

Parsiana

Q: Parsis celebrate their birthdays in a strange manner, particularly the children: they light candles on a birthday cake and then blow them off to the chants of "*Happy Birthday to You!*"

Should this be tolerated?
What was the custom in ancient Iran?

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.

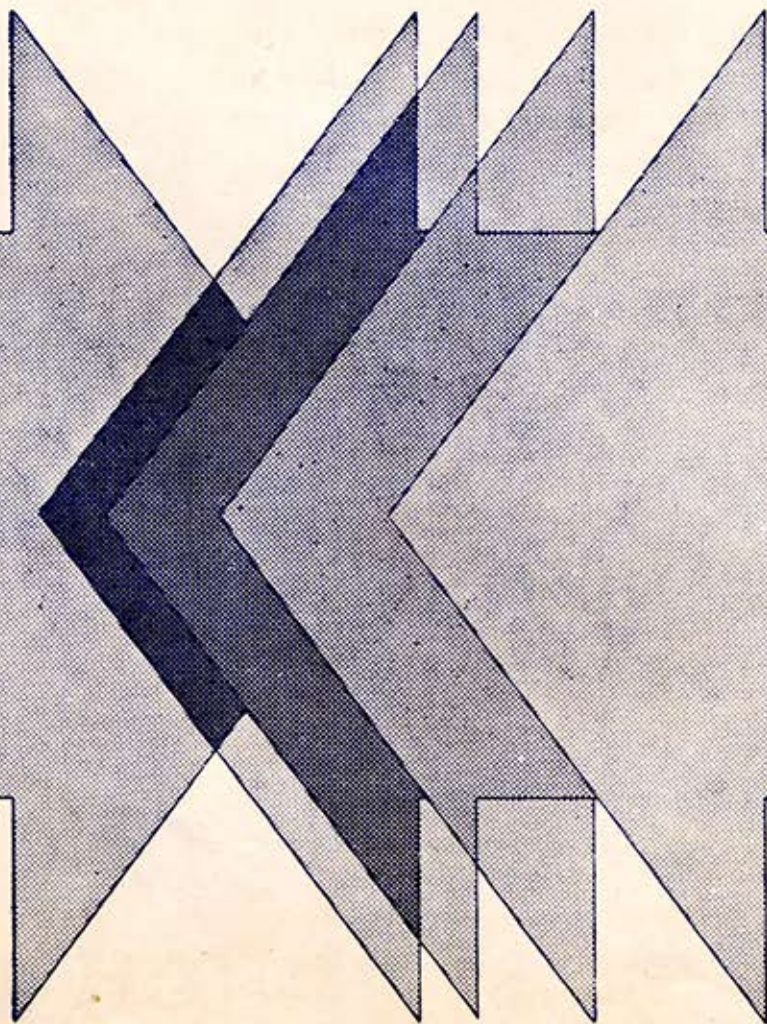
This kind of activity results in a chain reaction releasing the energy for greater development. From the nuclear technological base we launched into space technology. And long before that, in 1938, we developed Indian manufacturing capability. Then it was restricted to dairy equipment. Today, we have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



LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED
where technology moves with time
P.O. Box 278, Bombay 400 038

And in today already walks tomorrow

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge



Parsiana

May 1982, Volume 4 No 11

Readers' Forum	3
Events and Personalities	7
Business	10
Law and Lore	12
The Parsi Punchayet Case - VIII	14
"Happy Birthday to You!"	21
Uttara Dances by Sunil Kothari	24
History in the Baking by J. P. Dotiwala	26
BPP: Facts and Figures by Arni Sethna	28
A Corpus of Custom by N. J. Nanporia	30
The Life of Dastur Dhalla - XXIV	31
Bridging the Gap	36
In Memoriam	36

EDITOR

Jehangir R. Patel

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

R. P. Thanavala

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Abraham Mathai

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Usha Albuquerque

DESIGNER

Sean Mahoney

DESIGN ASSISTANT

Kranti Shilotri

ADVERTISING

Veera Patel

Zarin Billimoria

MANAGEMENT

Hanita Irani

Cheryl D'Penha

CIRCULATION

D. B. Chinoy

Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel at C/o. H. L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A.K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay, 400 001, printed by him at Jyoti Industries, 324 A to Z Industrial Estate, Bombay 400 013 and phototypeset at Decora Printers, Bombay 400 009. All rights reserved. Address all editorial and business correspondence to Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Phone: 268730.

Annual inland subscription: Rs 30 for one year (12 issues); Rs 55 for two years (24 issues); Foreign subscription rates: Seamail Rs 60 for one year, Rs 110 for two years; Airmail Rs 120 for one year, Rs 215 for two years.

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

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



In Memoriam

Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

BLAZE ADVERTISING PVT. LTD.
AND ASSOCIATE COMPANIES.

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.

U. S. IMMIGRATION

Iranian Zartoshties now qualify as minorities under threat by U.S. Immigration Authorities and may apply for asylum to America. We urge them to consider this possibility to gain U.S. immigration rights. For further information and help, they may contact: The Persian Zoroastrians Organization, P.O. Box 50334, Pale Alto, CALIF. 94306, U.S.A.

PARVIZ VARJAVAND
San Carlos, California, U.S.A.

The American Consul in Bombay, Nancy L. Pelletreau clarifies:

Under current guidelines, members of Iranian minorities including Zoroastrians may be eligible for parole to the United States. Parole, which is not the same as asylum, is granted by the Attorney General and permits the applicant to enter the United States temporarily. When the emergent reasons for which the person was paroled into the United States no longer exist, the person must depart the country unless he qualifies for immigration through normal channels.

Iranian minority applicants who are seeking entry into the United States may apply at any American Embassy or Consulate. Cases are submitted through the Department of State to the Immigration and Naturalization Service which adjudicates each request on behalf of the Attorney General. Each request is handled individually and may or may not be granted.

NECESSARY ENDEAVOR

The news of the institutional ferment of the last two years makes fascinating reading. The effort to involve Parsis in carving out their own destiny must involve a great deal of work and not a

little frustration. But, in my view, it is a necessary endeavor if the religion is to have anybody left to be a witness to it.

The initiative taken by the laity in the "new" Western Zoroastrian Associations is the basis of their vitality.

In this connection, I am inclined to think that the Parsis in the Washington D.C. area should take a lesson from these instances of lay initiative and drop the idea of establishing a consecrated fire-temple, complete with full-time priests, in this hemisphere. A facility inclusive of a "house of prayer" and space for varied community activities would serve far better.

Its success would depend upon the members' responsible participation, whereas the building of a temple and the installation of full-time priests will encourage the notion that the priests will give real leadership to the community. Would that they could! But where are priests who could be found?

CYRUS PANGBORN
New Jersey, U.S.A.

"THE LOST VISION"

It was enlightening to read Jehan Bagli's article from Canada ("Zoroastrianism, The Lost Vision", *Parsiana*, December 1981). To think that in this age of scientific progress there are individuals like Joseph H. Peterson in search of truth who seem to have found it in our ancient faith through some books on Zoroastrianism. This too after being born, in a faith with perhaps a powerful, modern, propaganda machine.

If Peterson, a sincere believer in Zoroastrianism, wants his navjote done, it seems criminal and most uncharitable to deny him this privilege. If Zoroaster himself converted non-Zoroastrians into the true faith, who are we to stop a believer from becoming a Zoroastrian and joining our fold? Who knows such a

person may prove to be a powerful influence in spreading the true and good religion of Zoroaster in a new country.

The Parsis in Bombay are a lost race, thanks to our bigotry.

We believe the sole reason for not taking outsiders into the faith is the burden on the community funds.

Peterson makes us realize how very narrow is the vision of the Parsi Zoroastrians. We are deeply interested to know the result of his quest. Our good wishes and prayers go with him.

FREANY G. GODIWALLA

PRAYER POWER

Jews and Northern Semitic peoples still pray in Hebrew, though 70 percent of them are educated. Brahmins and Hindus still pray in Sanskrit and all over the world the Mohamedans pray in Arabic.

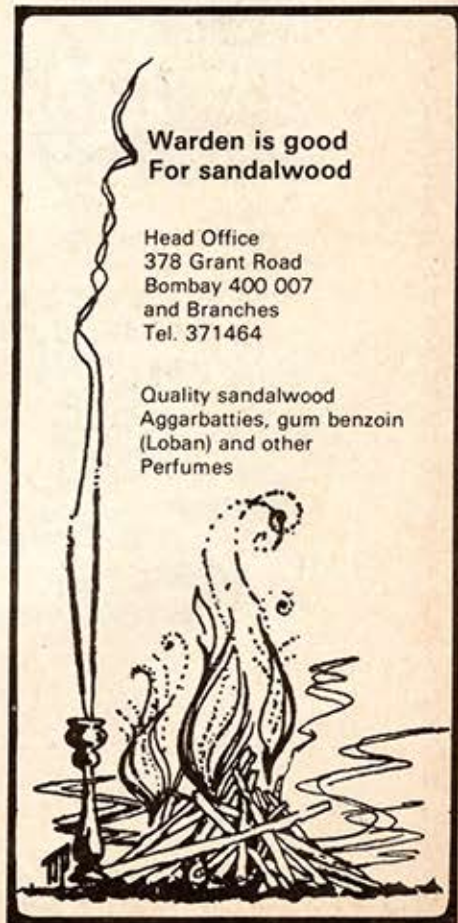
For any Parsi/Zoroastrian who wants to pray in Gujarati, we have all our prayers translated by eminent scholars like Kanga, Chiniwala, Masani and Irani in Gujarati, and by D.S. Framroze and others in English.

NARIMAN S. BAXTER
Poona

Warden is good For sandalwood

Head Office
378 Grant Road
Bombay 400 007
and Branches
Tel. 371464

Quality sandalwood
Aggarbatties, gum benzoin
(Loban) and other
Perfumes



Here's how we take care of your cargo —safely, quickly.

AIRFREIGHT can handle just about everything in
air cargo, both international and domestic.

From pins to tigers. Efficiently and quickly,
so that your cargo arrives exactly on schedule.



*We pick up
your cargo so
you don't have to
bother about
cartage.*



*Freight forwarding
is done thro' leading
international
airlines.*



*Customs clearance is
managed by a special
department. No delay here.*



*We secure special
commodity rates
when applicable.*



*We arrange for consolidation
and charters where needed.*



AIRFREIGHT PVT. LTD.

Regd. H.O: Neville House, Nicol Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 001

Branches: Bangalore, Bhadohi, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kanpur,
Madras, Pune, Srinagar and Trivandrum.

MIXED PRIORITIES

I am rather distressed to see in *Parsiana*, so much space being devoted to the old Parsi Punchayet Case which has very little relevance today, and to mud-slinging articles on personalities under captions like 'Of Trusts and Distrusts' etc. Somewhere down the line, I feel that our priorities, and if I may say the objectives of *Parsiana*, appear to have got mixed up.

As I see it, our number one priority today is, how to infuse enthusiasm in the young of the fold who can spearhead the much needed resurrection of the Community, and stop its rapid downward decline. The need of the hour is not so much to educate the Community in its past history and extol its glory, but to find out in what direction it is moving today. In this respect there are several things which have to be looked into, one of them being, the reason why the Parsis, are taking to the Baba cult in large numbers.

Every Parsi proclaims from the roof top that the Zoroastrian religion is the oldest, the best, and the highest form of religion that the universe has ever known. After 4,000 years, a revival is now taking place in all corners of the world, to inculcate in this strife-stricken world the teachings of Zoroaster. Conferences and conventions abound a plenty in foreign countries, and universities abroad have even instituted a chair to propagate the Prophet's word.

One would, therefore, naturally expect that the Parsis in India would form the spearhead and the driving force behind such a religious revival. But alas, this is unfortunately not so, and instead we find more Zoroastrians taking to the Baba cult. It will come as a shock to know that, in proportion to their numbers, the percentage of so-called Zoroastrians professing the Baba faith, is higher than in any of the non-Hindu religious communities like the Christians, Muslims, or the Buddhists.

Why is it that, of all the other communities, the Parsis are gravitating in such large numbers to cults outside their own religion? Where is it that we elders have failed our youth, and this great religion failed our community? It is obvious that, somewhere down the line something has misfired and gone astray. Things have now come to such a pass that, whereas formerly this trend was confined to individual worship, today we find complete Zoroastrian families built around a Baba cult.

Will the great exponents of the Zoroastrian faith, or the high priests of our scriptures, or our learned trustees, or the readers of *Parsiana*, come forward to explain this drift and answer the question - "Where is it that the Zoroastrian faith has failed the Parsi community, for them to turn to a Baba cult?" I am afraid unless we can answer this question, we will be wasting our time in finding, may be, correct solutions, but to the wrong problems.

BRIG. NOSHIR B. GRANT
Poona.

VITAL ISSUES

Instead of indulging in needless bickerings on matters such as whether we should have dokhmas or not, or how many wives Zoroaster had, the community should concentrate all its efforts on two vital issues — housing, and rousing the youth of the community to greater efforts, both in education and vocation.

The lament now is that the numbers of the community are dwindling, even while many couples put off getting married because they have no house of their own. Other couples move from sanatorium to sanatorium, endlessly hoping for a place of their own. At the same time, several young bachelors shy at the idea of marrying, simply because they have no accommodation of their own.

An all-out effort for more new houses for Parsis on a big scale is a must. A home for every Parsi, or at least for every married and marriageable Parsi should be its slogan.

Vigorous efforts are also required to shake off the apathy of youngsters. A degree and a bank job seem to be the goal of most Parsi youths. There is no enthusiasm for extracurricular activity, either social or physical, among the majority of them. They are averse to hard work both in studies and other fields even though perseverance alone can help them to rise and elevate the community in the face of overwhelming competition from other communities. There is no desire to take risks in life or to enter the business field.

Our forefathers put the community on the top by hard work, integrity and a willingness to take risks and enter different fields of trade and business. Should we not take up the challenge and help revive the youth?

H. F. BAGWALA

JEENA & COMPANY ESTD. 1900

IATA AIR CARGO
Clearing, Forwarding
Warehousing and
Insurance Agents

10, Veer Nariman Road
Fort, Bombay-1.

Cable : 'JUSTITIA'
Telex : 2313
Phone : 312032

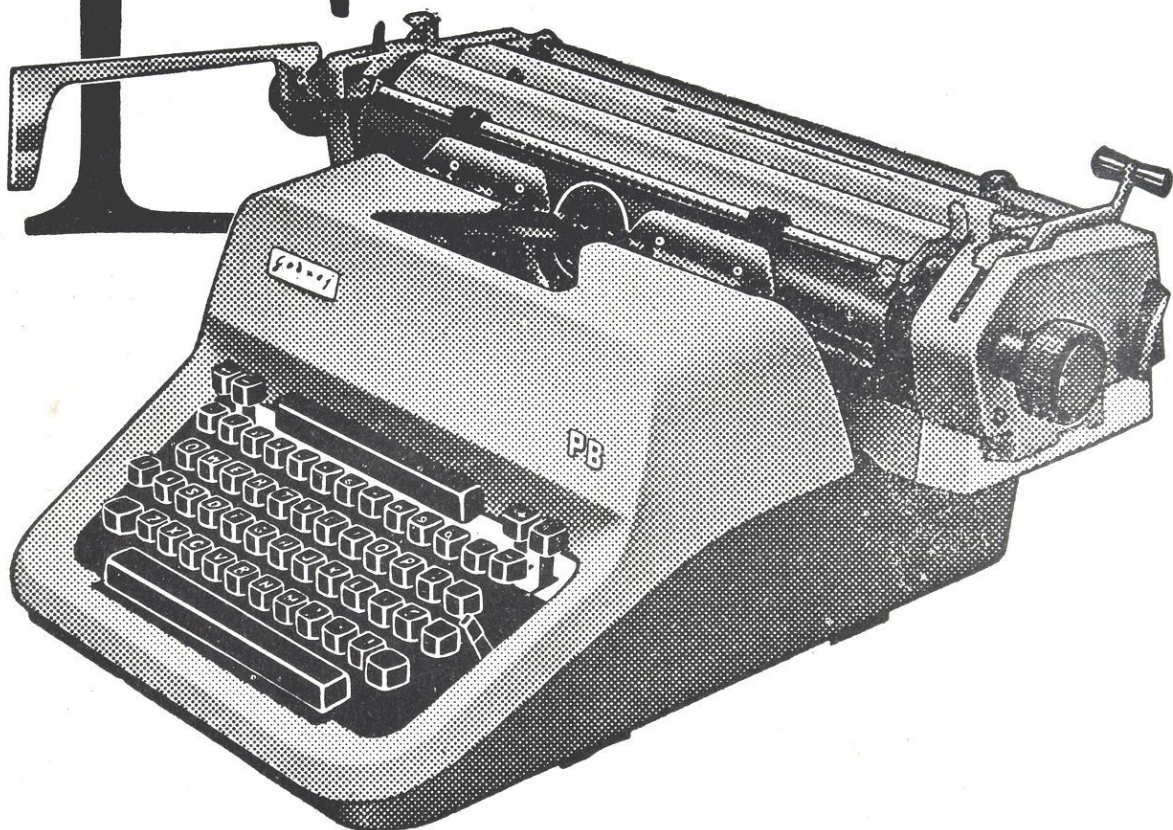
BRANCHES :
E. Merc House
19/B, Shakespeare Sarani
(Formerly Theatre Road)
CALCUTTA-16.
Phone : 444711

'Jeena House'
50, Hanuman Road
Connaught Circus
NEW DELHI
Phone : 310821

C.14, Devtha Plaza, 1st floor
Residency Road
Bangalore-25
Phone : 564474

No. 26-26-24, 2nd floor
VIZAGAPATNAM-35
Phone : 62018

EFFORTLESS



**The new Godrej PB has a light-as-air touch.
To make typing a lot easier for you.**

The new Godrej PB offers you the optimum combination of light touch and speed. Linear ball bearings ensure lighter, smoother carriage movement.

new

Godrej[®]

PB

India's first world-class typewriter.

Encores for Vachha

"He has the ability to turn melody and rhythm into pure joy", said the review in the Indian Express on the performance of Michel Romy Vachha, the first Indian pianist to successfully complete the postgraduate course in Pianoforte Perfection and obtain a diploma with excellent grading at the Conservatoire Santa Cecilia in Rome.



Vachha: the piano, his forte

Vachha, 27, born in Bombay of French-Parsi parentage, has given piano recitals to large audiences in Delhi, Madras, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Bombay and Calcutta, and has been acclaimed by leading newspapers for his skill and talent. Vachha a licentiate of the Royal School of music, London, has performed in Europe too, according to a write-up, and was awarded a diploma for excellent performance at Velletri, Italy. He has also played before the great conductor Zubin Mehta in Florence, and before Bruno Seidlhofer in Vienna.

Vachha's concert tour of India in 1981, his fourth in the country, included performances at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Bombay, the Mysore Palace, Mysore, the Alliance Francaise, Pondicherry and before a distinguished gathering at the home of the Ambassador of France in Delhi, notes the write-up.

All India Radio Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Goa have broadcast Vachha's piano recitals, while Delhi Door-darshan displayed a film on his

rendering of the music of Brahms and Chopin.

Vachha, commenced his piano lessons under Ms Eccleston while schooling at St. Paul's, Darjeeling. He completed his schooling at 'The Scholar' in Bombay and graduated in International Languages from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi where he studies Russian, notes his father, T.R. Vachha, an engineer who retired as Additional Secretary in the ministry of railways. In 1977 he won the open scholarship of the Music Academy of Rome, and studied under the celebrated concert pianist Marcella Crudeli.

Although western music is his forte, Vachha takes an interest in Indian classical music; it helps him deepen his own knowledge of European styles, he noted, according to Indian Express. Vachha also has a gift for languages and speaks French, Spanish, Italian and English fluently, in addition to the Russian he learnt at university notes his bio-data. His mother Marie-Olga is French.

Vachha who has played to repeated encores at concerts all over the world, and whose playing, according to the Economic Times is "not only confident and expressive but has flash and flourish", is presently pursuing Masters classes in Pianoforte Perfection at the Academy of Music, University of Zurich, Switzerland.

U.S. Grant for Rana

A senior research grant to visit several universities in the United States has been awarded by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, Washington D. C. to Dr. Aspy Phiroze Rana, professor and head of the department of Political Science, Baroda University, notes a press release.

A University Grants Commission professor with a Masters degree from Baroda University, Rana's research will focus on "Strategic determinants and the political economy of India's relations with the West". He will be also visiting the Universities of Kent, London and Oxford in the United Kingdom, under the sponsorship of the



Rana: on visiting terms

British Council.

After his study programme which commenced in January this year, Rana will be attending the XII World Congress of the International Political Science Association at Rio de Janeiro where he is to convene a panel and chair one of its sessions, notes the write-up.

Good Contacts

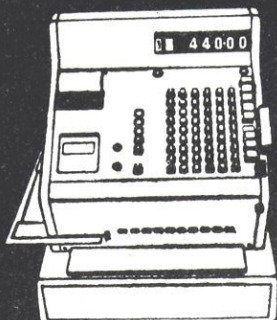
The noted contact lens specialist, Dr. Rusi N. Dastoor has been selected a member of the Optometric Vision Research Foundation by the Australian



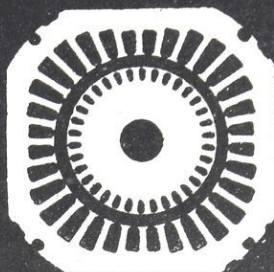
Dastoor: honoured vision-ary.

Contact Lens Association, notes a Press Trust of India report. Dastoor was conferred the honour at the International

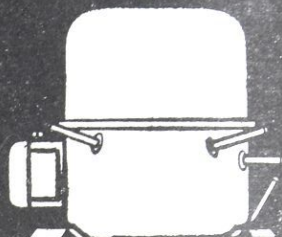
Our quality means so much to so many!



Cash Registers



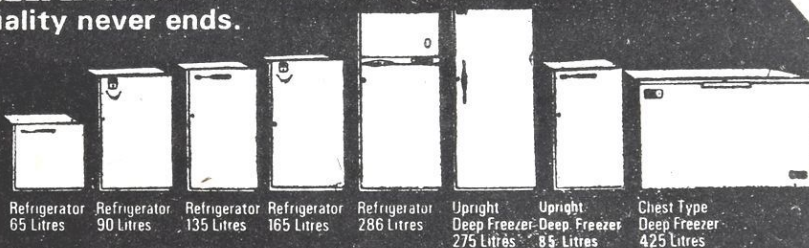
**Electric Motors
& Laminations**



**Hermetic
Compressors**

Millions of people
at home and abroad
benefit from our
diverse range of
products.

Kelvinator — where the obsession for
quality never ends.



Refrigerator 65 Litres Refrigerator 90 Litres Refrigerator 135 Litres Refrigerator 165 Litres Refrigerator 286 Litres Upright Deep Freezer 275 Litres Upright Deep Freezer 85 Litres Chest Type Deep Freezer 425 Litres

Refrigerators & Deep Freezers

Kelvinator

of India Limited

19 A, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi-110 054

New Delhi : Atma Ram House, 1, Tolstoy Marg, Ph : 382648 Bombay : Elphinston Building, 10 Veer Nariman Road, Ph : 254167 Calcutta : Shanti Niketan, 9th Floor, 8 Camac Street, Ph : 435632 Madras : 18, Patullos Road, Anna Salai, Ph : 85543 Ahmedabad : 1, Metro Commercial Centre, 2nd Floor, High Court Marg, Ph : 450282. Bangalore : D-17/18, Devatha Plaza, 131/132, Residency Road, Ph : 563595. Bhopal : E-1/84, Arera Colony, Ph : 64605. Chandigarh : SCO 1108/1109 Sector 22-B. Secunderabad : 96, Park Lane, Ph : 74989.

Contact Lens Congress at Sydney last September.

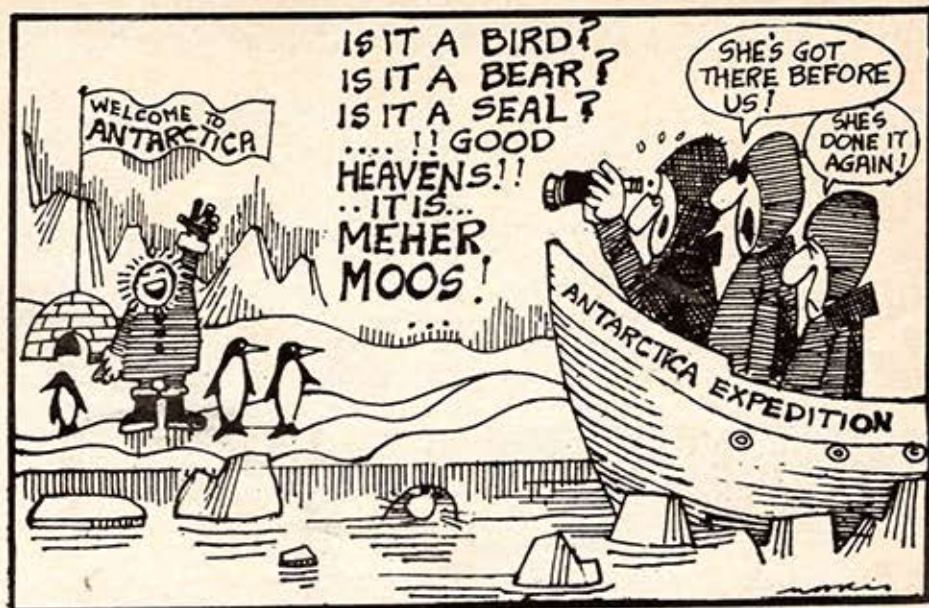
He was on the Congress panel discussion on permanent wear soft lenses.

Meher Moos in Antarctica

The cartoon here of Meher Moos, Air-India's most widely-known mascot after the Maharaja, has been done by Mario Miranda. It captures the whole essence of being Miss Moos and being everywhere and being first everywhere.

For Miss Moos went to Antarctica at least three years before the official Indian team went there. And she has been to other places also, including those where Air-India does not fly (which means most places).

And unlike the Indian expedition, which merely named a mountain after Mrs. Indira Gandhi and returned (like Captain Cook named an island in



Antarctica after George III), Miss Moos has done most things on her trips, including eating monkey brains, ants, reindeers, conversing with pygmies,

sailing down the Amazon, being photographed with penguins.

Courtesy: MID-DAY, February 17, 1982

With the Best Compliments of

INGERSOLL-RAND (INDIA) LIMITED

Manufacturers of

Air & Gas Compressors * Rock Drill Equipment

*** Vacuum Pumps**

On the Bridge

From the days of the Arab dhows, Indian shipping has slowly evolved into a professional and highly competitive industry. The Indian National Shipowners' Association (INSA), represents the diverse interests of the industry and has on its board many veterans of



Gandhi: master mariner

the sea. Elected as president of the association, is Vice-Admiral R.K.S. Gandhi, vice-chairman and managing director, Shipping Corporation of India, who spent World War II at sea in various theatres of war. With him on the board are N. H. Dhunjibhoy, chairman of South East Asia Shipping Company, a descendant of generations of shipping men, and F.G. Dastur, managing director South India Shipping Corporation, another war veteran, notes a press release.

A graduate of the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, England, the Defence Services Staff College Wellington, the United States Naval War College, Newport, and the National Defence College, Delhi, Gandhi was aide-de-camp (A.D.C.) to Lord Mountbatten when he was Viceroy of India.

He has held command of various ships and as commanding officer of I.N.S. Betwa, led the attack on the Portuguese destroyer 'Alphonso de Albuquerque' in Goa harbour in 1961. During the 1971 war with Pakistan, as captain of I.N.S. Mysore he was

awarded the gallantry decoration of Vir Chakra. He has held command of both Eastern and Western fleets and was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal for distinguished service in 1977, according to his bio-data.

Today Gandhi is a director of the Indian Register of Shipping, a member of the Indian Technical Committee of the American Bureau of Shipping and the vice chairman of the Indian Committee of Lloyds Register of Shipping. He is also the vice chairman of the Irano-Hind Shipping Company, a joint venture between the Shipping Corporation of India and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, Tehran.

From a family of shipping men, N.H. Dhunjibhoy entered his father's business of ship chandling, stevedoring and cargo booking as a schoolboy, spending much time outside school in docks or on board ships, according to *Indian Shipping*, a journal of the shipping industry. Dhunjibhoy's early training in automobile engineering and marine architecture came in use when in 1948 he founded his own shipping company, South East Asia Shipping, venturing into the West Asia Gulf trade. He presently holds agencies for some prominent continental shipping companies at Indian ports.

A member of INSA for many years, Dhunjibhoy elected a director of INSA,



Dastur: sea worthy

for 1982-83, has also held the office of vice-president and president of the association, representing INSA at several national and international forums, reports the press release.

Dhunjibhoy, affectionately known as

'Noshir', is a descendent of a shipwright of the Wadia Shipbuilders of the 19th century, and his entire family is presently engaged in shipping as sailing vessel owners, shipping agents and stevedores, notes *Indian Shipping*.

F.G. Dastur, managing director of South India Shipping Corporation, whose career has seen warfare in the Middle East and business in the travel trade, was also elected a director of INSA for 1982-83. Highly respected in shipping circles for his in-depth knowledge on almost every aspect of the industry, Dastur has represented the industry at numerous national and international meetings, conferences and other forums.

A graduate of Bombay University, Dastur joined the Indian Army in 1941 as a commissioned officer, serving in the Indian and British Cavalry during the war years in the Middle and Far East. After leaving the Army, he entered business as managing partner of Indian Factors, Asiatic Travel Service and Cine Indian Services. He later joined the shipping business, first in Ratnakar Shipping Company and later in South India Shipping Corporation where he soon rose to the position of managing director, notes his bio-data.

Since his entree into shipping he has held several posts in INSA. As chairman of the Negotiating Committee he has



Dhunjibhoy: anchoring the shipping industry

expertly handled issues such as conditions of seamen and officers, keeping in mind the economics of the shipping companies he represented, notes the press release.

Theatre Luminaries

"My present status is a dream come true", comments Naval F. Damania, newly elected President of the Theatre Owners Association. (TOA). The 58-year old theatre personality whose career has spanned over 40 years started out by hiring movie halls for morning shows, as a schoolboy.

Elected with him at the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Association in Bombay, as Vice-president, is Hector H. Mehta, another veteran of the film industry.

Damania who today is the partner in



Damania, championing cinema causes

seven theatres in Maharashtra and the owner of Chitra Talkies in Pune, has many plans to champion the causes of theatre owners in the state. "The Government takes away at least 65% of the theatre owners income by levying a variety of direct and indirect taxes," he pointed out in an interview with *Business India*, a Bombay based fortnightly. He is therefore planning to submit a petition to the Government to reduce entertainment tax so that theatre owners are not forced to pass on their costs to movie goers. However, the latter may have to pay still more for their tickets if the association's other request to the Government to grant a small service charge to cinemas to "meet soaring costs", according to Damania, comes through.

Theatre owners have also made a representation to the Government to permit air-conditioned theatres to convert to non-airconditioned ones, says Damania who has been on the managing council of the association for the last



Mehta: pioneering film processes

six years as Treasurer and Vice-President. He has also been included in deputations sent to Government and semi-Government bodies, for presenting for redressal, the grievances of theatre owners. Commenting on the blackmarketeering of tickets, Damania feels that the police department is hand in glove with blackmarketeers. "I don't say that the proprietors are all saints, but unless the police take action, we cannot do anything." Damania a graduate of St. Xavier's College and a director of Shree Vindhya Paper Mills is interested in the socio-economic upliftment of the community and is the convenor and organizer of the Committee for Electoral Rights (C.E.R.) Zonal committee, notes his bio-data.

Also keenly engaged in social work on an extensive scale, the trustee of several public charity trusts and an active Rotarian, is Hector H. Mehta, newly elected Vice-President of the TOA, notes a press release. Mehta, a commerce and economics graduate of Sydenham College is married to an advocate, also a commerce graduate, who is as deeply involved in social service activities, says the bio-data.

On the managing council of the TOA for the past six years, Mehta is also vice-president of the Raw Film Steering Committee and an office bearer of the Film Federation of India.

Mehta is chairman of Modern Sixteen Cine Laboratory, a pioneer in 16mm colour film and commercial film processing. He is also Chairman of Dharti Cine Enterprises which owns and operates the Dharti cinema at Parel. There are plans for a complete reconstruction of the existing theatre with air-conditioning and other modern amenities notes the hand-out.

Tax Talk

"We want to have a public meeting at which we want to invite two or three top income tax commissioners, to explain in their point of view to the public... directly, face to face", states Soli Dastur, 46, a leading tax lawyer who has been elected president of the 700 strong chamber of Income-tax consultants. The chamber which essentially represents tax practitioners, suggests amendments in tax laws and holds seminars and study circle meetings on tax matters of interest to the lay public as well as members of the association.

Dastur, a graduate of Cathedral and John Connon High School, Sydenham College and Government Law College feels that the Indian tax laws are not oppressive and that tax rates of 55% and 60% are reasonable. "The income-tax department is one department that could do with entrusting the matter to efficient experts" he comments: "there is a tremendous scope for improvement, not anything earth shaking... a few small things". The chamber has taken up various issues with the tax authorities and has organized two seminars on taxation open to the public, says Dastur. The chamber also has a monthly publication called 'Income-tax Review' which is very popular, he adds.



Dastur: tackling taxing problems

Dastur's plans for the future include completing his Master of Laws, "I want to do it by thesis", he says, and is keen on researching on 'Assessment of firms and partners, and foreign collaboration' as one of the topics he would like to take up for his thesis.

Company Secretaries' Head

The first Parsi and Bombayite to be elected President of the 4,000 strong Institute of Company Secretaries, is Pervez P. Mistry, secretary of Mahindra Ugine Steel, notes press reports. A graduate of law and commerce with a diploma in taxation, Mistry is a fellow of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and has been on the governing council of the Institute since 1978.

Well-known in steel circles and actively associated with professional



Mistry: in good company

bodies and committees of Trade and Industry. Mistry is a member of the Company Law Advisory Committee, the Law Sub-Committee, and honorary secretary of the Alloy Steel Producers Association of India according to his bio-data.

Mistry is also a research student for a Ph.D. in Economics and often contributes articles and letters of topical interest on economics and management in financial newspapers. He is also an active Rotarian, notes his bio-data.

Business First

The first Parsi woman from Delhi to graduate with a Master of Business degree from Delhi University is Ms Shehnaz Fareedoon Daruwalla, reports T.R. Vachha a retired additional secretary in the Government of India, from Delhi.

An honours graduate in History from Delhi University, Shehnaz, 23, was born in Birmingham, England, and had her early education in Bombay. She is employed with Uptron India Ltd., a public sector enterprise, dealing with computers and computing machines.

Judges Disappointed With Parsi Attitude And Opinions

"THE CHILD IS our trust. If we forfeit the trust, everything is lost," said Justice Krishna Aiyer, the mercurial ex-judge of the Supreme Court and a crusading social reformer, at the public meeting jointly organised by several social welfare organisations under the joint auspices of the Women Graduates Union and various other organisations in Bombay.

"The deprived child in our country constitutes a silent and helpless segment, needing a family and home. Yet the Adoption Bill, which aims at giving a family life and status to this child, has been kept in abeyance for the past 26 years," laments the leaflet distributed at this meeting.

In a soul-stirring address, Aiyer said, "Not our armies, but our babies are our defence in the long run. Patriotism summons us to bring up the child as an asset of the motherland."

We must provide a method of adoption for orphans, added the Judge. The policy is secular, the benefits are secular, the motivation is human even spiritual, opined Aiyer.

Talking about the religious objections the speaker said that, some day India must belong to Indians, not to cults and schismatic denominations holding the country to ransom through obscurantist sabre-rattling.

Emphasizing the 'free-will' aspect, Aiyer said that, any one who wishes to resort to adoption must be free to take advantage of the legislation and not be ordered to obey any prescription.

"I know that there are only a lakh of Parsis. But the number is not important, look at their strength and the power that they command in every walk of life. I am really surprised at their objections," concluded the eminent jurist.

A leading solicitor and well-known Parsi affairs crusader, Dadi Engineer, explained the viewpoints prevailing amongst the Parsis. Engineer outlined the historical and socio-religious reasons prompting apprehensions in the community about the Bill, and stated

that he felt a majority of Parsis wanted total exclusion from the provisions of the Bill.

If a poll is taken, said the speaker, a large majority of Parsis would voice their opposition to the Bill.

However, said Engineer, a sizeable section would be satisfied, if there is a clarificatory amendment to Section 14(2) mentioning that adoption does not mean conversion and automatic entry into the religion.

Even in certain Hindu temples, only special priests are allowed in the sanctum sanctorum. One can understand the Parsi feelings on this point, said Engineer. Conversion was a thorny issue and the evidence of 1000 years against it, cannot be ignored lightly, he concluded.

Ms. Tayabjee strongly objected to the exclusion of Muslims from the Bill and

India must belong to Indians, not to cults and schismatic denominations.

thought that perhaps the Parsis could be accommodated with suitable amendments.

Ms. Justice Sujata Manohar, of the Bombay High Court, outlined the provisions of the Hindu Maintenance & Adoption Act, 1956.

"I am surprised that the liberal Parsi community harbours these objections," said Ms. Manohar. "No religion can be so shallow so as to be weakened by the entry of a helpless child in the family," opined the speaker.

She expressed surprise at the fact that for the same reasons that Hindus had earlier clamoured for an adoption law, today the educated and forward looking Parsis, of all people, were opposing it!

Prof. Noshir Kaikobad, eminent sociologist and CER (Committee for Electoral Rights) Social Welfare Chairman, organised the meeting.

Rare Books

Antique Engravings,
Coloured Lithographs, etc:

for sale, purchase, preservation, restoration
or for your specific interest in any business,
profession, arts, hobbies, sports, games, etc:

Consult Jimmy Ollia,
14, Cumballa Chambers, 1st floor,
Cumballa Hill Road, Bombay 400036.

Consultations by appointments only.
Tel. 350649 before 10 a.m.

Gift shopping at its best at



the friendly Gift Shop at

**Bombay Swadeshi
Stores Ltd.**

Sir P.M. Road, Bombay 400 001.

Tel: 253443/252730

**ZOROASTRIAN ARTEFACTS
& SILVER PENDANTS
AVAILABLE**

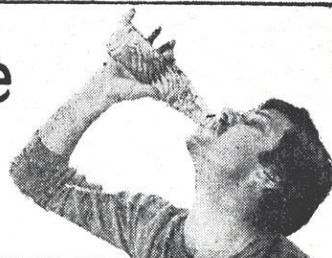
2,94,726



sodas
a day



and
more



going
down



Since 1889, there
has been only one
soda for everyone.
Duke's. Today,
with so many other
sodas on the market,
there's still only one
soda for most people.

Duke's.
The best-selling
soda. Because
it's the best.
No wonder over
2,94,726 bottles
are drunk.
Every day.



The one soda
for everyone



The Parsi Punchayet Case

Petit vs Jeejeebhoy VIII

The Difference between a Parsi and a Zoroastrian

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 consigned 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."

In the last instalment Daver stated that conversion was permitted and enjoined in Zoroastrianism subject to certain conditions, but the community in India did not attempt to convert anyone nor was a single proved case of conversion in India placed before the court.

THE ONLY question of importance on this part of the suit that now remains to be considered is the general question raised by the Plaintiffs, *as to who are the parties entitled to the benefits and uses of the Charitable Funds and Institutions now in the possession and under the management of the Defendants.* The contentions of both sides are fully set out in the pleadings. The Plaintiffs say: "There exist numerous rich endowments consisting of property, both moveable and immoveable, devoted to various charitable and religious purposes for the benefit of persons professing the Zoroastrian religion."

They say that the Trusts declared by the Trust Deed of the 25th of September, 1884 are in terms "at variance with the Trusts and purposes for and to which the same were originally provided and dedicated."

The Plaintiffs believe that, "at the time the said Deed was prepared and executed, there was no intention by the terms thereof to exclude from the benefits of the said Trusts any person professing the Zoroastrian faith." They complain that the Defendants had interpreted the Trusts in a manner which would exclude from the benefits of the Trusts persons born in other religions and subsequently admitted into the Zoroastrian religion; and they pray that, in so far as the Trusts declared by the Deed of the 25th of September, 1884, differ from the original Trusts, they may be declared *ultra vires* and void; that the true Trusts on which the charitable properties are held may be ascertained and declared; that the Deed of 1884 may be construed; and that it may be declared who are entitled to the benefits of such of the Trusts as may be held to be valid.

The Plaintiffs say: Every Juddin admitted into the Zoroastrian religion is entitled, as a matter of right, to all the benefits of all the Charitable Funds and Institutions in the Defendants' posses-

sion.

The Defendants say: The parties entitled to the benefits of the Funds and Institutions under their control are persons who are Parsis who are the descendants of the Zoroastrian emigrants from Persia; their Iranee co-religionists who may come and settle either temporarily or permanently in India; and the children of Parsi fathers born of alien mothers, if they are admitted in, and profess, the Zoroastrian religion.

A great deal of time and energy were expended on the argument as to the exact meaning and significance of the word Parsis, and as to whether the words *Parsis* and *Zoroastrians* mean the same thing and designate the same persons, or whether there is any distinction in the individuals designated by the terms Parsis and Zoroastrians.

Any one who professes the religion promulgated by Zoroaster - be he an Englishman, Frenchman, or American - becomes a Zoroastrian the moment he is converted.

I confess this question has never, at any time, presented any difficulty to my mind: a Zoroastrian is a person who professes the Zoroastrian religion. A Zoroastrian need not necessarily be a Parsi. Any one who professes the religion promulgated by Zoroaster—be he an Englishman, Frenchman, or American—becomes a Zoroastrian the moment he is converted to that Faith. But how can he become a Parsi? It was argued that the 6th Plaintiff's wife was now a Parsi. Supposing a Parsi lady becomes a Christian and marries a Frenchman, can it be said that she had become a Frenchwoman? And if she

**The expression "Parsi religion" is as meaningless
as the expressions : "English religion," "French
religion," or "Dutch religion."**

adopts Christianity and marries an Englishman, does she become an Englishwoman? One has only to see how the word Parsi came into existence and what it was meant to designate to realize that the word Parsi has only a racial significance and has nothing whatever to do with his religious professions. Mr. Dossabhoy Framji in his *"History of the Parsis,"* says the word takes its derivation from Pars or Fars, a province in Persia, from which the original Persian emigrants came to India. Several witnesses corroborate this. One witness, Mr. Jamsetji Dadabhai Nadershah, who has visited Persia and studied the cuniform inscriptions in Persia, throws more light on the subject. He says:—"In the Assyrian records I find the earliest mention of the word Pers. The word is applied to the country called Fars and to the people of that country. The word originally used for a province was applied to the whole country of Iran (Persia) later on. The word Pers in the Babylonian inscriptions was first used to indicate the country, and then it came to indicate the inhabitants of that country."

It will thus be seen that the word Parsi, when used in India, could only mean the people from Pars. When the emigrants from Persia settled in India, the people around them probably knew little of their religion but they knew they came from Pers or Pars, and they called them Parsis. Thus, all the descendants of the original emigrants came to be known as Parsis. A Parsi born must always be a Parsi, no matter what other religion he subsequently adopts and professes. He may be a Christian Parsi, and he may be any other Parsi according to the religion he professes; but a Parsi he always must be. The word Zoroastrian simply denotes the religion of the individual: the word Parsi denotes his nationality or community, and has no religious significance whatever attached to it.

To my mind, the distinction between the two terms, Zoroastrian and Parsi, is most clearly defined when one sets about carefully examining the real meaning of the two expressions; but before the French wife of the 6th Plaintiff proposed to be converted to the Zoroastrian religion and claimed to have become a Parsi, I doubt if anyone ever cared to make the smallest distinction in the use of the two words. Before 1903, no one ever gave a thought to this distinction. As late as 1872, in a legislative enactment the manifestly unmeaning expression "Parsi religion" is used to designate the Zoroastrian religion. Surely, there is no Parsi religion in existence. What, however, was intended to be conveyed by the expression was the religion generally professed by the Parsi community. To my mind, the expression "Parsi religion" is as meaningless as the expressions: "English religion," "French religion," or "Dutch religion."

**No one had for twelve
centuries ever
made an attempt to convert
persons professing other
religions.**

Before the controversy in connection with the French lady arose, no one had the remotest idea that a Zoroastrian could be anybody other than a member of the Parsi community. For centuries, the only people who in India professed the Zoroastrian religion were the members of the Parsi community born in the religion of their forefathers. No one had for twelve centuries ever made an attempt to convert persons professing other religions. Proselytising was wholly unknown amongst them. No one preached the religion or attempted to

teach it to an alien. There was not an instance known either in modern or ancient times, of anybody but a Parsi who professed the Zoroastrian religion. The Zoroastrian religion was professed by the Parsis alone in India; and small wonder, therefore, if the expressions Zoroastrians and Parsis came to be loosely used, as if the two words meant one and the same thing.

In 1884, it was not within the contemplation of any one that, in the near future, converts to Zoroastrianism would come into existence, and neither the English Solicitor who drafted the Deed of the 25th of September, 1884, nor those who instructed him to prepare the Deed, and who subsequently executed the same, had the remotest conception of such a class or such an individual as an alien Convert to Zoroastrianism coming into existence; and therefore there could be no possible object in intentionally declaring wrong Trusts or Trusts at variance with the intentions of the donors and founders. In fact, the Plaintiffs themselves say that, in declaring the trusts as they are declared in the Deed of 1884, there was no intention "to exclude from the benefit of the Trusts any person professing the Zoroastrian faith", meaning thereby Juddin converts to Zoroastrianism. This, at all events, is an admission that there was no intentional wrong declaration of Trusts in the Deed of 1884.

Till 1903, the two expressions, Parsis and Zoroastrians, were used most promiscuously to mean one and the same thing. When the members of the Parsi community professing the Zoroastrian religion were sought to be designated, some used the word Parsis and some used the word Zoroastrians.

Since the controversy, some persons who have established new charities have, in order to avoid all possible misunderstanding and to leave no room for doubt, used the expression Parsi Zarhosti. This is by no means a new combi-

The Weekly Provokes

**It challenges
outmoded thought,
refutes established
ideas, confronts
social mores and
clarifies opinions
on the vital issues
of the day.**

The Weekly presents conflicting points of view on matters of national significance—thus giving you the full story with all its ramifications.

It does so through highly readable articles by the foremost authorities in the field, week after week... Provocation at its most challenging—that's the Weekly.

There's just no substitute for The Illustrated Weekly of India.



The Illustrated Weekly of India
The Weekly family habit the nation enjoys.



Till 1903, the two expressions, Parsis and Zoroastrians, were used most promiscuously to mean one and the same thing.

nation. As far back as 1836, Framji Cowasji Banaji uses the expression "Parsi Zoroastrian" in his letter to his colleagues of the Panchayet. Many witnesses were questioned on the subject and they were all unanimous that Parsis and Zoroastrians were used as synonymous terms and conveyed the same meaning. Plaintiffs' witness, Mr. Sheriarji Bharucha, says:

"I would use the two terms Parsis and Zoroastrians as synonymous terms. This is the way in which these terms have always been used and are still used. As soon as the word Parsi is used the only idea suggested is that he is a Zoroastrian."

These arguments appeared, both to my learned brother and myself, to be absolutely sound; but what was the attitude adopted by the Defendants? Their Counsel contended that Section 7 of the Statute of Frauds, XXIX of Charles II, Chapter III, was in force in British India, and that under the provisions of that section, copies of documents evidencing Trusts of immoveable properties were neither *proveable* nor *admissible* in evidence.

This position, adopted by the Defendants, appeared to me to be most extraordinary. They admitted that they were Trustees holding a large number of immoveable properties on certain Charitable Trusts for the benefit of their community. They were in possession of copies of documents evidencing those Trusts. They were not in a position even to suggest that those copies were not genuine and authentic. In fact, they knew that they were authentic and genuine copies. They were subsequently proved to be such before us. The records in their possession which contained the copies were not their property but were the property of the Parsi Community. They knew that a question of the greatest importance to their Community was being dealt with by the Court.

Their obvious duty as Trustees, it

seemed to me, was to place all available materials in their possession and at their disposal before the Court and to assist the Court to come to a correct decision. Instead of that they made a determined effort to keep back important documents by pleading a Section of an English Statute of 1677! We felt, however, that if the Defendants had a legal right to withhold these documents, they were entitled to do so, and that the Court was not concerned as to whether the attitude the Defendants were advised to adopt was a correct attitude for Trustees of large public charities to adopt.

The immoveable properties in respect of which we have to ascertain what the real Trusts are, in order to find out whether Juddin converts were intended to be included amongst the beneficiaries, are the five Towers of Silence at Malabar Hill and the three Sagdis, the Sagdiwala's house, the Fort and Baharkote Nasakhanas and the Godavra Agiary.

The word Parsi denotes his nationality or community, and has no religious significance whatever attached to it.

The documents relating to these properties consist of extracts from the "Parsi Prakash," Tablets, Letters, Anjuman Patras, Advertisements in Newspapers, Addresses, Panchayet Resolutions, etc.

Of the five Towers of Silence, the first that was built is known as Mody's Tower. It was built and consecrated in 1670. There is no document whatever in existence relating to this Tower, and the only reference we find to it is in an extract from the "Parsi Prakash", and that extract contains no expressions giving any indication whatever as to for

whose use the Dokhma was built.

The next Tower, known as Maneckji Sett's Tower, was built and consecrated in 1756. The only Exhibit relating to this Tower is an extract from the "Parsi Prakash." It merely says the Tower was built in consequence of a "great rise in the Zoroastrian population of Bombay." There is no document in existence in connection with this Tower.

In 1778, a third Tower, known as Anjuman's Tower, was erected and consecrated. There are no documents also in connection with this Tower. There is a tablet on it: a copy of the inscription says nothing as to for whose use this Dokhma was built. An extract from the "Parsi Prakash," with reference to this Dokhma, merely says:

"The entire Zoroastrian Anjuman caused the Dokhma to be built."

The fourth Tower was built in 1832, and is known as Banaji's Tower. There are a good many documents, mostly informal, put in in connection with this Tower. They consist of letters, a tablet, an Anjuman Patra, and Advertisements in connection with its consecration ceremony. The expressions used therein are "the entire Zoroastrian Anjuman," "people of the Zoroastrian community," "people of the Mazdiasnan religion," "persons of the Mazdiasnan religion," "the whole Anjuman," "the people of the Holy Zoroastrian Community of Bombay," "Dastoor, Mobeds, Herbuds, and Behedins of the Mazdiasnan religion of the Holy Zoroastrian Community."

The only document of any importance or formality is the Anjuman Patra or address to the Community, read by the founder, Framji Cowasji Banaji, on the occasion of the consecration ceremony. He says therein: "Now from to-day the Dokhma has been opened for being used in accordance with the tenets of the Mazdiasni religion by the people of the Anjuman (community) of the Mazdiasni faith."



For Pure Diamonds

K. WADIA

JEWELLERS

324, GRANT ROAD, BOMBAY 400 007. TELEPHONE: 371483
APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SERSON

**Electrolytic Capacitors
For
All Electronic Applications
From
12 VDC To 350 VDC**

Manufacturers:

Serson Industries Pvt. Ltd.

Pimpri P.F.P.O., Poona-18.

Cable: Etchfoil Poona-18. Phone: 82379

The word Parsi takes its derivation from
Pars or Fars, a province in Persia,
from which the original Persian emigrants came to India.

The fifth and the last Tower was built by Cowasji Edalji Bisni in the year 1844. The documents relating to this Tower are letters, advertisements, a tablet, a Resolution of the Punchayet, and an address. The expressions used are : "Entire Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay," "all Zoroastrians," "persons of the Firka of the pure and the best Mazdiasni religion," "people of the whole Zoroastrian Anjuman," and "the Holy Zoroastrian Community of Hindustan."

This is the Tower referred to in the Defendants' Written Statement, and in respect of which the founder stipulated that it should *not* be used for bodies of Parsis on whom inquests had been held, or whose bodies had been subjected to *post-mortem* examination or brought from out-stations and brought into contact with non-Zoroastrians.

We next come to the three Sagdis. The first Sagdi, known as Muki Shroff's Sagdi, was built in 1795, and there are no documents in existence relating to this building. The only exhibit in connection with it is an extract from the "Parsi Prakash," which says that it was for the use of Zoroastrians.

The next is Saher's Sagdi, built in 1830. The only Exhibits in connection with this building are a tablet and an Anjuman Patra. The tablet says that this Sagdi was built for "the use of the Anjuman of the Zoroastrian people" and was given in charge of "the Anjuman of the Zoroastrian Community." The Anjuman Patra says that it was for "the use of the people of the Mazdiasni religion."

The third Sagdi was built by the late Sir Dinshaw Petit in 1873. The Exhibits consist of letters, a tablet, and Anjuman Patras. In Sir Dinshaw's own letter there are no expressions or words of any importance. In the reply by the Trustees the words used are for the "use of the Zoroastrians." In the Anjuman Patra dated the 7th October, 1873, the language used is : "I have built the said Sagdi for the use of the Khas-va-Aam of

the Zoroastrian Anjuman." On the Tablet the words are :— "For the use of the Zoroastrian Anjuman."

In connection with the Fort Nasakhana there are no documents.

There is only one document relating to the Baharkote Nasakhana. It recites that originally it was given "in charity for being used for the purposes relating to the Zoroastrian Community," and it says there is a Tablet in it on which the words are "for being used by the Zoroastrian Anjuman."

There are no documents relating to the Sagdiwala's house. With reference to the Godavra Agiary, there are two Exhibits before us, an Anjuman Patra of April, 1860, which recites that, in 1825, the Atash Adran Saheb premises "were opened for the entire Zoroastrian Community." On the Tablet the words are "for the performance of divine worship for the entire Zoroastrian Community."

A Juddin may become a
Zoroastrian, but how could
he ever possibly become,
a member of "the Holy
Zoroastrian Anjuman
of Bombay."

The language used in all these documents is, to my mind, most clear and unambiguous. The people for whose benefit these Institutions were established, the persons for whose use these religious establishments were founded, were the members of the Zoroastrian Community of Bombay. The expressions most frequently used are "Zoroastrian population of Bombay," "the Zoroastrian Anjuman," "the people of the Zoroastrian Community," "the people of the Anjuman of the Mazdiasni faith," "the whole Anjuman," "the Holy

Zoroastrian Community of Bombay," "the Dustoors, Mobeds, Herbuds, and Behedins of the Mazdiasni religion of the Holy Zoroastrian Community," "the entire Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay," "persons of the Firka of the pure and best Mazdiasni religion," "the Zoroastrian Community of Hindustan," and "the Khas-va-Aam of the Zoroastrian Anjuman."

The utmost stretch of imagination cannot convey to my mind the impression that the Founders, when they used the expression set forth, meant or intended to include amongst the objects of their benefaction, the Lalias of Bombay, the Dubras from Surat, and the Bhangis, Mahars, and Kahars of Gujerat.

A Juddin may become a Zoroastrian, but how he ever could possibly become a member of "the Holy Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay," or be one of "the members of the Zoroastrian Community of Bombay," or become one of "the Anjuman of the Mazdiasni faith," passes my comprehension. A Juddin converted to Zoroastrianism had never come into existence. Such a person could not possibly have been within the contemplation of the donors and founders : the possibility of such a being coming into existence would be so new and novel that if the donor ever conceived such an idea and intended to include him in his benefaction, he would certainly designate him separately and specially, and not include him in the general description of the community of his then existing co-religionists and their descendants. It would be a most violent presumption to make—a presumption utterly unjustified by the circumstances existing at the time when these institutions were founded—that the possibility of a Juddin convert to Zoroastrianism was ever present to the minds of these founders and that they intended to include him.

To be continued

J.N.MARSHALL PVT. LTD.

POONA - 411 034.

**YEARS OF DEDICATION
AND
QUALITY CONSCIOUSNESS
BRING YOU THE BEST
IN**

STEAM ENGINEERING

DESIGN AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR FUEL ECONOMY

- * Efficient Steam Distribution and Utilization
- * Condensate and Flash Recovery Systems
- * Waste Heat Recovery
- * Compressed Air distribution
- * Oil Distribution and Steam Tracing.

PROCESS CONTROL INSTRUMENTS

SYSTEMS CAPABILITY FOR VARIOUS PROCESSES

- * Versatile Linear Servo-Motor Type Potentiometric Recorders and Indicator Controllers.
- * PH, Conductivity Analysers and Controllers.
- * Flow monitoring of Liquids, Air, Steam, through Magnetic Flowmeters and Differential Pressure Transmitters.
- * Filled System Thermometers, Dial Thermometers Temperature Recorders and Controllers.
- * Pressure, Vacuum and Compound Gauges, Recorders and Controllers.
- * Gas Analysers for CO₂, O₂ and others.

"Happy Birthday to You!"

Everything You Wanted to know... Questions and answers published in the issues of *Dini Avaz*, the orthodox, Ilmekhshnum, (mystical) English-Gujarati, bi-monthly.

Q: Parsis celebrate their birthdays in a strange manner, particularly the children: they light candles on a birthday cake and then blow them off to the chants of "Happy Birthday to you!" Should this be tolerated? What was the custom in ancient Iran?

A: A Zoroastrian is supposed to preserve and protect fire in any form, anywhere. By blowing lighted candles on the cake, ignorant parents encourage their offspring from a very young age to flout one of the most fundamental tenets of the Zoroastrian Religion. It is not surprising in modern times to find the parents themselves cocking a snook at the teachings of our Prophet.

We have seen in some Parsi households even westernised doddering dowagers indulge in such irreligious acts on their own birthdays! Your question, therefore, if this should be "tolerated" only provokes a couple of counter-questions: What is the remedy? Who has the authority to prevent them from committing such sacrilegious acts? All we can say is, to each his own. Everyone of us will see truth in the face at the dawn of the fourth day after death.

The late Dr. Sir Jivanji Modi, in his *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, states that, "No religious rites or ceremonies are enjoined as necessary on the birthday of a Parsi child... After a bath and a new suit of clothes, the child is generally sent with some sandalwood to an adjoining Fire-temple... Some of those who can afford, get a religious ceremony known as *Fareshta* performed... According to Herodotus, 'of all the days in the year, the one which the ancient Persians observed most was their birthday.'

Q: It was reported some time back that the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey performed a Gahambar-cum-Jashan, when all Zoroastrian members, non-members and families were invited. Obviously, here the word 'Zoroastrian' is used in the broadest sense available, to include non-Parsi spouses and other American students of Zoroastrianism. The question that arises is, can a Jashan be performed before those who are not Zoroastrians by birth?

A: Why go West? What is happening today in Bombay itself? Any Parsi soiree with a priced meal thrown in is dubbed Gahambar, and Jashans are performed at sea-side clubs in the open, with microphones and speakers, to boot! That's ultra-modern, sophisticated, off-beat Zoroastrianism for you! Don't be surprised if in the next decade, you have taped versions of the rituals. Press a button, flick a switch, and pronto! You will have Shapurdar's sonorous voice in the comfort of your home, reciting the *Afringan* or *Farokhshahi*!

Again, Bombay Parsis flock to witness "demonstrations" of certain ceremonies in public halls, where the ushers

Any Parsi soiree with a priced meal thrown in is dubbed Gahambar, and Jashans are performed at sea-side clubs in the open, with microphones and speakers.

and attendants are also avid onlookers. How many Zoroastrians have raised their voices in protest against the very idea of simulating holy rituals which can be performed only by qualified Athornans?

But all this does not at all justify the deliberate performance of the Jashan ceremony before non-Zoroastrians. According to the late Dr. Sir Jivanji J. Modi, "the word Jashan is another form of *Yazashna* or *Ijashna* meaning an homage of praise, to worship. Some derive the word from *Chash* to taste, to eat."

The liturgical ceremonies which are generally performed in a Jashan are, the *Afringan*, the *Baaj*, the *Yasna*, the *Farokhshi* and the *Satum*. The last three may not be performed. An absolute must in any Jashan ceremony, is the *Afringan*. Also in any Jashan ceremony, the implements used are purified, and care is to be taken that they are not defiled. All those who attend the Jashan ceremony are supposed to attune themselves to the Mobeds performing the *Afringan*.

A Jashan is performed by either one or more pairs of Mobeds. The two Mobeds are called *Raathwi* and *Zaota*. It is the *Zaota*, who initiates the *Afringan* proper. Among other things, the *Zaota* has to have his eyes rivetted on two flowers (of the eight that are there) which have been placed vertically, while reciting the *Pazend* introduction to the *Afringan*. At this time, the Mobed is supposed to create powerful thought-forces (*Mithra*) and cast constantly from his eyes, the *Vohufryan*, fire-energy, that he possesses, on the two flowers. When he does that, that is, when his eyes radiate his personal magnetic force containing *Atash-e-*



GRINDWELL NORTON LTD.

*Regd. Office: Army & Navy Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400023*

*Phone: 244727 • Grams: GRINDWELL
Telex: 011-2840 GNO-IN*

Vohufryan, the flowers, which have the *Atash-e-Urvazisht* (*urvazisht*=fire-energy) in them, attract and absorb the *Vohufryan*, fire-energy, on the principle of the *Afringan*, the *Chuck Farvaani* just as an electric battery is first charged and stored with the electric current, so that it can be used whenever needed, so also the two flowers become highly charged with the Mobed's thought-force and his *Vohufryan*, fire-energy.

Moreover, whenever a *Jashan* is performed on behalf of an *Anjuman*, i.e. those who have contributed the amount of money for the *Jashan* ceremony and who are present there, the words used in the introduction of the *Afringan*

By blowing lighted candles
on the cake, ignorant
parents encourage
their offspring to flout
fundamental tenets of
Zoroastrianism.

clearly state that: *Framayashney Hamaa Anjuman Mazdayasni Berasad!* — May all this reach according to the request of the *Anjuman* which is *Mazdayasni*!

The priests, while reciting the *Afringan*, recite both *Avesta* and *Pazend Manthra*, which create powerful vibratory colours in the atmosphere. These *Manthra* are recited before the *Atash*, around which, towards the end of the *Afringan*, the *Chuck Farvaani Kriya* (the rite of circumambulation and drawing the circuit) is also performed!

It is an axiomatic fact that except *Yathaa*, *Ashem* and *Yengahe Haatanm*, no other *Avesta* or *Pazend Manthra* can be recited before non-*Mazdayasnis*!

Parsis including the *Athornans*, who have settled abroad, have appointed these non-Zoroastrian spouses—mostly women—as the chief office-bearers of the various Zoroastrian (sic) Associations. So, is there any wonder that these European or American spouses bring along their children and other family members? They only end up making a cruel mockery of the tenets, canons and rituals of the Zoroastrian religion. If *Athornans* themselves aid and abet such sacrilege, why blame the laity alone?

With Compliments
From

EMPIRE ESTATE

Liberty Building
41/42 Marine Lines
Bombay 400020

"Now I feel very confident and can tell you that I find modern dance and Bharata Natayam compatible."



Uttara
Dances

When I met Uttara Asha Coorlawala at the Max Mueller Bhavan, she was about to begin her workshop. But to her utter dismay she realised that she had forgotten to bring her handbag from the airport containing her notes and music. So we left for the airport and recovered the bag which was safe in the custody of the airport personnel.

On the way we talked and talked since we were meeting after an interval of three years except that we had met briefly in Bombay two years ago. She was then planning to go over to teaching-tours in France. A real jet-set celebrity, she has been, roaming all over Europe performing, conducting classes, workshops and assimilating several disciplines.

She is a gypsy though she returns to New York and Bombay. Since I have known her for over a decade and have been watching her phenomenal progress, I was curious to know what new works she had choreographed. 'Draupadi and the Saree' she said with enthusiasm. 'You remember the work chair? I used the saree as a prop and then things began to happen. I use modern dance technique and now the piece has worked out beautifully.'

A student of Martha Graham, Asha has been active on the dance scene for more than fifteen years. Today she has arrived on the international scene with a bang and I know of no other Indian dancer who has been so busy in an alien idiom. Asha has been performing, creating and growing in her artistic pursuit.

Currently in India for a series of performances in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Delhi, Asha is hoping to complete her New York University Master's degree course in dance and then work towards a Ph.D programme. And this course is performance-oriented which makes her a performer, a choreographer and a teacher. Yet she is free to travel and perform.

She has been given the name Uttara by Baba Muktananda of Ganeshpuri and though we call her Asha, she is known in the professional dance world as Uttara. She graduated from the St. Xavier's College, Bombay and then went over to the States and studied under the guidance of the great Martha Graham and other leading lights of the modern dance. When in New York in 1971 she took me to Merce Cunningham's and Pearl Lang's studios. I watched her working assiduously with

Martha Graham and was greatly impressed by her technique. Martha Graham was very fond of her and one could see that, whenever one had an opportunity to see them together. Asha's work in India was seen in the 'seventies when she toured with the Mandala Dance Theatre.

"Now I feel very confident and can tell you that I find modern dance and Bharata Natyam compatible. I am not contaminating Bharata Natyam. But since I have studied it I am in a position to understand the structure better than many other dancers who do not know modern dance. To-day I do not attempt to blend the two forms. But I am well equipped to evolve a form which has a fine fusion and my work shows it. I have

She has been given the name Uttara by Baba Muktananda of Ganeshpuri and though we call her Asha, she is known in the professional dance world as Uttara.



arrived at a stage where I can explain to the dancers several secrets of these two dance traditions of the East and West. I am making time, and will as soon as I am through with my thesis and other projects launch on teaching it in India and would certainly contribute a lot," she said with genuine humility. She is not in a hurry and knowing her tenacity, I can well foresee that in a couple of years she would certainly blaze a trail.

"I choreographed Lakme ballet for the Royal Opera House of tours in France last year and it was a big success. They have invited me again to teach there. I think they feel sure about my approach, and of course Sunil, I have inherited not only our dance techniques but traditions of the west as well." Asha spoke without any trace of arrogance. And I know what she means.

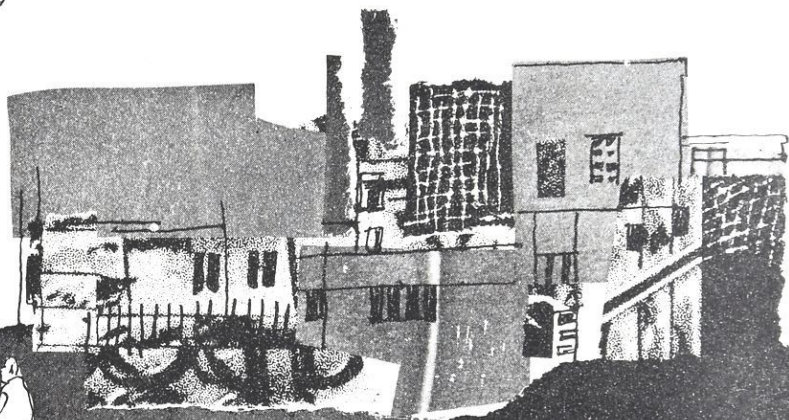
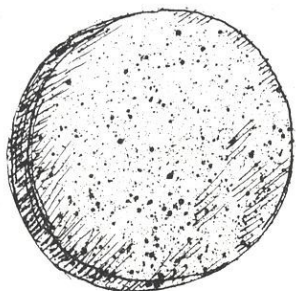
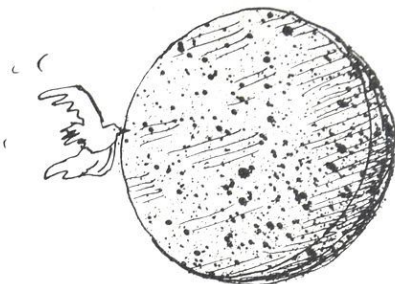
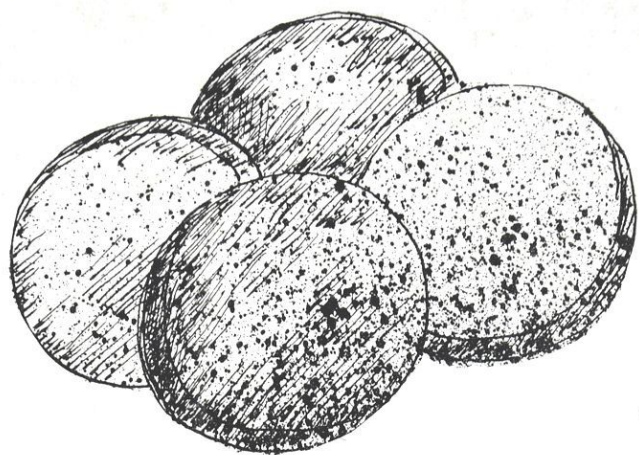
Her present repertoire includes Duncan Dances recreated for her by Diana Pruet, consisting of Botticelli's paintings, La Primavera, the Russian Revolution of World War I and the tragic death of her two children. The readings are selected by Asha. The actual themes and the music that inspired Isadora have been the sources in Asha's work. Then there is 'The Americanization of Uttara' by Major Burchfield, a choreographer and Asha's former partner. Draupadi's Saree is a fantasy by her and in Suite India she has excerpts from Lakme, Yakshi and Rangilo with music by Leon Delibes, Ananda Shankar and Shoba Gurtu respectively.

After her current Indian tour she is off to Japan from where she would go to perform and teach in France, Germany and Spain and then back to New York. The workshop for the Dance Theatre of Calcutta at Max Mueller Bhavan was quite exciting for her. She felt that this was the best group in India which had done very commendable work in modern dance under the Brazilian dancer Carmen. Asha hopes to return next year and plans to repeat the workshop she had at the Bhulabhai Memorial Institute in Bombay with dancers proficient in classical styles. 'It helps us all and who knows we might soon be working on projects of great significance in an exciting dance vocabulary?' she exclaimed with joy and genuine concern. That would certainly augur well for the Indian dance scene.

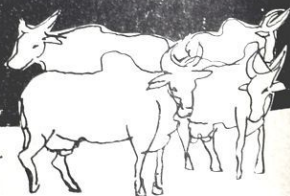
Sunil Kothari

The Economic Times 7th March 1982

Sunil Kothari is a noted dance critic and writer



Laobail



History in the Baking

J. P. Dotiwala

IN THE HISTORICAL city of Surat a flourishing port in the olden times, there is a road named Dutch Road and a garden named Dutch Garden. Near this Dutch Garden there was a Dutch warehouse in which the Dutch had constructed an oven to make bread for their own people, and had employed five Parsi gentlemen to knead the dough and to bake bread for them.

When the Dutch left India and Surat, they handed over their oven to one of the Parsis serving there. This Parsi gentleman was none other than our ancestor (great grandfather), Faramji Pestonji Dotiwala.

In the beginning Faramji continued to prepare bread and supplied it to the few remaining Dutch, and Britishers who too had come to India. As time passed the population of the Dutch and English decreased, business went slack, and stocks of bread were left unsold.

These breads were made from toddy, one of the best fermenting agents being a natural juice extracted from trees. They contained no water, and so remained good and fresh in taste and did not get contaminated or spoil: they only became dry due to loss of moisture. Our ancestors used to sell bread at a very cheap rate so they started becoming popular amongst the poor people. They wanted to run the bakery economically and so started making small dried breads in round small sizes much like our present day biscuits. These biscuits being cheap appealed to the people and there was a great demand for them. So instead of letting these small breads dry by themselves they were put in the open oven to dry out. This was the first instance when the biscuits were made dry in an open oven.

In those days most of the doctors were Parsis and they advised their patients to eat dry biscuits made by our

great grandfather Faramji Kaka. Our biscuits being light and tasty became popular with doctors, as a controlled diet for patients. As the patient regained his health, doctors advised him to eat biscuits with fat (shortening) and thus biscuits more substantial in caloric value were introduced.

In this way the biscuits increased in popularity and they started making three varieties of biscuits. One with sufficient quantity of pure deshi ghee was called "Faramsu Surti Batasa", the second kind with less shortening was called "Surti Batasa", and the third was the original one without any shortening which was called "Plain (Sada) Batasa."

In those days most of the doctors were Parsis and they advised their patients to eat dry biscuits.

This is how our great grandfather Faramji invented Surti Batasa Biscuits.

Even in those times the Indians made a sweet called Dal. This dal they made outside on stoves. Our ancestors baked the same mixture in the oven and made sweet biscuit nankhatai. In this way Batasa & Nankhatai came into being as sweet biscuits.

In the early days there were only three bakeries in Surat owned by three Parsis. We were the pioneers in the bakery industry. Other people used to entice our trained workers by offering them gifts and more pay and start new bakeries with their help. In this way the bakery business was adopted by people of all castes and creeds and with the rise in population the number of bakeries increased and the monopoly of the Parsis in this business was lost.

When the business was started there

were no big flour mills which are there today in plenty, and there were no stores at flour mills too. We used to store wheat in wooden store rooms and then seal these store rooms with cow dung so that no germs got into the stored wheat. This wheat was ground by ladies in hand chakis and then sieved through a thin cloth in order to separate the finer ground product to be used as maida from the coarser one to be used as rava.

In those days shortening was also not available in tins as it is now. Pure ghee came in leather containers from the villages to our bakery. Our forefathers used to buy this pure ghee and make a variety of biscuits and nankhatai etc.

When India got independence prohibition was introduced in Gujarat, and so we stopped getting toddy for our biscuits and bread. Toddy being a natural juice of a tree, gave good taste and texture to all the products. There is no other natural fermenting agent as good as toddy. We then had to use fermenting agents made out of hops and potato which served our purpose but the taste and texture which we used to get from toddy disappeared. In the States where there is no prohibition, bakers today no longer use toddy as it is very expensive and not very pure.

We claimed our right from Government to exempt sada biscuits from sales tax and the Government obliged by exempting sada biscuits for the poor from sales tax. The above benefit was given to the then Bombay State so Gujarat and Maharashtra also benefitted by the above exemption. After that our bakers' association appealed to the Government and got sales tax exemption for all salted bakery products. We are still paying sales tax on all the sweet products manufactured by us.

This is the history of our bakery and of Surti batasa and nankhatai.

"This is how our great grandfather Faramji invented Surti Batasa Biscuits."

BPP: Facts and Figures

Arni Sethna

THERE HAS BEEN a sudden resurgence amongst the Parsis of Bombay...to know more about themselves, to question their way of life, to look at their actions more critically. In fact to be less complacent.

The 'Statistical Outline' brought out by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) thus falls into this new line of thinking. The president of the Punchayet, Dr Aspi F. Golwalla writes in the preface "The Trustees sincerely hope that it will be of some use and interest."

For the first time the community and Parsi 'watchers' have a birds-eye-view of the Punchayet functions: its net worth, income and expenditure; the various housing, educational, occupation and welfare schemes the Punchayet runs, and the loans it disburses on this account. And lastly a brief on population, births, deaths and marriages.

The Khatas

The funds of the BPP are divided into three khatas or accounts. The Class I khatas are those which the BPP trustees "administer for various purposes such as maintenance of different Institutions," doles, medical relief, scholarships, housing and other activities. "Generally the corpus of these (219) funds (Rs 2,07,56,000 as on 31st December 1978) is kept intact and the

The largest number of deaths, 332, were between the ages of 71 and 80 years.

income is used for different purposes ... except in the case of housing donations where the income as well as the corpus can be used."

The 157, Class II khatas, with a corpus of Rs 2,79,10,000 "are the funds of different Anjumans of India and other Institutions for which the BPP acts as mere Custodian."

The 839, Class III khatas, with funds of Rs 3,12,59,000 "comprise of funds of Rs 5,000 and above donated by various donors for objects specified in their letters of donation."

The breakdown of the funds as on 31st December 1980 shows the value of securities and shares to be Rs 71,42,500, fixed deposits Rs 7,63,60,000 and debentures Rs 19,13,400.

The BPP administers approximately 160 buildings in roughly 10 colonies.



Statistical Outline (1971-1980) Bombay Parsi Punchayet, pages 60.

The Punchayet manages 15 institutions whose annual expenditure comes to Rs 33,44,793. In 1980 the Punchayet received donations totaling Rs 12,95,074.

Between 1971 and 1980, 10,383 corpses were consigned to the Towers of Silence of which 5,430 were males and 4,953 were females. In 1980, out of a total of 1074 deaths, the largest number, 418, was attributed to cardiac failure, next came senile debility (96), third, pneumonia (93) and fourth diabetes (71).

According to age, the largest number of deaths, 332, were between the ages of 71 and 80 years, the next, 263, between 81 and 90 years, and the third, 251, between 61 and 70 years.

The table of births and deaths since 1971 shows an increase of deaths over births every year. In 1971 there were 692 births and 1035 deaths, leaving an excess of 343 deaths over births, while in 1980 there were 655 births and 1074 deaths, an excess of 419 deaths.

Sources

There are three suggestions that might make these statistics more meaningful. The activities could have been subtitled, like Finance, Housing, Education, Employment, other Welfare and Popu-

lation, and under each, the details listed. Also the sequence of activities could have been worked out more logically. Just to illustrate the point, from details on 'Doongerwadi/deaths', the information moves on to 'Parsi Punchayet Library' on to 'Fort Nursery and Infant School', and then on to the 'Sale of Kusti Wool/Kustis'.

The most critical factor in any statistical booklet is the source, which is not stated. I inquired from the Punchayet and was told that the sources were four-fold, predominantly the Punchayet's own records and annual reports, the register maintained by Doongerwadi on deaths, the Marriage Register of the Court, and finally, the Census.

The Trustees of the BPP need to be congratulated for their 'maiden' venture. They have come out of their isolation and desire to share their information with others. May they continue to do so.

Path of Enquiry

"EVERY FEW YEARS we like to know what is happening to the Parsi community," says Ms Arni Sethna, a veteran researcher and new head of 'Pathfinders', the market research division of Lintas India, a leading, Bombay based, advertising agency. Sethna has assisted in preparing the background material for a survey of Bombay Parsis, conducted by the International Institute

In 1980, out of a total of 1074 deaths, the largest number, 418, was attributed to cardiac failure.

of Population Studies, which is expected to be completed by May this year.

"The 1961 census showed a declining

population, smaller family size, high longevity and late marriages" in the Parsi community, observed Sethna in an interview with *Parsiana*. "The Committee for Electoral Rights (CER) felt that in 1981, we should be doing a socio-economic survey." The International Institute of Population Studies decided to take up the survey, and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet financed the project.

The survey will touch on aspects like demographic trends over the last ten years: age/sex ratios, educational and occupational factors, income levels, trends in births and deaths, data on the health of the community and medical facilities.

With the help of three different questionnaires covering the three groups of households, married men and women and unmarried men and women, the survey will enquire into the standard of living, income levels, life styles, attitudes to marriage, number of times married, reasons for not having married and other such variables, according to its relevancy to the particular group. "Sometimes all three questionnaires



Sethna: surveying the community

may be asked in one household, while at others, only one or two may be relevant," explains Sethna.

The survey is based on a random sample of 2,000 households and covers eight to ten areas in Bombay where 80 percent of the Parsi population lives. The Parsi population of Bombay is estimated to be about 67,000 according to the 1971 census.

"I'm naturally inclined towards research, and when it involves a social cause and people...more so," Sethna elaborates. She has been research manager with Hindustan Lever, research consultant with the former Mass Communications and Marketing (MCM), and senior research executive with the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB). She undertakes social research and is involved in welfare work for the physically handicapped. This survey has specially aroused her interest since it involved the Parsi community.

With a comprehensive background of the Parsis, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet would be in a position to decide the areas in which to effectively utilize the funds available, she clarifies, and adds "the main aim of the survey is to plan for a better life."

Match your **AMBITION** to a **CAREER**

To do so we offer you:

- Diploma Course in Business Management (Oral/Postal)
- Banking: C.A.I.I.B. Course (Postal & Oral)
- Commerce: G.C.D. Course • Executive Secretarial Course
- Private Secretarial Course • Telephone Operating
- Telephone Operating-cum Receptionist Techniques
- Shorthand & Typewriting • Punch Operating • Telex Operating



Enquire at:

Sir J. J. College of Commerce

14, Nanabhoy Lane, Hutatma Chowk,
BOMBAY 400 001. Tel: 251185

A Corpus of Custom

N. J. Nanporia

Perhaps it can be categorically said that since the 18th century there has been no book on western India and Bombay which has not remarked on the singularity of the Parsis — this singularity consisting of the clearest demonstration anywhere of the permanence of survival. The community's ability to last is its greatest virtue to which all else has been subordinated in the 1,200 years of its presence in India. When the small band of fugitives landed at Sanjan the entire logic of their circumstance pointed to their absorption in the vast anonymity of India or at least to an irreversible erosion of their identity. This did not happen and the reasons why it didn't can be found in the instincts of self-preservation that were later formalised and embodied in the Parsi Panchayet.

There is here a continuity for over a 1,000 years, and it is probably this sense of a running theme which has persuaded the author of this book to cover the entire ground despite an emphasis on the 100 years before 1960. Here then is the raw material of the Parsi story, for Sapur F. Desai's work is very appropriately a compilation rather than an interpretative study, concentrating on the facts and events which reflect the evolution of the community. India at the time was a community of communities and another one from across the seas did little to threaten such loose equilibrium as there was. The Parsis were prepared for compromise in the interests of their own preservation, and this was matched on the Hindu side, by a tolerance and hospitality that were surely unique in the annals of any country. This enabled the immigrants both to consolidate and to acquire the kind of coherence which a long-term settlement requires.

During the period before the Panchayet was formed in approximately 1698, the community was presumably guided by an inherited corpus of custom and religious observances, supplemented by the secular needs of a band of fugitives on an alien shore. The Panchayet was a formal recognition of a self-governing system that had already

taken shape, but it was also a confirmation that the Parsis had become a settled community and accepted as such, by local authority. Curiously, the initiative came from Gerald Aungier, the Governor of Bombay (1669-1677) who was, no doubt moved by his own administrative calculations. A body of elders and influential members of the community qualified to speak on behalf of the Parsis had obvious advantages not only for the Parsis themselves but for the general peace and everyone dealing with them.

The majority of Parsis were poor and ill-informed and willingly accepted the decisions of their co-religionists and elders. Though it initially lacked legal sanction the force of custom gave the



History of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet 1860-1960 by Sapur F. Desai published by The Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet Funds and Properties, Bombay; pp 434; Rs 60.

Panchayet a quasi-judicial status. Dissensions or irregularities were summarily resolved, and there was a general falling in line for fear of ostracism, a penalty particularly effective among a people jealously anxious about protecting their identity. These were the beginnings of the Bandobusts or Regulations founded on usage and the Zoroastrian faith, and from them there developed the discipline, the cohesion and the distinctiveness the cultivation of which became the special care of the community's leaders. Later, trusteeship and welfare dominated Panchayet policies and later still British legislation, in a logical extension of the Aungier initiative, legislated for the codification of the Parsi personal law.

It cannot be doubted that the Panchayet leaders were greatly aided in the earliest period, by the docility of a following held together by mutual dependence in an atmosphere which, though not hostile, called for intelligent adjustment. Yet it is worth noting that Parsi individualism and intransigence, often the outcome of untamed vitality, were never far below the surface. Also there were genuine dif-

ficulties over interpretation of the customs and regulations relating to marriage, and as the pressures of an initially alien atmosphere eased, schisms emerged and discipline suffered. Prosperity and the lure of authority sometimes combined to obstruct justice, and soon the Panchayet was petitioning the British Governor for the legal authority to inflict such punishments as beating transgressors with their own shoes or placing a halter round their necks. This situation contained the ingredients which collectively can be seen as the perennial Parsi dilemma which has survived, with modifications, to the present day.

A community perpetually conscious of the demands of survival, is also challenged by the need to adapt to changing times. How far such adaptation was possible without endangering the community's essential character was one of those subjective considerations which invited heated debates. Moreover, a dedicated pursuit of success was an offshoot of the survival syndrome; and success in turn generated the confidence that fueled indiscipline and contention. Thus if conflicting voices began to be heard and the Panchayet itself was shaken by internal dissension these were together a testimonial to the achievement of the Panchayet in holding the community together in the early period and launching it on the road to development.

Appeals to the British for more powers for the Panchayet alternated with quarrels among the trustees, conducted with all the high drama and intensity of a day when feelings tended to be extreme and uncompromising. Some inkling of all this can be gathered from the comment of an official writing on behalf of the Commissioners for the Affairs of India: "The difficulties arose out of the increase of the tribe, the numbers now possessed of wealth, their independent turn of mind, and from the want of a good understanding among the leading families." However, it should not be overlooked that, though the British helped by way of gentle

admonition and advice, it was within the community that the Parsis invariably found or created the necessary correctives. No controversy, however wild, was without, somewhere in the confusion, a persistent voice of sanity and enlightenment, as often among the ranks of the community as from a part of the leadership. Desai has many anecdotes to tell to illustrate this, and they are much the most readable part of this gripping work.

There is also an abundance of material to show that, as another offshoot of the survival syndrome, the Parsis wherever possible associated themselves with the interests of the Hindus to whose hospitality and tolerance they owed so much. When the Sultan of Ahmedabad invaded Sanjan they fought alongside with their Hindu allies, and it was not long before the distinction between the larger interests of the community and those of the country they had adopted as their home became progressively less valid. The story of the Parsis in this role is too well-known for repetition, but in passing it is interesting to learn, as a modest item on this side of the Parsi ledger, of a grant of land to the trustees of the Babulnath Temple.

The merits or otherwise of rival views on such intractable issues as conversion into or out of the community, the maintenance of Doongerwadi and the preservation of its integrity are irrelevant to what is basically a saga of endurance and adaptability. In short it might be said that as a people the Parsis avoided politics, worked hard, venerated success, and concentrated on getting things done because by doing these things they could reconcile what they were with acceptability by other fellow communities. The trappings of westernisation they adopted only superficially concealed the fact of their Parsiness one feature of which is the persistent orthodoxy that identifies the community as unmistakably Oriental. Westernisation was solely a formula for getting on which in turn was the preservative that helped to keep the community's identity in recognisable shape. One is left with the impression that there is yet more to be said on the Parsi theme and Desai's reference to Portuguese records suggests that a scrutiny of the Goa archives would be most rewarding. The history of a people whose formula for survival is one of the most fascinating chapters in human history is something about which the final word can never be said.

Aek Atmakatha

Despair and the Dasturs

The Life of Dastur Dhalla XXIV

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 24th edited and condensed extract from the book "Dastur Dhalla - The Saga of a soul" - an English translation by Gool and Behram Rustumji of the original Gujarati, published by the Dastur Dhalla Memorial Institute, Karachi.

THE STORY SO FAR

Born to a poor Dastur family in Surat on 27 August 1985, 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.

This approach caused him to clash with the more orthodox section of the community and he became involved in several religious and social controversies.

But despite the opposition, Dhalla proceeded with his efforts to educate the community and resolve old conflicts.

One of Dhalla's prime concerns was the intellectual, spiritual and financial condition of the priesthood. In the last three issues of Parsiana Dhalla spoke of "the accident of birth creating our dastors and our mobeds," and of the steps taken to create a more enlightened priesthood.

In the current extract, Dhalla quotes from an article he had written on the priesthood.

"We have introduced the punthaky as an integral part of a behdin family. The rise and fall of a family directly influences the punthaky. When a behdin fares well in business and he becomes well-to-do, the gratuity given to the punthaky on auspicious and inauspicious occasions increases accordingly. Besides, the punthaky gets orders at generous rates to perform expensive ceremonies running into thousands—ceremonies like Nirangdin, Zindehravan, Gatikherdd, Hamayasht, Devazdeh Hamayasht, etc. Under his personal supervision, the punthaky gets these ceremonies performed by his meagerly paid mobeds and thereby earns a sizeable profit.

"With the passing of time, if some layman becomes wealthy he has a Fire Temple erected or he becomes a millionaire and has an Atashbehrum constructed. At such times the family punthaky earns the prerogative of establishing these institutions, acquiring the proceeds thereof and eventually becoming the Head Priest. Thus those who hitherto had various families as their clients, now become the leading priests of the Fire Temples. They gain in status and in income. And once they are established as heads of such institutions, the position is permanent. It does not end at that. The headship automatically becomes hereditary.

"Our Fire Temples in various towns are of private ownership. On auspicious and inauspicious occasions members of the anjuman contribute towards its funds, but they have no voice in its management. Hence, if the anjuman of a certain city is eager to appoint an edu-

BUCKAU WOLF

DEPENDABLE NAME FOR SUGAR PRODUCTION



We help to produce sugar with 130 years
of experience to our credit in designing,
manufacturing and supplying complete sugar plants.



**BUCKAU WOLF NEW INDIA
ENGINEERING WORKS LIMITED**

PIMPRI, PUNE-411 018 MAHARASHTRA STATE, INDIA.
BRANCHES : BOMBAY-CALCUTTA-DELHI-MADRAS-ROURKELA.

cated mobed as head of the Fire Temple there, it is unable to do so. The Trustees of the building will not allow it. In case they display a broad-minded attitude, the punthaky raises a hue and cry and fights tooth and nail for his parental rights and makes a plea of endangering their livelihood by suggesting to place an alien in the family seat and thus wins the sympathy of the proprietors of the premises.

"Our system is such that the Head Priest of the Fire Temple of a certain city is answerable only to its Trustees. He works for the Anjuman and derives an income from groups of Zoroastrians or from the Anjuman, yet he is independent of the Anjuman. Similarly, the Mobeds working in that place, work for the Anjuman and earn their living, but they are like independent businessmen.

"At present we are maintaining approximately 185 Agyaris and Atash-behrams in the subcontinent. All these are reserved by their respective proprietors for their hereditary present and future Dasturs or Punthakies. This is a kind of Trust to safe-guard the interests of a line of Punthakies or Dastur-Punthakies, and by virtue of it the son of a Punthaky or a Dastur is born into the world with a sealed and signed guarantee of a ready-made income on reaching adulthood. His position is safe—his income secure.

"Hence, it is a matter of choice whether he strives to reach his Punthakyship or his Punthaky-Dasturship through the light of knowledge or not. If he has an inherent love of learning he attains higher education and wins for himself the laurels of becoming the spiritual leader of the community. The community cannot acquire a learned Punthaky or Dastur for the asking. In case it gets one, it is by sheer chance.

"The income of Dasturs who have no punthak is meagre. If there happens to be an Atashbehrum under the Dastur's jurisdiction, the Trustees of that place allow him to collect the proceeds of the 'Boy' of an important month like Ardi-behst or Adar, or even a little more, but it is difficult for a Dastur to live on such precarious income. Due to this he strives to earn a livelihood by performing marriage, Navjote or Jashan ceremonies plus Fareshtas, Afringans, Baaj, etc. Despite a great deal of hardship he earns comparatively much less than his brother Punthaky-Dastur. Apart from that his income is even less than that of the Punthakies who are considered his aids at his own Fire Temple.

"The doors of a theological career are closed to self-respecting and independent-minded Athornans. Dadabhai Naoroji and Pheroze Shah Mehta were precious gems of our small community in the last century. Both were highly intellectual Athornans. Had these great men decided in their youth to follow their parental profession and, together with the general education they had acquired they had attained religious knowledge and shown an inclination to be the spiritual leaders of the community, what opportunities could the community have offered them? In capacity and brilliance they could surely compare with Dastur Tanser or Dastur Adarbad.

"If they had aspired to reach the status of a High Priest so as to guide the community, they would have realized that they had no claim to the seat of Dasturship as they were not born sons of Dasturs. If they had thought that a major punthaky is the possessor of a large income, so that if they succeeded in acquiring a large clientele, then, deducting living expenses, from the surplus they would be able to develop literature, travel from place to place spreading the good faith, become members of religious societies, converse with learned scholars and enhance their scholarship, attend religious seminars of the world and read papers there, establish contacts with pundits of various lands and carry the greatness of the Zoroastrian faith to the four corners of the globe.

"Upon scant examination they would have found they were not eligible even to get permission to become punthakies, as the stamp of hereditary punthakyship has been set on the respective flocks. Eventually, out of sheer desperation, they would have sought shelter of some well-to-do punthaky and taken up the job of paid priests. Thus, with great difficulty, they would have been able to secure a morsel to feed their families. But then fresh trials would commence. They would find that after the round of professional duties of Yajashni in the morning and Baaj in the afternoon and Satoom in the evening and Kardo at night and Vendidad at midnight, no time could be spared for their studies. Besides, due to financial difficulties, the high hopes they had built to render religious service to the community would be smothered and stifled. They would also see that the elevated role of a religious leader has been dragged down to so business-like a footing that their

enlightened souls could not honestly accept such venues of earning an income. To avoid such conditions these great priestly youths and others like them, in the middle of the last century, turned their backs upon the profession of their forefathers and sought fresh fields of adventure.

"In the religious life of the community, there was no room for them—no career whatsoever—no demand for them, no provision for such men. And the conditions that existed 75 to 85 years ago still prevail. The world has progressed, the country has progressed. The community has progressed in all other branches, but it is static where its priestly fold is concerned.

"In countries of the West there are seminaries to give higher education to Christian priests and Jewish Rabbis. On almost the same principles the exemplary institution established in 1912 with a munificent donation of twenty-five lacs by Seth Meherwanji Muncherji Cama, an ardent admirer of the priestly fold, has already witnessed two decades. Within a very short time the wise managers of the institution realized that its establishment was not fulfilling the cherished purpose of providing the community with highly qualified religious leaders. Merely to send out into the world a young Naver of a Maratab with a superfluous general education up to an English fourth or fifth standard level, entailed a tremendous expenditure.

"The endeavour to graduate bright, promising students and to get them to perform the highest ceremonies was not successful. The hereditary Zoroastrian Church had no place for such well-qualified youths. As a result the organizers appealed to the High Court to alter the original conditions of the funds of the institution in such a manner that only half of it should be reserved for creating ceremonial priests while the proceeds from the other half could be utilized in furthering general academic education.

"The organizers of the institutions complained that bright students capable of coping with higher studies do not take advantage of this institution. This is but an echo of the complaint registered by Khurshedji Cama and other well-wishers of the priestly class 50 to 75 years ago. They used to bemoan the fact that priestly families gave higher education to their talented sons and sent them out into various professions, whereas those of lesser intelligence, who could

not fit into any other field of occupation, were trained as practising priests.

"The organizers have, for the present, stopped admitting youths of such a poor mental calibre. Only those capable of passing the Matriculation examination and studying further are admitted. The orthodox group is protesting against this action. In simple language it is stated that the idea of teaching English and giving higher education to those wishing to practise the priestly profession should be abandoned, and the institution should concentrate on training Athornan students to become proficient in performing the most

"Our system is such that the Head Priest of the Fire Temple of a certain city is answerable only to its Trustees."

sacred ceremonies. The original idea of supplying the community with highly educated, scholarly, religious leaders is thus abandoned.

"A new danger is facing us. The number of college-going mobed and behdin students, who during the last 50 years opted for Avesta and Pahlavi as their second language and, because of their love of service and of literature, rendered voluntary religious service to the community during the spare time, is decreasing. The attention of the whole country is drawn to the necessity of vocational and technical training in keeping with the times.

"Everywhere fewer students are going in for literature and are attracted towards science, industry, crafts and engineering. By degrees the number of our young men and women studying for the B.A. and M.A. is steadily falling. As a result, since some time fewer students are entering our two large madrasahs at Bombay to study Iranian languages. Hence the community will lose the leadership of the learned Ervads and behdin students who had been rendering honorary service during the last 50 years.

"In the 40's of the last century Rev. Wilson led a jihad against our religion, with the result that our community became aware of the need of educating our priests according to the demands of the age and of giving to the community enlightened religious leaders. A 100 years have gone by since that awareness. In the middle of the last century we

established two large Madrasahs to teach Iranian languages according to the curriculum set by the University for its provincial colleges.

"Twenty-five years ago we established two large residential Madrasahs at a tremendous expense. For a 100 years the community stung on neither money nor effort to create religious-minded athornans. When this question was first tackled, higher education had just found its way into the community and only a handful of educated gentlemen were found in the community.

"The move for female education in the community commenced a 100 years ago. There was quite a tirade against it. Excluding a few exceptions, the query from all quarters was, 'What have women to do with education? Being educated, would they be going to offices to work? Their place is in the home and household chores their sole responsibility.' It is not surprising that such views were held by members of our community.

"It is said that the reformists explained to the orthodox gentlemen of the community that man is a wandering Brahmin. All day he is out of the home, at his business or in his office. During that time when the washerman brings the clothes or the tinker brings the utensils, if the woman can read or write a little she can at least take an account of the clothes and the utensils. This explanation seemed valid to the orthodox and women began to learn the rudiments of reading and arithmetic at the Mehtaji's school. Soon it was discovered that, 'you yield an inch and they take an ell', without anticipating the consequence. Women blindly forged ahead in the field of learning.

"Today thousands of graduate and post-graduate men are framing the brilliant career of the community and hundreds of graduate and post-graduate women are lending lustre to

Old post cards etc./wanted

Advertiser wishes to buy OLD picture postcards, photographs, cig-cards, playing cards, posters, prints, illustrated books, albums and other related material.

Willing to pay top prices for single items or entire collections.

Please send, detailed list with expected prices to The Advertiser, (OLD) C/o. Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001.

BOYS' TOWN Public School Nasik 2

Recognised as a **Public School** by the Department of Education for Indian Merit Scholars. **Excellent Climate — All-round Education :**

All Academic Subjects—Technical Subjects: Workshop, Technology, Mechanical & Electrical Maintenance, Carpentry & Farming. Training in **Self-Government** through Elected Boys' Office bearers. **Games—Physical Training — Daily Assembly with Congregational Prayers —** Weekly intensive Zoroastrian - Geeta-Koran classes — **Excellent Modern Kitchen and Dining Room facilities — Airy Dormitories, Moderate Fees, Freeships and Concessions to Deserving Students.**

Apply to —

THE MANAGING TRUSTEE

**P. N. MEHTA EDUCATION
TRUST**

Cooks Building, 324 Dr. D. N. Road,
Bombay 400 001.

the enlightened community. Their numbers are ever on the increase in all branches of knowledge and science and will continue to grow. In the community's onward march in education the priestly class has fallen far behind the laity and will remain so.

"If we compare the statistics of education of the behdin flock and its punthaky, we will find graduate and post-graduate sons and daughters in lay families, while at the other end are ceremony-performing punthakies who have studied upto English Class IV or V. Without being carried away by sentiment and exaggerating, and without becoming needlessly alarmed, with calm calculation, common sense and impartiality it can be stated that in years to come we shall have to content with the following number of practising priests:

"Approximately 50 to 75 graduated Dasturs and Ervads; culled from the descendents of various Dasturs and Punthakies. A few priestly-aids, educated upto a level of English IV or V, and all other mobeds who have studied only four or five books of Gujarati. It is impossible for a hereditary, Zoroastrian, business-minded, practising priesthood and a sound, highly-qualified

class of religious leaders to exist side by side.

"Many a time, through sheer ignorance, some people believe that the priestly problem is not as insoluble as it seems and that a solution can easily be found. Twice various gentlemen have sent their suggestions for solving the

The hereditary, Zoroastrian Church had no place for well-qualified youths.

question to the Trustees of the Fire Temple at Karachi. They have suggested that paid priests should be employed in proportion to the Zoroastrian population of Karachi. Whatever ceremonies any Zoroastrian family wishes to have performed, it should write to the Secretary of the Anjuman. The Secretary should have them performed by the Mobeds employed by the Anjuman, send the bills for the prayers, etc. direct to the party concerned, collect the amount and credit the same to the account of the Anjuman.

"This project seems simple on paper, but to put it into practice is not only impractical but impossible. It cannot be

applied without very major alterations in the constitution of the community. Primarily, it would become incumbent to put an end to the 4,000 year old tradition of hereditary priesthood and to commence the system of appointing salaried mobeds on merit. If that can be achieved, then and only then, will the various problems relating to the priestly fold be automatically resolved.

"Moreover, with the severing of the direct link between mobeds and the laity, within a very short while the performance of ceremonies would be on a decline and there would be a sizeable decrease in the excessive amounts expended on ceremonials every year. But this can come to pass only if we have a newly constituted community minus a hereditary priesthood. This can be achieved only when we can do what the arrogant warrior Ataturk Kamalpasha did in Turkey by scorning the voice of the entire Muslim world and putting an end to the Khilafat by almost a miracle that bewildered one and all. How is this possible in a community that is like sheep without a shepherd?

"Without exaggeration it can be said that the priestly problem is truly insoluble."

To be continued

LET'S BUILD THEM TOGETHER!

Whether it's a five-star hotel, a Sultan's Palace, a hospital, a chemical factory, a fertiliser plant or a housing project—we have the expertise and experience—to handle any turn-key construction project anywhere in the world.

Over the last 100 years we have not only pioneered the construction industry in our country but spread our wings to Muscat and the Middle East—where against competition from the best construction companies, we won the contract

for putting up the imposing Muscat Palace complex of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman—and completed it in time.

The multiplicity of projects carried out by us over several decades has resulted in the building up of expertise in numerous aspects of the construction industry. We proudly offer this expertise for any construction project and proposals for joint ventures would be welcome.

Taj-Intercontinental Hotel
— Bombay

Oberoi-Sheraton Hotel
— Bombay



SP

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

International Operations Division,
Engineering & Construction Contractors,
New India Centre, 17 Cooperage Road,
Bombay 400 039 India

Bridging the Gap

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet Quarterly Review; July - September 1981 Volume I, Number I, Pgs. 40.

With the dual purpose of bridging the communication gap between the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the community and of clearing the "misunderstanding and misconception about the performance of the Punchayet", the BPP has launched a *Quarterly Review* edited by Sapur Desai, a former secretary of the BPP and author of *The Bombay Parsi Punchayet 1860-1960*.

The Review begins with a short history of charity by Parsis in Bombay and goes on to catalogue the activities of the BPP since its inception. Although the recital of facts makes for dull reading, the careful reader can glean some fascinating bits of information. For instance, it tells us that the first vocational guidance bureau in India was started by the BPP in 1947. The statistics of births and deaths and marriages and divorces tell the tragic story of our declining population and the high rate of marital failure.

The centrepiece of the Review is an article by former BPP Chairman B.K. Boman-Behram on the subject of housing. Boman-Behram relates how various countries have dealt with housing problems and notes the BPP, the Wadia and other private trusts have managed to provide 54 per cent of Parsis with homes. The BPP, according to Boman-Behram, has enough land to build 1,000 flats but lack funds. He dismisses the option of building ownership flats because "it is difficult to exercise control over these (co-operative) societies."

Although he does not cite any reasons for the necessity of such control, it is perhaps the fear that such flats may pass out of the community's possession that concerns him.

The Review contains several lengthy lists of members of various Parsi associations and lists of donations given and received. These lists which take up almost a quarter of the space of the Review, do not improve its readability. Besides the language is peculiar with phrases like "affluent classes made it a point to look after their lame ducks."

The Review in its present form would be of interest only to those who are connected with or deeply interested in the BPP. If the Quarterly desires to communicate with the community at large, the publishers will have to present news about the BPP's activities in a "newsy" manner.

IN MEMORIAM

Died: Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee, 93 Gathic scholar and author of several books on Zoroastrianism, on September 10, at his residence in Calcutta.

A retired deputy collector, Chatterjee was attracted to Zoroastrianism in 1924, when he was posted at Behrampur in Mursidabad District, notes Mahyar Byramji Patel a former secretary of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman who



Chatterjee: Gathic scholar

assisted in promoting Chatterjee's works.

Chatterjee taught himself Gujarati, Persian and Avestan and not satisfied with the existing translations of the Gathas "he began interpreting them and comparing them with the Vedas," notes a press release. "He was the first to point out the similarity between *Spenta and Angra Mainyu* of the Gathas with the *Satwa* and *Tamas Gunas* of the Vedas. He upheld Zarathushtra to be the first universal prophet and asserted that Zoroastrianism enjoins some of the highest spiritual and human values.

In recognition of his contribution to Gathic literature, Chatterjee was felicitated twice, once in 1967 by the Calcutta Parsis when he was presented with a shawl of honour and a silver salver, and again in 1972, when he was presented with an address on behalf of the entire Parsi community.

In Barasat, 15 miles north of Calcutta, at his residence, Chatterjee established a temple called the '*Rudra Mandir*' (Rudra is the God common to both the Daeva and Ahura worshipers) where he recited daily from the Gathas, the *Prisni* and the *Gita*, notes a press release.

Chatterjee has written on Zoroastrianism in English and Bengali. Among the English books are: *Ethical Conceptions of the Gathas-1931*, *Gathas-1932*, *Prisni Gatha-1934*, *Ramchandra and Zarathushtra-1935*, *The hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra-1967*, *Atharvan Zarathushtra, the Foremost Prophet-1971*, *Message of the Gatha as reflected in the Masnavi of Maulana Jalal-ud-din*



Billimoria: financial adviser

Rumi-1971, *The Gospel of Zarathushtra in the words of Jalal-ud-din Rumi-1972*, *Visnu and Mazda-1975*.

Chatterjee is survived by his wife and son Barunkumar.

Died: Ardeshir Burjorji Billimoria, 58 chairman and director of several Tata and other concerns, on November 3, at the Jaslok Hospital, after a brief illness.

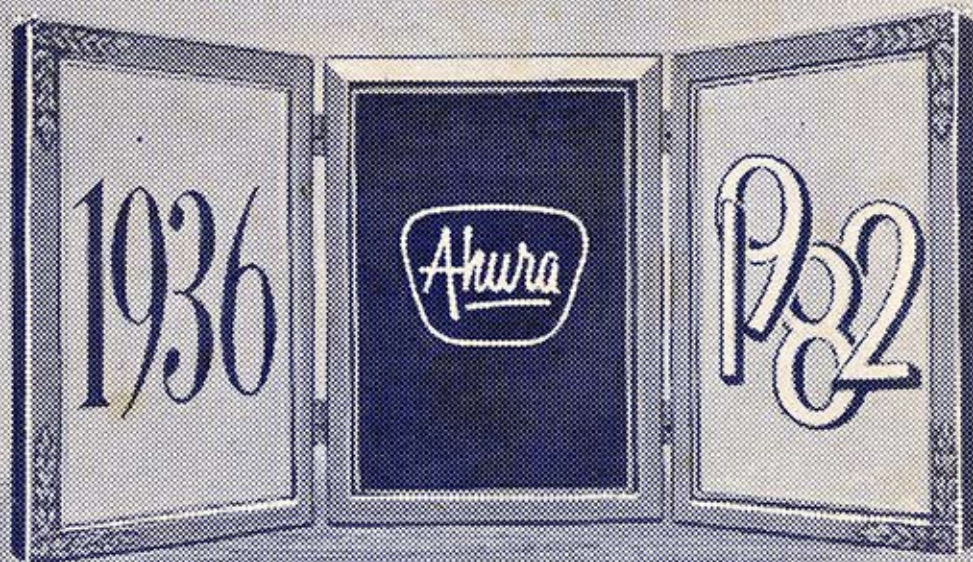
A financial adviser to the Tata organization for many years, Billimoria was a director of Tata Sons and Tata Industries, and chairman of the Investment Corporation of India, Tata-Finlay Limited, Forbes Forbes Campbell, Gokak Patel Volkart Limited, Ewart Investments, Lakme Limited and Investa Industrial Corporation.

"A lover of sports and music, Billimoria will be particularly remembered for his keen sense of humour, and the justice and objectivity with which he handled many difficult situations", notes a press release.

A bachelor, Billimoria made time for philanthropic activities and was the chairman of the Volkart foundation and a trustee of many other charitable institutions, notes the release.

46

Years young
- moving with the times-



AHURA- Whenever and wherever quality is mentioned in Process Chemicals.

When we offered our first consignment of Process Chemicals way back in the 30's, business circles commended us for taking the risk and termed it pioneering. We liked the word pioneering and decided to live by it.

Today 46 years later, we are striking a new course in keeping with the needs of our time, tuning

ourselves to the specific needs of industries that have turned to modern technology. Ahura now serve some 50 industries, each with a range that could be an eye-opener to the future.

**AHURA - The name that matters to
manufacturers of end products.**

AHURA CHEMICAL PRODUCTS PRIVATE LTD.

82, Mahakali Rd-Andheri East, Bombay 400 093 Phone: 572277 • 572278

Gram : AHURACHEM • Telex : 011 - 3917

Where
magnificent
jewellery
is exclusive.



TRIBHOVANDAS BHIMJI ZAVERI

241, ZAVERI BAZAR, BOMBAY 400 002. TEL: 325115, 326135