Khorshed, whom she acknowledges as her severest and most patient critics.

Mehta discovered the popularity of



Jashan at Mount Barot

Parsi cooking during her student days in North America, first at finishing school and then at New York University, studying journalism, and subsequently while her husband was on an assignment abroad.

In the introduction to *101 Parsi Recipes*, Mehta writes: "Parsi cooking appeals not only to people from all parts of India but also from different parts of the world. I first became aware of this while I was a student in New York. My school held a fete at which there was a stall of food from different countries: the chicken vindaloo which the school cook prepared from my mother's recipe disappeared in less than an hour while the stall was still well-stocked with other dishes!"

"I was petrified of cooking, until I started and realized that it was quite simple. I started with baking, and began to love it," recalls Mehta, who was an associate editor with *Eve's Weekly* for three years, and is now a seasoned cook. Her *101 Parsi Recipes*, which won for her publishers, Vakil and Sons Ltd., the Maharashtra government's award for presentation and design when first published in 1973/74, is now in its second edition.

Mehta is at present working on a new book, *Cooking for the Family*, especially formulated for the Indian housewife, and to be published by India Book House.

Pundolite Pilgrimage

Jashans are being regularly held at the caves of Mount Barot, near Sanjan, where the first Zoroastrians in India are said to have hidden the sacred

fire for 13 years. On 24 January, a group of about 50 devotees, mostly followers of the late mystical leader Minocher Pundole, hiked up Mount Barot for their annual *jashan* and pilgrimage, notes Z. M. Zend, one of the members of the group.

The *jashan* was performed by five Pundolite priests after the caves had been cleaned by the group, says Zend. The week-end pilgrimage included a visit to the Udvada Atash Behram, other fire temples, and the Sanjan pillar where prayers were offered, Zend notes.

Spotlight

Vispi Dara Dotiwala, 23, and **Dara S. Mistry**, 26, have been given a cash reward of Rs 200 by the Bombay Commissioner of Police, M. S. Kasbekar, for displaying exemplary courage in rescuing a businessman from a knife attack and robbery, on the night of 28 January in Bandra, a Bombay suburb. (*Free Press Journal*, 13 February 1981).

Swimmer **Persis Madan** (Willingdon Sports Club) shattered the 100 metre freestyle mark for women with a time of 1.06.1 seconds, her fifth record victory at the 10th Bombay YMCA Winter Gala held at the end of February. (*Indian Express*, 2 March 1981).

Swimmer **Farad Bhatena** of N. M. Commerce College, Bombay, won the individual boys title in the Junior Inter-Collegiate Swimming Meet held at the Y.M.C.A. pool, Bombay, on 3 March. (*Indian Express*, 6 March 1981).



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Noted Bombay dentist **Keki M. Mistry** is the first Indian to be appointed consultant on the editorial board of the international journal, *The Tropical Dental Journal*, published in English and French and distributed in Africa, Asia, South America and the eastern oceanic tropical countries. (*Times of India*, 8 March 1981).

Lecturer, columnist and popular astrologer **Bejan Daruwalla** received the *Jyoti Shiromani* award under the auspices of the Bruhad Gujarat Astrological Society, Ahmedabad, from Shreyans S. Shah, Editor-in-chief of the *Gujarat Samachar*. (*Blitz* 21 March 1981).

Dinaz Homi Gorimar has been awarded a Ph.D. degree in English by the Bombay University for her thesis entitled "Women's Education: Its forms, methods and effects as reflected in the works of the major women novelists of the 19th century". (*Times of India*, 6 March 1981).

Piloo Kapadia was elected president for the second time of the Association for Social Health in India, and **Adi Chinoy** was elected one of the vice-presidents. (*Indian Express*, 27 February 1981).

Athletes **Darayus Sarkari** and **Bhaktawar Khambatta** emerged individual champions in the men's and women's sections of the All-Parsi Athletic Meet held at the University Stadium

on 28 February and 1 March (*Times of India*, 2 March 1981).

Former commercial manager of Indian Airlines and director of the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, **Dorab Cawassa Warden** has been appointed executive secretary of the Travel Agents Association of India. (*Times of India*, 8 February 1981).

Reigning Railways champion **Jazir Rusi Mehta** retained his middle-weight title with a lift of 147.5 kgs. at the National Weight Lifting Championships in New Delhi. (*The Statesman*, 29 March 1981).

Chairman of the board of Trustees of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, **Karl Khandaivala**, was awarded the R. P. Chanda birth centenary medal for 1980 by the Asiatic Society of Bangalore on 2 March 1981. The award was presented to him for his contribution to art history in India, according to a press release. (*Times of India*, 4 March 1981).

Athlete **Bakhawar Khambatta** (Railways) hurled the shot put to a new national record of 13.38 at the 19th All-India Athletic Meet, held in Delhi in March, and sprinter **Adille Sumariwalla** was declared the fastest man of the meet for his 100 meter dash of 10.5 seconds, according to newspaper reports. Sumariwalla also equalled the Asian mark of 10.4 sec-

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onds at the Tata Sports Club meet on 29 March at the Bombay University Stadium, notes a *Times of India* report of 30 March.

Senior Superintendent, Hughes Dry Dock, Bombay Port Trust, **Keki D. Gazdar**, retired after 27 years of service. He is said to have devised a method for lifting and sinking the Victoria Dock caisson, earlier thought impossible and had the opportunity of docking all six indigenously built frigates. (*Free Press Journal*, 4 February 1981).

Swimmer **Kurush Contractor**, 20 year old undergraduate of St. Xavier's College, Bombay, won a gold medal for successfully completing the Third Palk Strait Swimming Competition, held on 1 April in a record time of 12.29.45 seconds, despite unfavourable weather conditions, and shark and snake infested waters. Contractor is now one of the probables for the Indian water polo team at the 82 Asi-

an Games and hopes to attempt swimming the English Channel if sponsored. (*Indian Express*, 8 April 1981).

Assistant Collector of Customs, Preventive Department, **Rustom Parakh** retired after 37 years of service. He was considered to be an ace detective and in recognition of his outstanding services, was awarded the President's medal in 1978. (*Free Press Journal*, 14 March 1981).

Rayomand K. Irani, of Poona was awarded his Ph.D. degree by the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay for his thesis: Studies in Fluidized Reactor for Complex Systems, according to the Poona Parsi Panchayat Newsletter of March 1981.

Manijeh Hoshang Kherawala, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Ahmedabad, is one of the two officers deputed by the Government of India for advanced training in Income Tax

according to present day trends, in West Germany, notes a news item from Lucknow, where Kherawala originally began her career teaching at the Regional Training Institute of Direct Taxation.

Bomi Daruwalla, 17 year old member of the 16th Finchley Scout Group, was presented with his Chief Scout's Award by district commissioner Peter "Jumbo" Davis on 27 March at the scout group's East Finchley Methodist Church annexe headquarters, notes the English newspaper *Press Group* of 17 April. The award was in acknowledgement of "the work done in social and community service and outdoor activities", according to the scout group's circular.

CORRIGENDUM

Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan's name was inadvertently spelled as Talyarkhan in the Events and Personalities section of the March issue of *Parsiana*. The error is regretted.

Banuo ane Grahstho

It would have been just another Parsi wedding at Bombay's Jeejibhoy Dadabhai Agairy, except that the groom happened to be the grand nephew of Indira Feroze Gandhi. In memory of her late husband's family, the prime minister, her son, Rajiv, daughters-in-law Sonia and Maneka and grand children Priyanka, Rahul and Feroze Varun, attended the 19 April wedding of Purvez Rustom Patel and Rashana Homi Chothia.

As guests strained to catch a glimpse of the first family and cameras clicked away, Ms Gandhi dressed in a white silk sari and sleeveless blouse sat in the front row during the ceremony.

After the ceremony, the first family, along with the bride and groom and other VIP's sat on two facing rows in the middle of the baug to partake of noted caterer Freny Godiwalla's fare.

The groom, a 28-year-old graduate in pharmacy from Bombay University, is a partner in the Ethical Pharmaceutical Company. His mother, Chandan, is the niece of Ms Gandhi's late husband Feroze. Purvez's father is financial controller in Darabsha B. Cursetji's Sons Pvt. Ltd., his younger brother, Cyrus, is a chartered accountant and an officer in the Scindia Steam Navigation's internal audit department



(From left to right) Rajiv Gandhi, the groom, Purvez, the bride, Rashana and Ms Gandhi: honoured guests.

(photograph by Rashid Bamanbehram)

and his sister, Feroza, is a student at Bombay's Sydenham College.

Rashana, the 26-year-old bride was till recently a lecturer at M.S. University, Baroda, and holds a first class M.Sc. degree in clothing and textile

technology. Her father, Homi, is a Senior forest officer of the Gujarat Government, Baroda, while her mother, Zarine, is active in the Baroda Parsi community. Rashana has two sisters, Khusnama and Dinaz.

The Hockey Maiden

The person wielding the stick in Indian women's hockey is an attractive sports enthusiast from Pune, **Arnavaz Damania**.

Damania managed the 1980 Indian Women's Olympic Hockey team at Moscow and though, "our women's team did not perform their best" said Damania, "there will be other opportunities. Our team is of very good material and has great potential."

"June, July and August of this year were memorable and hectic months for us of the All India Women's Hockey Association, (A.I.W.H.A.), who were privileged to attend and participate in the Moscow Olympics. As manager of the Women's Hockey Team, on its maiden venture to the Olympics, it was a challenge to hold the crash coaching camp for the girls in Pune, the last minute anxiety caused by the late sanction by the Government and the A.I.C.S. (just 10 days before the date of departure i.e. 9th July), outfitting the team for the Russian climate, completion of passport and visa formalities and so on.

"We finally emerged from all this and met the rest of the Indian contingent in Delhi in July. There we had a series of briefings, a meeting with our Prime Minister and President—and thus reinforced, we left for Moscow full of hopes and excitement and with some anxiety and a lot of determination. There were roughly 86 in the contingent from India.

"We were given a very good reception in Moscow and were most impressed by the organisation and the efforts that had gone into the preparation of these 1980 Olympics. The Russians had really put in great efforts to make it a success.

"The Olympic Village was beautifully laid out and planned. There was a well-staffed and equipped hospital. Sports Administrative Building and other facilities. What struck us as most thoughtful was that the personal comfort of the participants was looked after in great detail, facilities for washing, ironing and repairing were all provided free of cost. Three dining halls provided for food till mid-night. Besides this, there were a number of coffee bars, snack bars and milk bars which were most popular.

"There were opportunities for us to enjoy a variety of cultural programmes

every evening—and facilities for watching video tapes of the games, official literature and other information were easily available.

"Transport posed no difficulty as there were a sufficient number of trolley buses operating within the Village. Travel in Moscow too was free on presentation of Identity Cards. Each contingent was allotted a car and mini-bus to travel as and when they chose. Six interpreters helped us in communicating with the Russians, we would have felt rather lost without them.



Damania: 'Electrifying atmosphere'.

"In the beginning, we found the security arrangements rather irksome and rigid, and we chafed quite a bit under the restrictions imposed on us. Identity Cards were issued to all, which had to be hung around our necks throughout our stay. Participants were searched each time they entered the Village, dogs were there to sniff out drugs and bombs, and even the buses that took us to the stadiums had security guards. Our initial irritation gave way later when we started appreciating the risks involved and how essential it was for all these safeguards to be maintained.

"The Opening Ceremony, March Past, Flag Hoisting and lighting of the Olympic Torch at the stadium were most spectacular, something we shall never forget. As a security measure we were not allowed to witness the entire cultural programme,

but were sent back to the Village after sometime. We could, however, watch all that we missed on the T.V. The atmosphere was electrifying and people ebullient, a wonderful feeling of friendliness everywhere.

"Unfortunately, our women's team did not take the opportunities that came their way. Our girls lacked the fervour and determination that winners are made of. I feel that they were too easily demoralised by the umpiring. When challenges were thrown at them, their killer instincts did not rise to the fore.

"The closing ceremony was memorable for all of us. The warmth and friendliness broke all barriers of country and creed. We bade farewell to our happy village home, our interpreters, security guards, the friends we had made and also the cleaning women some of whom had picked up a few words of Hindi. We had found the Russians cold and withdrawn to start with, but a few days of acquaintance proved to us that they were warm and gentle people.

"Back at the Delhi Airport we were welcomed by friends and relatives, but the Gold Medalist Men's Hockey Team got a really heart-warming welcome. It made our girls really wish that they had tried a little harder and put more fight into their game."

Damania is president of the Women's Hockey Association of Maharashtra and was its secretary for three years prior; she is also a member of the executive committee of the A.I.W.H.A. She was a delegate at the International Federation of the Women's Hockey Association Conference held in August 1980 at Scotland.

Wife of Dara N. Damania, managing director of Buckau Wolf New India Engineering Works Ltd., and mother of three daughters, Damania, a former hostess with Air-India feels politics and sports should be kept separate.

"It was a great pity that many were not able to participate in these Games because of the boycott. In spite of it many records were broken and higher standards were set as compared to the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

"I very strongly feel that politics should not be allowed to enter the sports arena. The spirit of international oneness and amity that is generated at the Olympic Games cannot be replaced by any other medium.

We can but look forward to the 1984 Olympic Games and hope it will be held in conditions that are easier and happier than those of this year and that India shall be able to participate in bigger numbers and strive harder to bring glory."



Pardivala: strict disciplinarian and (clockwise) with President Tito, with the President Kennedy Plaque, with the Helm's medallion and citation

Dhansak Cricket

"What the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India could not achieve for the community, the game of Cricket might", writes Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar, *Parsiana's* Nagpur correspondent.

Bhagwagar notes, "The Nagpur Parsi Cricket Gymkhana has over the past five years striven to foster greater friendship and goodwill among like-minded Parsis of different places by arranging inter-city cricket matches."

"For one such recent encounter, the Nagpur Cricket XI journeyed to Jamshedpur to play for the Jiji Irani Memorial Trophy, instituted by Dr. Jamshed Irani, in memory of his father, the late Jiji Irani."

"The Parsi Cricket Gymkhana beat the Jamshedpur XI by a convincing margin of five wickets, in the match played at the Jamshedpur Stadium on Sunday 8 February, 1981. The Nagpur boys were superior to their opponents in all departments of the game and the victory for them was a cake-walk."

"Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji, the lively and well-loved 'cricketing priest' from Nagpur was declared Man of The Match. His expert fielding contributed in large measure to the fall of

the steel city stalwarts. Percy Zal was declared the best batsman and Shiraz Doongaji the best bowler from Nagpur."

"The main wicket taker for Jamshedpur was Behram Zarolia and their best batsman Cawas Saiwalla."

"Cricket for Parsis is inseparable from dhansak and dhoom-dham. The last two ingredients were very much in evidence during the two-day visit to Jamshedpur. Off the turf, the Nagpurians were completely bowled over by the warmth and hospitality of the host team. Eruch Surti, Rumi Master and Pesi Wadia of Jamshedpur worked

Nagpur cricketers and organizers



hard to make the fixture the success it was.

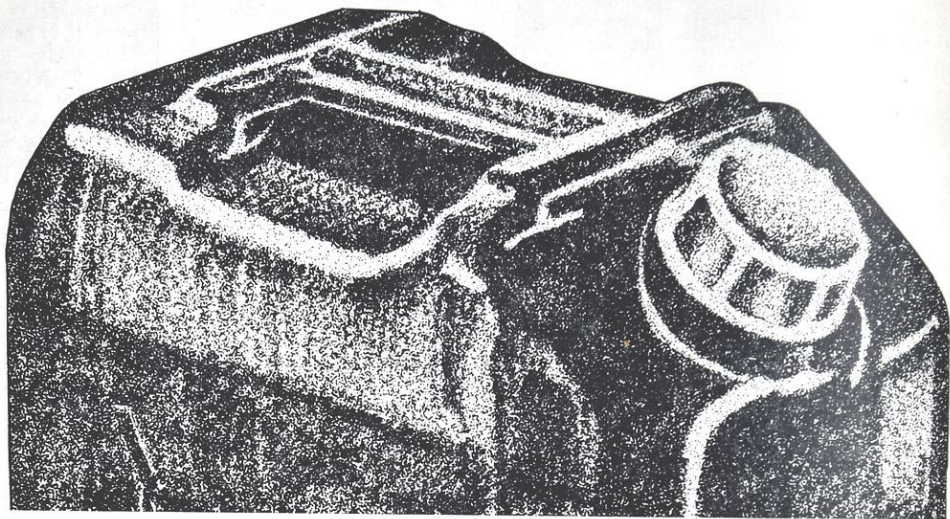
"The resurgence of popular interest in cricket among the young Parsis of Nagpur is due in very large measure to the enthusiasm and encouragement given by Dadachanji and Shiraz Gimi, chairman, Sports Committee who are there every morning to give the youngsters practice. For the next cricket season the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana is threatening to field a Ladies XI. So gentlemen beware!"

In the Service of Sport

Veteran athletic coach, administrator, official and author, Jal D. Pardivala, was presented the Buck's award for outstanding service rendered by him to the cause of physical education and sports in the country. Instituted by the YMCA College of Physical Education, Madras, the award was given to Pardivala at the diamond jubilee celebrations of the college on 20 December 1980.

An unassuming, grey-haired gent of 70, with an athletic physique and brisk walk that belied his introductory statement, "I am an old man now", Pardivala is hesitant to talk of his many and varied experiences on

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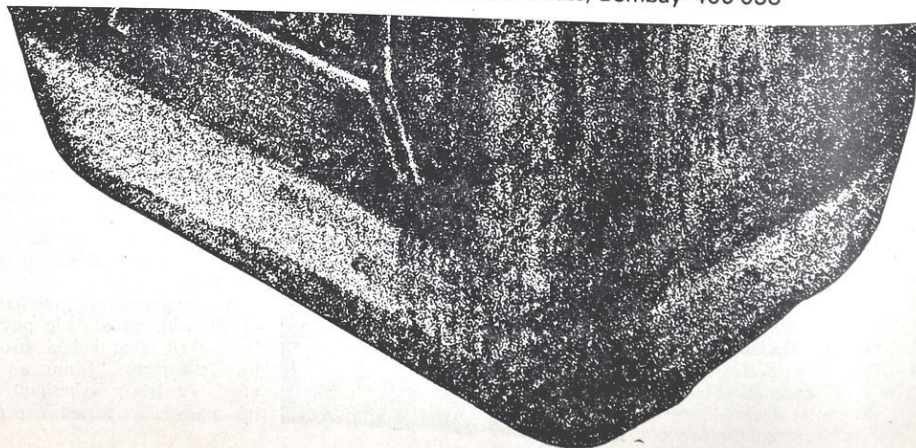
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and off the athletic field. "Won't you be bored with my tales?" he asks, bringing out his collection of clippings, photos and other memorabilia preserved over the years.

With nostalgia and pride, Pardivala recalls the International Olympic Committee Gold Pin he got in 1958 for "enhancing Olympic ideals and the Olympic movement," the International Amateur Athletic Federation Veteran Pin, for "great service to sport" in 1962, the Amateur Athletic Union of USA's President Kennedy Plaque for "being co-ordinator for the Commonwealth versus USA Athletic Meet in July 1967", the Helm's Athletic Foundation medallion and citation, "in recognition of noteworthy contribution to athletics" in 1969, and the Government of Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Award and Diploma for "distinguished service to sports in the state" in 1972, to mention only a few.

But the award of which Pardivala seems most proud is the Finnish Ministry of Education's Sports Cross and Diploma, also referred to as the Sports Oscar, which he received in 1960, during the Rome Olympic games. The citation states the award is "in recognition of your valuable service to the Finnish sports life." A Finnish newspaper clipping of the times, headlines Pardivala as, "The only Finn in Bombay," continuing, "it was only

right that the Silver Cross of the Finnish Sports was awarded to the teacher of the Bombay Sports Institute, Jal D. Pardivala, who, with several articles and lectures in his hometown of Bombay, as well as in his country, India, has made Finland and its sports known more than anybody else in India." Pardivala received the award after wading through a sea of Indian governmental red tape, jealousy and vindictiveness, "18 months after the award was proposed," notes the *Free Press Journal* of 27 September 1960.

The first Asian and only Indian member of the Technical Committee of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) and a member of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians, Pardivala has authored several books on athletics. His *Manual of Athletic Competitions (Track and Field)*, now in its fifth edition, has been referred to as "undoubtedly the most comprehensive book of IAAF track and field rules ever published in the English language", by the American journal, *Track Technique* in its summer 1979 issue. In 1960, Pardivala released what has now come to be called his *magnum opus* — *Indian Athletics, 1920-1959*, a statistical history of Indian athletics, a "prodigiously painstaking effort, a pioneering record of our athletics",

noted *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, at the time.

The son of a Pardi farmer, Pardivala from an early age displayed his fondness for athletics. He is said to have run 200 metres in 23 seconds as a teenager. But it is as a physical educationist that he was sought after. Pardivala has taught at the Bharda New High School, St. Mary's, Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Institution, Bombay International School, Greenlawns, the David Sassoon Industrial School, and other Bombay schools. He has also conducted training programmes and helped in the organization and administration of major athletic competitions. His pupils remember him as a strict disciplinarian, thorough in his training and a walking athletics Encyclopaedia.

Rashid D. Bamanbehram

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For new miracles or symphonies
Accept transfusions unerringly
Talk of the Raj unendingly
Envy NASA secretly
Even decide to cremate their dead
Some sell out to Johns Hopkins
Bladder, gall and eyeball
Some still have bird-nightmares
Some even make it to TIME --
Babies begin to backchat
Husbands to help out at home
The telephoneman comes around
They run the theme into the ground
Nothing matters not blood nor flame
The almighty dollar
And the son's good name.
(Nothing works like telepathy
Or planeloads of rumour)
Cancer, lunacy still hold sway
An occasional tuberculosis
An annual X'mas 'Dhan-sak'
A 'Pilaf' — stuffed turkey
(Nothing revolutionary)
Or, a display of granny's 'gara'
(Something like The Shroud's unveiling)
Send demi-semi quivers for a day
Ah Parsi Bartleby, Deerslayer
Hester and Dimmesdale
Bombay to Brooklyn brave fog and fall-out
Quoting 'What's in a name?'*

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sodas
a day



and
more



going
down



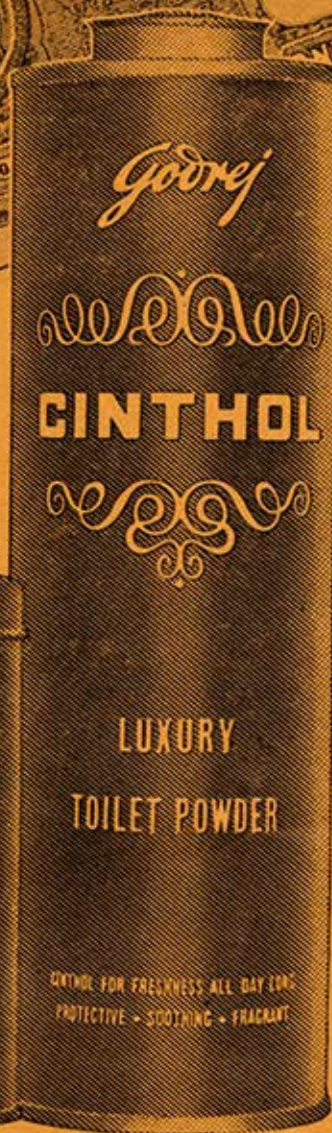
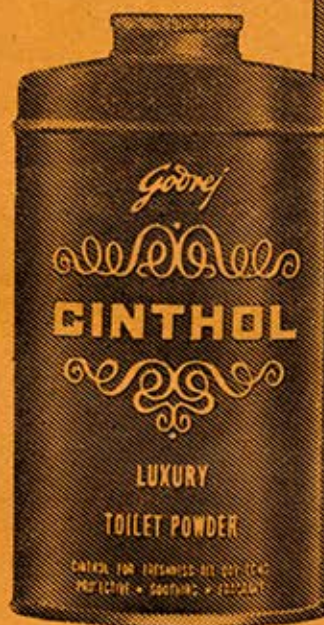
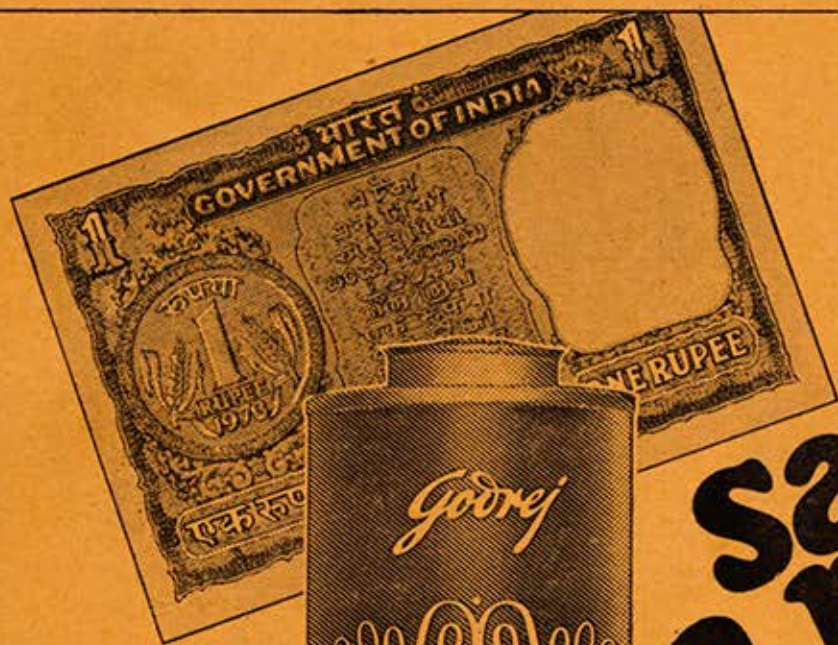
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