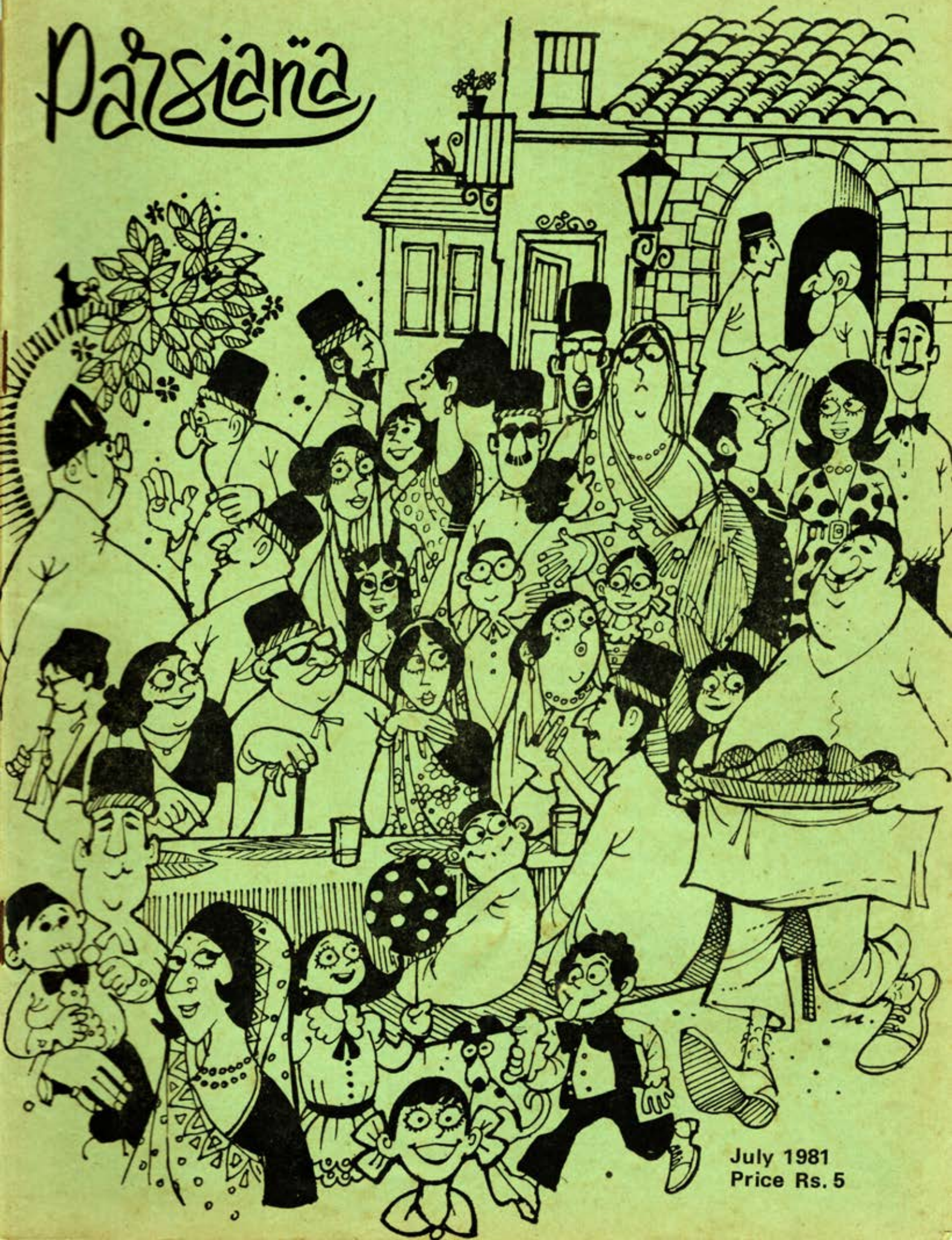


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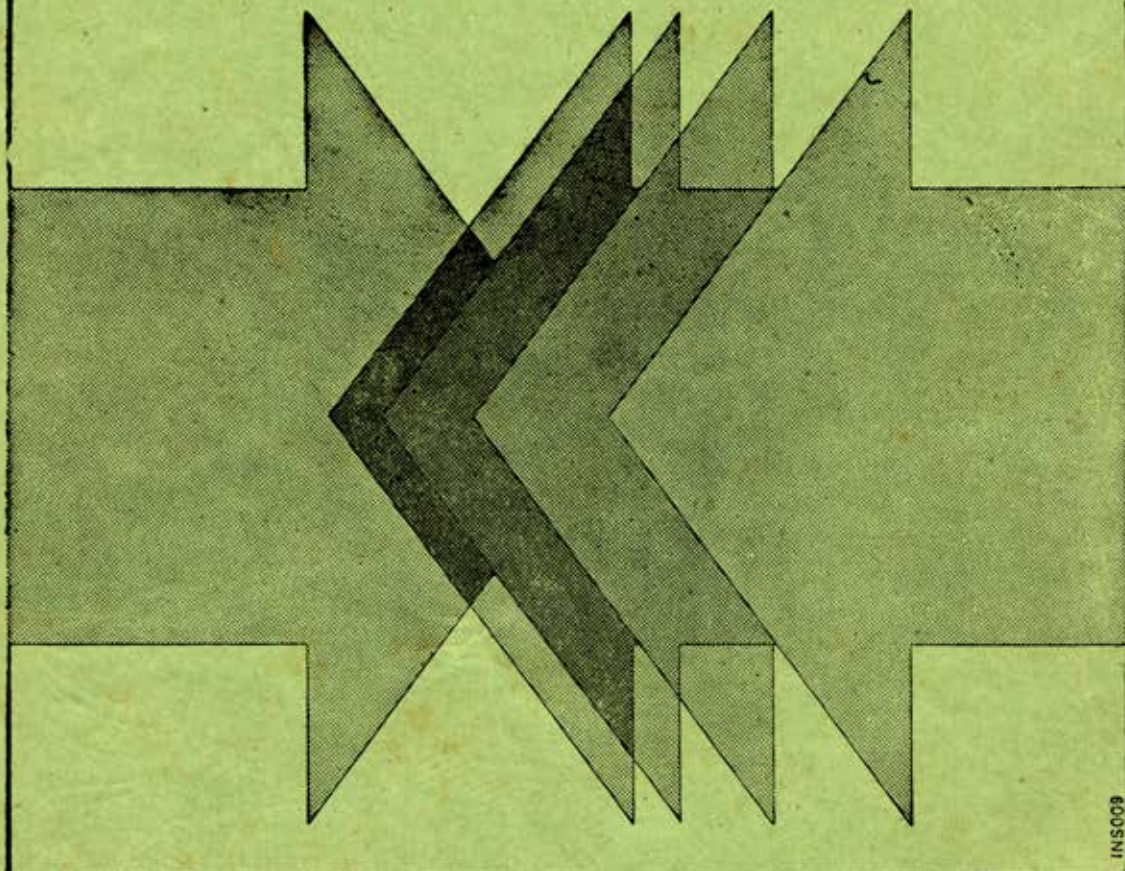
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—Samuel Taylor Coleridge





Parsiana

July 1981 Volume 4 Number 1

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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.

Karachi Mobeds

I have read with interest the article *The Smouldering Embers of the Kadmi Priesthood*, (Parsiana March 1980).

We in Karachi have been worried for sometime about the shortage of mobeds and thought it wise to form a trust for their welfare. This is a collective effort to make this profession more attractive to the young. We have received tremendous support from the Parsis of Karachi, and work towards the betterment of the mobeds has already started.

It is high time that the Indian Parsis thought of some collective effort for their mobeds. Anybody interested in receiving further information regarding this trust may write to the undersigned at 206 Al-Saddar Bldg., Bhickaji Street, Saddar Karachi 3, Pakistan.

I have been a practising priest since

1965, and agree with Valayati 'that it is a very difficult life', but those of us who are truly interested in this profession must continue to try and make improvements in the basic structure of Mobedi, making this dying profession more attractive to the young.

PAURUSASP D. MAGOL
Karachi.

Tribute to Vakeel

Those of us who had the good fortune of coming in contact with Hilla Vakeel, citizen par excellence, who passed away on May 6, would endorse my view that to see Hilla was to like her and to know her was to respect and love her; it made no difference whether they be known names like Verrier Elwin, Aubrey Menen, Balraj Sahni, Mulk Raj Anand, P. L. Tandon, Gulahdas Broker or a college student who participated in the discussions at Nalanda. This gentle and dedicated soul was one of the civilizing influences of Bombay.

It is said that in a democracy the highest office is that of the citizen. Hilla Vakeel's book, *The Good Citizen* conveyed this message. I do wish that efforts are made to make the book compulsory reading for our school going children so that they may become proud citizens of a great city.

ARVIND A. DESHPANDE
Jt. Hon. Director, Bombay Civic Trust.

The Calcutta Parsee Club

You have reported on the first Zoroastrian Athletic Championships hosted by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations for Welfare And Culture (Parsiana, December 1980, Events and Personalities, *FOZAWAC's Amateur Athletics*). Readers may be interested to know about the Calcutta Parsee Club, which has as its principal objects the provision of opportunities and facilities to Zoroastrians to play and participate in games, sports, and athletics. The club also holds sports events and social functions.

The Calcutta Parsee Club was founded in 1908 by five sporting enthusiasts and had for its premises a small tent on the maidan. Today the Club has about 700 members and a spacious tent which is one of the largest on the maidans. The membership strength will appear even more formidable when it is realised that there are currently about 1,600 permanent Parsee Zoroastrians in Calcutta.

The sporting activities of the Club

include cricket, hockey, football, tennis, basketball, badminton, table-tennis and athletics. The Club started as a cricket club and continued as such for quite sometime.

In the years gone by, some of our cricket players have played in the Ranji Trophy Championships and one had even made the all-India grade. One of our girls has also represented the State.

On at least three occasions, our hockey team has annexed the All-India Parsee Cyclists Challenge Cup played at Bombay. Our ladies too, have taken to hockey since 1947. Our team plays in the 'A' Division of the Calcutta Women's Hockey League which they won on more than one occasion. Several of our girls have represented Bengal and one has represented India on three occasions.

In football, the Club's team plays in the Bengal Soccer League. Although our standard is not very high, a number of years ago we had annexed the coveted Lady Hardinge Shield.

In order to encourage the younger generation to take to sports, the Club holds morning tournaments in hockey and football on Sundays and holidays. About 50 to 60 youngsters participate.

The Club's senior basketball ladies team has been playing in the 'A' Division.

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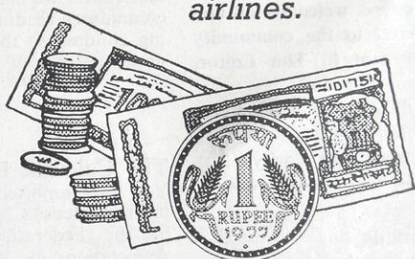
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sion for many years and recently won the League Championship. A number of them have played for Bengal and some still do.

In table-tennis, our members have shown a fairly high standard and some have represented Bengal in the National Championships.

Our Club is one of the very few clubs on the maidans to have as many as three tennis courts. At one time we were the only Club to have four tennis courts, but we later converted one into a basketball court. We hold annual tournaments in five or six events and also hold a tin-and-bottle tournament every year on Christmas Day.

One of our players has won the tennis Singles Championships in the South India, Delhi and Bengal Lawn Tennis Championships. Another player has been a member of the junior squad which participated in various European tennis championships and at Wimbledon.

The Club's first Athletic Sports were held in 1933 and have been an annual feature since then, drawing a large

number of participants and an even larger number of spectators. A few of those first participants were to become leading athletes of the State.

Of late our standards in athletics have fallen and our annual sports meets have become more of a gymkhana affair.

On the social side, the Club organises dances, dinners, lunches, indoor games evenings, film shows, etc. But the two major events are the annual children's party, including a fancy dress contest and the annual Jamshedi Navroz variety entertainment show-cum-a la carte dinner. Both these functions attract a large number of community members.

One of the unique features of our Club is the nominal monthly membership fees. With a view to giving all Zoroastrians an opportunity of participating in sports, athletics and social events, the fees charged vary from Rs. 1 to 5 per month.

On weekends and holidays, the Club runs a canteen where tea and snacks are sold at very low rates.

Another unique feature of our Club is the spirit of bonhomie and camaraderie which prevails among members. There are no cliques or groups or petty politics. Elections at the annual general meetings are conducted without bickering and with near unanimity.

The Calcutta Parsee Club is an institution of which any Parsee can be justly proud.

JEHANBAX A. KAPADIA
Calcutta.

The Strange Case of George Edalji

I refer to Virasp Mehta's request (*Parsiiana*, December 1980) for information on the name of the second Parsi converted by Dr. John Wilson in 1839.

The other convert to Protestant Christianity according to Dr. J. H. Moulton in his *The Treasure of the Magi*, Pg. 214, (Oxford University Press — 1917), was Hormazdji Pestonji.

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Events and Personalities

Peerbhoy Polytechnic

The Akbar Peerbhoy Women's Polytechnic, dedicated to assisting women "to stand on their own feet... to earn their livelihood and to be economically independent" was formally inaugurated on April 24 by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra A. R. Antulay.

Ms Homai Peerbhoy, noted social worker and chairperson of the Polytechnic established in her late husband's name, speaking on the occasion noted, "my husband was deeply interested in education, especially the education of girls, for he strongly believed that to educate a girl was to educate a whole family."

A well-known lawyer, the late Peerbhoy was keen "to see the Muslim community stand shoulder to shoulder with other communities and take its rightful place in the progress and prosperity of the country", said Ms Peerbhoy. "He always felt that by working for his community he was working as much for the whole country, because a chain is as strong as its weakest link. The Akbar Peerbhoy Girls Polytechnic is open to all, irrespective of community, caste or creed."

The late Peerbhoy had bequeathed Rs. 10 lakhs to his Parsi wife with the proviso that the money be used after her lifetime towards the creation



Peerbhoy: "shoulder to shoulder".

of a women's Polytechnic. But Ms Peerbhoy set about creating the Polytechnic within her own life time.

"Though the Polytechnic started functioning since last June, we did not have a formal inauguration till today, because the building was not com-

pleted," said Ms Peerbhoy. "But already over a 100 girls have passed through the portals of the Polytechnic and a 100 more will do so next month."

"We have started the departments of cooking, dress-making, embroidery, beauty culture and hairstyling, fabric printing, making of soft toys and typing and shorthand. More departments will be started from next term."

"Already many of our girls have got jobs and have started earning. We have a programme of learn and earn. We have started a production centre in a modest way and the articles are displayed for sale."

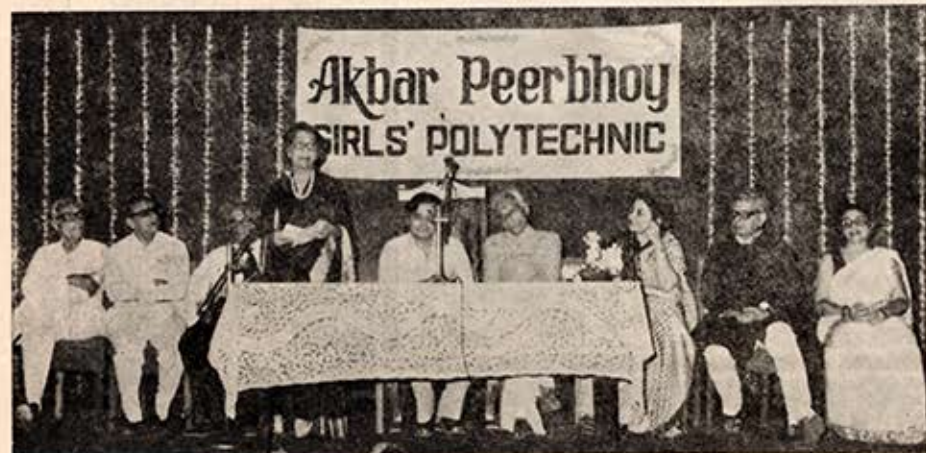
Among other donors are the Sir Ness Wadia Foundation, and the Dorab Tata and Ratan Tata Trusts.

Magistrate, society hostess, journalist, social worker, smiling, soft-spoken Ms Peerbhoy is a vice president of the Anjuman-I-Islam — a 104-year old endowment trust that oversees and maintains 51 charitable cultural and educational organisations of the Muslim community in Maharashtra. The late Akbar had been its president for 17 years and his wife spared no effort to help him with his work.

Indeed, in the Muslim community which traditionally holds women at a discount, Homai, the Anjuman's only female vice-president since its statutes were amended three years ago, has a prestigious niche. She is the chairperson of the new Polytechnic and vice-president of the Anjuman, in charge of the Akbar Peerbhoy College of Commerce and Economics and the Panchgani High School, a flourishing English medium public school open to all communities.

Much of her time away from the activities of the Anjuman-I-Islam is spent in the pursuits of the Friends of Children Society of which she is the founder president. The Society has built two homes for destitute children, a dormitory for the Panchgani High School, a wing for Bombay's Jerbai Wadia Children's Hospital and equipped the J. J. Hospital, Bombay, with a children's operation theatre. It runs a nutrition programme for 100 children while continuously sponsoring

Peerbhoy speaking at the inauguration of the Polytechnic



approximately 40 children and their families. The Society also donated a lakh of rupees to the Polytechnic.

Explaining the genesis of the Society, Ms Peerbhoy recalled the Panchshet Dam disaster and "the harrowing tales of children roaming the streets. Y. B. Chavan was then chief minister of Maharashtra and Akbar knew him well. He agreed to build a home for the children if we could collect Rs 50,000. We registered the society and collected the money in two years."

A metropolitan magistrate sitting at the Juvenile Court, Ms Peerbhoy is a past president of the Maharashtra State Women's Council and a member of its executive and management committees, states her bio-data. A member of the Governing body of the SNTD Women's Polytechnic, she is the Chancellor's nominee on the senate of the SNTD University.

But the young Homai Romer had "wanted to be a barrister, the son my father did not have, to carry on his tradition." The ex-inter collegiate badminton champ recalls how on a visit to the U.K. after graduating from Elphinstone College, Bombay, she pleaded with her parents to permit her to remain in London to become a barrister. "But they wouldn't budge. I had to come back and do my LL.B." But Ms Romer registered her displeasure by refusing to practise. "In those days you couldn't practise at the High Court unless you were a barrister," she rationalised.

Dosu Karaka, "a good friend," introduced her instead into journalism and she joined him on *March*, a Bombay Chronicle Publication; then followed him to *The Current*. The feature on the establishment of the Aarey Milk Colony and the article on a slum colony near Parsi Gymkhana at Marine Lines, Bombay, are two journalistic forays she remembers today, smiling at the memory of her "young son Rutton" (by a previous marriage) and "his fascination with those little huts, so new to the Bombay scene then."

As a commentary to the changing skyline of Bombay, Ms Peerbhoy surveys her well appointed split level apartment in Advent: "When we, Akbar and I, bought this place it had such a magnificent view—clear all the way to Malabar Hill. We thought at least in our lifetime that would not change. The developments you'd rather not have are those that arrive earlier."

(Interview with Ms Peerbhoy
by Arnavaz Mama)

The Mehta Memorial Lectures

In the memory of the late economist, Professor Jamsheed Kaikhusroo Mehta, the Allahabad University has decided to institute the Professor J. K. Mehta Memorial Lectures.



Mehta: pioneering the theory of wantlessness.

"Commencing from 1981, once every year, eminent men from the fields of economics and other social sciences would be invited to deliver lectures in the department of Economics, Allahabad University," notes Vinod Anand, head of the economics department at Allahabad University, in a letter appealing for grants and donations to create an endowment to finance the lectures.

Said to have been the pioneer propagator of the economic theory of wantlessness, the need to minimize wants, on which most of his work is based, Mehta died on 9 August 1980 at the age of 79. Professor and head of the department of economics at Allahabad University, his original contribution to economic thought led him to be acknowledged as an economist of international repute.

Mehta's book, *A Philosophical Interpretation of Economics* was not appreciated by economists in this country, "but the world now recognises the need for consumption control and lesser emphasis on purely material pursuits," notes J. S. Mathur, honorary director of the Institute of Gandhian Thought and Peace Studies, and Professor and Dean of the faculty of commerce at the University of Allahabad. The book has now been rated as a classic and translated into

several foreign languages, adds Mathur.

Besides economics, Mehta "was a master of nearly all branches of academics. He was at his best in the sphere of psychology, philosophy, religion, sociology, mathematics and even medicine," states Mathur, who writes; "He (Mehta) was an eminent homeopath..."

Mehta's willingness to help those in need, his kindness and punctuality ("We could correct our watches by his arrival and departure," noted Mathur), have won for him the respect and admiration of those who have come into contact with him. "Professor Mehta always reminded us of the *Rishis* of Vedic times — always calm, composed, radiating and soothing. To meet him was to feel relieved of one's anxieties and worries. His guidance and advice was available to everyone," recalls Mathur.

Born in 1901 in Rajnandgaon, fifth in a line of six children, Mehta obtained his M.A. in economics, and joined Allahabad University as a lecturer from where he retired in 1963, according to a life sketch in a book of commemorative essays in honour of Mehta entitled *Essays in Contemporary Economics*, edited by P. C. Jain and D. N. Chaturvedi, to which eminent economists have contributed.

The Entrepreneurs of Old

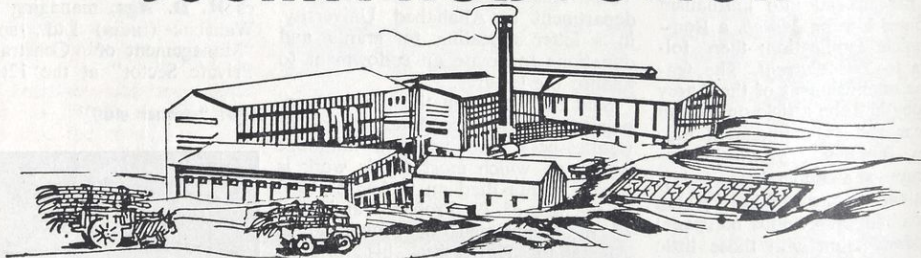
"As a people we tend to be so negative — anybody will give you six reasons why a thing can't be done", states R. D. Aga, managing director of Wansons (India) Ltd., speaking on "Management of Constraints in the Private Sector" at the 12th Annual

Aga: "sterner stuff"



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Convention of the Bombay Management Association (BMA) in 1980. In his talk reproduced in the BMA journal *Ambit*, of December 1980, Aga compared the gumption and foresight of the pioneers of Indian industry, notably Jamshedji Tata, Cawasji Dawar and others, to the Indian entrepreneurs of today, whom he feels would rather operate from behind a facade of complaints and constraints than take the opportunities that come their way with a positive outlook. "An entrepreneur, almost by definition, is a person who does not accept constraints as limiting factors," says Aga, "if an entrepreneur or manager fails, he has only himself to blame."

"Whenever I read the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of a Chamber of Commerce or a Management Association, where a Cabinet Minister, is usually the Honoured Guest, I am amazed at the catalogue of woes that are spewed out by scions of the private sector—M.R.T.P., FERA, licensing, price controls, shortages of power, cement, wagons, credit restrictions, inflation, tax structure, labour legislation, Company Law, the list is endless.

I am sure part of it is for effect although one would imagine that entrepreneurs, being as resourceful and result-oriented as they are, would, after 30 years, have realised the ineffectiveness of these monologues. But let that pass. What I find difficult to appreciate is the pre-occupation of these spokesmen of the private sector with constraints instead of opportunities...

"There was a time in our history when industry was started, when entrepreneurs were made of sterner stuff... I refer to the century between 1850 and Independence, when Indian entrepreneurs had to work under a hostile, alien government which put every possible obstacle to their survival and growth.

The first modern cotton mill was started by a gentleman called Cawasji Dawar in 1851. Thereafter a number of textile mills were set up. But the attitude of the British Government was distinctly hostile. They actually levied a countervailing excise duty on cloth produced in India, while allowing imports duty-free to protect the mills of Lancashire. Can you imagine, what would happen to industry today if imports are allowed duty-free and countervailing excise was levied?

My hero, where private enterprise is concerned, is Jamshedji Tata. The story about his forays into the London capital market for funds for his

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proposed steel plant is well-known. One eminent financier in London, who was sceptical about the capability of an Indian entrepreneur to set up and run a steel mill, is reported to have said that he would eat every pound of steel produced in India. He died of indigestion a long time ago. What is not so well known is that the then British Government refused to give to Jamshedji Tata the data it had on the iron ore available in eastern India which had been surveyed by the Geological Survey of India. Jamshedji Tata had to carry out his own survey under the most adverse circumstances. TISCO is a symbol of his enterprising spirit and dedication. This is the stuff of which entrepreneurs are made".

Studio Chief

The new president of the Association of Motion Picture Studios for 1981-82 is **Hosi Wadia**, a prominent businessman in the film industry.

Managing Director of the Bombay Film Laboratories, a partner of Bombay Sound Services, said to be one of the largest sound recording studios in India, and a director of Bombay Film Enterprises, Wadia, is also treasurer of The Cine Laboratories Association, according to a press release.

A Commerce graduate of Bombay University, Wadia, 42 also represents the Association of Motion Picture Studios and Cine Laboratories Association on the Raw Film Steering Committee, is a corporate member of the British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society of U.K., and a member of the Society of Motion Pic-

Wadia: behind the silver screen



ture and Television Engineers of the U.S.A., notes the release.

Driving Force

Zarine Taraporevala, newly appointed secretary of the 31,000 member Western India Automobile Association (WIAA), has been appointed Honorary Secretary of the Federation of Indian Automobile Associations (FIAA), from 1 May this year, according to a press release.



Taraporevala: motoring improvements

"With her at the helm of affairs, the WIAA, the FIAA and the motoring public generally can look forward to an era of progress and growth and an improvement in motoring conditions and facilities for the members," notes the release.

Taraporevala, who has been in the textile field for the past 25 years, is a graduate of Bombay's Elphinstone and Government Law Colleges, where she is said to have won all the coveted awards, including the Kinloch Forbes Gold Medal.

The FIAA is the parent body of all automobile associations in India, whose interests it safeguards on the national and international level. A road atlas of India has also been compiled by the FIAA with information for tourists.

The WIAA, established in 1919, provides members with a break-down service, facilities for paying taxes, renewing driving licences, and issuing international driving permits. Members also get the benefits of a five percent rebate in motor insurance premium, and are offered a discount

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of 10 percent at selected hotels, notes the release.

Silent Success

Aban Nadir Unwalla of Bangalore was chosen the deaf woman of the year 1980 by the Quota Club of Bangalore, according to a Canara Bank promotional release in the *Decan Herald* of 9 January 1981. "Not content with working as a punch operator in Canara Bank's head office, Aban requested a transfer to a more challenging position", notes the publicity write-up, adding that Unwalla was given "the opportunity to prove herself at the counter of the Benson Town branch at Bangalore."

"Aban today has more than justified the faith placed in her. She has worked hard to establish an excellent rapport with every customer. Her irrepressible smile more than makes up for her silence and her efficiency has impressed not only Canara Bank..."

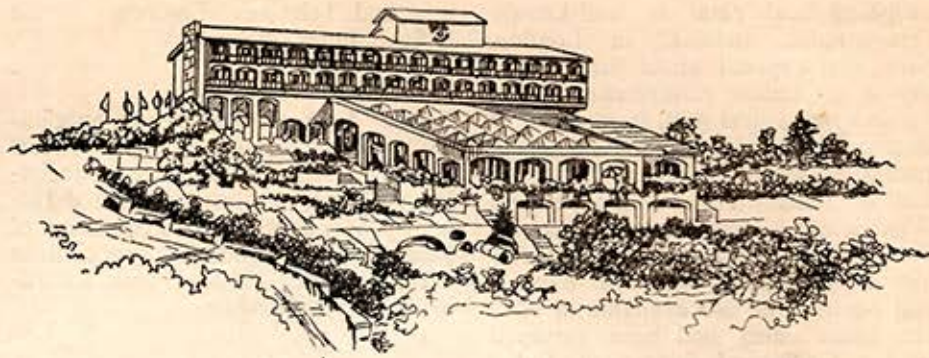
Her father, **Ervad Nadirshaw Unwalla** is the *panthaki* of the Bangalore agiary.

Holiday in the Hills

The picturesque western ghat hill station of Lonavala has its first 5-star holiday resort, thanks to the reputed Bombay hoteliers and constructors, **M/s. B. Jamasji Mistry Pvt. Ltd.**

A sister concern of the Fariyas Hotel in Bombay, Fariyas Holiday Resort was designed by architects **M/s. Dara B. Mistry and Partners** who won a competition held by the promoters to select the best design.

"Several sites near Bombay were considered," noted **Pesi M. Shaw** Technical Director of the Fariyas



An artists impression of the Fariyas Holiday Resort.

Hotel, "but after a thorough market survey and feasibility study, Lonavala was finally selected being the most easily accessible hill station."

According to a report prepared by the architects, the design was based on the requirements spelt out by the management which consisted of 50 Guest Rooms in the 'First Phase' and 40 Rooms in the 'Second Phase,' a conference room for 100 persons, two speciality restaurants, a coffee shop, card room, bar, health club, an all weather glass enclosed swimming pool and other ancillary facilities.

"The main concept of the design is based on the idea of a plaza, surrounding the swimming pool, where there is a sense of happening with the people exposed to maximum participation in the activities surrounding them and promoting visual continuity with various public rooms and the landscaping so as to offer a totally new style of living", note the architects.

The man behind the hotel and construction company is **Hosi Mistry**,

a graduate of the J. J. School of Architecture who is said to have started his firm with a capital of Rs. 10,000. The classic entrepreneur, Mistry built his modest partnership firm into the thriving construction companies of **B. Jamasji Mistry Pvt. Ltd.** and **Bomanji Mistry Pvt. Ltd.** which have built some of the finest multi storeyed structures in Bombay such as Woodland Apartments, Il Palazzo, W.I.A.A. Club, Persepolis, Fariyas Hotel and Harbour Heights.

"In 1970 when the Government gave an incentive to the Hoteliers, Mistry started the construction of Fariyas Hotel at Colaba and proceeded to Europe for further studies for the planning and interior of new modern hotels," notes the firm's write-up. "The word Fariyas has been derived from the names of his first two daughters Farida and Yasmin and the hotel's restaurant 'Abanara' has been named after his third daughter Aban."

"Fariyas Hotels Pvt. Ltd. was the first hotel to get a loan from the Government of India Hotel Development Loan Board and was also the first to return the loan in 1980 before the stipulated period."

Mistry's wife **Amee** looks after the house keeping and interior decoration of the hotel. An affable out-going person, Ms Mistry mentioned at the press conference that the company's staff pitched in whole heartedly for the Lonavala venture. For the press conference to announce the opening of the resort, one of the staff member's wives, Ms Murthy had embroidered a design of the holiday resort.

The Lonavala Holiday Resort is the second hotel venture undertaken by the Mistry's. "The management is confident of making this resort a success," notes Ms Pamela Malkani, marketing and sales manager. "Fariyas will provide great employment potential, the project will be a great boon to the local economy as well as the social community in and around Lonavala."

Mr and Ms Mistry: classic entrepreneurs.



Filling a Cavity

The Zoroastrian Dentists Organization, (ZDO), based in Bombay, has plans to collect funds to sponsor deserving Zoroastrian students to undergo training in dentistry, notes a release from the ZDO on the occasion of their first Scientific Session, held on 24 May at Bombay's Radio Club.

A small committee has reportedly also been formed by ZDO to hold dental camps in the rural areas of Nargol and Udvada for poor and needy Zoroastrians, for which a dental chair and other equipment was donated by noted Bombay dental surgeon and president of the Dental Council of India, **Dr. Fali Mehta**, who chaired the day's proceedings, states the release.

The Scientific Session featured an audio-visual, talks and a question-answer session followed by lunch, notes the release, these activities were preceeded by an Extraordinary General Body Meeting, "the basic purpose of which was to spruce up the organization's constitution and to register life membership."



Dentists (L to R) S. Sahukar, Ratan Doctor, Mehta, Sorabjee and Porus Turner.

que hill-station of Panchgani celebrated its 50th anniversary with a jashan, contributory dinner, *kirtan* and other events. Hormuzdiar Dinshawji Choksi, grandson of Nanabhoy Choksi, spoke on the origin and development of the Dar-e-meher whose birth date falls on Adar Mah Adar Roj (1 May).

A *manpatra* was presented by Dr Navroze S. Kotwal, great grandson of the founder, to Ervad Pavri who has served the Dar-e-meher for 30 years. A casket, shawl and purse were also presented in recognition of his services.

Among those participating in the

nization at the conference.

A former banker, Sidhwa is said to be the backbone of the PTP National Centre, having founded two important PTP chapters in Bombay and Madras, organized the Tenth Decennial Anniversary Celebrations of the PTP National Centre in Bangalore and staged the fourth PTP World-wide Conference at Bangalore.

The PTP was founded in 1956 by the late President Eisenhower to promote world peace and understanding.

SPOTLIGHT

The first Indian woman to be awarded the *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques* by the French government is **Kaity Nariman**, vice-president of the *Alliance Francaise de Bombay*. The award is given to those who are dedicated to the diffusion of the French language, literature and culture. (*Times of India* 12 April 1981).

The new director-general of the Montreal Symphony orchestra is **Zarin Mehta**, brother of Zubin Mehta, conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. The Montreal Symphony is scheduled to tour the Canadian and American west next fall. (*Indian Express* 6 June 1981).

Mr. R. Hormazdiyar, secretary of Ahura Chemicals, Bombay, has been elected president of the Indian Chemical Auxiliaries Manufacturers Association for the year 1981-82, according to *The Economic Times*.

Jal H. A. Vakil, a retired magistrate and administrator of Seth Charities has been elected president of the David Sassoon Library and Reading Room, the oldest library in Bombay. (*Free Press Journal* 20 May 1981).

Naval H. Tata, noted industrialist and president of the Employers Federation of India, has been re-elected for another three-year term to the new Governing Body of the International Labour Office, Geneva. (*Indian Express* 20 June 1981).



Dr. Kotwal reading the manpatra.

Founded 27 years ago, the ZDO has around 80 members, with **Dr. D. Sorabjee** as president, and seeks to invite more members from India and abroad to enrol, according to **Dr. Soli Javeri**, joint honorary secretary of the organization. Life membership is for Rs. 25 while Patron membership is for Rs. 100 in India and for those abroad, \$25 and \$100 respectively, notes the release. Inquiries may be addressed to Dr. S. M. Javeri, 8/31, Grants Building, Arthur Bunder Road, Colaba, Bombay 400 005.

Panchgani Dar-e-Meher Gold

The Seth Nanabhoy Bezonji Choksi Dar-e-meher, situated at the pictures-

functions were Dastur Hormuzdyar Norshirwan Dastoor of Pune, Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza of Udvada, Sir and Lady Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy, *Kirtankar* Parvez Katrak, relatives of the founder and others.

Promoting Peace

Heading the Indian delegation at the Fourth Asian Regional Council Meeting of the People to People (PTP) International Meeting at Taipei, Republic of China, was **Behram S. Sidhwa**, president of the Bangalore Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman, notes a press release.

Sidhwa was chairman of the Workshop for Expansion of the PTP Orga-

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Navjots in Yazd

The largest navjot ceremony ever to be conducted in Iran, was reportedly that of 33 boys and girls in Yazd, on 20 March this year, according to a release from the Zoroastrian International Cultural Association (ZICA).

"Considerable efforts had to be put in by the Tehran-based ZICA Committee for staging the Navjotes", noted **Russi Surti** ZICA president, adding, "In view of the various difficulties prevalent in Iran these days, special steps had to be taken to coordinate with helpers in Yazd. Likewise, very special efforts had to be made in view of the fuel rationing, to arrange for two buses to transport 72 ZICA members and well-wishers 700 kilometers away to Yazd.

"The function opened with a devotional song sung by nine of the 33 initiates, this being an auspicious number because of the 33 *Amshaspands* (angels) or *Ratus* (chiefs). This was followed by a speech by the renowned *Gathic* scholar **Dr. Ali Akbar Jaffarey**, who expounded on the virtues of each individual having the liberty to choose for himself whether he wished to be initiated as a Zarthoshti.

"Not surprisingly, therefore, the age of the new initiates was between nine and 21 years. This speech was followed by the main event with **Mobed Kerman Katrak** first praying the *Havan-geh* and *Atash-nyaish* according to the Iranian custom, while the initiates and Mobeds remained seated on the stage. Thereafter the Mobeds conducted the Navjotes in groups of nine, so as to complete them in four groups. This was followed by **Dastur Meherwan** from the

Yazd *Atashbehram* reciting the *Do-ova Tandarosti*... the function terminated with traditional dried fruits, tea and Yazdi cakes being served to all present."

The release notes that ZICA was "able to meet the expenses for the Navjotes from funds built up over the years mainly through membership subscriptions and the net proceeds of its various functions. The *peramnis* to the initiates came from donations by well-wishers. The gifts to the initiates included **Dr. Ali Akbar Jaffarey's** *Stot-Yasn, Gathic Text of the Avesta with Persian Translation and Commentary*, copies of which were donated by **Sazmane-Farouhar**, a Tehran-based association for Zarthoshti youths."

ZICA was formed in Tehran five years ago by "a few enthusiastic Zarthostis mainly from India and Pakistan in order to render cultural and other services to the community", states **Surti**, adding that, "over the years, it was necessary to coordinate increasingly with local Zarthoshtis and Iranian Anjumans, as a result of which ZICA was proud to have more than 50 percent of its 200-strong membership comprising of local Zarthoshtis."

The ZICA managing committee consists of president **Russi Surti**, vice-president **Navroze Mamlatdar** and members **Homai Mistry**, **Rustom Zarrapoush**, **Kersi Bhesania**, **Arde-shir Zonji**, **Firdosh Shroffi**, **Khodaram Gavashni**, **Mehrmosh Surti** and **Nariman Mavelwala**.

Service to Singapore

A **Keki** and **Nargis Medora** Block,

has been added to the Singapore Leprosy Relief Association (SILRA), in "recognition of more than 25 years service" by the Medoras to SILRA, notes a release from the Association.

The late **Keki Medora** was the "pillar and architect" of the Association, while his wife, **Nargis**, has served the SILRA in various capacities, including that of president, since she first joined as an ordinary member in 1953, states the release.

It was during her term as president, according to the release, that "the present SILRA Home for the destitute was built at Lorong Buangkok Off Jalan Woodbridge for those unfortunate victims who were shunned by their own kith and kin and from society. These destitutes lived in isolation, in extremely squalid conditions not fit for human habitation.

"It is through her initiative and valuable advice that it was possible for the Association to embark on this project of building a Home for these unfortunate ones. Today, there are about 100 former lepers being accommodated who enjoy all the decent modern healthy conditions.

"Workshops for basket-making, carpentry etc. were introduced in the Home for the benefit of these folks who could earn an extra income for their pocket-money."

Besides her work at SILRA, **Medora** is also president of the Women's and Girls' Home, president of the St. Andrews' Hospital Board, a committee member of the Parole Board, on the finance committee of the Y.W.C.A. and vice-president of the Singapore Sports Council for the Handicapped, according to the release.



ZICA committee members



Mobed Kerman Katrak



Katrak with initiates during the ceremony

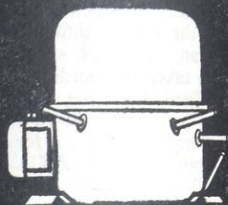
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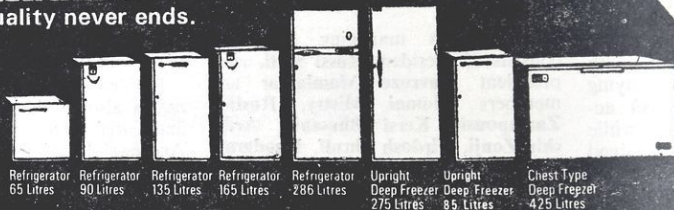
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Adoption and the Parsis, 1981

The emotionally charged issue of who is a Parsi, is once again being raised by the Adoption of Children Bill, 1980, now before the Indian Parliament.

According to the bill, an adopted child will have the same rights, privileges and benefits as a natural born child. The question thus arises that if Parsi parents adopt non-Parsi children will the children be considered Parsi and will they be entitled to all the Parsi religious and trust benefits.

To safeguard against non-Parsis being considered Parsis, several anjumans and individuals have written to the Prime Minister and minister of law, justice and company affairs, to exclude the Parsis from the scope of the bill or to amend some of the clauses as suggested by Rustom Gae, a

"Can the trustees be compelled to grant the benefits to non-Parsi children?"

senior advocate of the Supreme Court and a former law secretary to the Government of India.

Gae's suggestion, and that of several others, is that the adoption bill be so amended as to prevent non-Parsis from receiving any of the benefits, rights, privileges, etc. reserved for Parsis.

Gae's clause states, "Where the child adopted belongs to a race or community or has a religion different from that of the adopter or adopters, nothing in this section, shall effect the race, community or religion of the child, and the adoption shall not by itself confer on the child any rights in regard to matters relating to race, community or religion of the adopter or adopters, which the adopted child would not have had, if it were not adopted."

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Ms. Roda Mistry, a member of the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh, stated, "It has come to our knowledge that some Anjumans on their own without consulting their general bodies have written to your kindself requesting that the Parsis may be exempted from the purview of the Adoption

Bill which is before the Parliament...

"In this connection, the undersigned has written letters to over a 100 Anjumans all over the world asking for their opinion after consulting their general bodies, especially the youth and eminent Parsi Zoroastrian Advocates of the Supreme Court. Their opinion will be compiled and forwarded for your information as soon as it is received.

"It is hoped Madam, that you will give us time to do a proper study and inform you in due course before any action is considered to exclude Parsis from the purview of the Bill."

Shiavax Nargolwala, the controversial president of the Delhi Anjuman and a vice-president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India in a letter to the Prime Minister stated, "It is... very essential that the Adoption of Children Bill, 1980, should be made applicable to the Parsi community in the same way as to all other communities except the Muslims..."

"Due to various socio-economic reasons, and emigration from India, the Parsi community in India is dwindling in size. Due to housing shortages and economic difficulties, many Parsis are unable to or marry very late. Consequently, the fertility rate has dropped and, as each succeeding census shows, there is a sharp decline in the Parsi population of India..."

"Inter-community marriages are on the increase not only amongst Parsis but amongst other communities also. Spouses in such marriages should have the unfettered right to adopt a child and to bring up the child in the religion of the adoptive mother, or the adoptive father. This would be in the interest of the welfare of the adopted child."

A note on adoption prepared by Keki J. Gandhi, the Federation's honorary secretary, states "Can the trustees of the existing funds... be compelled to grant the benefits to non-Parsi children adopted by a Parsi parent?"

"The answer to this legal issue would depend on the terms of the Trust Deeds. These generally provide that the beneficiaries would be Parsi

Zoroastrians, and give unfettered powers and absolute discretion to the Trustees to decide without assigning any reasons, whether to deny or to grant the benefits under the Trust Deeds to a particular individual, and if so, to what extent. Hence even when the Adoption Bill, in its present form and without the proposed amendments, becomes law, it would be left to the discretion of the Trustees of each Trust whether or not they should grant the benefits under the Trusts to non-Parsi children adopted by Parsi parents.

"Even if the above contention is for any reason found to be incorrect, the Trustees, if they so desire, would be able to deny the benefits of the Trusts to non-Parsi children adopted by a Parsi parent on the ground that the settlor's express wish was to confer benefits, on Parsi Zoroastrians only.

"It would therefore seem that there are enough safeguards built into the Trust Deeds and the Trustees of the individual Trusts will be free to decide this issue on their own without any interference or compulsion."

The most important criterion for determining the contents of the Bill, should be the sentiments of the adopted child and the parents-to-be.

Would Parsi parents tell their adopted children to follow another religion or none at all?

If Parsis adopt a non-Parsi child, and this may be the only recourse for couples where Parsi children may not be available for adoption, is the child not to be brought up as a Parsi Zoroastrian? Would Parsi parents tell their adopted children to follow another religion or none at all?

Or should childless Parsi couples who cannot find a Parsi child to adopt, never have adopted children?

The community has to search for an answer based not only on customs and beliefs, but also compassion and understanding.

THE 'GAHAMBAR STYLE'

Gahambars, which went out of vogue in the metropolitan cities, are making a comeback. For the last three years, the once traditional, seasonal community feast has been held on Jamshedi Navroze on the Cricket Club of India (CCI) lawns in Bombay. And more recently the Mancherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, hosted a gahambar to mark its 60th anniversary.

The idea for reviving gahambars in Bombay was mooted by Katie Mehta, partner in the noted Bombay law firm of Mulla and Mulla and Cragie Blunt and Caroe and her husband Dr. Freddie Mehta, a noted economist in Tata's. The Mehtas who are active in community affairs and who gave the noted scholar preacher Khojeste Mistree his initial boost in the Bombay community, thought of the gahambars after several visiting Zoroastrian scholars, amongst them Professor Will Oxtoby, John Hinnells and Cyrus

Pangborn, spoke of the need for the community to get together and how the gahambars once fulfilled this function.

"Just being together is important—for the individual, for the family and for the community... communal life and culture grow and prosper when the community congregates together and lives together", emphasised Nadir A. Modi, noted Bombay lawyer, speaking at the Dadar gahambar, held at the Dadar Parsi Gymkhana grounds on 21 March, where he was the guest of honour. Modi, the founder of the Young Collegian's Zoroastrian Association (YCZA), and his wife, Homai took on the onus for organizing the CCI gahambars from the informal committee of doctors, housewives and professionals, who organized the first gahambar three years ago.

The number of guests at the gahambar exceed 2,000, making it amongst

the largest Zoroastrian community get-togethers in the world, more than even the number at the Third World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in 1974.

At the CCI gahambar, a *jashan*, followed by a *hambandagi* led by Khojeste Mistree, a play — *Zarathosti Jeegar*, an episode from the *Shah-Nameh*, compiled and directed by Homi Tavadia and Tehmi Damanwala was enacted by Parvana Irani, Farokh Dotiwala and Dinyar Tiran-daz, and an audio-visual, *Tavarikh*, based on the enterprising spirit of the Parsi pioneers, especially Jamshedji N. Tata, was screened.

At the Dadar gahambar, besides the customary *jashan*, three navjotes were performed by Ervad Rattansha C. Panthaki, priest at the colony's Rustomframna Agiary, and Ervad Rustomji Panthaki, principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa, assist-



The CCI Gahambar: "Chaiye hame Zarthosti"



(Top right) Hambandagi with Khojeste Mistree (right) the Gahambar Jashan



The Dadar Gahambar: (clockwise) the song-skit, 'Darling tari mari sathe peheli moolakat chhe'; a token of appreciation from the colony residents to Mithoo Jesia, presented by Soli Morris; the navjot ceremony; and Vare-Jam-Kard — a costume drama on the Jamshedi Navroze tradition.

ed by some of the Madressa students. Other programmes performed by colony residents included an Iranian dance, choreographed by Pearly Battiwalla, song and dance items and a costume drama on the Jamshedi Navroze tradition — *Vare-Jam-Kard*, written and directed by Mithoo Jesia, the dynamic rallying force behind the colony's activities, in consultation with Ervad Rustomji Panthaki, with sound effects and recording by Sam Poonawalla. Ms. Jesia's tableau presentation, *Amar Jyoti Zarathustra*, was recently performed at the National Centre of Performing Arts' Tata Theatre, and has run to several packed houses since it was first performed last year.

An innovative touch to the proceedings was the colony youngsters dressed in Iranian costumes greeting guests with a sprinkling of rose water as they entered, popping a sugared confection into their mouth, and a glass of *falooda* on the house.

The gahambars have attracted criticism from several quarters in the community, who state that the gahambars were traditionally free and open to the entire anjuman of the place. The Bombay gahambars charge between Rs. 20 and 25 which barely covers the costs. Whatever amount is left over is used for charitable purposes.

The criticism led some of the organizers to term the C.C.I. evening a 'gahambar style' function. But as people realize that it is not possible to feed all the Parsis in Bombay free of

"The Gahambars are six holidays or periods of holidays, each of the duration of five days, that occur at stated times of the year," according to Jivanji Jamshedji Modi's book *The Religious Ceremonies And Customs Of The Parsees*.

Modi notes, "the first object of the celebration of the Gahambars was to offer thanksgiving to God for the institution of the different seasons, on the regularity of which depended the prosperity of the world. To this primary object was latterly added the object of offering thanks for the creation of the six best and grand objects of Nature — The Heavens, Water, Earth, Vegetable Creation, Animal Creation, and Man..."

"The Gahambars are generally accompanied with solemn feasts, wherein members of the family, or residents of a street, or a town participate. *Gahambar-ni-chasni*, i.e. the ceremonial and communal eating of the things offered in the Gahambar ceremonies, forms an important part in the Gahambar celebration.

"It was considered to be the duty

cost on any given day at any given time, the affixed 'style' will gradually be dropped as the community comes to accept the modified 20th century version of the age-old feast.

of a Zoroastrian to celebrate the Gahambars. Then how were the poor to celebrate these? The *Afringan* of the Gahambar suggests a way for that. It says that all may participate in the public Gahambars and pay their mite, however poor, according to their means.

"Every Zoroastrian need not celebrate a Gahambar separately. There may be public Gahambars, celebrated by the members of a family or by the inhabitants of a particular street in a town or by those of a particular village or town. All may participate in these public Gahambars..."

"Of all ceremonial occasions, the Gahambars were considered to be the principal occasions for ceremonial gatherings. Universal Brotherhood, which we often hear spoken of, was one of the principal objects aimed at in the public Gahambars. The rich and the poor — rich and poor not only in wealth but in intellectual knowledge — of the town were expected to meet together and to learn from each other."

News from the Media

Parsis' Housing Right Upheld

Judge S. F. Rego at the Bombay City Civil Court gave a ruling affecting the rights of minority communities, and upheld the right of the Parsis to maintain the **Dadar Parsi Colony** area as an exclusive Parsi residential preserve.



Bust of Mancherji Joshi: Founder-father of the Dadar Parsi Colony.

The decision was delivered in suits filed by the Parsee Central Association Co-operative Housing Society, the Zoroastrian Building Society and two other Parsi plot holders in the area against builders who had purchased properties in the area and were threatening to sell the additional flats constructed in the buildings to persons who were not members of the Parsi Zoroastrian community, in breach of a covenant entered into between the original plot holders and the Zoroastrian Building Society.

The plaintiffs contended that the Deed of Covenant restricted the use and occupation of the buildings built on about 103 plots in the Dadar-Matunga estate only to Parsi Zoroastrians. This was under a building scheme formulated in 1926 by the Zoroastrian Building Society, in conjunction with the then City of Bombay Improvement Trust, to meet the housing needs of the Parsis.

The 103 plots comprised in the scheme were agreed to be leased to the Zoroastrian Building Society for 999 years in 1926. In turn, the Zoroastrian Building Society allowed the leases to be taken in the names of its nominees, or substituted tenants in consideration of such nominee executing the deed of covenant, whereby he agreed that the buildings would be given for use and occupation or residence only to members of the Parsi Zoroastrian community.

The defendants, who were owners of the plots in question, the builders and the non-Parsi purchasers of flats, contended that such a covenant did not run with the land so as to be binding on the successors in title of the original contracting parties, and that in any event, after the coming into force of the Constitution of India, such a covenant was void as being opposed to public policy and also violative of the defendants' fundamental rights not to be discriminated against on grounds of religion, and to reside and settle in any part of India.

The judge negated the contentions of the defendants and held that fundamental rights did not apply to the field of private contracts and were available only against the State and against State action. The judge upheld the plaintiffs' contention that living together was essential for and helped minority communities like the Parsis to preserve and protect their culture and language and their essential cultural identity, which protection was afforded to all minority communities by Article 29 of the Constitution.

The judge found in favour of the plaintiffs on the issue of the building scheme and granted to the plaintiffs an injunction restraining the defendants by themselves, or by their servants and agents or persons claiming through or under them from, inter alia, parting with possession of or letting out or otherwise dealing with the flats in the suit buildings, for being used and occupied by persons who were not members of the Parsi Zoroastrian community.

Mr. N. A. Mody, Mr. B. R. Zaiwalla, Mr. F. E. DeVitre and Mr. J. P. Avasia appeared for the Plaintiffs. Mr. Y. H. Muchhala, Mr. A. Rajabali and Mr. K. H. Modi appeared for the defendants in the main suit.

Mr. K. S. Cooper and Mr. D. S. Parikh appeared for the Parsi Panchayat, who were allowed to intervene in the matter. Mr. P. K. Pandit appeared for the Municipal Commissioner.

(Indian Express 30 April 1981)

Rich Indians who sided with British

The Jeejeebhoy papers in the Bombay University library collection throw light on the obstacles that nationalists like **Dadabhai Naoroji** faced during the last century from affluent Indians who were outright pro-British.



Naoroji: 'purely selfish'

The Jeejeebhoy and Sasoons dominated the commercial and political life in Bombay before the advent of the Tatas.

Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, who carried on a profitable China trade in opium, cotton, tea and gold with Jardine Matheson at the Canton end, in a letter now at the archives, wrote to Governor-general Northbrook: "My opinion is that the government with the very best of intentions is making a mistake in giving the masses very high-class education at too cheap a rate. As a rule, the natives do not seek or appreciate this high education for its own essential value but simply in the hope

Jeejeebhoy: making a mistake



of obtaining thereby advancement in the government service."

Some of the Jeejeebhoy papers running into 11,000-odd sheets in 48 copy-books, are now here for repair and preservation. The most interesting of them is the correspondence of Sir Jamsetji with British officials, friends, bankers and business houses during 1826-1876.

In another letter, the big business baron wrote: "I have no sympathy with men like **Nowrojee Ferdoonjee** and **Dadabhai Naoroji** who I look upon as mere political agitators who pretend to have at heart the interest of their countrymen but whose aims and purposes are purely selfish".

(The Times of India 8 June 1981)

Lifer for One in Pithawala Murder Case

One person was sentenced today to life imprisonment by the Surat sessions judge, **Babubhai Patel**, for having caused the murder of **Nariman Pithawala**, former vice-president of the Surat district panchayat, on September 3 last. Six others charged with the same crime were acquitted.

Raman Chittu Patel, alias **Gomla**, was convicted under section 302 read with section 34. He was, however, acquitted of charges under section 302 read with section 148 and 149.

Dilip Desai, **Shantilal Patel**, **Bikku Chittu**, **Kalidas Dhamji**, **Jayanti Surji** and **Channu Chinda** were acquitted of



Ferdoonji: political agitator

charges under section 302 read with sections 34, 148 and 149.

Nariman Pithawala, president of the Surat jilla poultry farmers co-operative society, **Chalthan**, was driving to his office on September 3 when a truck dashed against his car on the outskirts of **Chalthan**.

When **Pithawala** got out of the car and tried to run away, six or seven people from the truck, including the

driver, surrounded him and battered him with sticks, rods and other weapons. They left him bleeding about 50 feet from the car. He succumbed to his injuries in the civil hospital in **Surat**.

The sessions judge held that the prosecution had firmly established that six or seven people delivered blows and caused injuries and also that one external injury and six internal injuries were sufficient to cause death.

The judge held that the prosecution had proved beyond doubt that the main accused, **Raman Gomla**, was among the assailants who caused the murder.

The judge also held that the prosecution had failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the others accused had committed the alleged offence.

Mukund Joshi appeared for the prosecution and **Bipin Hazari** for the accused.

(The Times of India, 9 June 1981)

Life for Accused in Parsi Fire Temple Case

A servant of the Parsi fire temple at **Fort, Bombay**, who had murdered another employee of the temple last year, was sentenced to life imprisonment by Justice **B. J. Rele**.

The trial for what came to be

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known as the Parsi agyari murder case had started on May 8. The killer, **Homi Minocher Karanjia** was sentenced to rigorous life imprisonment under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code and to a further rigorous imprisonment for two years and to pay a fine of Rs. 500 under section 457.

Homi had been charged with the murder of **Darabshaw Cawasji Elavia**, who had been working at the Vatcha agyari at Dr. D. N. Road, Fort, for several years.

While trying to get away with the temple valuables, Homi had been nabbed by Darabshaw on the night of September 3 last year. In the scuffle that ensued, Homi reportedly assaulted Darabshaw with a knife and a wooden log and after killing him, threw his body in a well situated in the temple's compound.

Homi, who fled from the spot, was subsequently nabbed by the men and officers of the Palton Road police station. Darabshaw's body was recovered from the well after the culprit had confessed and was taken out by the fire brigade. The blood-stained clothes of both Homi and Darabshaw were also recovered by the police.

The judge dismissed the defence of the accused that some outsiders had committed the murder. The accused was defended by Mr. Singh and prosecuted by Mr. Golwalla.

The case was investigated by sub-inspectors Yengde and Gaonkar under the supervision of inspector M. F. Irani.

(The Times of India, 29 May 1981)

Dadi Bulsara's Superb Show

A sleek blue Ambassador slowly rolled on to the stage and stopped and **Slihan Dadi Bulsara** slipped under its rear wheel. A karate cry from Bulsara and the car passed over his groin as the 8,000 crowd watched in disbelief at the sprawling St. Thomas school premises in Calcutta.

Bulsara claims it to be a unique achievement as according to him nobody in the world has ever attempted to pass a car over the groin.

But this was not the only spectacular feat Bulsara, branch chief, director and controller of the All-India Kyokushin Karatedo, achieved. He had earlier broken eight slabs of ice, each weighing 70 lbs., to create another world record, surpassing the record created by M. Nakamura of Japan, who broke six slabs of ice at the karate Olympics at Tokyo in 1979.

(The Times of India 12 May 1981)

A Hundred Years Ago

A movement of considerable interest

has sprung up within the last few weeks among the Parsee community here, a movement which may have the most important results for that community if taken up by leaders who are thoroughly and intelligently in earnest, but which will, of course, end in nothing if left in the hands of Parsees who care for an agitation of the kind chiefly as an occasion for displaying their verbosity. It has been variously described as a movement in favour of religious education, or as one for religious reform, but as it calls also for the religious education of the priestly class, who ought to be the educators, and as its chief aim is to ascertain what the Parsee religion really is, it may be described with more accuracy as a movement in favour of a revival of true Zoroastrianism among profess-

ing Zoroastrians. The circumstance which gave rise to the present discussion on the subject was an article on the Parsees, by Professor Monier Williams, in the March number of the *Nineteenth Century*, but the readiness and zeal with which the Parsees themselves seem to be taking the matter up show that there exists a widespread feeling of both need and room for such a revival. There is another and more recent circumstance popularly assigned as the occasion of the present movement, but although Mr. K. R. Cama seemed to lend colour to that surmise in his recent lecture, the Parsees are really indebted to Professor Williams for their present attention being directed to the purity of their Zoroastrianism.

(The Times of India 2 May 1981)



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THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

*The people sit, all dressed in white
Their eyes well up with tears.
They're paying homage to their dead
They know their time too nears.*

*The incense burns with sandalwood
The smoke clouds up the place.
The people sit. Staring, Staring.
At the corpse's bloodless face.*

*The incense burns with sandalwood
The priests' voices intone
Prayers to Ahura Mazda
"A sinner's sins condone."*

*The prayers end, the priests are through
The men in white file past
They pay their respects to their dead,
It's all over at last.*

*The pall bearers shoulder the corpse,
Men hardened and dour.
Followed by grieving men in white,
They proceed to the Tower.*

*Beside the path, the peacocks dance,
Softly sway the trees.
For just a while the sorrow's forgot
In the whispering, wafting breeze.*

*Upon the pleasant winding path
Sudd'nly a shadow falls,
High up above the swaying trees,
A vulture hoarsely calls.*

*In grim and silent majesty
The Tower of Silence stands
To greet the corpse that once did live
Greet it with outstretched hands.*

*At last the trail comes to a halt
Before the Tower's doors
The shouldered corpse is carried in,
The birds unfurl their claws.*

*The hunger stricken beady eyes,
Glare balefully in flight
Sharp beaks open on seeing the corpse,
And swoop down out of sight.*

*The mourners' eyes well up once more,
The vulture — death on wings,
Rears its ugly head and feasts,
Afraid, a peacock sings.*

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Neville: Strongest man in India.

Vispi: doing a squat snatch.

The Daroga Brothers

The Darogas are one family that believe in carrying their own weight — and a lot more. **Rusi, Vispy and Neville** have all made a name for themselves in the muscle tensing sport of weight lifting.

Vispy, the second brother has consistently broken national record after record, and at the National Weight Lifting Championships which were held in New Delhi this March, he claimed the middle-heavyweight title by creating a new national record. Earlier this year, he captured the bronze medal at the Commonwealth Weight Lifting Championships held in Auckland, New Zealand.

Not to be outdone by his older brother, Neville won the super heavy weight title at the National Weight Lifting Championships, and earned the title of the strongest man in the country.

Rusi, the eldest brother, who won the Maharashtra State Championship in the light heavyweight class in 1978, and the Greater Bombay Championship in March 1980, is still an active contestant, and was the first of the young men in the old Parsi Bombay bastion of Balaram Street to take up the sport.

Their father, Keki, a gymnast who taught at the Marwadi Vidyalaya High School, gave the boys the impetus to take up the sport.

Vispi, who represented India at the 8th Asian Games held in Bangkok where he stood fourth, recalls the encouragement given to the brothers by various persons and institutions. At the Sir Cowasjee Jehangir High School and Behramji Jeejeebhoy School, the school staff helped out, with Ms Roshen Driver, the principal of the Jeejeebhoy school ensuring he received a glass of milk during the short recess.

Later on Dinshaw Merchant, an active community member who has assisted numerous Parsi sportsmen, gave him a "diet allowance." In order for a weight lifter to indulge in the sport, a protein rich diet is crucial but expensive. The brothers down six eggs around the time of competitions.

At the Burhani College, Vispi was given "full facilities" and a scholarship. Rusi, who first took up body building and then switched to weight lifting, notes that a person cannot do both things. "You have to decide which muscles to develop."

He bemoans, "the lack of scientific training" for the sport in India. Most of what he learnt was gleaned from Russian and German weight lifting magazines.

Neville, started out 'hating' weight lifting. "My brothers forced me to go with them. I used to sit and watch and then I became enthusiastic.

Weight lifting is very good for the health, if it's done in the right manner."

The peak years of weight lifters lie between 30 and 33 years, according to the brothers; with Vispi and Neville, in their early 20's, and Rusi, still to approach the mid 30's, the Daroga's have a healthy and a 'heavy' future before them.

Rashid D. Bamanbehram

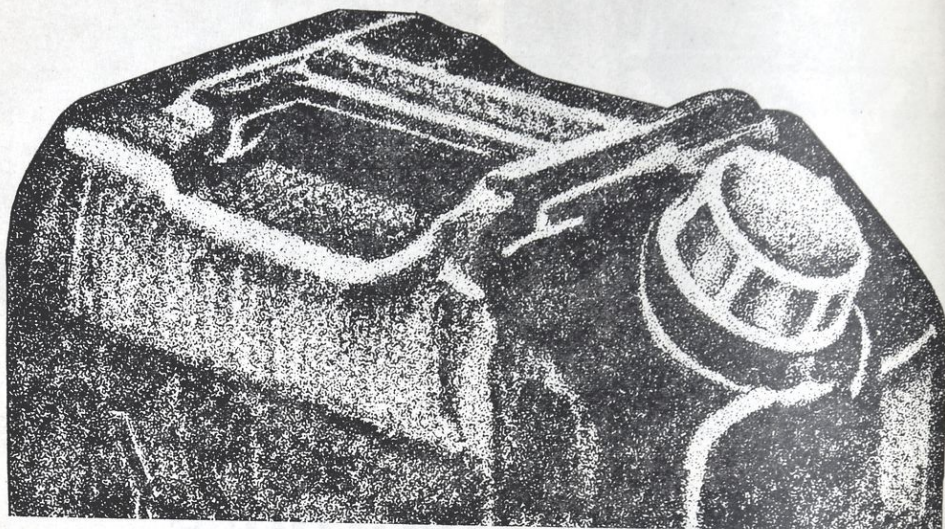
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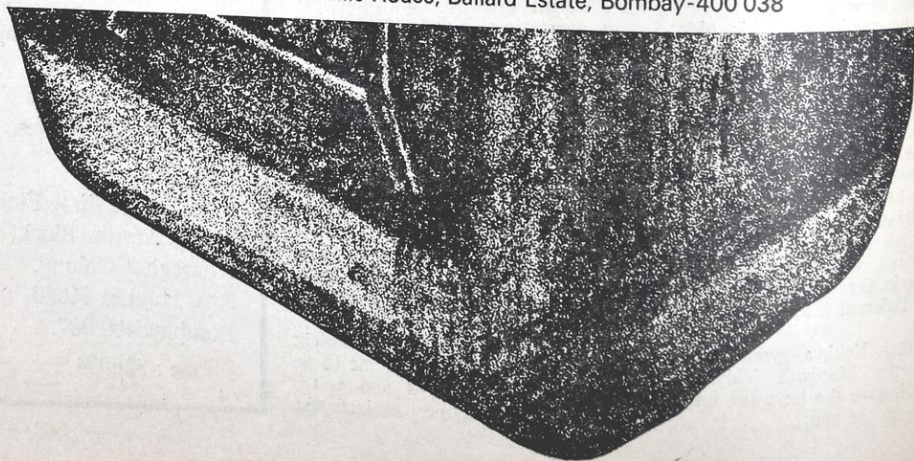
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AEK ATMAKATHA

REFORM AND REBUKE

The life of Dastur Dhalla XV

Aek Atmakatha is the autobiography of the late Dr. Manek Nusserwanji Dhalla, high priest of the Pakistan Parsis and a religious scholar of world repute. This is the fifteenth edited and condensed extract from the English translation of the book—'Dastur Dhalla—The Saga of a Soul', by Gool and Behram Rustumji, 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. He was married to five-year-old Cooverbai when he was eight years old. 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 under the guidance of Professor A.V.W. Jackson, the well-known Zoroastrian scholar of the west, Dhalla was awarded 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. On his return to India, Dhalla was nominated the Dastur of Karachi, on 19 September 1909, his 35th birthday. Dhalla wished to elevate the status of the priestly class by encouraging priests to educate themselves in religious matters and to voice their opinions irrespective of the wrath of the orthodox in the community. Dhalla advocated reforms in the established religion and felt that the priests were best suited to do this.

One of the first questions that demanded my complete attention was to establish a kind of association that could organize a Zoroastrian Conference to ponder upon and discuss problems pertaining to the progress and betterment of the community. It was my desire and hope that all the dasturs, mobeds and ervads of all the varied sects could meet on a common platform and ponder upon their own condition.

It was my idea to offer the chairmanship of the first conference to one who by birth was a *behdin* but a true dastur in conduct and in wisdom—Ulema Khurshedji Cama. But fate had ordained otherwise and, within a week of publishing my circular, all of a sudden his heart failed and he passed away to meet his Maker.

The suggestion to hold a Zoroastrian Conference was welcomed with enthusiasm by a large majority, but in order to make it more effective many people from Bombay advised that the Conference be thrown open to the entire community so that any communal question regarding its improvement could be discussed.

It was decided to hold the Conference at Bombay on 16th, 17th and 18th April 1910. I personally met many leading men of the community and won their sympathy for the movement. I persuaded the learned Dastur Darab Sanjana of the Wadiaji Atashbehram to accept the chairmanship of the *ad hoc* committee and requested the deputy Dastur Rustom Sanjana to work as the secretary. The first three meetings of the committee were held under the chairmanship of Dastur Darab and the work went on smoothly.

Upto this time the community had welcomed the preliminary Conference with one accord. Daily and weekly newspapers spared no pains in giving it their whole-hearted support. Yet within a short span of time, it was whispered that the Conference was not in reality all that it appeared to be in public.

Our adventurous, forceful, daily communal newspapers, through eight editorials a week and 12 articles

scribbled during the 12 hours between dawn and dusk, completely confused the community. The more conservative members resigned from the committee and the Zoroastrian Conference that had its birth and its existence without any sect or party or opinion, suddenly came to be regarded as a separate, extreme, reformist party and henceforth took the semblance of what it was not.

Accusations of two kinds were levelled against the Conference. Uncircumscribed, fiery, accusations alleged that the organizers of the Conference were endeavouring to coat with a veneer of the west, the customs of the community. Others were definite and pointed out that the Conference was trying to seize the *Gahambar* funds; that it was determined to limit the burning of sandalwood, that it desired to throw open the gateways of the community to non-Zoroastrians, and that it was advocating cremation.

The complaint regarding the *Gahambar* fund was not entirely unfounded. Instead of conserving lakhs of rupees for communal dinners on certain days of the year in Bombay and other places, they could be utilized in more beneficial ways to the community. The most that the Conference could have done about it would have been to try to cultivate communal opinion about it.

The question of sandalwood arose because there is a vast difference between the fragrant fuel that was used in Iran ages ago, and is still being used there, and that which we are using since we came to India. We use extremely expensive items like sandalwood and frankincense most lavishly. This was not done in Iran. Ahura Mazda does not estimate a man's faith according to the weight and value of sandalwood and frankincense.

If it could be proved that the Conference was being invited only to revive the *joodin* question that had just recently abated, then it would become so unpopular in the community that it would be suicidal. And the opposition spared no pains to do so.

Just as the opposition towards the Conference had driven away the ortho-



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dox group from us, it had at the same time, bought into our fold many different individuals of more reformist views who had not bothered to concern themselves with communal questions or to take part in any of its movements.

Gradually the Conference became a reformist body, although serious, balanced moderates like Jeevanji Mody, Meherwanji Cama and others continued to take an enthusiastic interest in it. In such an inflammatory atmosphere the work of the Conference was inaugurated.

As I crossed the threshold of dasturhood, the majority of the community frowned on me. The violent opposition leaders succeeded in branding me guilty in the eyes of the masses. Making capital out of my not being a *maratab*, messages started pouring in from Bombay not to recognize or acknowledge me as a head priest. From all sides I was accused of having presented Zarathushtra as an 'ordinary' man. I was charged with harbouring vain presumptions of reforming the religion of Prophet Zarathushtra. I was labelled a dangerous dastur and an irresponsible reformist.

As I was not wont to writing or speaking in public to explain the injustices done to me, I had to endure them patiently.

A mammoth meeting of the opposition party was called at the Faramjee Cowasjee Institute to read out the protests against the Zoroastrian Conference that had been collected from various cities of Gujerat by string-pulling

from Bombay. At this meeting I was attacked in unrestrained language.

A very highly qualified university graduate, well-known for his impetuosity, with the purpose of playing upon the sentiments of his audience,

Ahura Mazda does not estimate a man's faith according to the weight and value of sandalwood and frankincense.

even crossed the limits of common courtesy to say that only a wretched community like the Parsis would tolerate such an insult to their Prophet.

Such incitement would not always fall on deaf ears. Some weak-minded men would surely try to act upon it. To write anonymous letters is an unfortunate weakness of our community; hence it was but natural that I started receiving threatening and profane letters.

My co-religionists of Karachi had sent me to Bombay to crown the Conference with success. The opposition party left no stone unturned to stop the meetings from being held.

Rumours had already reached the realm of my dasturship even before my return to Karachi that I had been disgraced in Bombay and that the Parsi stalwarts of that land had made it incumbent upon me to flee from the Conference Hall by the backdoor.

At Karachi, a very strong party was in the opposition. Under the leadership of the managing trustee of the Saddar Daremeher, 25 people made

an impassioned appeal to the community through handbills, to dethrone me from the seat of the high priest. The leaflets that were printed in Gujerati were freely distributed amongst Hindus, Vohras, Memons and Khojas, while through letters in English they tried to impress upon European officers not to consider me as the high priest of the Parsis any longer. Since the Conference had been held in Bombay, these men did not forget to apprise the Governor of Bombay also.

I did not scorn the sentiments that had been growing against me in the community. My views were not in conformity with those of my critics, yet I respected them.

I listened to all that was said against me, read everything that was written to run me down. If anyone wished to seek an explanation, I did not grudge him the time or the opportunity. Those who met me personally, usually left as friends.

Most of the things that were spoken or written about me were not true—they did me injustice. Yet I refrained from replying to anyone. My supporters were displeased with this attitude, but I persuaded them that my work was my answer.

During this period I commenced publishing a monthly magazine entitled *Asha*, containing valuable articles on Zoroastrian ethics, history, philosophy, etc. Due to insufficient circulation it faced a deficit and had to be abandoned. Strange as it may seem, the number of orthodox sub-

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A Parsi at Persepolis, 1981 A.D.

Here we are
Among Kings of Kings
Foreshadowed in flight
By Farovahar's wings
His umbrella
And shoe
Now they bear him a cow
Now butter
Now a lamb
Now wool
Who are these bearers?
How much have they borne?
Where are bearings?
What makes the markings of a King
Or of a stone Farovahar's wing?

I Write English

I write English
Avestan dead
Hindi in the cinema
Parsi Gujarati engraved in tomes
I've no one to blame
The Raj went
Bombay's not a homeland
Nor an island:
England America Iran....
A moneyed minority's unpitied
If charity's in-bred
There's no color to plead
Ahura outlawed deviation
All merry and weak
There's nothing to fight
Malabar Hill, Ooty Races
Doongerwadi, 'Dharamsalas'
All variously decaying
We've neither Vampire nor Camille
We've Boeings to fly
Nuclear reactors for fission
Birds to feed on the dead
As Lady Chichi said
'Have a poet'
My skin neither black nor white
A Persian dusk
grows green

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Avesta gives no evidence of the completeness and correctness to be expected of a language that may be conceived as celestial.

scribers was greater than that of reformists.

Till the beginning of the last century the system of the priests of our community giving religious instruction to their flock through sermons was unknown; nor did the literate laity spread any such knowledge to the masses through lectures and talks.

After Surat came under the jurisdiction of Bombay in 1600, its Governor, Sir Jonathan Duncan, sanctioned a monthly salary of Rs 50 to Dastur Cowasjee Rustomji, the high priest of the *Shanshais* of Surat, instructing him that in order to remain loyal to the government it was incumbent upon him to give religious teaching to the Parsis from time to time, and whenever the government required any explanations regarding the customs and practices of the Parsi community, the same should be supplied.

During that period the community had commenced being educated to some degree and a new group of young men who had studied English had been created.

Navroji Darabji Chandaru, the active and alert editor of the *Halkaru* (the Herald) and the *Chabuk* (the Whip) of Bombay, gave a talk in Gujarati at the Town Hall on *The Customs and Practices of the Parsis*. Later, when Reverend Wilson waged a *jihad* against Zoroastrianism, he gave talks refuting the same.

From ancient times the pulpit has been an integral part of the Christian Church. Under the direction of Reverend Wilson the youth of our community who had acquired English education, were attracted to Christian churches to listen to their sermons and were deeply influenced by them. It was their earnest desire that our religious leaders should give them similar service.

The Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Society, which had been established in 1851, later organized sermons and lectures from time to time. But we did not conduct regular Sunday services or sermons as in Christian churches. The reformist press and the educated youths of the community were constantly calling for them but no practical steps were taken to cater to their needs.

During my stay at New York, I frequently attended one church or an-

other on Sundays. At that time I had made up my mind that on returning to Karachi I would arrange to organize regular prayer meetings at the *Daremeher* on the four *Hamkars* of each month. This hope of mine was fulfilled on my attaining the head-priestship.

With the eager co-operation of some enthusiastic youths and the sympathy of our leaders, an organization, based on the principles of the world-famous Y.M.C.A. came into existence amongst the Parsis of Karachi and it was called the Y.M.Z.A. (Young Men's Zoroastrian Association). From the inception of the association we gave prime importance to congregational prayers and sermons on every *Hamkara*.

But as the initial excitement abated, the congregation gradually thinned. For seven years we continued these *Hamkara* prayer-meetings, despite very poor participation. But when it became impossible to attract people, we had to end this religious movement meant to foster a feeling of devotion.

A question which is as old as the hills, yet always seems fresh, is the question of praying in a current and comprehensible tongue.

In one of our issues of the *Rahnuma* of 1926, I had penned an article about this. Some passages from which are quoted below:

"From the beginning of the last century, the youth of the community began to study English literature. Many years of the students were spent in acquiring this knowledge. This was the first time that Zoroastrian youths were availing of such high and wide education and spending 15 or 17 years of their lives in its pursuit. The new age of religious and social movements had set in, first in the Province of Bengal and later in Bombay.

"In the middle of the 19th century our community too came under the influence of this new age. There was a clash of new and old ideologies and heated debates ensued on certain ques-

tions. One of these questions was this topic of prayer in an intelligible tongue.

"This question of praying in a language that can be understood was born of the group of youths who had attained this new type of education. They felt that to pray in a tongue which was beyond its ken was mere meaningless babbling... Despite the lapse of seven decades its demand has not been met. Its appeal continues and the opposition too, is as strong as when it started. This question is of grave importance to the religious life of the community.

"The foremost and strongest opposition against the request to pray in an intelligible language was that Avesta was a celestial language... Avesta was the language of Iran when Zarathushtra began to compose his verses. He had studied in that language and it was also in common use, hence it was natural that he should write in Avesta.

"Should it be presumed that Avesta is composed by Ahura Mazda, Himself, and that its source is spiritual, then its prime quality must needs be its perfection. But Avesta is not infallible. Avesta gives no evidence of the completeness and correctness to be expected of a language that may be conceived as celestial.

"The perfect writings of a spiritual language should be such as would apply equally to mankind at every stage of his existence. But the major portion of what has been written is merely a portrayal of the local movements, traditions, superstitions, customs and the social life of the people of those times. It is impossible to apply them to changed times and climes, conditions and circumstances. Man's work is never perfect. Even so the Avesta, written by man, is not perfect.

"Whatever Avestan writings are existing with us are utilized as prayers. These prayers can be divided into

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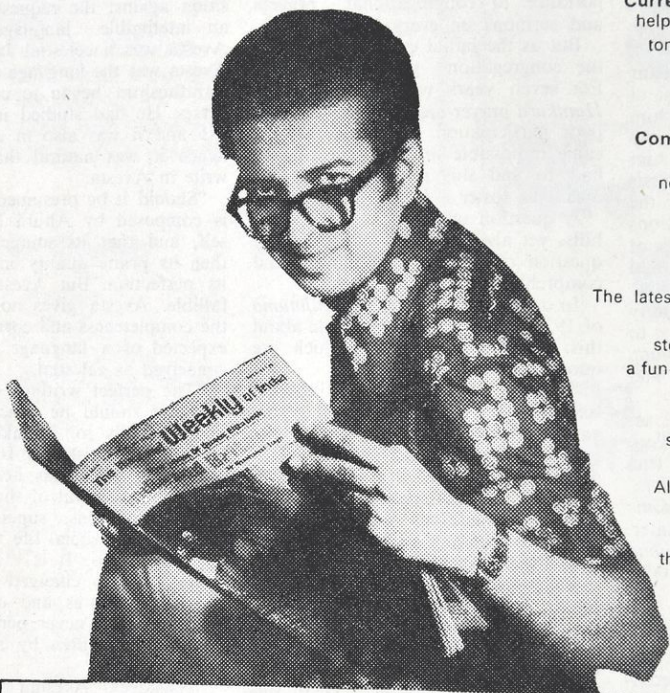


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Faith is not concerned with the prayer of the supplicant — it is sufficient that he prays.

two parts. The first class is comprised of the *Gehs*, *Nyashes*, *Yashts* and certain portions of the *Khordeh Avesta*, which make up our daily prayers. The second contains the *Yajashnes*, *Visparad*, *Vendidad*, *Afringan*, *Afrin* and other liturgical prayers recited by priests in ceremonials.

"It is thought that all this religious literature from beginning to end is prayer. The truth is completely contrary to this belief. A very small part of all that is recited is actual prayer. A variety of subjects like theology, ethics, religious sayings, rituals, legends, psychology, history, geography, sociology, political economy, jurisprudence, genetics, physiology, pathology, hygiene, science of the universe, astronomy, geology, botany, zoology, biology, etc. are included. Even those who have not studied Avesta can easily find this out by reading the late learned Ervad Cowasji Kanga's Gujarati translation of the entire Avesta.

"The Avesta is an invaluable document of the development, thinking, customs, and conduct of our forefathers who lived more than 3,000 years ago. But history, geography, pathology, and biology are not prayer. Only some verses of the *Gathas*, a few passages of later Avesta, and a couple

of lines that can be gleaned on close examination can be termed prayer. All else is only a composite collection of the various aspects affecting the life of the Iranian nation of those days.

"We are told that all the Avestan writings are allegorical, ambiguous mystical, concealed, figurative and symbolic. What can be read on the surface is not the truth—the underlying purport is completely different.

"These translations are not the outcome of the linguistics of the so-called, modern, materialistic age. On reading any of the translations it will be readily seen that the subjects enumerated above as contained in the Avesta scriptures are correct, and the same has been declared with one accord by Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Persian and Gujarati translations in different ages.

"Mankind has always painted the past as perfect and has glorified it as 'the golden age' and held it up as an example worthy of emulation by the present generation. But merely because this has always been done, it is not necessarily right. Man's life in the past was as replete with vices and virtues as it is today. It is not as if men exist in the present age whereas angels inhabited the earth in bygone days.....

"Three decades ago a Pahlavi book entitled *Boman Yasht* was prescribed by the University in the syllabus for the study of Persian languages. In our existing Avestan literature the *Boman*

Yasht is not to be found, but all sorts of stories about its miraculous powers have been prevalent amongst the superstitious section since ancient times.

"It is said that formerly the magical power of the *Boman Yasht* was so great that anything could be achieved by merely reciting it. But people began to misuse it and to utilize it to destroy their enemies and to derive selfish benefits through it, so the Almighty retrieved that *Yasht*. When this text was first printed and published for college students, some enthusiastic publishers of the *Khordeh Avesta* began to include this Pahlavi *Boman Yasht* also in their Gujarati version of the *Khordeh Avesta*.

"No prayer, that is written in Pahlavi, which has a mixture of the Semitic tongue, is ever recited, nor is this a prayer. It is an essay wherein its authors write about the rise and fall of the Persian Empire, of the evil days that are to befall it at the hands of the Romans, Turks and Arabs and they write as though they are foretelling the end of existence.

"In sheer ignorance many recite this Pahlavi document as a prayer and believe that they are reaping a harvest of virtue. Without the slightest doubt and with complete conviction many innocent co-religionists recite this narrative as a miraculous prayer, hence it is not at all surprising that they derive a mental relaxation and a sense



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of physical well-being from it. Blind faith can move mountains.

"When other nations have spiritual literature sufficient to submerge a seeker, ours is suffering from a drought. Due to unfounded and imaginary fears that the Avesta would be forgotten and forsaken, any attempt made in the direction of supplying such necessary prayers, is nipped in the bud.

"The *jihad* that was waged against Ervad Bharucha, a true and noble Athornan scholar of the last century, for taking the initiative about 50 years ago, to recite prayers in Gujarati together with each verse of the Avesta and to sing Gujarati devotional songs during the sermons delivered by him, under the auspices of the Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Society, is still fresh in people's mind.

"Such perversity is responsible for stemming the creation of devotional literature in understandable language in our community. Fanatical religiosity keeps the devout and thirsty soul starving and unsatisfied—our impoverished devotional literature is gasping for breath.

"Fantastic legends that Avesta is mystical and supernatural, that strange vibrations are wafted heavenwards by the mere utterance of its words, exerting miraculous influences, do not enhance its worth. Such a concept of prayer pulls it down from its spiritual heights to the lowest rungs and instead of inspiring, turns it into sorcery.

"To him who has absolute faith and undoubting belief, prayer whether in a language that is understood or not, is just the same. Faith is not concerned with the prayer of the supplicant—it is sufficient that he prays. With uplifted hands and a humble heart he reads and recites the narrative of the conflict that is carried on between the angel of rain and the demon of drought (i.e. between Tishtar Yazad and Apaosh) or, in a melodious voice he prayerfully chants the description of the length and breadth of the River Ardivisur.

"The man in whom faith has infused serenity, contentment and joy, questions not the need for comprehensible prayer. But the awakened soul and the questioning mind are not at peace. Our excessively orthodox people prohibit any questions concerning incomprehensible prayer. As a result a section of the community is being reared today that does not pray at all because it believes not in unintelligible mumblings and is faced with a barrier against its urge for intelligible prayer."

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Died: **Hilla Vakeel**, 77, author, and cultural catalyst, who co-founded Nalanda, a group dedicated to 'promote Indian studies; on 6 May 1981, after a months illness in Bombay.

"Her writing was read and won her admirers, among them Aubrey Menen, an old friend who repeatedly urged her to write more," wrote Adil Jussawalla, the noted poet, in an interview with Vakeel published in the *Sunday Standard* of 31 August 1980 entitled *Two Sisters*. "But she argued then that English was a foreign language and that she'd never be able to write in it as an English person."

A former editor of the first Indian journal for women, *Indian Home*, Vakeel was a regular columnist for the *Kaiser-E-Hind* weekly and also wrote for *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Asiatic Digest* and several other publications, and authored the book, *The Good Citizen*, a compilation of advice for children.

Over the 25 years of Nalanda's existence, small groups of people would gather in the sisters' rustic home in the Bombay suburb of Bandra to talk about and discuss subjects relating to India. "I always want it said of me that I plucked out a thorn and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow", Vakeel had said in the interview with Jussawalla.

"Hilla had a wide circle of friends from whom she collected donations for many a needy individual, charitable cause, and institution. For noted anthropologist, Verrier Elwin's work among the tribals, Hilla organised the Neptune Ball I, and Neptune Ball II for the Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital for children at Parel," notes her sister, Dossan, in a letter.

Hilla had strong views on her community and in the columns of the *Kaiser-E-Hind* she "berated the average Parsi boy for being a 'hopeless prig' and the community as a whole for being 'artistically bankrupt' eternally gripped by gluttony." Jussawalla notes that Hilla held her father's view that "the servants in Hyderabad are more polite than the Bombay Parsi."

Hilla was educated at St. Joseph's Convent, Bandra and later completed an Oxford correspondence course. "Inspired by her brother, she took to journalism, and at the age of 17 published her first article in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, writes Dossan.

While Hilla was editor of *Indian*

Home, and in her thirties, she reportedly had a nervous breakdown which resulted in her being confined to her home for the rest of her life. Her sister too, stopped going out. In the *Sunday Standard* interview, Hilla noted, "I have such a fright of distances... Aubrey Menen used to tell me that meant I didn't want to go to heaven."

Hilla is survived by her sister Dossan, elder to her by five years.

Died: **Ardeshir F. Cama**, 61, one of the founder members and honorary secretary of the Borivili and Suburban Zoroastrian Association (BSZA), on 29 March 1981, following a sudden heart attack.

"By his fervour, enthusiasm, integrity, prudence and his approach towards work, the Association has reached its pinnacle within a short span of five years. The void created by his death is difficult to fill and the loss irreparable," noted a resolution passed at a condolence meeting of the BSZA on 17th April.

In the five years that Cama helped guide the BSZA, various activities,



Cama: 'cared enormously'

es, programmes, a business service and library, sale of low priced exercise and text books to students, were inaugurated. Cama edited the most regular newsletter of any Zoroastrian association in India.

Vakeel: "plucked out a thorn and planted a flower"



A Bachelor of Engineering from Pune University, Cama started his career with the noted construction firm of Shapoorji Pallonji and later began a plumbing business which involved him in the construction of the Reserve Bank of India's new buildings at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, till he retired in 1979.

Cama moved to the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) township in Borivili in 1974 and with the help of other enthusiastic community members organized a successful *Deh* month jashan and Navroze function attended by Zoroastrian residents of Borivili and its environs. Encouraged by the response, the BSZA was formed and formally inaugurated on 25 January 1976.

"In the passing away of Mr. Cama we have lost a gentleman who lived deeply, thought profoundly and cared enormously for the welfare of the community and of human beings at large," noted an obituary in the May BSZA newsletter.

Cama is survived by his wife, Sillo, and sons, Soli and Dinshaw.

Died. **Dr. Sam Khurshed Dastoor**, 54, noted contact lens specialist; of kidney failure, on 5 May 1981, in Bombay.

A pioneer in the field of soft contact lenses in India, Dastoor founded the Dastoor Contact Lens Laboratory in 1965, and was reportedly the first to fit continuous wear soft contact



Dastoor: lens pioneer

lenses in India. He is also said to have conducted a project for fitting contact lenses for the poor suffering from conical cornea, free of charge.

Dastoor was presented the Service Recognition Award of the National Eye Research Foundation, Chicago, in March this year, for his contribution to the eye care activities of the Foundation, according to his bio-data. His papers on contact lens read at various meetings of the All India Contact Lens Practitioners Association symposiums, won him honors and he also presented papers at the

Fourth and Fifth World Contact Lens Congress in Tokyo in 1972 and Las Vegas in 1976, notes a press release.

A Charter Member of the Lions Club of Bombay and on its board of directors for two years, Dastoor is said to have received the first achievement award for the first project of Lionism in India — establishing the Lions Eye Glass Bank.

Dastoor obtained his doctorate in Optometry from Pennsylvania State University, and underwent a specialized course in contact lens fitting in the U.K. He was admitted as a fellow of the Association of Contact Lens Practitioners in London, and a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry in 1964.

Dastoor is the author of the book, *Micro-Corneal and Soft Contact Lenses — Prescribing and Fitting Techniques*.

Dastoor is survived by his wife Roshan.

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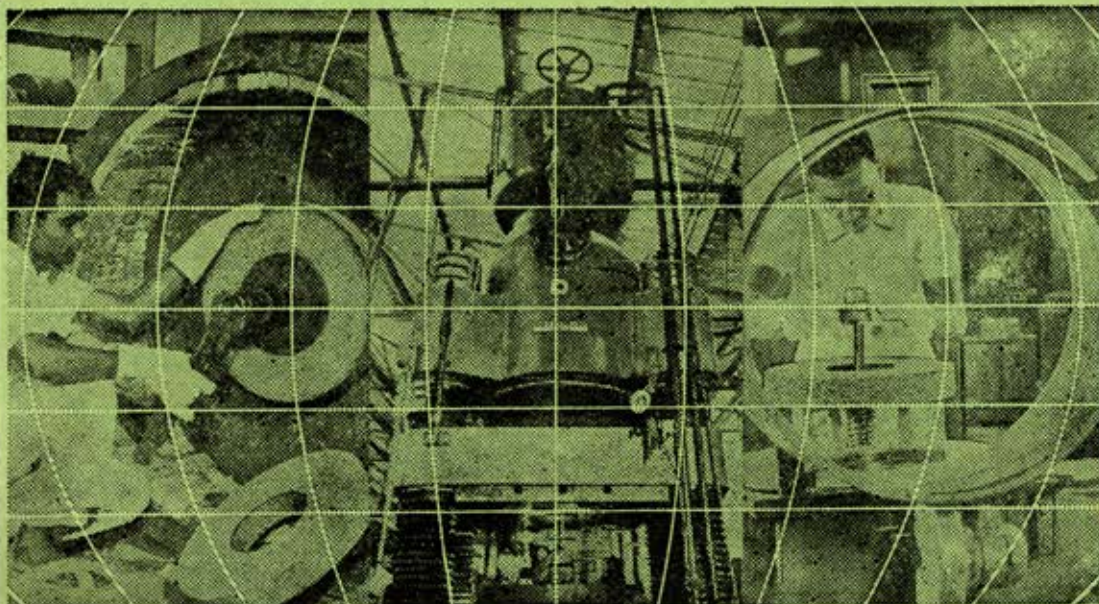
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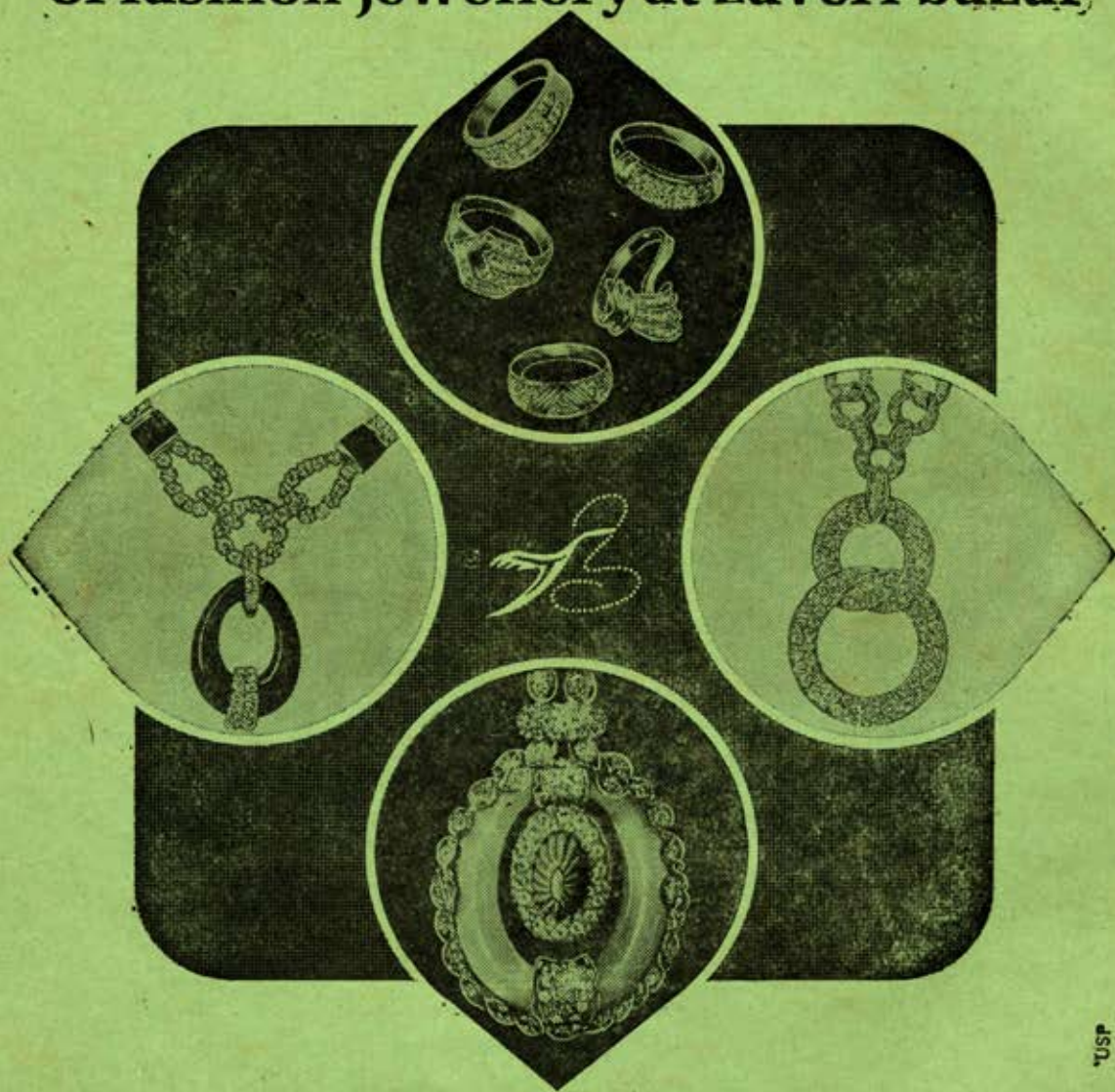
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