

Pañchajanya

December 1981 Rs 5

Visay Kapadia, director of the Goju-kan school of karate



And so, at L&T, tomorrow is past history. All our yesterdays that were once our tomorrows were thought of years ahead. To take one example, we did not wake up to nuclear technology the night before the nation planned a major shift towards nuclear power. We spent a whole decade developing nuclear technology. Finally the great moment came. L&T was able to manufacture critical equipment for India's nuclear power projects.

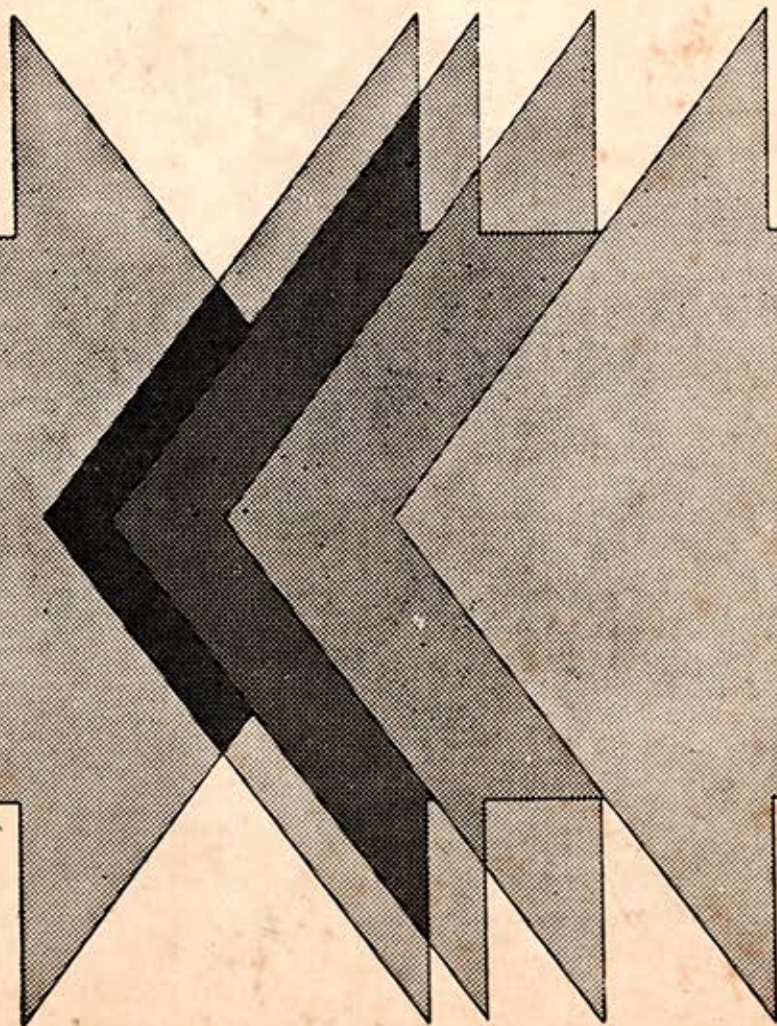
This kind of activity results in a chain reaction releasing the energy for greater development. From the nuclear technological base we launched into space technology. And long before that, in 1938, we developed Indian manufacturing capability. Then it was restricted to dairy equipment. Today, we have the know-how and can do in every field of engineering — food, chemicals, petrochemicals, fertiliser, cement, steel, paper and pulp, power...



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And in today already walks tomorrow

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge



Parsiana

December 1981 Volume 4 No 6

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Readers' Forum

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.

"FIRE FIGHTING"

The article, "Fire Fighting" by Berjis Desai, (*Parsiana*, August 1981) is likely to create misunderstanding as Mr Desai has not mentioned some important facts, and some of his statements are not correct. Further, the case is pending before the Supreme Court, and hence it is not possible to discuss the matter. However, in order to clear possible misunderstanding, I state as follows :

The suit was not filed in my personal capacity. It was filed as president of the Udvada Athornan Anjuman in accordance with the resolution passed by the Anjuman.

Evidently, Mr Desai has not read the judgement. It appears he relies partly on hearsay and partly on some report. The amusing last paragraph of the article shows that Mr Desai has misunderstood and misapplied the terms "plaintiffs" and "defendants".

Mr Desai does not mention or even refer to one vital fact, prominently noted in the judgement : There was only one issue before the Gujarat High Court and that one issue was :

"Whether the defendants prove that the reliefs claimed are against the public policy and as such they are hit by Articles 25-26 read with Article 13 of the Constitution of India."

As noted in the judgement, this was the only issue discussed and argued before the High Court; and the High Court decided this one issue only.

Before the High Court, there was no question of religion and there was no question of religious books. It is a matter of surprise that Mr. Desai does not even state this vital fact that the High Court decided only one issue of the Constitution of India.

Translations of ancient texts are not to be read as novels. They are to be read and digested, and to be understood and interpreted in the light of existing circumstances and historical background.

If read like novels, such writings can create misunderstanding and even cause deception.

H. K. MIRZA

DESAI REPLIES

My article was exclusively based on the judgement delivered by the Gujarat High Court. My primary purpose was not to print a legal report but to highlight the futility of a costly and unnecessary litigation started by the Udvada Athornans.

Secondly, Mirza's charge that I have "misunderstood and misapplied" the terms plaintiffs and defendants "in the last paragraph" is baffling, as these terms do not appear at all in the last paragraph! Finally, as regards my alleged omission to state "the vital fact," may I request Mirza to re-read my article and be satisfied that a major part is devoted to Articles 25 and 26 of the Indian Constitution.

BERJIS DESAI

AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION

We receive several letters from Zoroastrians in India seeking assistance from the Australian Zoroastrian Association in regard to immigration. We cannot render any help in this regard as we cannot exert any influence on the Government. Each applicant is treated individually on his or her merit.

We can assist them in personal matters perhaps - like offering advice on accommodation, cost of living, etc. Incidentally the Immigration laws are changing from April 1982. Interested people should check out the changed rules before applying for immigration.

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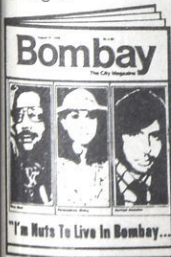
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Hong Kong Calling

The latest addition to the international, newsletter, network is *Parvanda*, a smart, mimeographed publication issued by the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao. Edited by Jimmy Minoo Master, a young marketing executive in the Hong Kong Tourist Association, the publication derives its name from the 13th name of Ahuramazda, as enumerated in the 101 Names of Ahuramazda, and means 'in touch with all.' "We thought this a fitting name for our newsletter," notes Master, "and have taken the Sacred Flame and the Afarghan as our logo," the latter being designed by Ms J. Jackson of Corporate Communication Ltd.

There are 182 Zoroastrians in the tiny, throbbing British Crown Colony of Hong Kong according to the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Hong Kong 1980 directory. The trustees are Sammy Nasarwanjee Shroff, president, Erach Mancherji Mehta, secretary, Rustom Khurshedji Pavri, Noshir Phero Pavri and Keki F. Jokhi. Ervad Rustomji Ranaji Pavri is the resident "Mobed Saheb" replacing Ervad Jalejar Shrivakshaw Kuka, the former "Mobed Saheb" of Shanghai.

In July 1981, the Anjuman celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Zoroastrian Building, a community center at Leighton Road. The ceremonies scheduled for 6th July had to be delayed a day "due to a typhoon," notes *Parvanda*. "The Zoroastrian Building was suitably decorated with chok, garlands and floral arrangements."

According to a history of the Anjuman prepared by Jamshed K. Pavri, a former resident of Hong Kong now settled in Vancouver, Canada, the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao had its origi-

ins in 1822.

"The first recorded name as 'China Canton Anjuman' appears in a letter dated 5th November 1834 which was signed by nine leading community members. There were about 70 Parsis in Canton at that time.

"A general meeting of the Zoroastrian community was held in Canton on 19th September 1845 and it was decided to properly create a fund for the purpose of buying and maintaining burial grounds in the various ports and places where Parsis were trading, to render financial assistance to anyone in difficulty, to perform religious ceremonies and do other charitable deeds. They named it 'China Zarthushti Anjuman'. Dhunjibhai Behramjee Rana, Nusserwanji Bomanji Modi, Cowasji Shapurji Lanagrana and Ruttonjee Hormasjee Camajee were appointed the first trustees.

"The Parsis were allotted a plot at Happy Valley, Hong Kong, for their cemetery in October 1845. In July 1847 a piece of land was also obtained at Whampoa for the purpose. The land for the cemetery in Macao was given by the Portuguese government in 1847.

"As the funds grew, the Anjuman embarked upon charitable activities and started remitting money to India for charitable and religious purposes since the year 1848. With the opening of Shanghai to foreign trade, branch offices of Parsi firms were opened there and in 1854, the Canton Anjuman sent a sum of \$700.00 for the purpose of establishing a cemetery there. 'The Shanghai Cemetery Trust Funds' as the Shanghai Anjuman was known then, were self-supporting and their assets grew quite rapidly.

"To have a Zoroastrian house in Hong Kong, a list was circulated in 1857

and in 1861 a house in Elgin Street was purchased. In 1871 another house in Shelly Street was purchased. The house in Elgin Street was sold off in 1930. The present Zoroastrian Building on Leighton Road, where the community meets for prayers and social events, was built in the year 1931.

"In the year 1854 a fund for the relief of destitute Chinese was started. The trustees even today send donations to worthy charities out of this fund which has grown substantially since then...

"At the meeting of the Zoroastrian community held at Canton on 19th September 1845, the fund which is presently known as 'Zoroastrian Charity Funds Of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao' was founded for religious, charitable and benevolent purposes. The fund in those times was managed and conducted by the trustees appointed for the purpose from the principal members of the community according to certain rules and regulations passed from time to time."

Today the assets of the Anjuman run into millions of Hong Kong dollars. According to the financial statement for the year ended 31st December, 1980, prepared by auditors Dhun Sukheshwalla and Company, the share investments at market value alone are over 16 million Hong Kong dollars which is around three and a quarter crore rupees. In 1980, about a lakh and a half rupees were donated to charitable causes in India.

Individually, Hong Kong Zoroastrians have donated large sums to charitable causes in India, the latest being 'Ava Baug' a housing colony built in Navsari by Shapoor and Manijeh Fakirji Jokhi, former residents of Navsari.

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US

US Jews open their arms to converts

BY ALEX BRUMMER IN WASHINGTON

JUDAISM in the United States, the biggest Jewish community in the world, has marched into a new era with a decision within the Reform Movement to end a four-century-old moratorium on seeking proselytes to the faith.

The action, taken by the one-million-strong Union of American Hebrew Congregations, is being seen as a "great milestone" in Jewish history. The faith has eschewed conversions since the 16th century, when it was discouraged by the vigorous pursuit of heretics by the Christian Churches.

The new policy won final approval at the biennial conference of 735 American Reform congregations after an extensive three-year study. In approving its recommendations delegates passed a resolution noting that "Judaism is a loving, meaningful, spiritual religion that welcomes all who wish to embrace it".

As a result of the Reform Move-

It will seek to bring non-Jewish partners in mixed marriages to Judaism.

ment's action it will campaign to draw converts to the religion. It will seek to bring non-Jewish partners in mixed marriages to Judaism, and will also aim at those with no religious ties with other churches. However, the plan resists any efforts at "sheep-stealing" from other faiths.

The architect of the project, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the

Union of American Hebrew Congregation, said at the conference in Boston: "What we propose, in effect, is that we launch a massive effort to transform the attitude of an entire community — an entire generation, if you will — from a resigned, embarrassed acquiescence (to conversion) into a determined, emphatic counter-reaction."

The Reform Jewish Movement which

Children of a mixed marriage should be regarded as Jewish, irrespective of whether it is the mother or father who was born to the religion.

flourished among German Jews in the mid-19th century, is the most liberal of America's large and active Jewish communities. The opening of doors at the Reform Movement can be expected to reverberate in controversy around the world, particularly among orthodox communities which have historically taken a negative attitude to conversion.

Attention has been focused on the conversion question by the rising level of inter-marriage between Jews and non-Jews in American and most Western congregations. Recent surveys show that a third of American Jews have been marrying out of the faith. Because of the strict rules governing conversions, many of the non-Jewish partners have been regarded as unacceptable as synagogue members, and their children have been lost to Judaism.

This lack of openness towards non-

Jews has been a source of strong criticism among those advocating change. Quoting from the Torah, they note that Abraham and Ruth were not Jews by birth. Conversion, it has been argued, has been an integral part of Judaism since biblical times.

The new order does not mean, however, that Jewish missionaries will join other evangelists on the doorsteps of private homes, on street corners, or at airports. The broad goal is to create a more hospitable climate for non-Jewish marriage partners and their children and to those seeking a religious identity.

Among the more radical departures from tradition which has been approved is that the children of a mixed marriage should be regarded as Jewish, irrespective of whether it is the mother or father who was born to the religion. Historically, Jewishness, in the eyes of the rabbis, could be passed on to children only through a Jewish-born mother.

A third of American Jews have been marrying out of the faith.

To speed the fresh approach, the Reform congregations propose to set up a \$5 million fund, to be spent over five years. This would be aimed at providing material to fulfil the intent of the resolutions passed in Boston.

Zoroastrianism The Lost Vision

Dr. Jehan Bagli

The religion of Zarathosht, is a way of life on which no racial group has exclusive rights. The prophet of our religion had a vision - a vision of World Faith. Perhaps when the religion of Zarathosht entered into the time frame of recorded history, this vision was lost. As the time went by the religious tradition and the National history of Iranians amalgamated, and Zoroastrianism emerged as a religious heritage, to be enjoyed only by the people of Iranian ancestry. However, the vision of Zarathosht about Mazdayasnan as the religion of World Communities often surfaces, when we come across individuals or groups, who independently evolve, a dedication to the religion of Zarathosht, with or without introduction from an adherent.

A case in point is that of a young

"My greatest hope is to have a real Navjote and wear a real Sudreh and Kusti".

American Joseph H. Peterson who wrote to the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, about how his flame of life was enlightened by the Zoroastrian way of life. In his letter he said "I first learned about Zoroaster ten years ago . . . this discovery was sparked by a book which caught my eye in the library one day. This was the two volume SBE (*Sacred Books of the East*) edition of the *Zend Avesta* . . . This particular philosophy impressed me so much, that I began to think of my philosophy as being essentially Zoroastrian. I continued reading whatever I could find, on this great religion, and soon discovered the great debt which Christianity owes to it". All this Peterson did without contact of any sort with Zoroastrians.

Asked about how he improvised the Sudreh and Kusti, Peterson replied, "I have tailored a sudreh myself from white cambric according to a compila-

tion of several descriptions. I believe it to be faithfully reproduced". Regarding the elaborate weaving of the Kusti, the reproduction was no doubt less satisfactory in practice. However, he went to great lengths and search to bring it to his mental satisfaction. This is clearly evident, when he says, that, "I was able to find a hollow cording of approximately correct dimensions. This I unbraided at the ends and rewove in an approximation of the traditional Kusti".

However, the most impressive gesture of Peterson's faith in the religion of Zarathosht, and his efforts to live and practice it as closely to the letter of the religion, becomes apparent, when he tells us that "Consecration (of Kusti) were accomplished by reciting appropriate prayers as detailed by J.J. Modi - *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*". He further tells us that he has worn this Sudreh and Kusti improvised as above, for the last five years. He renews it four times daily, and observes *Nyaishes* as convenient. He ended his letter by saying, "My greatest hope of course, is to have a real Navjote and wear a real Sudreh and Kusti".

Peterson's case may be unique or it may represent one of those many individuals of non-Iranian, (or non-parsi) origin whose sincere wish to live as a Zoroastrian is thwarted by the non-receptive character of the community. That this non-acceptance dogma came about much later in the history, is evidenced by the fact that King Khosrow (531 A.D.) accepted a population of Turks and allowed them to be instructed - if they so wished - and accepted them into the Zoroastrian fold.

As late as in the fifteenth century, the Parsis consulted Iranian priests on this very question, asking them if they should allow their Hindu servants - who wished - to accept the religion of Mazdayasna. The answer of the priests was, "If servant boys and girls have faith in the Good Religion, then it is proper that

they should tie the Kusti and when they become instructed, attentive to religion and steadfast the *barashnom* should be administered to them" *Zoroastrians - their beliefs and practices*, by Mary Boyce (1979).

One can go on with many more such situations. But one very important aspect of these situations was that the religion of Zarathosht was open to those who wished of their own freewill to practice it. They were no doubt instructed into it before ritualistic acceptance was observed.

Thus neither the Prophet Zoroaster nor the priests of the early times would have denied individuals like Peterson the right to live as a true Zoroastrian. However, because of the restrictions imposed (perhaps justifiably so, under

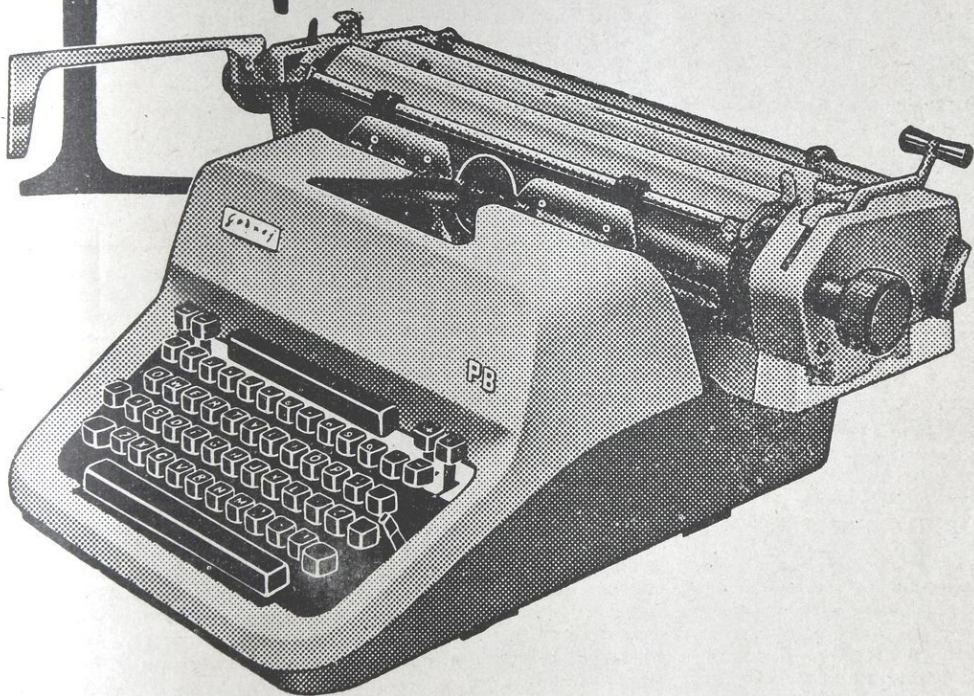
"I began to think of my philosophy as being essentially Zoroastrian."

the circumstances of the time) by the later day community, that the original vision of prophet Zarathosht to make the religion of Ahura Mazda, the World faith, is aggressively thwarted.

In North America, the existing Zoroastrian organisations should ponder over this matter, and through United Zoroastrian Association of North America (UZANA) draw up a plan of action outlining conditions and circumstances under which a sincere and desirous individual of non-Iranian origin can be accepted as a full Zoroastrian, without reservation. Such a document should then be presented to other Zoroastrian organisations in the World to make them aware of our efforts to fulfill the great vision of the prophet Zarathosht.

Dr. Ervad Jehan Bagli, is the Editor of Gavashni, the quarterly publication of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec.

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The Parsi Punchayet Case

Petit vs Jeejeebhoy III

Failure to prove Conversion

THE JUDGEMENT SO FAR

In 1903 R. D. Tata married according to Parsi rites, a French lady, after having her navjote performed. Tata claimed his wife "had become a Parsi professing the Zoroastrian faith and consequently she was entitled to participate in all the charitable and religious Funds and Institutions of the Parsis" including the right to enter fire temples and have her body converted to the Towers of Silence.

Thus the scene was set for the historic court case of Petit vs Jeejeebhoy, also known as "The Parsi Punchayet Case."

The question before the two judges of the Bombay High Court, Justice Frank C. O. Beaman and Justice Dinshaw Dhanjibhoy Daver, was whether a person born in another faith but converted to Zoroastrianism was entitled to the benefits of certain community trusts.

The plaintiffs (Sir Dinsha Maneckji Petit; Tata and others) contended Zoroastrianism enjoins and practices conversion and that converts are entitled to all the benefits provided. The defendants (Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy and others) while admitting that Zoroastrianism permits conversion state that "ever since their (Parsis) advent into India (they) have not admitted a Juddin (person belonging to another religion) into their fold. They admit, however, that children born of a Zoroastrian father by an alien mother has been admitted into their fold by the performance of the Navjote ceremony."

The plaintiffs called certain witness's to "give some concrete instances of conversion of Juddins to Zoroastrianism."

Daver in the part of the judgement printed in the last two issues of Parsiana discredited the evidence presented by the witnesses.

I have referred to all the witnesses called by the Plaintiffs for the purpose of proving that there have been instances of an entire alien or Juddin being converted into the Zoroastrian faith and admitted into the Parsi community, except one; and this one I have purposely left last for discussion, as he is by far the most important witness called on behalf of the Plaintiffs from their standpoint. This witness is Sorabji Bomanji Punthaky, a Parsi priest from Surat.

Before I proceed to discuss the evidence given by this witness, I ought here to explain the constitution of the Parsi priesthood. The community of Zoroastrians is divided into two classes—Mobeds and Behedins—that is, priests and laymen. A Mobed must be the son of a Mobed. A Behedin can never become a Mobed. To be a Parsi priest he must be born of a father who is a priest. The Mobeds at one time objected to give their daughters in marriage to Behedins, and this had led to very heated controversy in the community as is shown in this case. Although, at the present time, there is no active restriction, the Mobeds generally confine the marriage of their children amongst their own class. A Mobed's son may take to any other walk of life: he is not restricted to his father's profession. He may take to other occupation in life: when he does this he is known as Athornan.

A Behedin's son, however, can never be a Mobed. It will thus be seen that a man born of a Mobed father becomes a Mobed by right of his birth. No qualifications—moral, religious, or educational—are required of him. He takes religious training under his father or other male relations, and when he arrives at the age of discretion, he follows his father's profession as a full-fledged priest. A certain number of priests go through the higher religious purificatory ceremony known as Burushnum. They are then qualified for the performance of certain ceremonies which are known as Inner Liturgical ceremonies. Priests who have gone

through the Burushnum alone can perform these ceremonies. The other ceremonies, which are known as Outer Liturgical ceremonies, are performed by the ordinary Mobed.

The Navjot is one of the Outer Liturgical ceremonies of the Zoroastrian religion. It is a ceremony whereby a Zoroastrian born child usually between the age of 7 and 9, is invested with Sudra and Kusti—the sacred shirt and girdle which are the outer symbols of the profession of the Zoroastrian Faith. One Mobed alone can perform this ceremony. The Plaintiffs contend in this suit that the mere performance of the Navjot ceremony on a Juddin is sufficient to make him or her a full-fledged Zoroastrian and entitle him or her to all the benefits of all charities established for the benefit of Zoroastrians.

The priestly class amongst the Zoroastrians of India, as a rule, consists of respectable, religious, conscientious, God-fearing men; but as is common amongst all communities, there are some black sheep amongst them who are always ready to subordinate their consciences to mundane considerations and do almost anything for money, and the Plaintiffs' witness, Sobrabji Bomanji Punthaky, is a typical instance of the latter class. If the Plaintiffs' contentions were to prevail, the Parsi community would be entirely at the mercy of such men as this one; for it would be open to him to inundate the community with thousands of undesirable aliens. He himself says, one priest is sufficient to perform the Navjot ceremony and that the priest wants nobody's permission to do so. If I have formed a low estimate of this man's morality and honesty, he himself is responsible for it. He has made no attempts to disguise his true character, and has by his evidence enabled the Court to form a true estimate of his moral conceptions. I extract below a few of the sentiments he gave expression to, showing his conception of morality in life, from, I presume, his priestly point of view:

It has not established one single instance of a Juddin...
being invested with a Sudra and Kusti and admitted into the fold of Zoroaster.

"I have given instances of Parsis keeping alien women as their mistresses. One was of the Liquor Contractor and the other of the Priest Faramdaroo. It is not an uncommon thing for Parsis to keep alien women as their mistresses. Whether it is reputable or not is the business of the man who keeps the woman. *Where is the disrepute of keeping women like that?* Many do it... It is a common thing for Parsis to keep Dubri women as their mistresses at Surat and elsewhere in the Districts. It was very common at first and it prevails to a certain extent now."....."It is common amongst *Parsi Priests* to keep alien women as their mistresses. They ought not to do it. *It leads to adverse comment.*"

In my opinion, this man libelled the Parsi community of Surat and his own class when he said this practice was common amongst them. It is possible, as I have said before, that some Parsis in the districts of Gujarat, and possibly, some Parsis in Surat itself, indulged in this disreputable practice; but to say that it is common practice is, I think, to libel the whole Community. And as to Priests, there has been nothing whatever before us to show that their class indulged in the vice this witness attributes to them. This is the only man who has attempted to besmirch his own class before the Court.

My object, however, in quoting the above extract from the witness's evidence is to show that, in his opinion, there is no disrepute attaching to men who keep low-caste Hindu women in the way he has described, and that his only objection to priests doing the same is that it would lead to adverse comment. That his own conscience in reli-



The Godavara Agiary in Fort, Bombay to which the right of entry was sought.

gious matters, when they touch his pocket, is as elastic as his sense of social morality is also clear from his own evidence. Speaking of a Parsi who wanted this witness to invest two children of his Mahomedan mistress—by, according to him, a Mahomedan husband—he said he refused to do it as the father of the Parsi told him not to do so. He goes on, however, to say:

"If he had come to me and asked me again and *made proper arrangement for payment* to me I would have done it. *The work of he who pays is always done...* So far as I was concerned, it was a matter of money—of fees."

Translated in plain language, the witness admitted he was, for money considerations, prepared to do any work, however dirty. At least, that is how I read his evidence. This was the man on

whose evidence the Plaintiffs relied to prove, in the words of the witness himself, that it had been the custom for a long time in his Community to convert aliens to the Zoroastrian religion. After having expressed his "independent opinion," within the ruling of the Privy Council case I have referred to before now, this witness began his evidence by giving instances which he said were well known to him. He was then made to give what appeared to be carefully prepared evidence, intended to corroborate the witnesses Bhownaagree and Khusrubhai. He began talking about things as if he knew them personally, but it was soon discovered that many incidents he spoke of were told to him by somebody else.

Speaking of converts in the Bhownaagree family, he said: "The *children* of these original converts were invested with Sudra and Kusti in my presence." He spoke of other similar incidents as if he knew all about them personally. At the end of the case, in answer to the Court, he said: "With the exception of the investiture ceremony of Temulji, I was not present at the ceremony of the investiture of any of the Dubras of whose conversion I have spoken." Then, again, he spoke of a Mahomedan woman being converted to Zoroastrianism and married to a Mr. Rustomji Vakeel, of Surat, under the name of Cooverbai. The witness himself is 68 years old. This conversion he said took place 60 or 70 years ago and he heard about it 50 years ago. Dhunjishaw Motabhoy Vakeel, who was examined in connection with the conversion of Soonabai, happened to be a member of the Vakeel family of Surat. He said Rustomji Vakeel was his father's brother,

"It is not an uncommon thing for Parsis to keep alien women as their mistresses."

"The work of he who pays is always done... so far as I was concerned, it was a matter of money, of fees."

Those who were hitherto admitted into the Zoroastrian religion were all known to be born of Parsi fathers.

and he gave a flat contradiction to the statement that Cooverbai was a converted Mahomedan. He said she was a pure Parsi lady.

This witness, after making a statement that many Mahomedans had been converted to the Zoroastrian religion, proceeded, in support of his statement, to give, in great detail, the story of the conversion of two children born of Mahomedan mother and father. He said one Framji Bhicaji Ross, otherwise known as Framji Bhicaji Erava, returned from Delhi to his native place Surat, bringing with him his Mahomedan mistress, named Begum. She had with her two children—a girl 5 years old and a boy 3 years old. This, he said, was about 20 or 22 years ago. Framji was anxious to have these children invested with Sudra and Kusti and asked the witness to perform their Navjot, but Framji's father opposed such a proceeding and told the witness not to do it. Other people also, he says, told him not to do it, as they were "not the children by a Parsi father." In fact, Begum herself, he said, had told him that they were children of a Mahomedan, who was dead. Witness said Framji's father said to him :

"They are not the children of my son, and therefore you should not perform the ceremony."

On this he refused to perform the Navjot ceremony. It is in connection with this incident that the witness said that if Framji had made it worth his while he would have done it, for the "work of he who pays is always done." The witness then goes on to say Framji took the children to Udwa and had them there invested with Sudra and Kusti, and they were thereafter named Cooverbai and Dhunjisha.

The whole story told by this witness was proved to be a tissue of the most impudent falsehoods. His evidence was concluded on the 17th of February. It received wide publicity through the daily newspaper reports. The Defendants, on receiving certain information,

applied to have this man recalled, and he was examined again on the 6th of April, with reference to the story he told of the children of Framji's mistress Begum. He knew that he had been found out and his attempts at explaining away the falsehoods he had uttered were most futile.

Certain documents were produced, and the witness had to admit that Framji's father had died 7 or 8 years before Dhunjisha, the younger of the two children, was born. The whole story of Framji's father dissuading the witness from performing the Navjot ceremony was pure invention. He tried to explain this by saying that when he talked of Framji's father he was referring to Framji's younger brother, Adurji. That this is again deliberately untrue is clear from the fact that Adurji could not have said to him as he deposed : "They are not the children of my son."

The whole story about investiture at Udwa turned out also to be a myth ; for, when asked if he was prepared to deny that these children he spoke of were invested with Sudra and Kusti at Neemuch, he replied in the negative and said :

"Somebody told me - it was a Mobed who told me—that the investiture took place at Udwa. I do not remember the name of the Mobed. He is dead now many years."

The marriage certificate of Dhunjisha shows that he was the acknowledged son of Framji. There is nothing whatever before us to show that those children of Framji that the witness spoke of, viz., Dhunjisha and Cooverbai, were not Framji's own children born in lawful wedlock of a Parsi wife.

This was the principal witness amongst the witnesses called on behalf of the Plaintiffs to prove the usage supposed to be prevailing amongst the Parsis of admitting Juddins into their religion. This was their chief man to prove the custom alleged to exist amongst the Parsis by giving evidence of concrete instances. Witnesses like

Bhownagree and Khusrubhai had the merit of saying what they actually believed, however erroneous that belief might have been. This witness, Sorabji Bomanji Punthakey, invented lying stories and told wilful untruths. I have no doubt he acted upon the principles which is pithily summarised in the single sentence "The work of he who pays is always done," which remark was followed immediately by a very candid query : "Why should I do work without payment ?"

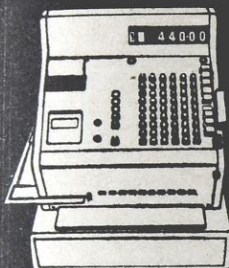
I am quite sure this witness is quite incapable of doing any work for anybody without payment. Coming all the way to Bombay from Surat ; stopping in Bombay and giving lengthy evidence—mostly evolved out of his own imagination ; subjecting himself to annoying cross-examination, was all very anxious work, which it would be contrary to the avowed principles of this witness to undertake and go through without adequate payment. Who paid him ?

This is all the oral evidence the Plaintiffs called to prove concrete instances of conversion of Juddins. When the learned Counsel commenced to call this evidence, we were told that the Plaintiffs had a very large body of this class of evidence. This evidence was recorded for five days.

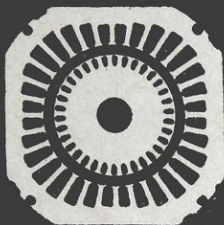
If the Plaintiffs had more evidence of the kind they called before us, it seems to me the exercise of very wise discretion on their or their legal adviser's part to have abstained from calling it. This evidence was in the main valueless and in part false. If anything, it accentuated the correctness of the Defendants' case, where they said those who were hitherto admitted into the Zoroastrian religion were all known to be born of Parsi fathers. It has not established one single instance of a Juddin—that is, an entire alien, one born of both non-Zoroastrian parents—being ever invested with a Sudra and Kusti and admitted into the fold of the followers of Zoroaster.

TO BE CONTINUED

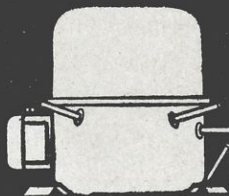
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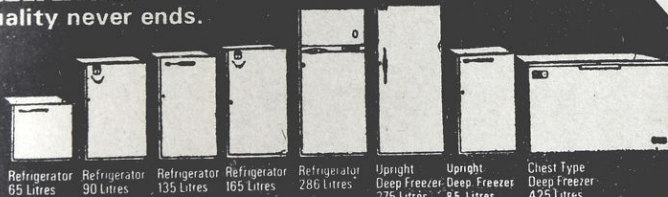
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Artist for all

Shiavax Chavda, usually dressed in white pyjama and kurta, is a contrast to the gay symmetry of colour that he creates. His work has dominated the Bombay 'artscape' for over four decades and reached far beyond. Despite being internationally recognised and having his canvasses in places of honour in several collections, including those of the late President Sukarno of Indonesia, the Godrej's, Tata's and Mafatlal's, Chavda remains unassuming, and almost recluse-like in his dedication to his work.

He lives with his wife Khurshid and daughter Jeroo in a fourth-floor apartment in the heart of the city, at Dhobitalao behind Metro, seeming however, to keep himself aloof from Bombay's bustle.

A short walk across the terrace leads to a circular room, divided into two. One half is used by the Nritya Jyoti Dance Academy run by his wife, the other half is Chavda's studio. Here again, in a profusion of books and paintings, together with professional trappings like a large easel and paint brushes, Chavda works daily on his paintings, often to the musical background provided by the dance classes in session.

Thorough Education

With meticulous care, that later manifested itself in his painting, Chavda nurtured his creative abilities to fruition with sound and systematic study. He graduated from the Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, and then received a diploma from the Slade School of Fine Arts, London. Having studied under noted persons in the art world—Professor Randolph Schwabe, R.G. Evensand and Vladimir Polunin, a contemporary of Picasso—Chavda acquired a sound knowledge of draughtsmanship, drawing composition and colour, though at this stage he felt very English in his style. He was also a student at the Academie de la Grande



Seasons

Chaumiere, Paris, and at the St Martin School of Art, London. Realising even then the need for greater care of paintings, he studied restoration with Helmut Ruhemann, the chief restorer at the National Gallery, London.

After having completed his academic training, Chavda left behind conventional class-room sketches, common scenes and landscapes. He was more interested in experimenting with figures in movement—capturing them on the limited space of his canvas. Some of his first sketches were of animals. These, drawn from animals in the Karl Hegenbeck Circus, were made as a student in Bombay. "This German circus was set up where the Bombay Stationery Mart is situated today," Chavda remembers. With his immense love for animals, the young artist visited the circus regularly to sketch the beasts. "Animals are naked and offer a real test to one's skills of draughtsmanship. There are no clothes to cover up weaknesses in drawings," Chavda explains.

Chavda also went through a phase of drawing cocks in all their strutting glory and their blaze of colour, challenging his vast and varied palate. "He started keeping poultry in Lonavala and we thought we'd be eating chicken," says Khurshid. The next acquisition being a camera, the family was all ready to be photographed. "Instead, he finished an entire colour role on a particularly handsome cock," says Jeroo. Besides, he spent the next three days sketching the fowl, and there was no chicken curry. The cockerel paintings were labelled as a "series of 'Majesties'," the titles being changed in deference to the Royal family when these formed part of his exhibition in London.

Inspired by Dance

"My father had his phases," says his son Pervez, an architect. He recalls that when he went through his "snakes phase", he was a constant visitor at the zoo and when he painted fish he was at

the Taraporewalla Aquarium most of the time. But consistently, through it all, Chavda's one passionate involvement remained with the human form—in what he saw people doing around him, working, dancing, singing. He was greatly influenced by the carvings at Khajuraho and the Lakshminarayan Temples in Bhopal, the Ramayana sculptures in Java. In his youth Chavda had also studied Indian classical dance and classical music which really excited him. At dance recitals he makes from 50 to 100 sketches in an evening. "I am constantly looking at the posture and sketching," he says, his sketchbook in hand, with perfectly drawn little figures of dancers on every page. "One has to be very quick," he adds.

In 1948 Chavda was invited by the Assamese Government to paint their tribals. He covered 2,000 miles in a jeep, going right up to the Tibetan border and sketched the Nisimi, Abor and Naga tribes, capturing their costumes and folk rituals.

For almost 20 years Chavda painted mainly dancers. In the early 60's he began to move away from dancers and other representationals.

"Only a little delineation here and there gives a clue to the subject," explains Chavda of the semi-abstract form he had progressed into. Contradicting his critics who felt at the time that he "insists on retaining recognisable forms and refuses to be completely abstract," Chavda's paintings today veer towards the purely abstract.

Recently Chavda had an exhibition of a unique collection of drawings of Balinese masks. He had sketched these masks, made of papier mache, in the museum in Bali where they are greatly treasured. These are only used during stylised dance festivals based on episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Unlike Degas, who used to steal back his paintings at night from his buyers' houses to add further finishing touches, Chavda is not possessive about his painting though he does admit that he loves them as though they were his children. He recalls that a painting depicting some people deep in conversation in a garden had been with him for 27 years and he had become quite attached to it. Then an American saw it, bought it and it was gone in a flash. "I feel these paintings are destined to go to certain places," he says. At an exhibition in London he noticed a young collector every day standing in front of a particu-

lar painting. He finally approached the artist and asked that if the painting was not sold by the end of the exhibition, could he have it at a price he could afford. Chavda, unhesitatingly, reserved the painting for him immediately.

Murals

Chavda also has several murals to his credit in Bombay, New Delhi and in Washington DC. This last, made for the Air-India office is 10 feet by 15 feet and depicts a procession of Mogul elephants and maharajahs. In a rare touch of humour in his work, the maharajah resembled the office manager and one of the princesses, his secretary.

Chavda's most recent murals are painted at the top of the sweep of stairway at the new National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) at Nariman Point and when lit are on public view through the huge glass windows. Twenty-one feet by 30 feet each, these are inspired by diagrams for meditation used in tantric art.

Chavda has come a long way since his first exhibition in the Princes Room at the Taj Mahal Hotel at a time when there was no proper art gallery in the city. Since that first public viewing, Chavda shows his usual consistency in choice of the same venue. "One should appreciate Chavda's shows year after year, since 1945, each of them improving on the previous presentation," says a critic in the *Indian Express*. "You are bound to change. You have to renounce the past to create anything new," claims the artist.

With several museums all over the world like the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Budapest Museum, The National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi, and museums at Baroda and Nagpur displaying his work, Chavda now paints only for himself. He has reached the stage where he does not keep an eye on sales or bother about peoples' likes and dislikes. "An artist thinks ahead," he claims. "In his lifetime Van Gogh sold only one painting, and that to his brother-in-law." Chavda works with a determination that is almost visionary, a vision that is not restricted to the contemporary, but which places him as much amongst the artists of tomorrow as of today.

Shirin Bahadurji
Abridged from Bombay Magazine, July 22 to August 6, 1981



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Mr. Rusi Nariman (on the left, standing) and Mr. Dinshaw Nariman (seated, with hand outstretched) personally supervising work.

The Parsi Dairy Farm shop on Princess Street: a taste of the good old days.

The Milky Way

There are a few establishments which still provide a taste of the good old days in Bombay — the Parsi Dairy Farm shop on Princess Street (at the bottom of the flyover) is one of them.

Established in 1916 it is run by the four Nariman brothers, Dinshaw, Meherwan, Naval and Rusi and one sister Jeroo — yes, in true joint family style, "We wouldn't have survived for 65 years," punned one of them, "if we were not truly joined!"

"Less than four annas a litre — that was the price of milk during my father's days when he started the business with a can of milk right here on Princess Street," said the eldest of the brothers, Dinshaw.

Today, a litre of their milk costs Rs. 7! The price has gone up twice this year to meet the ever-increasing production costs. It is undoubtedly an indication of the changing times but still value for money — which is something one cannot say of the Greater Bombay Milk Scheme, recent newspaper reports revealed that it is running at a loss of 16 crores each year! Not to forget the "legalised adulteration" which goes on in their "toned milk"....

"Our's is pure whole milk, we don't deal with toned milk and this milk or that milk and our customers include

those who come to our shop personally to buy 15 paise or 25 paise worth of milk," said Rusi Nariman.

In fact, bulk orders during festival times are turned down if it means depriving the common man. Judging by the crowd purchasing one thing or another around me I believe him.

Add the words "Parsi Dairy" to any dairy product or sweetmeat — be it milk, ghee, butter, cream, kulfi, yogurt or halwa, you know that quality is guaranteed.

Articulate Twosome

The brothers I met, Dinshaw and Rusi, are not a very articulate twosome but their repeated quiet sentiment cannot but impress: "It's a small story of honesty and goodness. We are here today because we have never tampered with the quality of our products." And there are any number of Bombayites who'll willingly endorse this.

Life begins on the Parsi Dairy premises at 1 o'clock in the morning when the milk arrives from their farm at Sanjan, 140 kms away on the Bombay-Ahmedabad Highway. More than 300 animals graze — 90 per cent of which are buffaloes and the rest cows. Four years ago the high-yielding English "Frisian" cow was introduced in their

stock and presently they have about 40 of these.

About 8,000-10,000 litres of milk are distributed daily to the lucky citizens of Greater Bombay and although delivery starts at 4 o'clock and 4 o'clock may not be an agreeable time to be woken up by the door-bell — there is a list of 500 people "dying" to get Parsi Dairy milk!

Their 200-odd force of delivery boys in their blue shirts and khaki shorts are a familiar sight on the road if you're taking a walk at this hour.

"Our clientele includes peons and ministers," inserted one of the brothers but on second thoughts asked me to forget the minister bit! Which I suppose is also another indication of the times.

On the premises of Engineer Building (better known as Parsi Dairy building) is housed the laboratory where milk is tested for its fat content twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon (there are two deliveries daily) — "We test a hundred samples each time, our milk has a 7 per cent fat content" — which of course is more than whole milk. Government whole milk has a fat content of only 6 per cent half the time it is not available.

Huge vessels

In another room milk boils in huge

Contd. on page 36



VISPY KAPADIA

King of Karate

A fourth-dan black belt, he's India's finest exponent of this ancient art of self-defence.

The easiest way to get hurt in Bombay is to creep up silently behind a tall, powerfully-built

(1; 100 kg.) and deal the massive back a goodish whack. If you're lucky enough to get away without any broken bones, you will give that particular back a wide berth from then on. "Fellows who know me don't try that kind of stunt," grins Vispy Kapadia, fourth-dan black belt and chief instructor and director of the famous Goju-kan school of karate, which is affiliated to the Zen-Nippon Karate-do Gojukai, Japan—the head of which is the 'living god of karate', Hanshi Gogen Yamaguchi. "If the blow comes unexpectedly, when I am dreaming of something else, my unconscious reflexes take over, and I will probably wheel round and deliver a kick to the groin in the same movement." Not very pleasant for a practical joker.

Living in one of Bombay's near ghettos was no pleasant experience for teenager Vispy Kapadia. It wasn't that he lacked the courage; he was physically

too small to put up his fists against a bevy of bullies. Today he would readily take on the whole bunch, and walk away from the scene of battle after routing them all. "Karate wasn't among my hobbies or likes when I was a kid," he reminisces. "It was sheer desire to be able to defend myself adequately that got me into karate."

Vispy was actually a superb badminton player in his school and college days. Nimble and aggressive, he would mow his opponents down with a series of hard and accurate smashes, and his ability to last out three games at a furious pace. He won the individual inter-school and inter-collegiate titles, captained Bombay University, and played doubles in partnership with Prakash Padukone in two internationals against the visiting Indonesian team in 1972. At one stage, he was ranked No. 3 in India among the juniors.

It was with a view to improve his physical condition for badminton and self-defence that he took up karate in

1969, at the age of 16. After achieving a reasonable level of proficiency in five years he went to Japan in 1974, and achieved the proud distinction of getting his black belt, the youngest karateka in India to do so. The honours didn't come easily. Karate is not for the weak and the squeamish; one must be prepared to bear injuries suffered during practice fights and training. The martial art also lays great emphasis on discipline. The schedule he went through in Japan was tough. It started with warm-up and callisthenics for two hours in the morning, went on to a three-hour session of 'Kihon'—practising the basics, like giving and absorbing hundreds of kicks and punches. Next came the 'kathas', the ballet-like form of dance full of punches and kicks. It is through these kathas that finesse is developed.

Two hours of kathas were followed by 'bonkai', explanation of the kathas. Every movement in a katha has a special significance. Finally, and most painful



by Shirish Nadkarni, *Gentlemen*, July 1981

Photo credits: and cover photo courtesy:
Gentlemen and Mukesh Parpiani

of all, was body conditioning—taking kicks in tender places like the solar plexus, abdomen, back, thighs, etc. Black belts are even allowed to let fly with kicks to the groin! At the end of the day, the students had gone through almost twelve hours of training and practice.

Serious injuries are part and parcel of a *karateka's* progress. Vispy's most serious one was in 1977 in Japan when his sparring partner, Ivan of Indonesia kicked him in the ribs, and broke the floating one. "That was the time I saw the greatness of my guru, Yamaguchi", says Vispy. "He put a hand on my rib, meditated for almost two hours, and then just put a little powder and a piece of paper on it. I was not to bathe the next day. What was absolutely unbelievable was that, apart from a blackish patch over the rib, there was no pain; I was absolutely fine, and could take part in practice."

The sacrifices made in the pursuit of the sport were not by Vispy alone. "My

parents were with me all the way," recalls Vispy with a soft look in his eye. "My mother sold some of her marriage jewellery to pay my fare to Japan the first time. We did not have much money at the time, and it was a big risk to take. I am happy to say it has paid off." Indeed, it has. For today, Vispy runs three schools of karate—at Byculla, Dadar and Vile Parle, each of which he visits at least three days in a week. The schools are doing roaring business, with karate as a sport having gained tremendous popularity over the last 15 months, especially after Yamaguchi's second visit to India. Vispy gave a spectacular display at an exhibition performance watched by 3,000 spectators and, of course, Yamaguchi. Six blocks of ice (each weighing 150 kg., and requiring six students to carry) were placed on wooden benches on the stage. Then Vispy broke each of them down the centre, one after the other, with just one blow with the knife edge of the hand. As the spectators came to their feet in spon-

taneous appreciation, they could understand how the man had managed to be worthy of the certificate and ceremonial sword presented to him earlier in the evening on stage by the great Yamaguchi himself.

And yet, there had come a time when Vispy had felt like giving it all up. The black moment had come in Mauritius, when Vispy was matched against a black belt who had fought dirty, and had injured some students of the 21-member squad that Vispy had taken over. At the best opportunity, Vispy let fly with a venomous kick to the face, squashed his rival's nose, and broke the front two teeth. "He came the next morning to me, and apologised for having fought dirty, but one look at his face made me feel sick," remembers Vispy. "It was swollen and disfigured; and I could not eat for two days after that, because of the sheer memory of that gruesome sight. I felt like giving up karate altogether. But I got over it; and I have since

continued overleaf

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vowed never to hit anyone so hard thereafter.

"What people may not realise is that it is too easy to kill a man. We know all the pressure points of the body, and even a light touch in the right place could be lethal. And that is all the more reason why it is dangerous to learn karate from someone who is not qualified to teach it." It was a dig at the numerous schools of karate that have burgeoned in Bombay and Madras within the last one year; and are run by "half-baked chaps who don't know the first thing about karate." Karate, Vispy feels, is learnt with a basic respect for the art, and it requires total dedication and circumspection.

Which is why Vispy is a martinet on discipline. He himself works like a cart-horse, doing personal training for two hours every day, and then teaching at his schools for about six hours. It is hard work, and it is rare that he returns home before ten at night. Karate leaves him little time for the other pleasures of life, but it allows him to travel and meet people, and to listen at any time to beat and pop music. He also loves good food but, contrary to the experience of most people, has no problem maintaining his weight. "If I eat too much, I just sweat it out the next day," he grins. Otherwise, that extra kilo might well make his mule-kick even more painful to the recipient.

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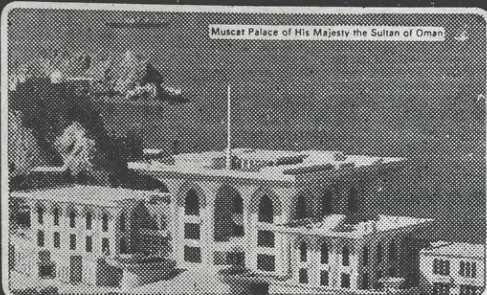
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Of marriage, prejudice and the Udvada Anjuman

Aek Atmakatha is the autobiography of the late Dr. Maneck Nusserwanji Dhalla, high priest of the Pakistan Parsis and a scholar of world repute. This is the 20th edited and condensed extract from the book "Dastur Dhalla - The Saga of a soul" - an English translation by Gool and Behram Rustomji of the original Gujarati, published by the Dastur Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi.



AEK ATMAKATHA

The Life of Dastur Dhalla XX

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.

With the assistance of the Karachi Parsis, Dhalla studied Iranian languages in Bombay and then proceeded to Columbia University in New York, where he was awarded a Ph.D. in 1908. On his return to India he was nominated head priest of Karachi in which capacity he tried to critically evaluate old religious beliefs and customs in the light of his broadened outlook.

He was active in forming a Zoroastrian Conference to study the problem of the community but his efforts met with severe criticism from orthodox groups. The conference floundered on the issue of religious controversy and in 1919 after the seventh session, closed down.

Amid the controversy the emotionally charged issue of performing the Navjote ceremony of non-Parsis arose, to be followed by controversies over whether dancing was immoral and should Parsi women be barred from acting on the public stage.

The Iranshah fire temple in Udvada

THE COMMUNITY'S COMMENDATION

During the fifty years of our marriage many changes had been introduced in the community's mode of living. In those days almost all girls of marriageable age were wedded. Today many a home harbours maidens ripe for marriage who, to their parents' distress, remain single. Living has become expensive. The community has advanced culturally. Opportunities for the intermingling of men and women and cementing friendships have increased, yet only a few love-marriages result from such social contacts. Youths usually welcome large dowries. Families that are unable to cope with the dowry system are saddled with spinsters who spend their lives in single blessedness. Not many young men are prepared to shoulder the responsibility of wedded life without the assistance of in-laws.

Thanks to my wife our three sons and three daughters had joined the ranks of matrimony and our progeny had multiplied.

Of our three daughters-in-law and three sons-in-law, one daughter-in-law and one son-in-law are 'behdins'. Even today many families deem it inauspicious for the off-spring of the priest-class and the laity to be joined in holy bonds of wedlock. We do not find any evidence in our Avesta-Pahlavi books of the feelings of people in ancient Iran regarding this matter. In India distinct discord about such marriages was first witnessed in Surat. In 1728 the mobeds of that city called a meeting of their own kind and passed a biased resolution that the priests were privileged to marry behdin maidens but priestly families would not give their daughters in marriage to the laity. As the dispute waxed, fifty years later, in 1778, the Parsi Panchayat at Bombay resolved that the behdins would neither give their daughters to athornans nor would they take daughters of priestly families. In other words, the exchange of girls on both sides terminated.

They also resolved to excommunicate those who disregarded this decision and such instances occurred. As rancour rose the government intervened as mediator and appointed a committee to examine the details. The mobeds claimed that since ages they had the right to marry behdin girls but not to give their daughters into behdin families. They were unable to supply any evidence in support of their arguments. At last in 1831 to end the controversy the Bombay

Families that are unable to cope with the dowry system are saddled with spinsters.

Panchayat passed a fresh resolution to the effect that, should the mobeds agree to let their daughters marry behdin boys, both parties would henceforth enter into partnership irrespective of their lineage.

As a result of higher education the community has become more advanced and cultured. Yet this superstition still lingers in certain families. The responsibility of initiating the superstition lies on the shoulders of the priests of olden days. Today many a behdin family is averse to accepting an athornan bride. A ritualistic priestly sect of Hindus is known as ardhvaryu. In this country our mobeds have been called 'andhiarus' from ancient times—a corruption of the word 'ardhvaryu'. Hence even educated men and women today imagine that to accept the daughter of an 'andhiaru' is to invite 'andharu' or 'darkness' into the home.

The superstition seems to apply even to those who have abandoned the practice of priesthood since decades and whose sons are prosperous doctors, lawyers, teachers, service-men or businessmen. If perchance some inauspicious event takes place in the home of a behdin family who has accepted an athornan bride, and if such sad situations happen to repeat themselves in rapid succession, the sole cause of the evil destiny is believed to be the unpropitious advent of the offspring of an 'andhiaru'. Some credulous creatures do not desist even from publishing their sad plight in the papers, as though to prove that the acceptance of a bride of priestly parentage is bound to bring disaster into the family. On the other hand, those of priestly lineage, but practising various professions, avoid, as far as possible, to allow their daughters to be betrothed to behdins; and only when a

Even today, many families deem it inauspicious for the off-spring of the priest-class and the laity, to be joined in wedlock.

suitable partner of a priestly breed is not on the horizon do they most reluctantly relent and display the large-heartedness of accepting an eligible behdin bachelor.

We were ever ready to iron out the differences that divided families or to mediate and smoothen in secret the delicate discords and disharmonies of home life and to cement ties that were about to be severed. We had to be prepared to face strange circumstances created in the name of religion. A young, devoted couple was living in peace and harmony. By chance the young husband got involved with an esoteric religious sect and gradually his thinking took such a turn that he began to believe conjugal ties to be sinful. He slept on a mat spread upon the floor at a distance from his wife and indulged in many such celibate practices. To preserve the honour of the home his wife and family tolerated his whims in silence for quite some time, but eventually they turned to us in despair. Under such conditions we were obliged to deal with exceptional patience and skill for days and even for weeks at times. But when all kinds of stratagem and contrivances ended in a joyous reunion, we enjoyed the deep satisfaction of having done our duty.

Honours

It is an ancient practice for the government of a country to confer titles and decorations upon its subjects. In the subcontinent, the government has two different modes of conferring titles on Hindus and Muslims. Hindus are honoured as Raobahadurs and Raosahebs whereas Muslims are decorated as Khan Bahadurs and Khan Sahebs. The latter form is conferred upon Parsis. When the laurels of knowledge are placed upon the brows of a Hindu pundit he is honoured as a 'Maha Mahopadhyaya'. The title of 'Shams-ul-Ulema' is conferred upon Muslims in similar cases.

Four decades ago the Muslim maulvis appealed to the government that as the term 'Shams-ul-Ulema' related to the Ulemas of their faith only it should not be conferred upon Parsis. The government wrote to the Right Honourable Sir Jamshedji to prepare a list of titles from which it could select one for Parsi scholars. Thereupon a committee comprised of some of our leaders was appointed which prepared such a list.

One of the suggested titles on the list was 'Vidhya Patti', — 'the lord of knowledge'. Ridiculing the suggestion, the 'Hindi Panch' which was being pub-

lished then, stated that slight alteration in word-structure — instead of 'Vidhya Patti' the title 'Petna Vathya' (a slave of the stomach) better befitted the present-day condition of our religious leaders. Eventually the government put an end to the matter and continued to confer upon Parsis the same title as Muslims.

Rumour reached us that the title of 'Shamsul Ulema' was to be conferred on me. Immediately the mistress of my home commenced lessons on the necessity and advantages of accepting titles. In good humour she taught me that 'Shams' means the 'sun'. Hence, by the acceptance of a title of its denomination, the sun would shine more benevolently on me and naturally, my radiance and brilliance would be augmented. Since the moon reflects the radiance of the sun, its rays falling upon me would glorify her who was my moon and my satellite. I became a disciple of her philosophic teachings and made her persuasive mind my own. Later, when the Collector of Karachi enquired whether I would accept the title of 'Shamsul Ulema' should it be conferred upon me by the government, without the slightest hesitation I replied in a single word: 'Bismillah' — (God's will be done).

Since the commencement of the conference of this title upon the savants of our community, it had been conferred upon Dastur Hoshang and Dastur Kaikobad of Poona and Dastur Peshotan, Dastur Darab Sanjana and Erwad Jeevanji Mody of Bombay. All these five devout religious leaders have left this world. I was offered this honour in June 1935. Since some time the holder of such a title is given a life-time's annual emolument of Rs.100/- by the government. The Vendidad demands that a true Athravan should seek for knowledge late into the night. That the government offers to pay for the midnight oil that a student burns should be considered a boon.

The recent arrangement of maintaining the High Priest of Karachi on a monthly salary dependent upon the monthly subscriptions that are collected. This system is precarious. As these subscriptions have decreased due to various reasons, since some years I have been receiving Rs.100/- less per month from the Anjuman than decided upon. But the effect of this decrease is not felt thanks to the kindness of friends and admirers. Twenty years ago they had purchased a small bungalow and gifted it to us on the occasion of my eldest daughter's marriage. In their

thoughtfulness they were now considering to raise a storey over it, but sufficient funds were not forthcoming. Meanwhile an invitation arrived from Jehangirji Hormusji Cama, the extremely efficient Managing Director of the 'Mancherji Cama Athornan Institute' at Bombay, to deliver a series of eight lectures there. The institute presented me with a generous honorarium for it. Besides this, that enthusiastic gentleman won the cooperation of some esteemed leaders of the community and organized my lecture-tour with the Anjumans of various cities. We travelled for three months in fifteen large and small townships of Bombay, Poona, Nagpur and Gujerat and I delivered thirty six talks during that period. At all these places I was presented with purses of varying amounts, the proceeds of which totalled twenty-five thousand. Thus besides building an additional

The young husband got involved with an esoteric religious sect and began to believe conjugal ties to be sinful.

floor above our premises, the sum helped to a large extent to meet with the expenses of our fifth and possibly our final trip to America and the estimate of Rs.8000/- that had been received for having my new book printed there. Thanks to the kindness and consideration of the community I have had the excellent opportunity of rendering faithful service as an itinerant missionary by speaking and writing to radiate the noble name, work and teachings of Zarathustra as described in the ninth 'ha' of the Yajashne, not only in the cities of the subcontinent but also in far-off countries of the East and West — five times in Europe and America and once in Iran, China and Japan.

The means to fulfil my religious mission was always fractional. Where a rupee would be needed we had fifteen annas nine pies. After spending a hundred we would have to stinge for a quarter, for that additional quarter was never ours. We exercised extreme economy on our tours. On returning from every trip my wife's first duty was to air my suits and over-coats and to store them away with care. She did this twice a year and when, seven or eight years

later we set out for America again, she would give them again to me to wear. She treated her American dresses in the same manner. We voyaged from Karachi to New York by second class. The train journeys in Europe and America were covered by third. Despite the strictest economy, expenses always mounted high. The publication of my book alone cost seven to eight thousand rupees. Due to absence of demand, half or more of the expense of every book resulted in a loss to me. Hence in spite of the profits accruing from the sale of my wife's purchases, at the termination of every trip we were burdened with a debt of two or three thousand rupees.

During our travels we were obliged to return to Bombay for a day. I was given the distinguished privilege of performing the opening ceremony of the beautiful building of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute which has been founded in the holy memory of the late, learned, scholar, Khurshedji Rustomji Cama. This magnificent mansion will continue to remind posterity of the precious services of two of our euridite and talented scholars.

The central lecture-hall of this Institute has been dedicated to the sacred memory of Shamsul Ulma Sir Jeevanji Jamshedji Mody, the jewel which lends lustre to the Athornan fold. Here many a learned scholar will deliver wise and enlightened sermons. Another similar institute built as a memorial to the renowned pundit, Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, is rendering memorable service amongst us. In like manner the Cama Institute has to create some rare and selective literature for the development of Parsi culture. One such important work is the compilation of a Zoroastrian Encyclopedia. The honourable Chairman of the Anjuman here, Khan Bahadur Sir Cavasjee Hormusjee Katrak, told me some time back that our Governor wished to read the most recent authentic history of the reign of our forefathers. In response to the demand for the latest I could offer nothing but Rawlison's Volumes published seven decades ago in the Victorian era. The Institute has to take up this and other such great works and to render invaluable literary service.

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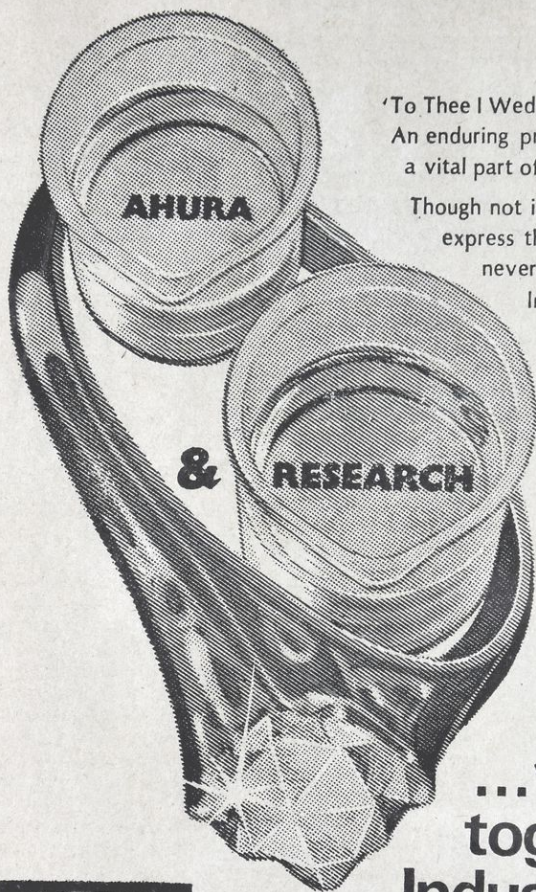


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'sanctum sanctorum'. All means of livelihood are centred around it. The thousands of devout pilgrims that go there every year from every town and city take with them means of sustenance. On them depends all trade and commerce. Orders for innumerable ceremonies arrive from all quarters and are noted there. Large quantities of sandalwood are placed on several 'machis'. Our community offers to the sacred 'Iranshah' silver that can be accounted in thousands. Ceremonies and 'Machis' are under the jurisdiction of 'punthakies' and, as neither of the Dasturs is a 'punthaky' dastur, their income is not commensurate with their status. The Anjuman at Udvada has the problem of their High Priests maintaining their status and fulfilling their sacred duty independently and with honour.

According to tradition and later as a result of legal verdict, nine priestly families of Sanjan and their heirs are the sole lawful guardians of this ancient 'Kebla' and they alone have the right to enjoy its income. Generations have passed but these servers who pay obeisance to the sacred fire have not moved with the times and conditions and, in the 20th century are still living the life of the 17th century. Deprived of sound education they have remained backward and are ever dependent on alms. On the other hand, their brethren in neighbouring Navsari, not finding sufficient sustenance at their doorstep left their hearths and homes and plunged into adventure and, by the sweat of their brow, became independent. Education altered their destiny and they have become the community's leaders in public life, thus making the athornan fold more lustrous and luminous.

The community has experienced innumerable strifes and struggles between various 'punthaks' or even amongst the members of the self-same diocese during its twelve hundred years of existence in this land. But in Udvada, during the last forty years, not thousands but lakhs of rupees have gone down the drain in courts and high courts and appeal courts in fighting out cases to the chagrin of the community throughout the country. All hearts have been pained at the constant complaints of the misuse and misappropriation of the sandalwood dedicated to the sacred fire for ceremonials. Twenty-five years ago, certain spirited athornans took up the cudgels to cleanse and regularize the Anjuman's accredited disorganisation and to set it on a constitutional basis.

Since early times, in Bombay and elsewhere, the funds of the Anjumans had been administered through the Trustees of the Panchayats of respective places. The move to regularize its election and to bracket its responsibility commensurate with the times, started in the beginning of this century. When such a legal constitution came into force in the Bombay Panchayat, the Anjumans at

They were the Puritans who were anxious to design a new pattern in the religious life of Udvada.

Karachi and other cities prepared systematic constitutions on more or less similar lines and began to administer the funds under their jurisdiction accordingly. Hence it was not surprising that there was a demand for such alterations and amendments at Udvada. But here, there was something more than the ordinary request for constitutional changes. Here it was not merely the question of the administration of funds, but the wider problem of the nomination of two dasturs and their rights and responsibilities as well as the complaints regarding the utilization of the sandalwood for 'Machis', etc. that needed to be solved legally.

Whenever a new religion is founded, or a new sect is formed in an established faith, a fresh religious fervour and zeal burns within the breast of its newly-formed following. They believe themselves to be the saviours and reformers of the chaos that has been created in the religious life of men. They feel they are the guardians and the sustainers of ceremonials and rituals, hence they come forward to work with a missionary ardour. Before their enthusiasm abates and their zest subsides and the fervour of their faith cools down, they succeed in bringing in certain changes in the religious life of the society.

Such was the state of affairs in Udvada. Through some imaginary, invisible and esoteric Zoroastrian group, a society known as "Ilmaksh-num" came into existence in Udvada which made a queer claim to reveal a new light in Zoroastrian ceremonies and conventions. This society found as its faithful adherents many athornans. They came to be known as the 'Unvala

Sect' from the surname of the family of their accepted elders.

On the authority of the presumed new understanding and inspiration that they had received, these good people introduced certain alterations in prayers and ceremonies according to their own wisdom and became more loyal practitioners of conventions. They were the Puritans who were anxious to design a new pattern in the religious life of Udvada. Like the outsiders and laymen they had become critics. Being inhabitants of the place, they were bent upon finding fault with the established practices of the region, hence were most unpopular with the fold. Their conflicts with the Anjuman increased and, more than once, they dragged the leaders to court. The atmosphere of the town was tense and dissensions and disharmony were mounting. From time to time the well-wishers of the community at Bombay had attempted to intervene and bring peace amongst the parties, but without success.

The selfless and courageous Burjorji Faramji Bharucha, who had since years sacrificed his health, wealth and knowledge to infusing a new spirit into the life and living conditions of Udvada, and the Unvala sect there, requested my humble services in the beginning of 1936 to bring about an understanding between the contesting camps and to crown with success the move to attain a constitution for the Anjuman. I accepted the challenge with great pleasure. Ahura Mazda was my guide and protector and it took two whole years to fulfil the mission successfully with the co-operation of all concerned. During that period my wife and I visited Udvada on four different occasions. Thus, abiding there for weeks on every visit, on the whole we lived in Udvada for two and a half months.

In the beginning of 1936 when we embarked upon our peace-making mission the Udvada Anjuman was divided into two parties, known as the Anjuman party and the Unvala party. Both the dasturjis headed the anjuman party and it was definitely in the majority. These parties had been quarrelling since some time. Just then the good priests who had been presiding over them passed away and their successors were nominated according to tradition. The Unvala sect proclaimed these nominations to be unconstitutional as elected without the sanction of the Anjuman, and refused to invite the newly appointed Dasturs on important occasions like the Navar or

Nirangdin ceremony or to ask their permission, or to pay respect to them or to cooperate with them. In short they did not accept or recognize them as Dasturs.

It was necessary to repudiate this objection before venturing upon the task of framing a constitution for the Anjuman. With the cooperation and coordination of the gentlemen concerned, this question was amicably settled within three weeks. The Anjuman's meeting that was called on 30th March 1936 passed a resolution of agreement regarding this subject. There was rejoicing in all quarters and as a joyful proclamation of the mitigation of misunderstanding, a procession accompanied by a band marched through the streets of the city.

It was decided that on my return to Karachi I was to prepare a draft constitution within two months and send it for the approval, alterations and amendments of both parties. As arranged, within the prescribed time-limit, I sent printed copies of the draft constitution to workers at Udvada and places outside Udvada. Meanwhile circumstance took a new turn and a controversy was created as to the personal rights and privileges of the two Dasturs and, over and above the two primary factions of the Anjuman and the Unvalas, two independent parties of the Dasturs were formed, and so instead of two, three parties came into being.

About 200 years ago, from amongst the Mobeds who had brought the sacred fire to Udvada, the Anjuman had chosen two leaders as their Dasturs. No rules and regulations had been framed regarding the scope of their authority. Shaikh Sadi has said that ten beggars can sleep comfortably under a single coverlet, but two kings cannot be accommodated within a single kingdom. Similarly, in a small society like the Anjuman at Udvada, it was not possible for two Dasturs to live side by side in the same domain. Yet, the spiritual heirs of both these seats of priesthood had for two whole centuries, ministered devoutly to the holy 'Iran Shah' and reigned amicably and in harmony as guides of the priestly class.

In framing the constitution of the Anjuman it was but natural that the question of the rights and privileges of the two dasturs be of prime importance. The Dastur who was adorning the throne of one party, his family and his followers vehemently maintained the authority of the two dasturs was not at

par — that one was senior to the other. His colleague and the adherents of that flock argued even more forcefully that the holders of both prelacies were on an equal footing and have always been enjoying equal status and equal privileges.

As if it were insufficient to designate our dasturs of India as the Dastur of a certain city, it has become a rule amongst us to speak of them and write of them as High Priests. There is only one Dastur in Karachi yet he is known as the High Priest of Karachi. The same is the case concerning the dasturs of other regions. Turning over the pages of the 'Parsi Prakash' it will be found that its famous writer affixes the word 'vada' or 'high' with the name of any previous dastur of Udvada who passes away or in mentioning the appointment of his successor or in discussing some of his public achievements. Hence it follows that A is 'high' and so is B 'high'. Yet when both dasturs are present in an assembly, it was obvious that the scales of rights and responsibilities would be slightly tilted depending upon who sits on the chair placed to the right or who commences a prayer ceremony.

In spite of that, if care is not taken to give the heirs of both parties equal authority while drafting the rules and regulations of the first constitution in the history of the Anjuman, the agreement that had been arrived at would be nullified and the progress of framing the constitution endangered. It took a year

The Unvalas who were in alliance with the Ilmakshnumites, were conducting ceremonies and prayers in a manner alien to tradition.

and a half to solve this problem. As usual in such cases, at times hours or even days of heated discussions arise over every point or every word. The one word whose meaning, derivation, scope of utility demanded our greatest attention and time was 'high'. Ultimately common sense, broad-mindedness and cooperativeness prevailed and two very difficult questions were solved.

Amongst the three factions that had evolved up to that time, a variety of subjects like the nomination of the two

dasturs, their privileges and prerogatives, and the constitution of the Anjuman, were being debated. The Unvalas who were in alliance with the Ilmakshnumites, were conducting ceremonies and prayers in a manner alien to tradition. Certain gentlemen placed in my hands a strong protest to add items in the draft constitution to put an end to such affairs, and informed me in no uncertain terms that unless these have been refuted, their party would not pass the constitution.

Two parties had split into three and now a fourth came into existence. The fourth party, composed of sixty members of the Unvala sect, sent a counter-protest to the effect that should there be any attempt to stop them from performing ceremonies and rituals as they had done since two decades according to their own religious beliefs, they would withdraw their cooperation from the framing of the constitution. Since a long time the Anjuman at Udvada had been disturbed by the alterations and additions to ceremonies that had been introduced in the name of Ilmakshnum.

Due to this rift many a happy family had broken up. In some homes the father would conduct prayers and ceremonies in the established style whereas his son would work in a contrary manner according to the teachings of the new party. In this way there was disharmony between father and son, brother and brother, uncle and nephew. Many elders complained to us about this with heavy hearts and tear-dimmed eyes. They informed us that as the Ilmakshnumites exerted an immense influence in Bombay and as ceremonies were being performed through the Boyce Trust Fund towards which generous subscriptions were contributed, the younger generation was drawn towards them to the distress of the elders. This was true. On the other hand, the members of the Unvala clan who had imbibed a faith in Ilmakshnum, had for twenty years practised the religion in its altered form, and were convinced of its veracity.

Both parties viewed their own particular beliefs with deep feeling, and presumed they were in the right, and looked upon the newly-created party as guilty of having introduced thirty-three major and minor alterations in the realm of prayers and rituals. The most important change was the system of performing the 'kusti' ceremony with the Sarosh Baaj 'Xnum'. It takes more time

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to do the 'Kusti' in this new manner than it did to perform it according to established practice. Considering the conditions prevailing in the community at present, it could be surmised that some members must be performing the 'Kusti' ceremony hardly once a day. Another smaller percentage does not even wear the 'sadra' and 'Kusti'. In spite of this,

It was not a question of proving which method of performing the Kusti ceremony was correct but of safeguarding the sentiments of both parties.

disputes regarding religious observances are rampant. Those performing the Kusti ceremony in the new fashion believe it to be the true and correct way. This was their honest belief. It was not a question of proving which method of performing the Kusti ceremony was correct but of safe-guarding the sentiments of both parties.

While the constitution was being drafted and passed, so many heated controversies arose from time to time regarding certain questions, that the agreement was on the point of being abrogated. Similarly this delicate question regarding rituals and prayers

Ten beggars can sleep comfortably under a coverlet but two kings cannot be accommodated within a single kingdom.

dashed against the rock of dissension and the vessel of the constitution was in danger of being ship-wrecked. By the grace of God and the wisdom of all concerned, this impediment too was removed and the draft of the constitution crossed this hurdle. Ten years have elapsed since then, the constitution is being adhered to at will, party spirit has to a large extent been abolished and there is peace and cooperation in the Udvada Anjuman.

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A Rare Collector

Kishore Chatterjee

IN my many years as a record-collector, I have rescued Schubert from a race-course jumble sale (a magnificent recording of the Cello Quintet with Casals) and dragged out Bach's sons from the red light area (a newspaper advertisement led me to a complete collection of CPE Bach Sonatas left behind possibly as a token payment for entertainment of another variety). I have been accused of smuggling gold, the result of a slight misinterpretation of a phrase used on the cover of Wagner's "Ring" sent to me by a friend from Australia. But, perhaps the most fascinating experience will always be my meeting Ardeshir Erachshaw Talayerkhan, the most enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide that a young record collector could ever hope to have.

Indeed, A.E. Talayerkhan would make a person weep for having bought one of his records. Not because the discs were defective. Oh no. For no man could have cared for his records more, no one could have catalogued, codified and priced his records with greater accuracy and honesty. No, he had ana-

lysed his magnificent collection of monophonic gems to the last nick and scratch, writing out on the records in detail the likely path the needle was to travel on the groove and describing the crackles and cuts and, of course, the pleasure on the pathway. No, the reason why one felt sad about taking records away from this incredible enthusiast was that he had loved his records and buying them was like bringing someone else's child home: a child reared, nurtured, cared for and pampered for years and now being sent away for a very personal reason.

A. E. Talayerkhan was very sick indeed a dying man when I first met him on a bright Sunday morning at an auction. Unable to find any records, I was admiring some Walt Disney toys when someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned to face the strangest-looking man I had ever seen. He was wearing a pair of khaki shorts which looked ten sizes too large for him and through which his thin legs, which looked as if they were made out of papier mache, swayed like twigs in rough weather. The legs ended in a pair of tennis shoes. He looked so frail that I was afraid he would disintegrate any moment. Instead he spoke the words that made sweet music after a disappointing morning. "You won't get records here, come to my house".

The pair of shorts now took me to a sleek blue sports car and we drove off towards what turned out to be a gold mine of records. On the way he talked incessantly about music, asked me about my favourites and urged me to

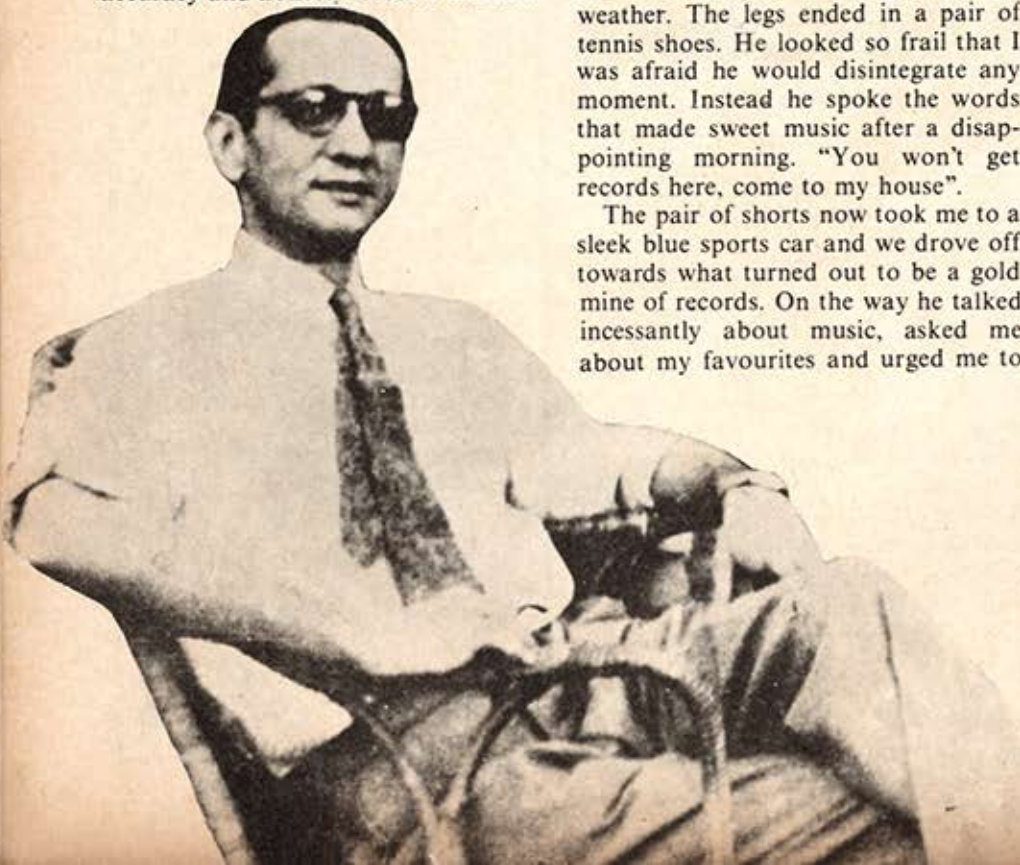
listen to a composer called Boccherini, whose music till that day was unknown to me, since none of his records were available in the city. When I told him I had not heard of Boccherini, Mr Talayerkhan was shocked. "Oh Boccherini" he exclaimed, "he is divine, you must take one or two of my Boccherinis home". Quite frankly, I had not realized that he was selling his records and I said something about listening to the music at his house, since I was very particular about lending and borrowing records myself and respected the same feeling in all collectors. I still remember the sense of shock that I suffered when I realized that those magnificent pile of incomparable records were all for sale.

Over the years I realize that Mr Talayerkhan had planned the sale of his collection in such precise detail, laid down the ground rules of sale and actually interviewed each and every prospective buyer (as he had interviewed me in the car on that first day), before letting him take away his Boccherini, his Mozart or his Mahler. For, A.E. Talayerkhan was not just selling his records, he was finding good homes for his favourite children.

Unfulfilled Promise

Today a fairly representative collection of western classical records can be picked up for money (thanks to the industry's Russian connexions) but in the late sixties, when I met Mr Talayerkhan, everything depended on luck. The gramophone industry had withdrawn its great repertoire of monophonic records which included Klemperer and Karajan's early Philharmonia recordings of the Beethoven symphonies, records by the legendary Guido Cantelli and Dinu Lipatti, by Edwin and Annie Fischer and quite a few from the Beecham legacy. There was a promise in the air of the records being reissued in stereo, but the promise still remains unfulfilled.

Almost simultaneously, the famous Wednesday club (concerts every Wednesday at the Hall and Anderson building) created by Phillips for the



promotion of classical music went defunct the records finding their way to the secondhand market. The major record shops also went dry on classical music except for a few released during Christmas, which for some reason was considered propitious for listening to classical music. The collector therefore, depended entirely on auctions, the secondhand market and private sales.

My accidental encounter with A.E. Talayerkhan was more than lucky. It was he who introduced me to the chamber music of Mozart, Schubert and of course Boccherini. Even in the monophonic era of the gramophone industry the only chamber music records available were the sonatas of Beethoven (played by Claudio Arrau) and the "Trout". The chamber music experience for the price Talayerkhan charged was simply getting some of the world's finest musical moments for a song. Opera was another experience that Talayerkhan shared with his record-buying friends and so was Bruckner, whose music would otherwise have remained for me cold and teasing words in a book. Adi Talayerkhan did not sell records, he opened the door to the world of great music for young and enthusiastic listeners.

If Adi Talayerkhan had decided to take up record-selling as a profession instead of adopting it as a means of finding good homes for his children in his dying years, he would have not only set an example in honesty and integrity but also taught everyone how to take care of these fragile objects in a tropical and humid climate. Most of the records in his collection came from the early years of the LP (1948-1956). Yet when I bought them in the mid-sixties they were as good as new. Each record was kept in specially prepared cardboard outer jackets over and above the record's own outer jackets and plastic sheets. He had classified his records into three categories—one, popular (Waltzes, Neopolitan songs, Paul Robeson, gypsy music, etc.) two, classical pops (Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Chopin) and three specials. The moment a prospective buyer was introduced into his house he was handed over one of these catalogues, depending on Talayerkhan's own assessment of the visitor's serious interest and involvement in music. For instance, I was introduced to his third catalogue, the "special" collection, only after I had been a regular buyer for over a year.

Later, I learnt to regret this for I

missed out on a lot of his very rare records to other collectors. This special collection consisted mostly of chamber music, including early HMV recordings of the Amadeus Quartet and the Quarteto Italiano (when the group recorded for Columbia), recordings by Toscanini, and others.

No one ever went to his house without returning with, not just a disc, but a decided curiosity and love for classical music. His appreciation was infectious and I shall never forget the way he made me listen to the Sibelius Sixty Symphony for which I had always an imperfect sympathy, rating it far below his other symphonies. When he played a record before someone bought it, I knew it must have been a special favourite and that he was taking a last lingering farewell from the music he had cherished and lived with. In his later years as his health grew worse, the actual demonstrations stopped and he just directed us to the pile of discs that would always be kept on the table and we made our selection guided by his excellent additions and annotations on the sleeve notes, in which, he gradually introduced a system of abbreviations, cutting out the earlier florid and nostalgic comments such as "Verdi 'La Traviata' Note: one of the loveliest of operas. Slight crackle side 3, 4, and 5. Hear it and decide. Largely in very good condition. Magnificent orchestration One-fifth the price."

Early during our acquaintance he explained to me his philosophy of selling classical records. "Sell your records by all means," he would say, "but only to those who are serious about music," as if pronouncing judgement on the ultimate fate of all record collectors. He never allowed his Norwegian second wife to touch his discs. Discography was a world in which he moved alone, sharing his love with others like him, who believed that records were more than just moving objects in polyvinylchloride but a living form that spoke its own private language which had a life apart from the music it preserved. He never graduated to the tape or cassette age nor even to the stereo age.

Returning from his house with a handful of records I do not know why I had always felt a tinge of melancholy like witnessing a sunset, the twilight of a God of the discographic world. Undoubtedly, A.E. Talayerkhan raised record collecting to a level I doubt this city will ever see again.

The Statesman, Calcutta, 17 August 1981.

The Agreement



When Jerbanoo's husband Bomsu died he left her a tidy sum. That started the trouble
Just how to invest it?

Her lazy son Diniar had just the scheme in mind—Monthly Interest Deposit Scheme.
"Just imagine—a regular income every month—and no work involved."

But daughter Kerbanoo counted on the Money Multiplier. "Think of the family's future requirements—the money will more than double in 8 years."

The air grew thick with schemes. Freddy, business-like, opted for the Current Account. Putlibai sighed about the Fixed Deposit.

But they all agreed on one thing. Central Bank. Bomsu after all had made his money there.

Come drop in at your nearest Central Bank branch. We'll advise you, as we did Jerbanoo, how best to invest your money.



Central Bank of India

(A Government of India Undertaking)

The Bank that moves out to people and places

Interpub/CBI/10/80

DANCE

There is an indefinable aura of tragedy around **Pheroza Lally**. She's half-real, half-unreal and the nearest thing to a prima donna ballerina that I've experienced.

When I visited Pheroza at home to interview her she chatted quickly with several high-pitched Ooohs, Ah...hhs and Eeees they overwhelmed me for a while and then became a part of her personality.

An amazing person, a miracle. For starters, listen to her: "My life began with Mummy. She taught me the rudi-



ments of ballet right from the time I was two-and-a-half years old. I had no formal training until I went to London at seven.

"I have an unusually supple back, quite unusual. I've legs that go right up there at 180 degrees—front, side, back, everywhere, 180 degrees!" I did not believe her until later on she took me to her studio and showed off to me.

Pheroza has a penchant for repeating words thrice to express herself: "Ohhh... when I came back at 12 or so to Bombay it was very, very, very difficult for me, a terrific struggle, a fantastic, fantastic, fantastic struggle. There was nobody to teach me."

This was when she returned with a five-year stint at the Art Education School in London where she lived with

"I'll
DANCE
TILL
I DIE!"

her elder sister. And after that she got a scholarship to study two-and-a-half years with the Bolshoi Ballet School in Moscow: "The Bolshoi is the most divine place in the world, my temple, my house of worship."

In London, Pheroza had taken all the five grade exams of the London Royal Academy of Dance for children and finished with honours—she was presented with a volume of Anna Pavlova's life.... "Anna Pavlova is my heroine, my idol, my everything!" she exclaimed. Her youthful ardour is contagious and I found myself responding to this half-child, half-woman dancer.

Did the woman take over when she refused to disclose her age? "Eeee...." she fluttered her eyelashes, "I am what I am." So be it.

In Moscow Pheroza graduated with the highest certificates of merit, the "Otlechno", and learnt how to speak fluent Russian.

And then the heartbreaks began. Her

"The only thing that matters to me is that there is dance in me, in me, in me!"

beioved mother passed away in 1967 and her father became her driving force: "He's everything to me. I can't tell you, he's not a man, he's an angel, he's not an angel, he's God, the greatest, dearest, dearest, dearest person in the world to me. I don't need another man in my life!"

On her return to India Pheroza met with a near-fatal accident in 1971. She lost her balance near the window and went hurtling down from the third floor, a drop of 80 feet: "All my bones were broken. My head, arms, elbows, ribs, back. My eyes were injured. Doctors said I would not live. I lost my hair! I was unconscious." In all this her legs alone remained unharmed!

"When I came around I was full of despair and death-wishes. But Daddy took my ballet shoes and put them on my feet and promised me that I would

dance again." And in some 11 months Pheroza was dancing again on stage.

In an effort to be independent, Pheroza, in 1975, did start ballet classes at the House of Soviet Culture but they were a washout. "Teaching is an absolute waste of time. It's all very demanding, a hard and strenuous life and more than anything a life of dedication."

"The children just haven't got the burning desire and their mothers, all they want to know is, 'When will my darling get on stage?' They want instant success. In classical ballet!"

With that Pheroza took me by the hand and led me to her studio. A large, uncluttered room with a practice bar, a long mirror and a gramophone. I watched fascinated as she bent her slight body this way and that way with fluid grace, sinking and rising with effortless ease. And, in between, she looked at me and asked, "You like?" Of course....

A ballet dancer, Pheroza said, must put in at least five hours of practice daily. According to her, and she should know, ballet originated in the court of King Louis XIV the "sun-king". It was a French export but it was Marie Taglioni, an Italian, who first went up on her toes.... "She didn't dance, she flew."

In modern times there is George Balanchine of the New York City Ballet Company—at the age of 77 he still dances and teaches. Then there is Peter Martin, Susanne Farrall who can be considered the prima ballerina in America. In England, of course, "there is my darling Margot Fonteyn", and Rudolf Nureyev.

Pheroza could talk on the subject for hours, I realized. Her collection of records include Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Schubert, but naturally! And finally, she answered the one question which she had been avoiding: What is she going to do now? Somewhat defeatedly she replied.

"Well, from what I can see there is not much of a future for ballet over here, there is not much of a future. I really don't know in which direction my life is going. Because I really, really, really don't know. The only thing that matters to me is that there is dance in me, in me, in me!"

And with that she flung her arms

"He's God, the greatest dearest, dearest, dearest person in the world to me."

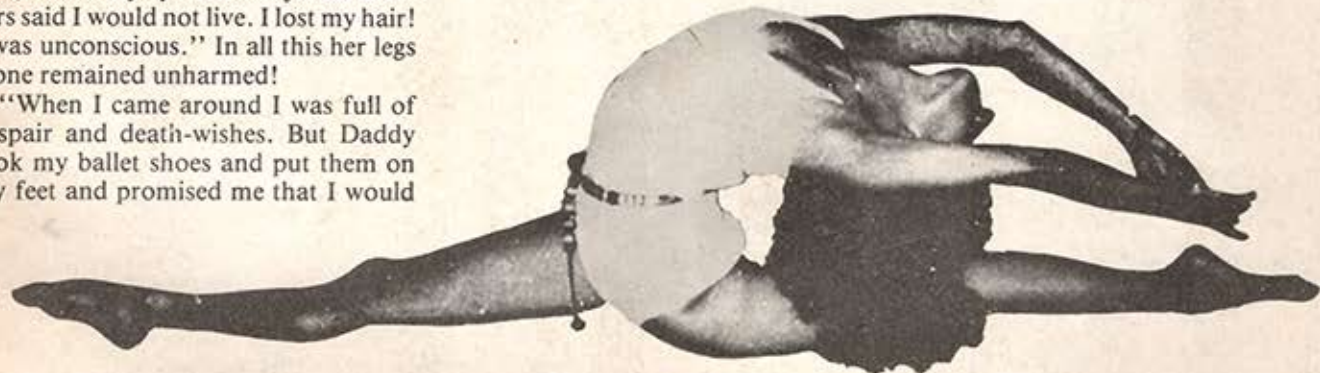
around her father and said impulsively, "He's my life and soul. I just want to dance till I die!"

I left Pheroza Lally clutching to her bosom her pink satin ballet shoes which came all the way from America and cost about \$22. Surprisingly, when I felt them they were as hard as rock instead of soft and delicate: "Breaking them in is very hard," Pheroza said, "You can break someone's head with them!"

Her father, a charming Mr. Pheroze Lally, gifted me a card with the words "Expect a miracle" printed on it. I guess his daughter's life is based on that legend.

"It was very very very difficult for me, a terrific struggle, a fantastic, fantastic, fantastic struggle."

TARA PATEL (Midday 19 July 1981)



Contd. from page 17

"hudis" over gas flames—"We use up about 10 cylinders of Burshane gas daily," explained Dinshaw Nariman, while conducting us around. There is a room where kulfi and yogurt is made, where the butter is churned in a machine made to specification in India, a cold storage, a room where the milk sachets are sealed.

Only 30 per cent of the milk is distributed in sachets in spite of the obvious advantages of this method; the use of milk sachets means an increase of "30 paise per sachet."

At the mention of profits, he smiled, "We make enough to survive in a nice way, after all our customers cannot afford to pay more as it is." The motto of the family business "Truth is light" (or is it the other way around?) is etched on their milk bottles and one knows that it is no mere piece of mockery.

After milk it is natural that they should have branched into Indian sweets in 1920 (they had about 20 Marwari cooks brought specially from Jaipur to prepare these sweets), in 1928 came their kulfi "which is Indian ice-cream and cannot be classified really as mithai" and then butter, ghee, yogurt from the 1930's onwards.



Delivery starts at four a.m.

The Parsi Dairy's "sutarfeni" and "Bombay halwa", according to a Bengali friend of mine, are the best things in Indian sweetmeats—when I visit her occasionally in Bhopal her standing instructions are not to turn up without these two items from Bombay!

Modern Look

Much of the modern streamlining came in when one of the brothers, Naval Nariman went to Bangalore and did a course in dairy management. He is in charge of the farm and technological side of the business. The rest pitch in with general administration and the hundred and one things to be done in the day-to-day

running and accounting.

It is the saga of the first generation—in its early 50's—smoothly paving the way for the next generation which is already involving itself in the business from scratch.

Five families encompassing 14 members may not be a very large joint family but the important thing is that they all live, work and eat together happily.

Perhaps the least known of the Parsi Dairy products is their collection of yogurt which was introduced into the market two or three years ago, it comes in 12 flavours—honey, jeera, pineapple, kesar, mango, mosambi, raspberry, chocolate, figs, banana, malai... these yogurts are served at their Kulfi House and Bhelpuri House adjoining the main shop at Princess Street.

In the meantime I recommend the Parsi Dairy "sutarfeni" even to non-sweet-toothed Bombayites. Essentially a Gujarati sweet, it melts in the mouth without much effort—to say the least I'd serve it to Prince Charles himself.

Parsi Dairy "sutarfeni" (with its generous sprinkling of pistachio and almond nuts) with fresh cream is a superlative desert!

by Tara Patel, Mid-day September 26, 1981.

SERSON

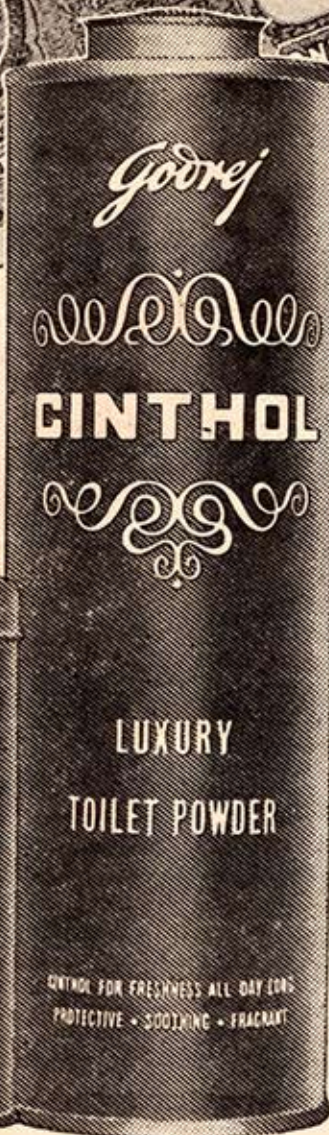
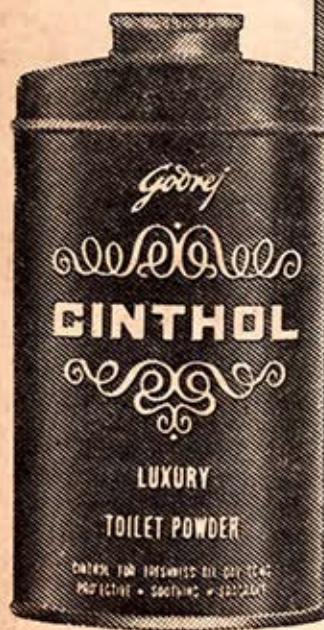
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