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Parsiana

October 1983
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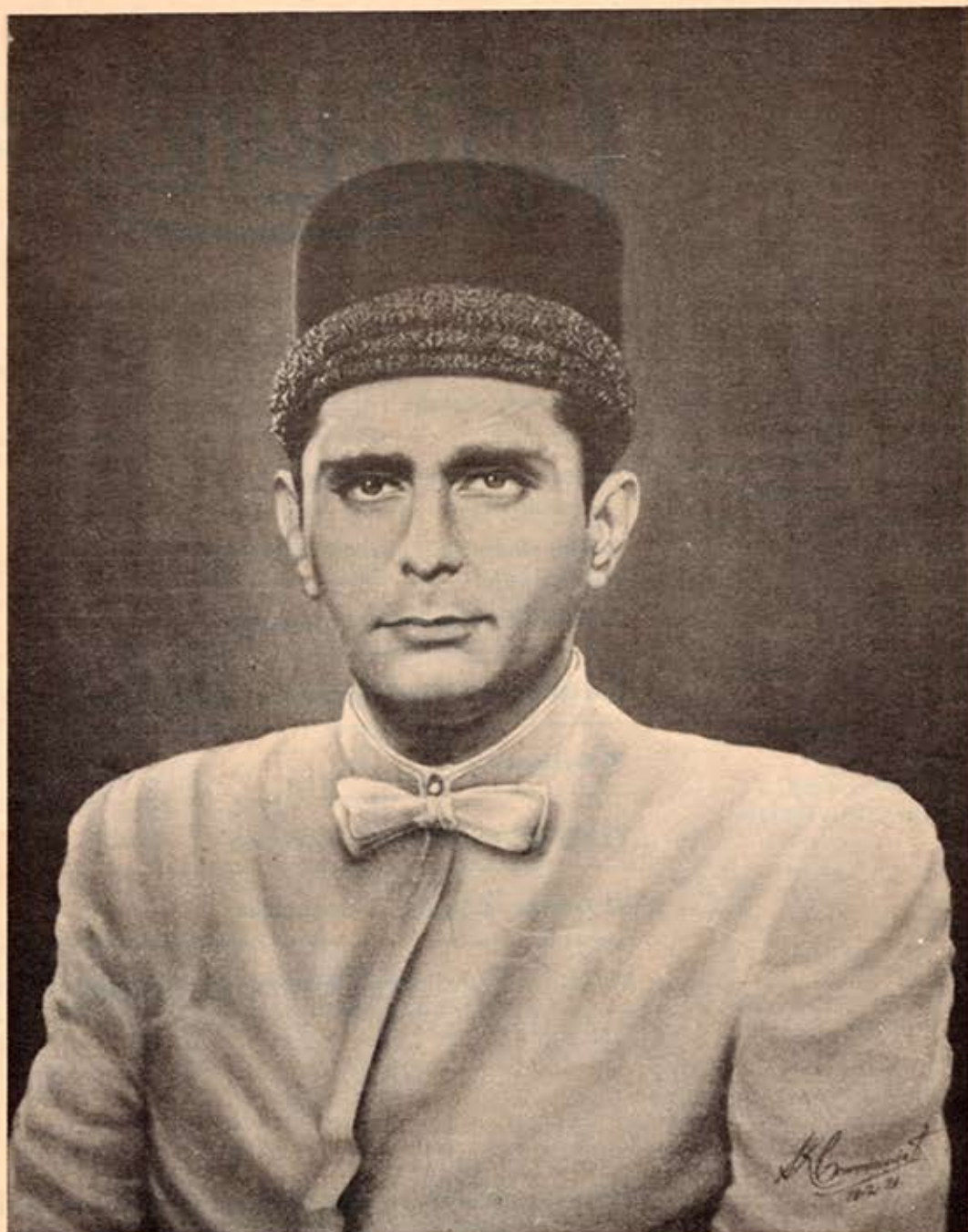
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In Memoriam

Mr. Fali Meherji Variava,

Director

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

Conversion

Conversion is to Parsis like a red rag to a bull. Zarathustra's preachings are forgotten, rational thinking leaves them, and the Parsis rush to fight an enemy that does not exist.

No religious person changes from one religion/atheism direct to another religion. There is always a pause; a blank and then a lengthy time during which the man searches for a system of faith and worship, a religion which can fulfil his need to be with God. Sometimes the search ends in the wonderful discovery of the Zoroastrian religion and the man professes the teachings of Zarathustra and practises the *tarikats*, including the *navjote*, of the Zoroastrian religion and

tradition. Let no man come between that man and his God.

Constraint on the Zoroastrian religion, perhaps necessary at one time at one place to preserve the religion has wilted under nature's spirit of the age. Not a single legend or quotation from the preachings or interpretations of Zarathustra can be rationally construed to signify that no man can profess the Zoroastrian religion through the *navjote* ceremony, unless both his parents are Zoroastrians. At best, it may be established that in the Zoroastrian religion conversion is not specified.

The Zoroastrian religion permits conversion. Membership of the community "is coming to be defined by commitment and participation and not by inherited identity."

A.E. TARAPORE

The acceptance of Zoroastrianism by King Vishtasp and others was not meant to be a conversion or change of faith from one established religion to another. It was simply the adoption of an organized system to their already existing Mazda-worshipping belief. The fact remains that there was no prophet or any form of established religion such as Buddhism, Christianity or Islam before the advent of Zarathustra. Where then is the question of Zarathustra converting the people of the primitive faith to his own?

As regards conversion in neighbouring countries like Turan and Sainina, it becomes necessary to emphasize that Iran and Turan implied only a distinction in country and not of religion. The fact that all the holy ones of Iran, Turan, Sairima, Sainina and other places are remembered in the *Fravardin Yasht* does not mean that those who resided beyond Iran professed a religion different from that prevailing in Iran. Thus the memory of the holy ones in the *Fravardin Yasht* simply depicts that Mazda-worship was not confined to Iran alone but also neighbouring and distant regions.

One cannot help accepting that Zoroastrianism is a universal religion. The *Daena Zarathustra* is the law of the entire universe. The 21 *Nasks* covered all the laws of nature be it spiritual, subtle or physical. But it is unfortunate that this universal nature of Zoroastrianism is misconstrued for

proselytism.

It would not be out of place to quote Mahatma Gandhi, "All religions are branches of the same mighty tree, but one must not change from one branch to another for the sake of expediency. By doing so one cuts the very branch on which he sits."

N.H. DADRAWALA

Our memory is short to talk about disowning those priests for taking Peterson into the Zoroastrian fold.

What happened in the past when the late Burjorji Bharucha took a bold stand and under the leadership of Dasturji Framroze Bode so many *navjotes* were performed of the sons and daughters of Parsi fathers and non-Parsi mothers. At that moment the orthodoxy was at par and the fanatics babbled a lot but they did not think of excommunicating Dasturji Bode. Even after that Dasturji Bode performed marriages of Parsi boys with alien girls.

Why then the present hullabaloo against Hormazdiyar and Antia? I am aware Hormazdiyar who had a sound religious training at the Cama Athornan Institute, performed ceremonies prior to leaving for the USA and is now working in an American firm.

The late Dr Irach Taraporewalla, in his book on the *Gathas* on page 56 said: "The place of Zarathustra among the prophets is unique. He was born not merely to teach and uplift the Iranian race so many thousands of years ago, but his was the message meant for all humanity and for all ages. For Zarathustra was not merely the prophet of Iran, but he was the world teacher, and his message is the eternal teaching of truth, love and service. His message has a very special value for humanity today."

FRAM F. MULLAN

Udvada

As we have no Parsi paper in the UK there is no means of knowing what our people think about any event or proposal. I have my doubts as to whether the majority even know about Peterson's *navjote*.

Some years ago I was instrumental in sending out a questionnaire to members of the Zoroastrian Association of Europe with the help of John Hinnells and Open University. On the subject of

conversion the following two questions were asked: Do you agree with the conversion of non-Zoroastrians? a) Yes (47.8 percent) b) No (38.1 percent) c) Don't know (10 percent). If 'yes' please indicate your views on which would be acceptable should conversion/converts be: a) Limited to marriage partners and children only and given full communal status (22.4 percent); b) Limited to marriage partners and children only but given separate communal status (1.5 percent); c) Open to all and given full communal status (25.6 percent); d) Open to all and given separate communal status (1.5 percent) and e) Other—please specify (2.2 percent).

Ever since Zoroastrianism became the state religion of Iran, in several of our *Nyaish* prayers the following passage appears: "May the knowledge, extent and fame of the commandments of the excellent Mazdayasnan religion be widespread in the world, over all its seven regions, so may it be." The community has spent enough time and energy in debating the question. I have my doubts if we will have 100 percent unanimity on it. Those who care for the religion, its preservation and propagation will go forward to do so. They do not need anyone's permission. In France there is a society for Zoroastrian Studies (*Société d'Etudes Zoroastriennes*). In America there is The International Mazdayasnan Order at Eugene, Oregon. And these bodies are not established by Parsis.

CYRUS MEHTA
Essex, UK

'The Resurgence of the Federation'

In *Parsiana*, July 1983, a reference has been made to the Minorities Commission presided over by Justice Beg. The reference should have been instead to the High Power Panel on Minorities presided over by Dr Gopal Singh, of which Ms Aloo Chibber is a member. The report of this panel was submitted to the government on June 14, 1983. The panel's findings and recommendations relate to a wide range of subjects like education, employment, industry, finance, economic concessions, economic disparity and implementation machinery.

SHIAVAX D. NARGOLWALA
President, Delhi Parsi Anjuman

'Inquest on the 'Quest''

Adverting to the article 'An Inquest on

the 'Quest' (*Parsiana*, March 1983), it would seem to me that if I were to pay for seeing a movie, my choice would not favour a film producer known for his ecclesiastical merits nor one that projects ancient scriptures. Conversely if I were to seek spiritual salvation, I would not visit a movie director.

We have great respect for our revered dasturs. They have preserved our scriptures and tended our holy fires over the ages. They should continue to do so. Until their scholarship or training at the athornan institutes and madressas includes courses in sociology and community development, they should not try to undertake the role of social guidance and certainly not of movie directors.

Generally, their application of scriptural knowledge to social problems is not laudable or acceptable. Nor need they use this platform to pronounce the admissibility or otherwise of conversion. One does not have to be a scholar of Avesta to know about 'freedom of choice' and about 'spreading of the faith to the seven continents.' We know the spirit of *Kemna Mazda* and of *Yasna* 30.2 and 28.7 well enough, irrespective of the translator, to know that Zarathustra enjoined the spreading of the faith. The Committee of 11 Ulemas appointed by the Anjuman in the early part of this century, conclusively pronounced that Zoroastrianism does not prohibit proselytization but enjoins it.

Cyrus Bharucha is a very competent film and TV producer. He, together with Zubin Mehta, can raise the fame and repute of our prophet and religion internationally, to heights never achieved by our dasturs. Those of us who did wish to ensure the authenticity of this production, ensured it at the Fourth North American Zoroastrian Congress in Montreal in April 1982 by appointing a committee to review the film script and nominated thereon some learned liberal scholars like Dastur Navruz D. Minochehr-Homji, Prof. K. Irani, Dr Ali Jaffrey etc., learned not only in our scriptures but also in their applicability to modern society.

To succeed, the film must have a universal appeal and interest. Then alone can it 'spread the message to the seven continents.' It is not aimed to make Zoroastrians better Zoroastrians. That function I am sure Cyrus and Zubin are leaving to our revered dasturs. Let these two proceed unhindered on their 'quest', leaving the dasturs to look after our atash-behrams and their respective dio-

cese.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Chembur under the directorship of Armaity Desai can, I am sure, formulate useful courses in sociology and community development for application to our mobeds and dasturs and 'Quest' or no quest, this possibility I feel should be seriously explored if we mean our priests to assume greater responsibility for social guidance in future.

HOMI B. MINOCHER HOMJI
Ontario, Canada

'Racial Harakiri'

The community, since the beginning of Parsi history has been a closed one, insulating itself from outside influences and isolating itself from other communities. This, at that time, was a good thing because primarily it ensured that the religion which was brought from Persia would live on in its original state.

However, the coming of the British effected a change not only for the Parsi community, but for the rest of the communities and people of India, and the community by lowering its social frontiers was able to participate in, and was indeed often the leader of the newly formed conglomerate Indian society. There were Parsis and Parsi participation in almost every field of social activity, from sports and entrepreneurship to education and civil administration.

However, the Parsis in the post-independence period, reverted to their original stand of splendid isolation. It cannot be over emphasized that any community retreating from the mainstream of a society begins to look in on itself and assumes a ghetto mentality characterized by mental and moral stagnation.

It is therefore not surprising that when many of the younger generation emerge from the closed confines of their community in pursuance of their studies or careers, they are reluctant to reassociate with a community which professes such a strong ethnocentric attitude to the detriment of social and intellectual advancement. It ought to be a matter of great concern to the community that Parsi boys and girls find so much in common with the boys and girls of other communities, yet cannot even generate a sense of affinity for their own community.

The case of the dwindling Parsi population and thus perhaps the ultimate demise of Zoroastrianism is

an even more serious one. It would be a pity if the religion survived through thick and thin down the ages only to die out because it had no followers to propound it. The only solution to this problem is conversion and there is no way out of it.

While this solution will create tremendous opposition and a reversal of many traditional customs, it must be pointed out that the prohibition of conversion is merely a social restraint inflicted upon us when the Zoroastrians first came to India. At that time it allayed a local king's fears that the strangers who had come to his country were not missionaries intent on propagating their faith, but refugees from their homeland who only desired to settle down and live in peace.

Later of course, it was a useful excuse for the Parsis themselves to preserve the 'purity' of their race. At neither time were the Parsis so pressed by problems as they are today and so could afford to cling to this tradition.

Today however, the community must cast aside such traditions and prejudices that it harbours and allow for conversion. Certainly our race will not remain as 'pure' as it was earlier (which itself is

open to doubt) but inversely, fresh blood cannot be anything but beneficial to a community beset by problems caused by excessive inbreeding. It would seem apt to quote here *Yasht 13.94*: "Henceforth from now may spread the good Mazdayasnian religion over all the zones that are seven."

Until such time as the community as a whole has the courage to change the trend of things, the younger generation will continue to migrate from the community, and the religion will continue its course towards extinction.

AFRIED PATEL

Kanpur

Calcutta Parsis

The article 'Calcutta Parsis: A rich heritage' by Gautam Ghose (*Parsiana*, June 1983), so far as it concerns the Parsis of Calcutta, is interesting. But a few points deserve some correction.

Seventy-five percent of the Parsi population of Calcutta numbering about 35,000 then, were from Navsari. The late Ervad J.F. Madan also hailed from Navsari where he worked in his young days as a mobed with a remuneration of one banana and one egg for performing the *Afargan* ceremony.

Dinshaw Bamji (not Mehta) and Sorabji Kolah who were personal chums also hailed from Navsari and left for Calcutta when the Bengal Nagpur Railway had just started functioning. They opened Europe-shop in Dharamtolla Street under the name of Dinshaw & Sorabji and held a number of agencies for wines, spirits and processed foods. Later on they took up catering contracts under the name of D. Sorabji & Co. for the East Bengal Railway as it was then known.

D. Sorabji & Co. had a virtual monopoly and everything from crates of aerated waters to meat, fish, fruit and tinned provisions used to be transported free of freight. Until the outbreak of the last Great War, the tariff for a nine-course breakfast and lunch in refreshment rooms of almost all Indian railways was Rs 2 and dinner Rs 2.50 and in restaurant cars—breakfast and lunch Rs 2.50 and Rs 3 for dinner. The East Bengal Railway provided them with about 15 free first-class passes and about 100 third-class passes for the use of their staff members.

All Parsi Zoroastrians were entertained free of charge by most of the Parsi caterers. In about the year 1912, when

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Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta with Lady Mehta went on holiday to Darjeeling, the company made elaborate arrangements for the decoration and a special top-class dinner with French dishes including Russian caviar, French pate-de-foie-gras and roast duckling. When the honoured guest called for the bill both partners present politely informed Mehta that it was the policy of the company to entertain free all Parsi Zoroastrians. On his return to Bombay Sir Pheroze Shah posted a cheque to the company. While thanking him for the remittance, they politely replied that they could not contravene a system and hence they sent the cheque to a Parsi charity fund in Calcutta.

All Parsi staff members then wore a long Parsi coat and a cap. After trying my luck at Rangoon where I worked hard from early morning till late night with no pay, I joined D. Sorabji & Co. as an assistant on a handsome remuneration of Rs 30 per month. In those days no questions were asked as to the identity or character of the applicants, they were all taken for granted as of sterling character and conduct. Until the outbreak of the last Great War, the Parsis held a virtual monopoly in catering on all the railways in India.

Ghose has made no reference to two other Parsi luminaries of Calcutta. The late Seth Framji Boomlakhau who hailed from Navsari, and his intimate friend Merwanji Bhot. Both were totally illiterate and worked as cooks and general assistants at Parsi weddings earning Re 1 per day from early morning till late night. Both were wrestlers.

While exchanging topics one day, both fell out, challenged each other, and arranged for a wrestling bout in Lunsikui Maidan, Navsari. The mutual condition was that the defeated shall instantly leave Navsari and never return while the victor was alive.

Merwanji Bhot, who was familiarly known as 'Mahello Band' knocked down Framji who, according to the terms, left Navsari for Delhi on foot, from there to Allahabad and finally settled down in Calcutta as a cook with the Banaji family. Later on, starting his own business of Europe-shop in Bentick Street and Chowringhee and also a catering business on the B.N.W. Railways.

Framji remarried a young widow, Jerbanoo, when the lady was 16 years and he aged 66 years and had about seven children. After Merwanji Bhot died, 70 years later, Framji came to Navsari to pass his last days. Framji performed the

navjote of his last child when he was around 94 years old.

Another luminary of Calcutta is Nariman K. Karanjia who in his youth was known by the nickname of 'Dhankhra'. Karanjia, hefty and muscular, was only a matriculate. When Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala opened up a branch of the Central Bank of India at 8, Clive Row, Calcutta, in about 1915, he appointed Karanjia as sub-accountant on a fabulous salary of Rs 250 plus 10 percent as war allowance. He was well known for his honest and scrupulous dealings and retired as managing director 13 years ago.

There were also rich Parsis—Eduji and Motabhoj Guzder having jute and cotton mills and presses, Merwanji Nanabhoj Mehta of Navsari doing large-scale business with China, Keki Lawyer and Rustomji Cawasji Mody, the uncle of Dr Minocher B. Mody. Jamshedji Saklat—who bought and sold shares and stocks, had a shop of sports goods in Chowringhee and was a personal friend and advisor to Ervad Jamshedji F. Madan.

R.N. RUSTOMJI

The Doongerwadi Pictures

What are these Doongerwadi pictures? Rumour has it that some notorious individuals, in the dead of one moonless night, smuggled themselves into the innermost precincts of Bombay's sacred Towers of Silence and, with camera and flash, took some singularly horrifying pictures.

The photos showed parts of bodies scattered all over and, though it might be difficult to hazard a guess, there should have been no less than three bodies in all. From the pictures it was not possible to make out whether they were in different stages of decay, but they certainly were in different stages of being devoured. There were no vultures in sight but then, in the middle of the night they ought to have been resting. Apart from this, there was a 'mountain' of skulls in the well. Strangely, I do not recall seeing any other bones, only skulls!

I asked myself why an educated highly emancipated community such as ours should not be able to solve the few problems that bedevil the running of our *dokhmas*.

In an attempt to start the process of righting the wrong, I have given below some of these problems and their solutions as I can see them:

Problem: There just aren't enough birds.

Solution: While it might not be feasible to repatriate grown vultures, it should not be impossible to breed them in captivity on a 'farm'. The Parsi Punchayet should finance and spearhead the activity and the job can be done even by a non-Parsi poultry farmer. The bred baby vultures should then be released in the *dokhma*.

Problem: The buildings and traffic at Kemp's Corner scare the birds and they fly away.

Solution: While the birds are being bred, their wings could be suitably clipped so that they cannot fly except over the shortest distances and heights.

Problem: On days when there are no bodies, the birds have to go hungry. Fewer birds are, therefore, tempted to remain.

Solution: On such days, in a nearby location, the Doongerwadi staff should arrange to provide non-human meat to keep the birds fed.

Problem: Skulls and bones do not disintegrate.

Solution: Either of two methods could be followed:

An electric, high voltage incinerator could be installed within the Doongerwadi premises and the skulls and bones, after a due lapse of time, consigned thereto. The ashes could be periodically immersed in a nearby river with due ceremony.

Or, the skulls and bones, after a due lapse of time, could be immersed in a tank full of concentrated acid or other appropriate chemicals and left there to dissolve. The acid/chemical could periodically be drained out of the tank and given the same anti-pollution treatment as is given to industrial effluents.

Problem: The periphery of the wells remain unclean.

Solution: An overhead mushroom tank should provide water storing facilities and cleanliness should be maintained by spraying the quagmire with jets of water.

If scientific knowledge and common sense are put to use for making timely improvements on traditional systems in order to make them more relevant to the needs of the day, our traditions will live on to the end of time. Our faith in our great religion will be strengthened, and those who are tempted to stray into other faiths or follow other traditions will no longer find reason to do so!

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

Events and Personalities

Zoroastrian Blood

Young blood, so to say, was credited for compiling and printing a Zoroastrian Blood Donor Directory.

"In a period of barely one year our volunteers have been successful in registering 1,034 names of prospective blood donors from a cross-section of our community," wrote Kersi J. Limathwalla, chairman of the Committee for Electoral Rights Youth Wing. The sole and primary objective of such a gesture being that no fellow Zoroastrian, young or old, rich or poor may succumb... for want of blood. "Special mention needs to be made of Kersi P. Gazdar who very ably co-ordinated the entire project with untiring efforts and Ms Zarine E. Pithawalia and Ms Meher K. Gazdar for their highly efficient job in group classification and compiling the final manuscript."

The directory was formally released at a grand function at Patkar Hall on October 13, before a large gathering, by the noted physician Dr Minocher Mody. Dinshaw Petit, chairman of the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital was presented the directory which he received on behalf of the hospital. The directory is to be given to several hospitals in Bombay and the blood would be available to members of all communities, stated Dadi Engineer, a founder member of the CER and one of its stalwarts. He noted the Youth Wing had already collected and donated 200 bottles of blood to the Parsee General Hospital, the Nowrojee Wadia Maternity Hospital and the Red Cross.

CER president Jamsheed Kanga noted that when the CER approached a

noted institution to finance the printing of the directory they refused, stating the CER was a "political body." "Is this (compiling a blood donors directory) the work of a political body?" asked Kanga. An anonymous donor finally bore the cost. Kanga also lauded the wonderful work being done by the Parsee General Hospital and commented "How lucky we are to have such an institution working for the community so steadfastly for the last so many years."

Mody termed the directory "a great achievement for a small community like ours" and noted how "difficult it is to get donors today."

Invitee guest Sunil Dutt, noted movie star and former Sheriff of Bombay, congratulated the community on the directory and voiced the need

for a similar city-wide directory.

In the keynote address noted lawyer and former Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Shiavax R. Vakil, urged the community to start co-operative stores and kitchens in the various colonies whereby a healthy diet at a nominal cost could be provided. "Any good cause you try, will not fail," he added. With the rising cost of sandalwood and other wood, Vakil suggested agiaries and atash-behrams also form co-operatives for the supply of *Kathi*. Sandalwood would be more difficult and costly to attain as it was being used in large quantities by the chemical industry.

The function ended with a play directed by noted theatre personality Dinyar Contractor and other "gags and skits."

Left to Right: Limathwalla, Petit, Sunil Dutt, Kanga, Vakil and Dr Mody at the CER function



Guzder goes places

Noted businessman and prominent travel personality **Cyrus J. Guzder** was appointed president of the Travel Agents Association of India in September, notes a press release.

"TAAI is the only recognized body of travel agents and tour operators in the country... (and) actively promotes and safeguards the interests of the travel industry in general and of its members in particular," states the report.

Soon after his appointment as president, Guzder led a delegation to the Indian prime minister which presented a

Guzder: Promoting tourism



memorandum on the imposition of the new visa procedures and withdrawal of the 30-day landing permit facility for foreign tourists visiting India. These restrictions act as a deterrent to the growth of tourism and TAAI estimates that "India is losing around 10 percent of its tourism traffic" and that "tourism growth has been declining steeply" with trends for the current year suggesting possible negative growth.

Guzder, managing director of the travel agency 'Indtravels' and chairman and managing director of the travel and cargo agency, Airfreight Pvt. Ltd., has been involved with the travel and tourism industry for the last 15 years, notes the press release. He is a former president of the Air Cargo Agents Association of India and was selected the Indian delegate member to the Air Transport Commission and Environment Commission of the International Chamber of Commerce at Paris.

"A member of various committees connected with civic affairs and the environment in India," Guzder is a

member of the Government of India's committee to strengthen the Archaeological Survey of India and Committee for the Preservation of Indian Monuments, notes the report. He is on the Bombay Municipal Corporation's committee for the preservation of historic buildings and the Housing Urban Renewal and Ecology Board. "He also assisted in the preparation of the UNESCO report to the Government of India on the impact of tourism on the monuments of India."

Guzder is on the board of directors of several reputed companies including Aviation Consultancy Services, Tata

Patel: Legal expert



Press, and the British Petroleum Indian Agencies Joint Enterprise.

High Court for Patel

Noted Nagpur lawyer **Hoshang Dinshaw Patel** was appointed judge of the High Court of Bombay in June. An expert in labour and industrial law, constitutional law and service matters, Patel (who joined the bar in 1954) was also "associated with the Enquiry Commission of Silewara Coal Mines constituted by the Central Government", notes his bio data. He has "made his mark as a counsel of various corporate bodies, state government departments and a large number of industrial organizations."

Patel has been part-time lecturer with the Nagpur law college for several years. He was president of the Labour Lawyers Bar Association and a managing committee member of the Nagpur and Kamptee, Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman.

Bangalore Housing Plan

The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman is seeking funds for the construction of one and two bedroom flats for Zoroastrians in the garden city of Bangalore.

The present dharamshala building at Benson Cross Road will be demolished and a new complex constructed incorporating a dharamshala on the ground floor, ownership flats on the second and third floors and flats on a rental basis for needy Parsi residents of Bangalore on the first floor, notes a press release.

"The total cost of construction to the anjuman will be about Rs 40 lakhs of which about Rs 30 lakhs is likely to be raised through a 'self-financing' scheme. The balance of Rs 10 lakhs will have to be raised by way of donations and interest-free loans from our well-wishers in the community," notes an appeal from the anjuman. "If a Parsi would donate a sum of Rs 5,000 and more, his name or the name of his nominee will be inscribed on a marble tablet to be fixed in the dharamshala."

"Through our earlier letter we had indicated that the anjuman had prepared a scheme to build ownership apartments for resident and non-resident Zoroastrians only. It was then envisaged that the land on which the new building was to be constructed would be given on long lease—initially for 99 years.

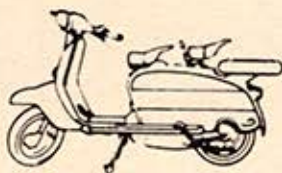
"Subsequently, the trustees have discussed this matter in great depth with numerous legal and taxation authorities apart from interested purchasers and have now decided that these flats will be sold outright on ownership basis with the land made free-hold. The advantages are: a) monthly lease rent will not be payable; b) registration stamp fees are likely to be very much less; and c) investment would be more commercially viable when the building is constructed on free-hold than on lease-hold land.

The scheme, expected to be completed by December 1984, in order to commemorate the diamond jubilee of the Bangalore Bai Dhanmai and Cawasji Dadabhai Dar-E-Meher, has been undertaken "mainly to help such members of the community who either are unable to obtain suitable accommodation in Bangalore due to restrictive monetary conditions or due to non-availability of accommodation in a crowded city," according to the report, or those non-resident Parsis in India and abroad who

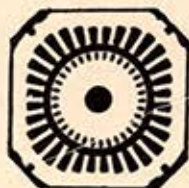
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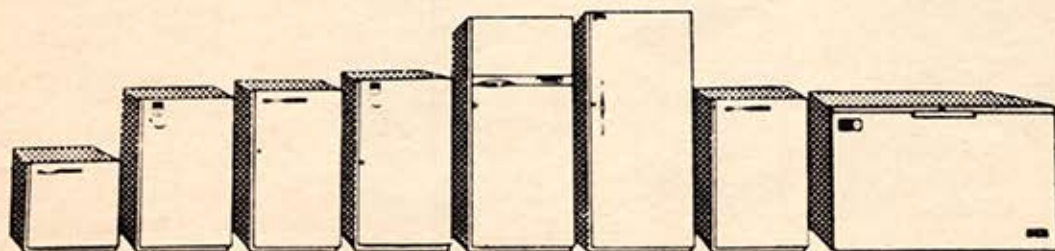
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(Electro-Mechanical &
Electronic)



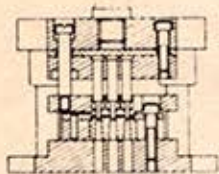
**AUTOMOTIVE
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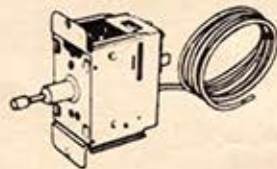
**LAMINATION
DIVISION**
(Electrical Motors &
Stampings)



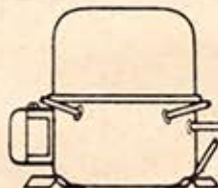
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seek accommodation in Bangalore.

Applications for the flats costing approximately Rs 1.90 lakhs (750 sq. feet) and 2.50 lakhs (1000 sq. feet) are invited from Parsi individuals and families with immediate effect, notes the report. One of the conditions laid down by the trustees is that "at all times the apartments will be occupied by Parsi Zoroastrians only."

"Each application shall be accompanied by an earnest money deposit of Rs 5,000 writes Behram Sidhwa, president of the anjuman, and subsequent payments, to be made by bank draft only, are to be made at specified stages in the construction.

For further details including the plans of the flats, contact Seth Cawasji Nusserwanji Dinshaw, Adenwalla Building, 121, Meadows Street, Fort, Bombay 400 023 or The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman, 15, Queen's Road, Bangalore 560 001.

Memorial Awards

To commemorate the memory of Ms Neelum Khurshed Kanga, a social worker devoted to the cause of the blind, who died on January 19, 1983, the National Association for the Blind (NAB) recently established 'The Neelum Khurshed Kanga Memorial Fund' for "assisting blind women and giving them financial assistance, scholarships and promoting their education, vocational training, employment, economic resettlement and total rehabilitation," notes a press release.

Shroff receiving award from NAB president Vijay Merchant. Inset: Neelum Kanga



At a function held on July 2, 1983, the birth anniversary of Ms Kanga, the Neelum Khurshed Kanga Memorial Awards were presented to three blind women for their outstanding achievements. The three recipients, according to press reports, were Ms Gracie Shroff, a telephone operator at the Workshop for the Blind in Bombay who has trained over 400 blind operators, Ms Kaushalya Balid, a teacher at the Happy Home School for the Blind, and Dr Usha Bhalerao, author, music teacher at the MP University and a doctor of sociology.

The Kanga Fund will be administered by the NAB's recently appointed Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Blind Women in India, notes the report. There are over 2,50,000 blind women in India, and twice that number of women who are visually impaired, according to NAB estimates, for whom, "very little has been done."

The Kanga Fund was started with an initial donation of Rs 2,000 from noted lawyer Nani Palkhivala and Ms Palkhivala, notes the press release. The Palkhivalas donated a further sum of Rs 10,000 which was augmented by "friends and admirers of Ms Kanga" to a total of Rs 35,000. "It is hoped to reach the target of Rs 1,00,000 during the year."

A student of the Girton High School and the Alexandra High School for Girls, Bombay, and "a successful sales executive in several esteemed concerns for 22 years," according to her bio-data, Kanga, 66, "helped in raising substantial funds for various activities for the blind



Boga: New techniques in dentistry

even before the National Association for the Blind came into existence."

She was also concerned about community affairs and "joined the Committee for Electoral Rights and was elected as a (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) Anjuman Committee member during the last elections."

Rooting out Decay

Noted Bombay dentist Dinshaw F. Boga co-ordinated a course in root canal therapy, a treatment which holds the promise of preventing the extraction of decayed teeth. Forty-four senior dental surgeons from different parts of India participated in the June meet to discuss this root canal therapy which is said to be in its infancy in the country.

"Patients (are) reluctant to go for therapy on the grounds that it is expensive and time-consuming" commented Boga. "A patient would have to go to the surgeon for three or four sittings."

Boga believes that "any health-care system to be a success should have dental care as an integral part." He was instrumental in starting the manufacture of fluoride tablets in India. "The drinking water in Bombay being deficient in fluoride, children need to take (these) tablets," Boga is reported to have said at the meet. This reduces the incidence of dental decay in children by 40-80 percent.

A graduate with honours from St Xaviers College, Bombay, Boga was awarded a fellowship of the International College of Dentists, and the Royal Society of Health (London). He is also an elected member of the Pierre Fauchard Academy (USA) and past-president of the Indian Dental Association.

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Katrak in Command

Behram F. Katrak, winner of the 1983 Home Guards and Civil Defence Medal for meritorious service, has been promoted to the senior post of commandant of the Home Guards, Greater Bombay. In this position Katrak heads a force of over 5,000 Home Guards whose task it is to act as auxiliary to the local police force and the fire and rescue services. The Home Guards also serve as a nucleus for the civil defence services in times of war, carry out social welfare projects as directed by the government and come to the aid of citizens in any type of calamity such as flood, fire or house collapse.

A member of the Home Guards for 25 years Katrak has received several medals including the Paschim Star, the Sangram Medal and the 25th Anniversary of Independence Medal for his gallantry and services. During the 1965 war, his bio-data states, "Katrak recruited and trained a large number of Home Guards at an outdoor camp which was specially conducted in the jungle areas of Borivli." In the floods at Poona (1961) and Surat (1959) Katrak was "instrumental in saving much life and property."

Born and educated in Bombay, Katrak joined the organization at the age of 18, according to his bio-data, winning the coveted trophy for the best all-round cadet and the Commandant General's Shield for standing first at a fire fighting course during early training. Since then, notes a report in *The Times of India*, "he has held important posts in the organization....In his capacity as officer commanding he attended a large number of

Katrak: Guarding home



fires, house collapse incidents as also railway and aircraft accidents in and around Bombay."

Grand old letter

A priceless piece of memorabilia left behind by the Grand Old Man of India, Dr Dadabhai Naoroji, is an 11-page letter that was addressed to the voters of Central Finnsbury constituency from where he was elected the first Indian MP to the British Parliament in 1892.

The letter, penned in his own handwriting, was an appeal to electors outlining the reasons why he was the fittest candidate to represent Central Finnsbury in the British Parliament.

The GOM was one of the 13 candidates fighting the elections from that constituency. Later, four candidates were selected to fight the poll and Naoroji was second in the order of preference.

Naoroji claimed in his appeal that he had spent a long time in England and hence was acquainted with its problems and those of the people of India. He went on to list his record of service. The Indian-born candidate barnstormed through the countryside, delivered lectures and talks and met voters house-to-house. He was duly elected victor from Central Finnsbury.

The then British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, in his notorious Edinburgh election speech, described Naoroji as 'a black man'. This derogatory appellation aroused the ire of the English people and constrained Queen Victoria to express her profound grief.

The letter and other items of the memorabilia were handed over by the former maharani of Kutch, Ms Rajendra Kunwarba, to the well-known city homoeopath, Dr S.R.Wadia, who had known the Naoroji family and had even seen the Grand Old Man when he was just six years old.

Naoroji died at 92 in Bombay in 1917. He left behind three sons and five granddaughters, none of whom survive to this day. The last grandson, Sarosh, an assistant commissioner of police in Kutch, died two years ago.

Among the other items of memorabilia the ex-maharani gifted to Wadia was an ornately designed jari-and-velvet purse presented by the Kashi Sujani Samaj on his election as president of the Indian National Congress at the 22nd session held in Lahore in 1893.

Another Naoroji heirloom is a thumb-nail sketch and portrait of the GOM written by Sorabjee Jehangir, then

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magistrate of Baroda in the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda, in the series, 'Representative Men of India', in the tradition of the American writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Representative Men,' only that the latter covered great men from different climes.

Wadia plans to present the purse and some rare photographs to the Parsi Museum at Khareghat Road, Gamdevi. He had earlier donated a portrait of the GOM to the KR Cama Oriental Institute.

Presently engaged in writing a biography of the GOM, a man who he has admired, Wadia once journeyed from his home in Colaba to Versova, 20 years ago, to locate the holiday home where Naoroji spent his leisure hours. No resident remembers the house and the spot where it stood. What remains is only a road leading from a bus-stop to the beach and named after Dadabhai Naoroji.

Reprinted from *The Times of India*, June 6, 1983.

Beware of Rustomji

You never can know what my friend M.K. Rustomji will be up to next. Actually, I know. He has just signed a package contract with Federal Publications of Singapore for publishing nine of his books which he has jointly produced with C. Northcote Parkinson—yes, of Parkinson's law fame—in Chinese and the Singapore publishers expect these management books to have a significant impact on the People's Republic of China.

I smell an Indo-British conspiracy

here to take over China by brainwashing the Chinese on management techniques. First they innocuously introduce imperialist-colonialist methods of management in China. Then they introduce western capital. Then they get hold of Swaraj Paul in a bid to take over Chinese industry. And before long David Rockefeller will be setting up his Beijing branch of City Bank with the State Bank of India following suit.

I smell trouble for the Chinese. This Parkinson-Rustomji pair is out for some good mischief and as a friend of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and a sworn enemy of capitalist enterprise, I must warn Beijing. There is nothing more deadly than an Indo-British intellectual venture and if Beijing will not look out in time, everybody in China will be wearing Nirmal textiles and buying Kirloskar engines.

I further understand that among other countries that have evinced interest in publishing the Parkinson-Rustomji books is Bulgaria. Look out Andropov. Beware of Indians who bring you gifts through the back door!

By M.V. Kamath, courtesy *Mid-Day*, May 27, 1983.

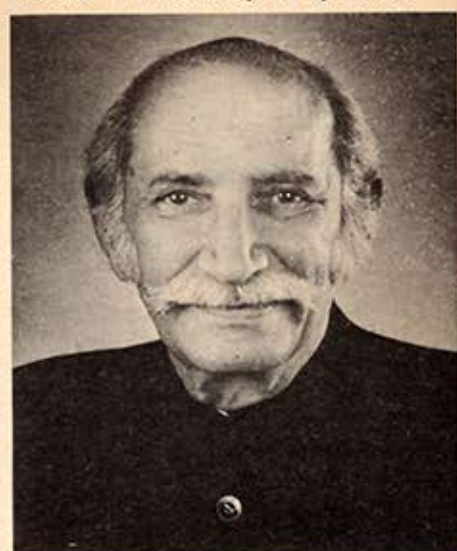
Donation for Hospital

For the improvement and extension of the outdoor department of the Bomanjee Dinshaw Petit Parsee General Hospital, a sum of three lakh rupees was donated by the Bai Shirinbai and Seth Rustomji Paymaster Public Charitable Trust, notes a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* newspaper. The dona-

tion was made in memory of the late Bai Shirinbai and Seth Rustomji Paymaster, notes Homi J. Chinoy, former coroner and presently administrator of the estate.

In addition, Rs 25,000 was donated

Wadia: "A homoeopath by choice"



for the purchase of furniture for the department, notes the report. The foundation for the extension of the outdoor department was laid by Ms Arnavaaz Jehangir Adranvala, a trustee of the fund.

Dusting the bust

Sir Cawasji Jehangir is synonymous with philanthropy, but few are aware of his contribution to civic and welfare spheres. One such contribution is the C.J. Hall which has been the venue for musical recitals, weddings and exhibitions for years.

Organizers of sports events, too, availed of its commodious space and most, if not all, of the major boxing competitions have been conducted there for 50 years and more.

Small wonder the Maharashtra State Amateur Boxing Association which uses the premises to conduct annual Western India Championships pays regular tribute to Sir Cawasji's memory.

In fact the boxing body's first act on entering the hall is to wash the bust of Sir C.J., which many may fail to notice while entering, and garland it in appreciation of his generosity. The maintenance department of the C.J. Hall, however, seems to work just by the opposite logic.

Courtesy *The Times of India*, June 20, 1983.



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Honoured Homoeopath

Bombay's well-known homoeopath, Dr Sarosh R. Wadia is the first Indian to have been invited to the USA twice to deliver lectures at the National Centre for Homoeopathy, Millersville, note press reports.

Wadia was recently elected Fellow of the British Homoeopathic Faculty, the second Indian to be so honoured "in appreciation of his long services in the national and international field of homoeopathy," according to a report.

"An allopath by training but a homoeopath by choice," Wadia is, according to his bio-data, a lecturer in homoeopathy at several colleges in India and honorary consultant at four charitable homoeopathic dispensaries in Bombay. He was national vice-president of the International Homoeopathic Medical League at Geneva and is the past president of the Maharashtra Homoeopathic Board.

Busybee's Fame

The fame of our own **Busybee** (also known as Behram Contractor) spreads far and wide. A recent edition of the *London Guardian* has a long article on India by Christopher Driver in which



he writes: "My lunch companion that day had been Malabari's (sic) spiritual heir, Behram Contractor of *Mid-Day*. A grizzled, myopic Parsee with a throwaway, miss-nothing manner... Contractor does everything that an old fashioned city editor did in H.L. Mencken's Baltimore. But he gets up early enough to write *Busybee* whose daily column gently manoeuvres his chosen target—profiteer, policeman, bureaucrat—to the puncturing sting in the tail. As if this were not enough, he also performs weekly as the first and liveliest restaurant critic of the liveliest eating city in India."

Courtesy *The Sunday Observer* July 7, 1983.

Corrections and Clarifications

In the article 'The Resurgence of the Federation' (*Parsiana*, July 1983), it was mentioned that "Nargolwala, with Jal Irani and two practising mobeds formed a working group to help the mobeds." Peshotan Nargolwala informs us that the working group was formed by Zal Eranee, three practising mobeds, a lady solicitor, two social workers and himself.

Matchmaker Matchmaker

To stem the phenomenon of intercommunity marriages, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet has started, this September, a free matrimonial bureau programming service. The bureau, said to be mooted by BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla, has received an encouraging initial response, according to R.K. Anklesaria, chief executive of the BPP. Twenty registration forms out of the 90 forms despatched have been returned within the first month of starting the bureau.

"We have sought the advice and help of various (professional and non-professional) *kajwallas*," commented Golwalla. He referred especially to Zoroastrian boys settled abroad who return to India looking for Parsi girls, stay for three to four weeks, fail to find a suitable partner and return, eventually marrying outside the community. "This marriage bureau will try and help such individuals—the service is not confined to Bombay," he said.

The brief but comprehensive forms incorporate, in addition to physical and financial characteristics, questions like 'Do you insist on horoscope matching?

Do you have the facility of accommodation/house after marriage? What are the qualities that you would like to especially look for in your partner (such as beautiful, tolerant, co-operative, mixing, quiet, etc)' and require details on religious attitudes, likes and dislikes.

According to the circumstances and preferences stated by each individual, a selection of prospective matches will be made, available candidates will be interviewed and arrangements to introduce candidates will also be made, noted Anklesaria. Premises at Noble Chambers, not far from the Punchayet's office at Dadabhai Naoroji Road have been allotted to the marriage bureau, and the Punchayet has sanctioned an initial sum of Rs 3,000. The bureau will be managed by Ms Sheroo Master of the BPP, Ms Gool J. Tata, joint secretary of the BPP, and Anklesaria.

Anklesaria proposes to widen the circle of contact by co-ordinating and exchanging information with other professional and non-professional matrimonial agencies. He commented that in certain large colonies like Cusrow Baug in Col-

aba, Bombay, several marriages take place among the residents themselves, "but there is no such affinity between Colaba and Andheri." Once a certain number of persons have been registered, the bureau proposes to send forms to those who advertise in the matrimonial columns in the press as well.

Anklesaria observed that it was necessary to start a bureau for marriage counselling so that in the process of building new relationships the old do not suffer neglect.

"The working of the marriage bureau will be on a trial and error system... We should be able to document all our experiences and take the help of family sociologists," said Dr Noshir Kaikobad.

"It's an attempt—in a worthy direction," said Anklesaria. "It may fail—it may succeed... There are limitations to final matchmaking, but even 12-20 successful cases a year will be worth it." "We don't want to achieve big results," Master added. "We want qualitative results. We want to make a happy match."

The BPP offers "strict confidentiality of the information received from the prospective parties," notes a press release. Interested persons may apply to GPO Box No 1850, Bombay—400 001, for registration forms.

The Community Voice

Hutokshi D. Doctor

'Chalo Delhi' was the cheerful call that summoned members of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India to the capital on October 8 and 9 for the second executive council meeting to be held since the reunion of the Federation. And it was perhaps the largest gathering in the 12 years of the Federation's existence that arose to participate in the *humbandagi* that inaugurated the meeting, held in the bright and traditionally Indian surroundings of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman's Bhiwandiwalla Hall.

"I'm happy to see that for the first time almost all the office bearers are present," said Shiavax D. Nargolwala, vice-president of the Federation and president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and Trust, in his welcome speech. Several representatives of the smaller anjumans of India attended the meet to relate the history and problems of their communities at this national forum.

"Differences we will have but they will not disturb our solidarity," promised Dr Aspi Golwala, president of the Federation, before the proceedings began, and at the close of two days of "fruitful session" he was able to reaffirm, "A community is as small in stature as the things it fights about. The Federation is tall in stature because of the atmosphere of cordiality in which the meeting was conducted."

Several items on the agenda were put to vote immediately after discussion, in an effort to ensure that decisions were made and translated into action, so that the Federation's "one voice" did not lose its new-found strength. While reports on the proposals of the last meeting in May were submitted, fresh resolutions were passed. Notable among these was the decision to host the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay in December '84 or January '85. The possibility of reconciling the objectives of the present World Zoroastrian Organization, based in London, with the Federation's concept of a world body was considered; a plan of action for the

amelioration of priests was recommended for implementation from the beginning of next year. Two resolutions were proposed on the Adoption Bill by the Federation's honorary secretaries, Erach Desai and Keki Gandhi. After a heated debate, the majority voted in favour of making a united representation through the Federation to the government on the

RESOLUTIONS

Main resolutions passed at the October executive council meeting of the Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India:

- * The Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress is to be held in Bombay in December '84 or January '85.
- * The Samast Anjuman resolution on the Adoption Bill passed in Bombay in 1981, recommending an appeal to the government that a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi would be equated with a natural born child only for the purpose of succession and inheritance, was adopted by the Federation.
- * A committee was formed to review the possibility of the Federation joining the World Zoroastrian Organization based in London.
- * A 10-point programme for the amelioration of priests was proposed for implementation from the beginning of next year.
- * A project for the counselling of school-children was recommended to be started in Bombay and Pune with an annual budget of Rs 48,600.

basis of the Samast Anjuman resolution of 1981, which recommended that a non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi would be equated with a natural born child only for the purpose of succession and inheritance.

If the last meeting was predominantly "action oriented," this one was in addition, future oriented, with an emphasis

on tackling the social, emotional and environmental problems of the youth, as well as their education and employment. A project for the counselling of school children, parents and teachers defined by Professor Noshir F. Kaikobad, social scientist and president of the Maharashtra Council of Social Work, was unanimously approved. Dr Hoshang P. Mehta, a noted vocational guidance counsellor, elaborated on career guidance. Kaikobad also spoke on the value of community centres and Jehangir R. Patel, editor of *Parsiana*, talked on effective communication through newsletters, as aids to social development and communication within the community.

The Fourth World Congress

"I have always said that the greatest achievement of the Federation in all its existence was the holding of the Third World Zoroastrian Congress," said Shiavax Nargolwala, and five years after the Third World Congress caused a genuine revival in the community, Zoroastrians world-wide will meet again in Bombay in December '84 or January '85. A resolution to this effect was unanimously passed at the meeting and BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder was appointed chairman of the organizing committee once again. It was proposed that the congress be held under the auspices of the Federation with the sponsorship of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, subject to their approval. Should the BPP disagree to the sponsorship, Nargolwala suggested that a committee of the Federation, representative of all the Anjumans of India, be formed.

"The Third World Congress was an outstanding success but in retrospect it was partly responsible for breaking up the Federation," said Guzder and Golwala expressed the hope that the Fourth Congress would not cause a greater split in the community in the light of the heat generated in North America by Peterson's navjote.

While the world congress was scheduled to be held every three years, five years

have already passed since the last congress. BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga stressed the need for "some periodicity for the meeting instead of making it an ad hoc decision. A lot of things were discussed," he said, "but without a body to implement them, we might find ourselves in the embarrassing situation of passing the same resolutions we did last time." Kanga therefore suggested the formation of a committee to review the projects which had been decided upon at the last congress and to discuss their implementation, "so that we have some achievements to show before the next congress. Let us talk by results."

Nargolwala clarified that there were only two formal resolutions passed by the Third World Zoroastrian Congress in 1978. One was to hold the next world congress as soon as possible and the other, the formation of a world body.

To join or not to join

While recognizing that the world body as visualized at the last world congress did not correspond to the existing World Zoroastrian Organization with its headquarters in London, the Federation adopted a conciliatory attitude and formed a committee, headed by Jamshed Guzder, to determine the objectives of a world body, its organization, and the possibility of blending the objectives of the WZO and the world body as proposed by the Federation.

Several delegates admitted that when the Federation had failed to take the in-

itiative, the WZO had stepped into the breach, but the WZO was once again criticized for accepting individual membership. "Can you imagine individuals becoming members of the UN?" asked Guzder. "It is totally incongruous that a body like the BPP which represents more than 50 percent of the world population of Zoroastrians

**Fifty percent of the
students who go abroad
do not return, and of these
at least 30 percent marry
outside the community.**

should have only one vote whereas 100 individual members from Bombay itself would command a total of 100 votes," noted Keki Gandhi in his report on the possibility of the Federation joining the WZO. He submitted instead, that the world body be organized at three levels—the main committee at the international level and sub-committees at the national and regional levels. "Individuals may be enrolled as associate members with involvement in regional work centres and some representation with voting rights on the national committees and regional work centres....but they will not be eligible to vote at the general body meetings."

"Let us first be clear as to what we want this world body to do," said

Kanga. "Social welfare is not its job. There will be chaos if every organization wanted to start a project for the amelioration of priests." The existing WZO can remain a social and cultural Parsi organization "but they cannot presume to speak on behalf of Zoroastrians all over the world," he said.

Nargolwala, whose answer to whether the Federation should join the WZO was a decided 'No' said, "I am quite convinced that the world body should be in India. But the Parsis of UK, USA and elsewhere will still have a strong voice in the running of this body." Recommending a policy of 'festina lente' or 'hasten slowly', Nargolwala advised the Federation against making any hasty decisions on this issue, a stand which Gandhi laughingly remarked was quite uncharacteristic of Nargolwala who usually adopted the role of the *chabuk* (whip) and not the *lagam* (reins). To this Nargolwala shot back that a horse is best ridden by a judicious use of the whip, the reins and the stirrups.

On the other hand, Mani Clubwalla of Madras, which recently joined the WZO, said, "The days have come when world Zoroastrians will be able to help Zoroastrians in India and that is why we have given (the WZO) some support." Dr Minocher K. Contractor of Surat suggested that the Federation "put its hand out to the WZO," while Homi P. Bodhanvala of Jamshedpur maintained that "someone has taken the lead—rightly or wrongly—please do not ignore the 40 percent of the population residing abroad—let us join hands, come together and find an acceptable solution for Zoroastrians all over India."

"It is often said that if you don't want to decide anything form a committee," Gandhi remarked. Nevertheless, the committee formed on Saturday to consider the WZO issue met on Sunday morning and submitted its proposals at the last session. "We'll try and see to what extent we can blend together our objectives and (their) objectives," reported Guzder. "If we find it impossible to blend, we'll draw up the pros and cons, have a dialogue and if some sort of consensus is arrived at we'll communicate it to you at the next executive council meeting."

Adoption raises a storm

On Saturday Nargolwala had mentioned that in reply to a question about the Adoption Bill at the last session of Parliament, the government reported

At council meeting: (from left) P. Nargolwala, Guzder (speaking), Gheyara, S. Nargolwala, Golwalla, and Dittia



that it had decided not to accept the recommendations of the Minority Commission (that matters of religion and conscience must be left to individual choice and not to dictation by others belonging to the same community) with respect to the Muslims. Naval B. Vakeel of Hyderabad-Secunderabad commented, "That means the Muslims have more voice than the Parsis," and Nargolwala countered, "You can say

that the Muslims have more votes."

Desai felt that "we should have a consensus on this problem at this meeting...(before) it is too late to make our representation to the government." To resolve all confusion over the issue the Parsis should make a united appeal to the government reaffirming the Samast Anjuman's stand, proving to the "doubting masses that we as a Federation can speak with one voice," and

enhancing the prestige of the Federation. In an impassioned speech Desai appealed for a unanimous vote in support of the Samast Anjuman resolution, which was adopted in Bombay. "Ever since the advent of our community in India we've adopted a custom and tradition that we have not so far allowed conversion. And we have been able to achieve so much because of this tradition," said Desai. "I'm almost certain that the majority of

EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT :

The Role of the Federation

In the minds of many, the role of the Federation in the community is unclear. Some anjumans see it as a threat to their autonomy, an interfering and liberal body. Others view it as an organization that makes and implements policies. Some see it as a forum, a community think-tank. While others view it as an all-India body which can make representation to the government.

As for all such institutions, it will take time for the role of the Federation to be clearly defined. But at present one purpose is clear: the Federation is the only meeting ground for the representatives of various anjumans. The meetings provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, of information. They also serve as an early warning system if things are going wrong for community members in any part of the country.

At the October meeting, various anjumans spoke of sizeable assets, mostly property, lying unattended. Land and buildings worth crores of rupees are being lost to the community for two main reasons: the Parsi population has shifted from the concerned areas and there is no one to look after the property, or because, as in the case of a Calcutta agiary situated in the heart of the city whose real estate is valued at two crores, the trustees are squabbling and the anjuman is helpless because the trust is a private one.

There is the case of the cemetery grounds near Agra, of land in Khambat in Gujarat, of the Tithal Sanatorium near Valsad, of land adjoining disused *dokhmas* being encroached upon.

The monetary loss to the community is phenomenal. And only a body like the Federation would have the clout and standing to intervene. If anjumans

and punchayets on their own took over assets of defunct or about to be defunct anjumans, motives would be questioned. But if the sanction of the Federation were there and the anjuman would be answerable to the Federation, there would be a check.

The Federation is still monopolized by a handful of anjumans, mainly Bombay and Delhi. The other anjumans are not vocal or do not get the opportunity to participate because of the loquaciousness of some of the above members.

At this meeting, delegates were asked to speak about their particular anjuman, but even here they were asked to be brief. Unless the less vocal anjumans are given a chance to participate, the purpose of the Federation will not be served.

Unfortunately, many smaller anjumans do not regularly attend the Federation meeting. When one delegate was questioned as to why his anjuman was almost never represented till that day, he said he and his other office bearers were too busy. And yet this delegate criticized the larger anjumans for not giving the smaller ones a chance to speak.

Also, many of the other anjumans send delegates who may not be the decision-makers of their respective communities. Hence they are not confident of participating. Bombay and Delhi always attend in full force with their top people and Bombay and Delhi also do nearly all the work.

The October meeting saw the largest gathering of anjumans for which the energetic secretary of the Federation is no doubt greatly responsible. The meeting witnessed a maturing of the all-India body. When the delicate and controversial issue of adoption was raised, there was apprehension all

round. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet made clear its intention to steamroll the Bombay Samast Anjuman resolution through and a BPP trustee stated in no uncertain terms that if the resolution was not adopted, "it would be the death knell of the Federation." The debate proceeded, and at a critical juncture, the BPP chairman had to almost physically snatch the mike away from the Delhi Anjuman president. What was going to happen? Would Delhi walk out of the Federation the way Bombay did six years ago? No. The Delhi leader abstained from voting and the rest of the members voted the resolution through. Delhi did not cast a negative vote because the BPP wanted one voice on the issue of adoption. And Delhi accommodated.

The give-and-take, the deft handling of proceedings by the BPP chairman and the Federation secretary kept proceedings on an even keel. The delegates voted on hosting the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress. They looked for constructive things to do. They worked democratically.

The criticism launched against the Federation members that all they are interested in is travelling at the expense of their anjumans and wining and dining is totally unfounded. Delegates sat through two rather gruelling days in Delhi's sweltering October heat, often with the air coolers turned off. Several travelled by second class train to Delhi while others paid for the trip out of professional expenses, tying up the Federation work with other business. They gave up their weekend and they did it because they were concerned about their community.

If communities get the institutions they deserve, then both the community and the Federation appear to be doing well by each other.

our population in Bombay, Poona and Surat is one with the decision of the Samast Anjuman. Think of nearly 80,000 Parsis in India who are united in this approach."

Keki Gandhi maintained that the Federation should recommend to all Parsi Anjumans and Parsi Zoroastrian individuals in India that they adopt only a Parsi child. "A non-Parsi child adopted by a Parsi can receive the inheritance but not the privileges of our religious institutions governed by our trust laws." As a second step he recommended that the Federation appeal for more time till they could approach the government with a united stand. "This is a more effective and united way," he said.

While Surat, Poona and Madras endorsed Desai's resolution, tempers rose, and Desai threatened, "If we are not of one voice on this resolution, ladies and gentlemen, it might lead to the death knell of the Federation again." Looking out at the sudden thunderstorm that had broken outside, a welcome relief from the dry heat the city had earlier been subject to, Nargolwala commented, "Even the gods are angry at the Adoption Bill."

While Nargolwala, Gandhi, Kanga and Desai all rose to speak at once, Golwalla wrested the mike from Nargolwala's hands saying, "I'm sorry I have to use my privileges as president... The Adoption Bill has been publicized and I do not want to postpone this issue." After further argument on whose resolution should be put to vote first, members voted first on Gandhi's resolution and then on Desai's, and Golwalla declared, "Mr Erach Desai's resolution is passed by a thumping majority."

Nargolwala abstained from voting on Desai's resolution. "Whatever the majority," he said, "I will stand behind it." In his summing up that evening he said, "The Parsi Punchayet felt that its credibility and that of the Federation was at stake. I agree that it is better to speak with one voice though it be a falsetto, than not to speak at all."

Dr Russi D. Anklesaria of Calcutta asked a pertinent question: "If they (the government) refuse once again, will that be the final nail in the coffin?" Desai replied, "We are hoping against hope that they will listen to the Parsis and exclude them also."

Amelioration of priests

In order to improve the quality of service of our priests, as well as their social

status, Peshotan Nargolwala, member of a working group to help mobeds, submitted a 10-point programme on which there was unanimous consensus. Four of the recommendations were adopted as declarations of intent. They include: free medical aid for mobeds and their dependants, free education for children of mobeds upto the university level, an ad hoc grant of Rs 5,000 when a mobed wishes to marry and settle down, and a 10 percent reservation in housing allot-



Golwalla (left) with Hidayatullah and other guests

ment for practising mobeds. The Federation proposed that they be implemented from the beginning of next year.

The report also recommends that "every mobed whose earnings are less than Rs 800 per month will receive an ad hoc grant of Rs 1,000 per year." Rs 70,000 out of a total of Rs 100,000 earmarked for this purpose should be provided by the BPP. Another proposal was a pension cum gratuity plan for mobeds, and the provision of a monthly stipend for students of the Athornan Madressa, Dadar, who agree to take up full time mobedi. This stipend is already being given to seven students out of the 40 at the madressa but as Peshotan Nargolwala says, "Frankly we don't need money right now, we need the boys."

The 'paramobed' scheme which proposes the training of behdins to perform certain religious ceremonies, has the "approval of Dastur Firoze Kotwal," Nargolwala said. He felt that the services of paramobeds could be used to solve mobed problems. Nagpur for example, has one panthaki, one mobed who has resigned and another who is threatening to resign. "So why not think in terms of a behdin who performs religious ceremonies, excluding some like lagans and navjotes?" he asked. "The Bombay Parsi Punchayet should use its good offices with the Cama Athornan Institute and Athornan Madressa of Dadar for

the training of such paramobeds," notes Nargolwala's project report.

"There are many who say that as long as the panthaki system exists, mobeds cannot be helped, (but)...you can't stop the system, just as you can't stop the dowry system. We have to find a solution to the mobed problem within these parameters."

"It should be the policy of the leading punchayets in a zone to support the smaller, less affluent units in the surrounding areas," notes the report. "If we cover the needs of Bombay, we have met with the requirements of 2/3 of the Zoroastrian population of India—a unique achievement."

To finance these schemes Nargolwala suggested that a higher price could be charged for the BPP's housing scheme, and the profits given over to the punchayet for mobed welfare, among other things. "If you give up this opportunity, another will not come," he said. "Please nurse this golden goose."

Nargolwala noted that the reportage on the efforts of the working group for mobeds to help Parsi priests, ('The Resurgence of the Federation', *Parsiana*, July 1983) brought in two donations worth Rs 4,800 from Canada in support of the cause.

Commenting on the BPP's efforts towards education, Guzder, chairman of the Higher Education Committee said that there are 11 associate trusts which offer scholarships to students. The R. D. Sethna Trust Fund for example, gives Rs 25 lakhs a year for education but the problem here is that these amounts are extended as loans while the Punchayet's efforts though modest, varying from Rs 5,000 to 10,000, are free. A. B. Sarkari of the BPP, further states that in the current academic year, the BPP gifted Rs 2,55,000 to 50 students for higher studies abroad, and loaned them Rs. 1,20,000. Besides, Rs 1,80,000, was given to 382 Parsi students for college studies in India. The Pirojsha Godrej Trust Funds are very liberal in granting scholarships, said Guzder, and Pesi Nargolwala said that the Iranian Zoroastrian Association gives one lakh a year for education, 60 percent of the beneficiaries being Parsis, the rest Iranis.

Nargolwala commented on the importance of "contact between supply and demand," and said that a booklet which provides statistics on the facilities available for students should be distributed to all the anjumans. Besides, Gandhi in Delhi and A. B. Sarkari at the Parsi Punchayet in Bombay could be the

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two points of reference for all students who seek educational aid.

The question of education abroad raised comments on the number of students who do not return to India after completing their studies. Fifty percent of the students who go abroad do not return, said Golwalla, and of these at least 30 percent marry outside the community. This September the BPP set up a matrimonial bureau which will help those young boys settled abroad who come to India looking for suitable brides, but have to return, eventually marrying outside the community.

Decongest Bombay

At the meeting in May it had been decided to appoint a panel of Parsi industrialists and bankers who would offer assistance and data guidance to potential Parsi entrepreneurs, and though the panel has not yet been constituted, Golwalla promised that it would soon be. Kanga reported that several state governments are giving new entrepreneurs incentives to start industries in certain specified zones and that some spadework should be done in order to find out more about this. This is an opportunity to decongest Bombay. "The Parsi Punchayet with all its resources can put up (only) 1200 flats—1200 miserable flats—and I have been trying to persuade Parsis that there is a civilized area outside Bombay," said Kanga exasperatedly, recounting an incident about a young Parsi with a wife and young child who, for lack of accommodation, shifted from sanatorium to sanatorium, sometimes sleeping in their tempo. Kanga found him a job but when he asked him to get a transfer to a smaller place like Nagpur the wife reportedly asked, "Uncle, what will happen to my son's education?" He also said that of 100 respondents to a scheme for the development of in-

dustrialists, sponsored by A.R. Balsara, managing director of Balsara Hygiene Products Ltd, manufacturers of 'Promise' and 'Ace' toothpastes, not one was a Parsi.

Kanga felt that every anjuman should help two or three entrepreneurs to find a house in their city, sponsor them, and see that they are comfortable. The Bangalore Parsi Association is already helping newcomers with their schooling, employment problems etc. Every anjuman should appoint someone to find out the incentives offered by the government and communicate these to the Federation.

In fact the Federation has recommended that each anjuman nominate one person who will communicate with the Federation. There was also a proposal to set up a full-time secretariate so that Keki Gandhi, who shoulders every last responsibility cheerfully, is not the only one "left holding the baby." Peshotan Nargolwala volunteered his services to maintain liaison between Delhi and Bombay. Gandhi, who felt that a secretariate was not yet necessary emphasized that the Federation is a "thinking, planning, recommending body. The implementation of the projects must be done by the anjumans," in collaboration with the Federation. "Feedback (from anjumans) must come to us so that we can work effectively," Gandhi said.

"You should be more lenient with those who stray. A small community cannot afford to lose its adherence."

Hidayatullah's Address

On Saturday evening delegates and members of Delhi's Parsi community assembled in Bhiwandiwalla Hall to listen to vice-president M. Hidayatullah speak frankly on the problems of minorities in India. "I don't know how the minorities are going to get into the mainstream of national life," he said. "There is no solution except for a generous treatment of the minorities." He felt that the reservations for scheduled castes and tribes, though necessary, may result in a situation where the only available vacancies in education or employment in the next few years, would be reserved for them.

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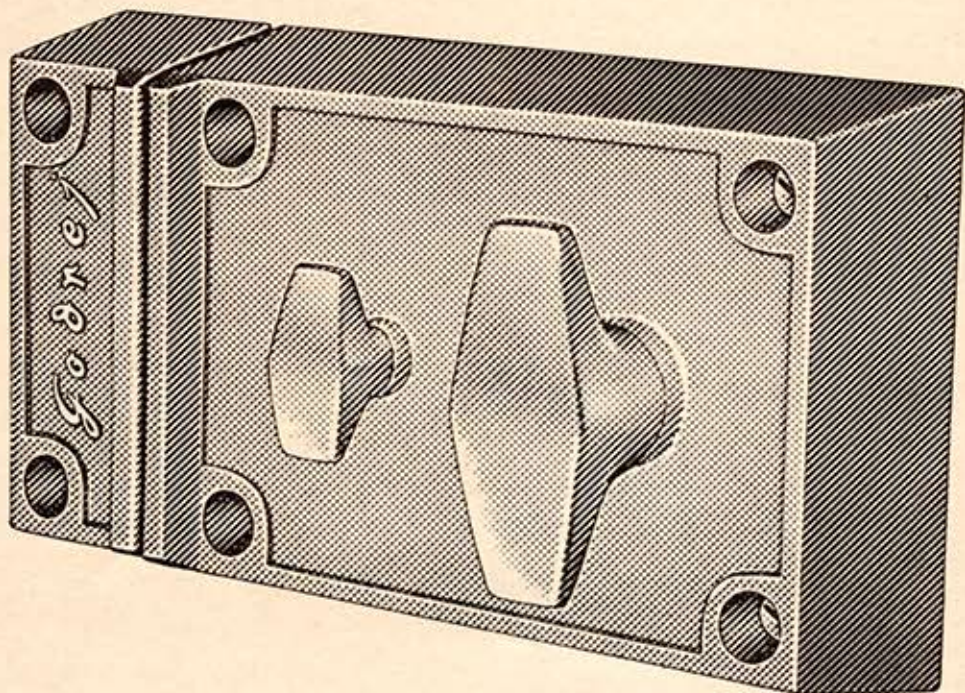
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Nargolwala in his introduction to the vice-president requested "some words of advice, some guidance on our problems," and Hidayatullah's message to the community was to "get going—have more hold on public affairs as the most advanced community in India," to "give the lead to other communities and be the spearhead because you have the capability to rise to the occasion." Referring to several distinguished Parsis including Justice D. P. Madon, the first Parsi to be elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court of India since independence, who was present that evening, Hidayatullah said, "These are the symbols of progress the Parsis have supplied and continue to supply. Unfortunately you get submerged, yet you make your mark."

Two years ago, when Hidayatullah inaugurated the tercentenary celebrations of the BPP, his advice to the community was—"Go forth and multiply," said Golwalla in his vote of thanks. This time the vice-president warned against an excess of orthodoxy. "You must think whether you should not be more lenient with those who stray. After all, a small community cannot afford to lose its

adherence...and it's a great shame if this community suffers for want of numbers." In conclusion he remarked, "I am very glad you have formed these anjumans and this Federation because that's the way to progress in this world."

Most of the delegates returned on Monday morning, while some stayed on to

Every anjuman should help two or three entrepreneurs to find a house in their city, sponsor them, and see that they are comfortable.

join a tour of the city, with its lingering air of history and old-world charm combined with smooth efficiency. And perhaps the feeling of fraternity, of purpose, of a beginning well made, which were apparent at this meeting, will linger until the Federation meets again in Calcutta in February.

Those attending the meeting included: Hoshang Debara, Agra; Merwan Mehta, Ahmednagar; Dr Ratan H. Sagar, Allahabad; Barjor K. Cavina, Ankleshwar; Minochehr B. Bharucha, Bhavnagar; Dr A.F. Golwalla, J.N. Guzder, E.B. Desai, J.G. Kanga, Bombay; Dr R.D. Anklesaria, Calcutta; Soli H. Mubarakai, Firoze Dara Vakil, Dahanu; S.D. Nargolwala, Keki J. Gandhi, Ms F.S. Variava, Rustom E. Daroga, Delhi; Naval B. Vakeel, B. Dittia, Hyderabad-Secunderabad; Dr Sohrab Kamdin, Jabalpur; Homi P. Bodhanvala, Jamshedpur; Ms Aban J. Satarawala, Jodhpur; M.K. Belgamvala, Ms Mani J. Clubwalla, Madras; Dinshaw F. Bapuna, Keki R. Bala, Nagpur; Bejoo R. Jilla, Nanded; Dinshaw S. Anklesaria, Poona; Ava Khullar, Satara; Minoo E. Pithavala, Zarin S. Amaria, Solapur; Maneck Gheyara, Dr Sam S. Bhaeca, Dr Minocher K. Contractor, Surat; Shavak F. Patel, Cashmera M. Bharucha, Vadodara; and Peshotan Nargolwala, Dr Hoshang Mehta, Professor N.F. Kaikobad and Jehangir R. Patel were invited to speak. The press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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Counselling, communication and community centres

"The tomorrow of the community depends on what we do today," said Professor Noshir F. Kaikobad, sociologist and president of the Maharashtra Council of Social Work who presented his report on the counselling of school children. "The long-term objective of the counselling service is to remove social, psychological and environmental impediments in the way of normal development of the child and to help him grow as an integrated personality," notes the project report. The social and emotional problems which cause potentially high achievers to give an average or below average performance must be diagnosed, and parents and teachers must be helped towards an understanding of the behavioural problems of children.

Problematic children may be restless or delinquent, rebellious or withdrawn, and this could be due to several reasons. "Sometimes it's over-protection, sometimes it's rejection, sometimes it's indifference. Sometimes it's family break-down, when theirs is not a home, just a house," Kaikobad said.

Professional social workers, specialized in psychiatric social work will undertake direct case work service and group work, under the guidance of a committee of direction. "A full-time counsellor may be able to provide... services to about 30-40 children by a combination of case work and group work service. If we include parents and teachers, who will have to be dealt with by the counsellor, the number of persons served will be 90 to 120 for each counsellor," according to the report which quotes the annual budget at Rs 48,600. "Consider this investment as investment in the future generation and then you will not try to equate the cost and the benefits," he said.

The Federation suggested that the Bombay and Poona Parsi Punchayats which together represent 75-80 percent of the population start this project, and that the income from the funds left over from the Third World Zoroastrian Congress be used for projects sponsored by the Federation, like this one, while the corpus of the fund remains with the BPP.

While Kaikobad dealt with emotional and social guidance, Dr Hoshang Mehta, who was associated

with the BPP's vocational guidance bureau for several years, said that counselling should also include career guidance, which is "guidance for the life beyond."

Vocational guidance can be given at any stage, Mehta said, and guidance depends on the kind of development the child has had. While development can be physical, mental, emotional, social and personal, vocational development is the "development of the individual with regard to occupation." During the stage of growth, the child merely gropes in the "world of work" until he reaches the stage of establishment, when he decides on his life's work. He grows in the job in the stage of maintenance, and then sets in the stage of decline. "Vocational guidance ensures that this working development runs smoothly and efficiently. We want maturity in vocational development just as we want maturity in social and mental development," he emphasized.

Parents have an important role to play in the vocational development of their child. A parent must accept that his child is a separate entity, with a separate genetic composition and life circumstances, and that he is free to choose his own career. But there should be a balance between freedom and discipline. Parents must talk to their children, keeping in mind the fact that the child lives in a changed environment, subject to many and varied influences.

Kaikobad, who also spoke on community centres as aids to social development said that participation in community life is important and if a community suffers from low or negative participation, newly emerging needs remain unrecognized or if recognized, seldom met. Social development was defined as "awareness on the part of the average Parsi of the situation in the community, the desire to do something about it, and the opportunity to do something about it." What is needed is a happy balance between socio-economic development. Small social issues should become crucial and relevant to every member. The community centre will be effective, he said, in making people feel that they matter, that they are responsible.

A community centre must divide basic functions like the management of nurseries or creches among its members so that users of the service become co-producers of the service. But there is a need for a qualified community organizer, a multi-purpose worker who will mobilize his community and foster collaboration between communities. "Parsis have a tendency to construct a small circle around themselves," according to Kaikobad.

Gandhi, the honorary secretary of the Federation, suggested that certain clubs which reserve membership for residents of their own colony should be thrown open for membership to the entire neighbouring community. These centres can also be an effective means of bringing young people together and it was suggested that smaller anjumans organize dances, dramatic societies etc. for the purpose.

The role of newsletters in furthering contact, communication and participation within the community goes largely unrecognized in India said Jehangir Patel, editor of *Parsiana* who spoke on 'effective communication through newsletters and other media'. Zoroastrians who settled abroad however, established newsletters "before they established agiaries and other institutions...they felt a need to communicate with each other." He remarked that *Parsiana* was able to report on Zoroastrians abroad, because they sent in various newsletters but "when will we get a chance to be able to write about the anjumans in India?" With changes in technology, newsletters are within easy reach of individuals.

An anjuman that does not have a newsletter has a vital part of its activities missing, and may be functioning at only 50-75 percent of its efficiency. They are deprived of a means of publicizing their problems, appealing for funds or reporting their achievements. "When people don't know, they don't care." In reply to a question as to what an anjuman newsletter could write about, Patel said, "A newsletter reflects the activities of the anjuman. If it is a question of no news to publish, it could be that the anjuman is only looking after the trusts and funds."

While Merwan Mehta from Ahmednagar made a commitment to publish a quarterly newsletter, Shrivastav Nargolwala stated that the Federation's bulletin should be revived and made into a "scholarly journal."

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Of Anjumans past and present

Twenty-one representatives from even the smallest Zoroastrian settlements like Satara, where there are only two Parsi families, attended the meeting, charting the history of their anjumans and community institutions, and pointing out their achievements and problems.

Certain anjumans like Delhi claimed that they had few problems. Delhi's community numbering 1500-2000 was described as "united, homogenous, with no squabbles and no recriminations." Nargolwala president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman and Trust reported that their dasturs were among the best paid, that their dharamshala was maintained as a "model dharamshala," and that Delhi proposes to start a housing colony for which the initiative was taken not by the anjuman but by "outsiders." "Whenever people ask the trustees what they are doing, my reply is, 'What are you doing'" said Nargolwala.

Calcutta, with about 500 Parsi families, has an abundance of community institutions including the Parsi Club, the Amateur Dramatic Club, a Stree Mandal, a Youth League and a Physical Culture Institute which all help make Calcutta "no satellite basking in the glories of the west coast." Like Poona, which now has the second largest Zoroastrian population (8,000), their biggest problem is housing. But the Calcutta Parsis have already completed construction of a community hall at Chowringhee, which is to be extended to a commercial complex.

Nagpur's agiary and dharamshala, their representative said, "can compare with the best in the world," and "not a single Zoroastrian (in Nagpur) is unemployed or below the poverty line." Naval Vakeel of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad spoke with enthusiasm and pride of his 1400-strong community. Their ladies have organized 'Project self-help' for the employment of needy Parsi women, while their youth have done well in the field of sport, having represented India in the Asiad basketball team. Community prayers during *muktad* have proved popular in Hyderabad and have helped solve the problem of the unavailability of priests, he said.

But there are other anjumans not so well off. Many anjumans are watching the slow death of their institutions either because of a migration of population, or the unavailability of mobeds, *khandiyas*, in some cases vultures, and very often, funds. Agra's dharamshala is reportedly in a "precarious position" with "limited funds" and it

One *dokhma*, which has not been used for years, cannot be sold because the last surviving trustee insists that his body be placed within its confines.

seems that the occupation of the dharamshala has suffered as a result of the daily tourist service from Delhi to Agra. At Ankleshwar, where 154 Parsis reside, and at Jhansi, there is no mobed. Ahmednagar, with 80 Parsis, has a panthaki who lives in nearby Poona and is therefore "not in a position to give good service." The Ahmednagar Anjuman plans a housing complex near the *dokhma* and has requested help for its organization.

The president of the Solapur Parsi Anjuman spoke at length on the "pathetic and unhygienic conditions prevailing at the *dokhma*." In the absence of the *khandiyas*, she said that young Zoroastrian boys carry the bodies to the Tower of Silence. Non-Zoroastrians are allowed for the *sezdo* in Solapur and even walk up to the *dokhma*. The representative of Vadodara (Baroda) said that one of their biggest problems is the increasing incidence of mixed marriages.

In Surat land is available in ample measure said Maneck Gheyara, president of the Surat Parsi Punchayet but, he lamented, "the punchayet encounters greatest difficulty in administration." Obstacles in administration are provided by way of the punchayet's constitution, government red-tapism and the restrictions of the donors themselves. "We spend half our day in Surat looking after government work," said Gheyara. "We have no time for samaj work." Gheyara also said regretfully, "All our institutions

which were well-financed...today are in a loss."

Gheyara referred to the valuable assets in Gujarat which lie unused for one reason or another. There is the case of one *dokhma*, situated in an industrially developed region, which has not been used for years but cannot be sold because the last surviving trustee insists that his body be placed within the confines of this very *dokhma*. He also blamed the priests for obstructing worthwhile projects and for creating disharmony.

Funds for education are sufficient in Surat and "no Parsi boy has to go without," but Billimora has a clause whereby only Parsi boys and not girls can receive aid. "Surat renders help to the entire community, even if they are not residents of Surat but they have to come to Surat," said Gheyara.

Referring to the problem of defunct anjumans and unused land, Gheyara said "In Surat there are *dokhmas* in the north, south, east and west but only one is being used." There is also a decline in the attendance and useage of Surat's 14 agiaries and two atash-behrams. In Khambat, he said, there is an agiary *makaan* and a *dokhma* but only two remaining Parsi inhabitants.

"I want the Federation to pass a resolution to have the right to take over defunct anjumans," said Gheyara, but a lot of legal implications will have to be dealt with before the Federation assumes this privilege. A beginning will have to be made with the collection of data, so as to ascertain the problems and enable the Federation to take the lead. The exhaustive questionnaires which have been sent to all the anjumans, and which are to be distributed to all resident Zoroastrian families will help in recording data which will pinpoint the community's needs.

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Fifty Glorious Years in Showbiz



For 50 glorious, history-laden years a cavalcade of some of the world's best classics in motion pictures and stage shows have gone to make the Regal Theatre in South Bombay a hallmark in the entertainment business.

Occupying a prominent spot in Museum Square, the theatre stands majestically, flanked by the ornate old Council Hall on one side and the once fashionable Majestic Hotel on the other, its neon-lit marquee proclaiming the running engagement.

Regal Theatre was opened with elaborate fanfare and ceremony on October 14, 1933 by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir Frederick Sykes in the presence of the city's elite, with the screening of *The Devil's Brother* starring the inimitable comedians Laurel and Hardy.

The plot for the theatre was the old Saluting Battery near the Gateway of India. From here guns thundered welcomes and farewells to royalty, viceroys and governors in the past. It was acquired by Globe Theatres (Pvt) Ltd in 1932; and a year later, Bombay's first luxury theatre adorned the place.

The building was designed by a British architect, Charles F. Stevens,



Top: Framji Sidhwa, the founder of Regal

and the magnificent interior decor was conceived by the well-known Czech designer, Prof Karl Schara. Schara introduced his advanced cubist motifs which lent a glow of brilliance to the auditorium as the lights came slowly on, creating the illusion of a rising sun.

By the standards of those days, it was the largest auditorium in the east. Western Electric installed the superb sound system, while Ernemann and Zeiss Ikon, two of the best names in the world of optics, equipped the projection room.

Draped in the mist of nostalgia are memories of another day. The elegant frosted glass lamps adorned the walls of the theatre. The palest of jade green and the lightest of orange hues shaded the cubist forms. The shimmer of chiffon, tafetta and georgette, as the ladies traipsed into its portals smelling sweetly of 'Shalimar', was heady. It was a leisurely era when relaxation was truly enjoyed and not artificially laboured.

With the passage of time, there were innovations and renovations. It was the first theatre to be air-conditioned, the first to introduce neon signs and the first to have its own underground car-park.

It was in the fifties that the Regal began to acquire a new look, but without changing the old-world facade. Gone were the frosted lamps, making way for fluorescent illumination, and the ornate cubist motifs gave place to functionally simple panelling and walls.

After the 35mm format lost favour with film-makers abroad, Regal incorporated the cinemascope equipment. Projection equipment was modernized and the acoustical paraphernalia was remodified to bring in the thunder of stereophonic sound and 70mm projection.

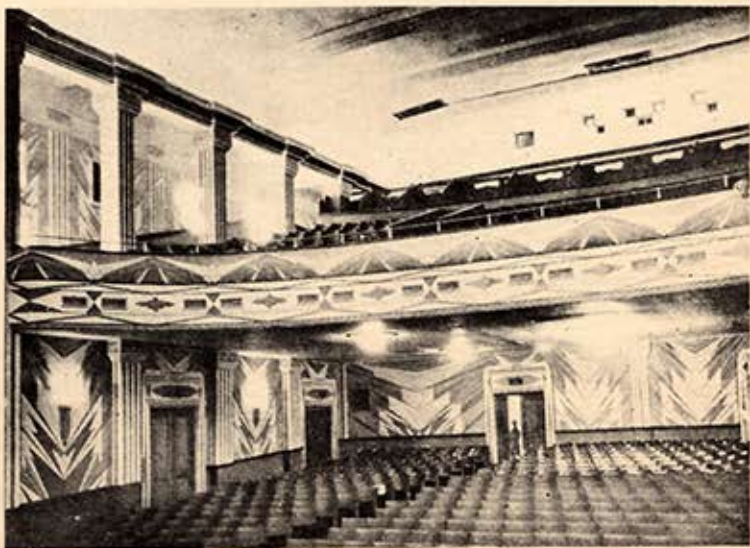
The promoters of the theatre were great believers in the art of advertising. Prominent companies were allowed display advertisements on the screen which were artistic and drew murmurs of appreciation from the audience. Furthermore, space was hired out for a display of products in the foyer of the theatre.

Current releases at the theatre were publicized in a unique way. Extravagant floats on trucks paraded the city streets to attract audiences to the theatre—a far cry from today's long queues at ticket windows and black-marketing.

Globe Theatre itself, has a



Hoarding at Regal of 'The Adventures of Robin Hood'



The interior of Regal in 1933

fascinating background. In 1913, Framji Sidhwa broke into the business as managing partner of the Royal Cinema de Paris in Rangoon, when the bioscope had just made its appearance. Few however, believed at the time that it could present a serious challenge to the stage. Framji did however, foresee its emergence as a vital medium for future entertainment, and decided to exploit its potential.

With that end in view he teamed up with K.A. Kooka in 1915 to establish the Globe Cinema Company in Rangoon and soon set up a chain of theatres in principal Burmese cities.

Globe then extended its activities to India in 1922, and by 1923 the company was converted into Globe

Bombay.

Today, the pioneers have left for their heavenly abode. But the pioneering spirit still continues in the younger Sidhwa brothers Maneck and Dhunji, joint managing directors of the company operating in collaboration with the illustrious son of Kooka, S.K. Kooka, popularly known as Bobby, the man responsible for giving Air India's Maharajah international recognition. Bobby is the company's director in charge of publicity.

To mark its golden jubilee, the management of the Regal decided to screen Columbia's delightful musical *Annie*.

The list of outstanding films exhibited at the Regal is long. Among them are such greats as *Queen Christina*, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *David Copperfield*, *Les Miserables*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Modern Times*, *Monsieur Verdoux*, *For Whom the Bells Toll*, *Hamlet*, *Red Shoes*, *All the King's Men*, *Richard the Third*, *Psycho*, *The Great Escape*, *The Bible*, *Anne of a Thousand Days*, *Airport*, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Kramer vs Kramer* and *Enter the Dragon*.

The Regal was the venue of a string of musicals, which now seem to have gone out of fashion. Among the prominent ones were *Mikado*, *Down Argentine Way*, *Three Coins in the Fountain*, *Sound of Music*, *West Side Story*, *Porgy and Bess*.

James Bond fans must know that except for the first in the series, *Dr No*, almost all the others were first released at this theatre.

The shimmer of chiffon, taffeta and georgette, as the ladies traipsed into its portals smelling sweetly of 'Shalimar', was heady.

Theatres Ltd to set up or appropriate a chain of cinema houses in the country, beginning with the opening of the Globe in Calcutta.

In a relatively brief span of ten years since, Globe Theatres covered several principal cities of India: A Globe in Bangalore in 1927, the takeover of Gaiety Theatre in 1928, renaming it Capitol, in Bombay, setting up of a New Globe in Rangoon the same year, followed by the Roxy in Madras in 1931 and finally the Regal in 1933 in

An elaborate float used to advertise 'Moon over Miami'



The Hayakawa girls dancing the 'Awa Odori', an old Japanese folk dance

It is a matter of pride that the first cinemascope film *The Robe*, and the Todd-AO 70mm showpiece, *Cleopatra* were released in Bombay at the Regal.

One of the most outstanding masterpieces in film history, Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* was a landmark in the history of the theatre. DeMille incidentally, was a good friend of Framji Sidhwa, and sent him special greetings on the silver jubilee run of *The Ten Commandments*, and also on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the theatre in 1958.

There have been several releases of first class Hindi films at the theatre, including *Pakeezah*, *Shatranj ke Khilari* and *Insaaf ka Tarazu*.

The Attenborough classic on the Father of the Nation, *Gandhi*, was one of the rare English films which had a silver jubilee run at the theatre. It was this film which encouraged the theatre to make legal history as well.

Regal is also linked in the minds of old-timers, with some memorable stage shows. Among those who made their appearance on the stage were world-renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, and well-known artists like Marian Anderson, Claudia Arias, Rudolf Serkin, Uday Shankar, Ravi Shankar and the Carroll Wallace Folies of Tokyo.

The Bombay Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jules Craen and violinist Mehli Mehta, father of the world famous conductor Zubin Mehta, were frequent performers at the Regal. The spectacular magic shows of the late Prof. P. C. Sorcar were also staged at the theatre.

Profits were not the only motive of the Globe Theatre management. Customer service was of vital concern. But more important, it had a commitment to society and social welfare. Many were the worthy charitable causes to which it readily responded, a

trait inherited from the founder, Framji Sidhwa, who readily donated and lent his theatre without any charge.

Among the causes to which the theatre gave a big hand were the Quetta Earthquake Relief Fund, which netted the enormous sum, for those days, of Rs 60,000, a Nite with the Stars which netted Rs 75,000 for the Kashmir Relief Fund, a show sponsored by the Bharatiya Arogya Nidhi which fetched Rs 2 lakhs for tuberculosis patients, and the *Gandhi* premiere which earned Rs 5 lakhs in aid of the National Association for the Blind. Besides, there were innumerable charity premieres to help several social and religious organizations.

For a number of years, the Regal was the venue of memorable events, including the annual presentation of the Filmfare Awards for exceptional performances in Motion Picture Arts and Science. In 1961, the late President Nasser of Egypt was at hand to give away the Filmfare Award, then called *Clare* awards after the well-known film



Regal is linked in the minds of old-timers with memorable stage-shows... some of the outstanding masterpieces in film history...and a string of musicals.

critic Clare Mendonca.

There were not a few famous political personalities who appeared on the Regal stage for various functions. The late Jawaharlal Nehru himself presided at the premiere of the film *The Story of Kashmir*. The late President Rajendra Prasad, too, was among the distinguished visitors to the theatre. The Dalai Lama saw his first motion picture, *Great Day in the Morning* at the Regal. In the 1930s, Rabindranath Tagore appeared on the stage to recite some of his immortal poems. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, too, is among the dignitaries to visit the Regal.

Many theatres have come up in Bombay in the years since, maybe bigger, maybe more modern, but the Regal, under the watchful management of the Sidhwa brothers, continues to maintain the service their forbears rendered to patrons, to ensure that the show goes on with the traditional Globe Theatre's eye for class in whatever is projected.

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Dharamshalas and Sanatoriums under Zoroastrian Trusts

Hormazdyar S. Dalal

Our forefathers had admirable foresight. They had vision. They had earned wealth as fruit of their adventurous spirit. And, they used it for the welfare of the community. They also had sympathy for mankind as a whole and rushed help whenever and wherever calamities occurred. But their catholicity did not deter them from providing dharamshalas, sanatoriums and convalescent homes for the young or the old and the sick of our community.

In Bombay alone, there are three sanatoriums, Framji Dinsha Petit, Sorabji Byramji Bhabha and Merwanjee Framjee Panday. Unfortunately, these sanatoriums are not used today for the specific purpose for which they were built. In the context of present day life, they have primarily become transit camps for Parsees without permanent homes, and also for the victims of yearly house-collapse calamities. The young, the old and sick therefore, have to look elsewhere for rest and recreation.

The Petit and the Bhabha sanatoriums are, by and large, well looked after. They have beautiful surroundings. Not only that, the Bhabhas have recently built another big sanatorium, adjacent to the old one—perhaps to reach the growing needs of the members of the community.

But the story of the Pandey sanatorium is very distressing. The place opposite the Colaba sea-face, is to say the least, uninhabitable. It has been grossly neglected over the years, and lacks basic amenities. The registration number of the trust is C-14. And as per the Directory of Public Trusts 1979 the corpus of the trust is Rs 6.93 lakhs. The annual income by way of interest is Rs 3.03 lakhs. The trust also had a Parsee dharamshala at Charni Road. Though an old and not much cared for place, it did serve the community so far. Early this year it was pulled down with a view to building a multi-storey

structure in its place. The dharamshala is expected to be a part of it. But the work at present is held up because of some reason.

In almost every part of the country our philanthropic elders have provided the community with dharamshalas and sanatoriums. The most conspicuous example is the Parsee rest house at New Delhi. Every Parsee Zoroastrian family cannot afford a five-star or even a three-star hotel in New Delhi, where the minimum rates per day are between

In almost every part of the country our philanthropic elders have provided the community with dharamshalas and sanatoriums.

Rs 300 and Rs 500 for a single bed only. While the maximum that a person would have to pay in the Delhi rest house would be about Rs 50 per head, with other amenities and good food. The place is located centrally in pleasant surroundings. At the same time it is managed excellently.

Nagpur is another place where the Parsee dharamshala is neat and clean and, until a few years ago, well looked after. Not far from the Nagpur station, the location is good, opposite a lake, and is a blessing for Parsee tourists visiting Nagpur, especially business representatives from Maharashtra and Vidharbha.

(The honorary secretary of the Nagpur Parsee Anjuman, Keki R. Bala has contested Dalal's last remark and noted that "the Parsee dharamshala is not only well maintained but very well managed...under the supervision of a young and energetic manager Ms Nargis F. Karbhay—Editor)

But against these two random examples two other places come to mind—Madras in Tamil Nadu and

Rajkot in Gujarat. A few years ago, being his first visit, this writer had to check into the Parsee dharamshala, Madras. The picture that has stuck in the mind is similar to one that was read in a Charles Dickens novel. Was it a dharamshala or a warehouse? That is the question that has been lingering still, even after a lapse of about ten years.

Rajkot is a centrally located city in Saurashtra, humming with business. It is very convenient for commercial representatives to cover the whole area. The dharamshala there, is situated in Sadar. Though an old-fashioned structure it has open surroundings. But it was very callously managed.

Udvada, Navsari and Surat in Gujarat also have their quota of Parsee dharamshalas. But the one at Udvada, the Petit Dharamshala, requires to be renovated, and the sooner the better. Ideally located near the station, with very good amenities, the dharamshala serves innumerable visitors to Iranshah.

So also the Ookerji Dharamshala at Surat. But with better amenities and an overdue new look, the dharamshala is bound to attract more Parsee passengers. The Surat Parsee Panchayet can perhaps help in this direction.

Navsari is lucky to have the Jamshed Baug. The place remains fully booked round the year and has an excellent manager. But it would further help the community if the manager had the power, in emergencies, to release the permanently reserved top-floor rooms.

Lack of funds?

Arguments are forwarded that the present funds are not enough to maintain these institutions. Are they totally valid? The answer would be in the negative. What is needed is not funds, but the will to generate funds. Our community is very generous. For any good cause, especially for the maintenance of our institutions, funds

could be generated: a) by an appeal to the community and b) by imagination, zeal and feelings for an institution.

With vision and a sincere approach funds could be had for the decent maintenance of these sanatoriums and dharamshalas however old they might be. In a majority of cases basically very little or no effort is being made to invest the available funds properly and thereby to generate sufficient income from them.

A Study by Z.C.D.I.

A careful study of Parsee trusts and properties by the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute has revealed that over the years these trusts have not realized more than 5 percent

What is essential is the day-to-day care of the property.

interest. True, in some cases the corpus itself is not very impressive, against the value of the rupee today. Even then, with an imaginative investment of the funds on hand, these institutions could be managed better. Not only that, they could even be developed properly with an eye on the present market. They are very useful institutions. They have been serving the community for the last several decades, and could still serve it for another fifty years or more, if they are preserved with genuine feeling.

Maintenance

What is essential is the day-to-day care of the property. Once allowed to deteriorate, it is bound to go to pieces, gradually. But, if looked after properly with timely repairs, white wash etc., it would tax the trust less, and would last long. Even some of the regular clients would be happy to donate sums for its upkeep. Not only that, for satisfactory service, they would be willing to pay reasonably higher charges. With the rising prices of all commodities, the daily rates for these places have to be upgraded to make them economically viable.

Sanatoriums

Unlike dharamshalas, sanatoriums play a more specific role. They are essentially for health and recreation. Man does not live by bread alone; he also needs rest now and then. His fami-

ly needs a change of climate and surroundings: therefore, the existence of sanatoriums at Uran, Dahanu, Khandala, Matheran and Deolali, to mention a few. All these are comparatively healthier places and Parsee families, especially the middle class families, flock there every summer or winter.

Deolali.

Take for instance, Deolali. It is an ideal place for recreation. Deolali's climate invites one all the year round. There are three sanatoriums. The most well-known is the Bahadurji Sanatorium with about 30 blocks, old and new. To quote the Directory of Public Trusts 1979 again, the corpus of the trust, against the registration number C-898, is Rs 5.83 lakhs. But the yearly income recorded, from investments, is only Rs 1.16 lakhs. The sanatorium remains almost full, both during the summer and winter months. It can serve still better if the rules are less rigid and the approach to the clients more pleasant. The situation of the sanatorium is also ideal. Why then can it not be maintained well? The furniture is too old, the walls need white wash. The surroundings too require constant attention. With little more pains and sensitiveness to the noble, charitable approach of the late Dr Bahadurji, the sanatorium can surely play a more constructive role, and generate a higher income.

Daruwalla and Cooper sanatoriums

Against this, the two other sanatoriums in Deolali, the Daruwalla and the Nusserwanji Jamshedji Cooper, are in declining stages. Their location could perhaps be responsible for their present fate. The Bahadurji Sanatorium is on the main Deolali-Nasik Road, while these two are rather in the interior, with less transport and other facilities. Besides, their corpus appear to be very meagre. It is doubtful, but the Directory of Public Trusts 1979, shows the corpus of the Daruwalla sanatorium at Rs 2.5 thousand only, while the annual income shown is Rs 5.6 thousand. Could the corpus be 2.5 lakhs? Whatever the case may be, the income recorded is again too low. Should it be then interpreted that the sanatorium is not in demand despite the fact that the Bahadurji Sanatorium has an excess clientele? The hotels are costlier and the private guest houses have only a room or two to spare.

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The Netarwallas have only five rooms. There are therefore surplus passengers. Apart from long term visitors there are many more, mostly youngsters, who come to Deolali for a day or two. It is a happy-go-lucky lot which looks for decent food and a clean place to sleep. Why then can the Daruwalla Sanatorium, or for that matter the Cooper Sanatorium not canvass for this excess influx?

The corpus of the Nusserwanji Jamshedji Cooper trust is Rs 33.8 thousand. The annual income is Rs 3.8 thousand. If the figures are correctly recorded with the Charity Commissioner, Maharashtra, the return from

With the rising prices of all commodities, the daily rates for these places have to be upgraded to make them economically viable.

the investment is definitely not enough to maintain the sanatorium primly. Nor can it run the sanatorium. But the income from the passengers can help prevent the decay.

Vigorous advance publicity, fund raising activities, initiative and a constructive approach can help prevent these two Deolali sanatoriums from extinction. Deolali needs them and so does the community.

Tithal Sanatorium

Nearer Bombay, Tithal seashore is beautiful for rest and recreation. A sanatorium was built there in the first decade of the present century. And it was registered on November 10, 1911. The trust is known as The Tithal Parsee Sanatorium. Its registration number is C-288. The corpus of the trust on page 549 of the Directory of Public Trusts Maharashtra 1979 is Rs 44.5 thousand, against which, the return shown is only Rs 1,000. Again, a case of very poor investment. The sanatorium today is in a dilapidated condition and requires extensive repairs costing about a lakh of rupees. It has not been in use for the last several years. It consists of three buildings, eight blocks. Each block is furnished and has two large rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. The toilets outside the blocks have collapsed.

The land covering the sanatorium is

about seven acres—six acres and thirty-four and a quarter gunthas to be exact. This is a very precious asset of the community having a unique situation. It is rather distressing that such a fine property has been allowed to degenerate. Four of the six trustees of the sanatorium are from Bombay, having prominent status in our society. They can collect rupees one lakh almost effortlessly. The question is why have they been watching this decay so passively?

The remaining two trustees are from Valsad. They were appointed only two years ago, as per the managing trustee's letter of April 29, 1981. But they are still not sure whether their names have been finally approved by the Charity Commissioner. They are thus ineffective.

Under such circumstances, the valuable property of the trust is in danger of being lost to the community. Sooner or later the land would attract the government's attention, or that of the squatters, and the community would be poorer by the loss.

The examples given are not conclusive. They are only a few instances of good and poor administration. What is required is a very healthy approach to these problems.

In a place like Deolali, other communities also have their sanatoriums. They are prospering. Their upkeep is good. Why is it then difficult for our community to preserve our institutions.

Not funds, administration

The answer lies elsewhere. Not funds, but weaker links in the administration of a trust or trusts are principally responsible for the present plight of these institutions. A study conducted, again by the Zoroastrian Community Development Institute, some time ago, has exposed some of the drawbacks.

(a) Only one trustee out of four or five manages a trust or even a group of trusts. The remaining ones are silent observers.

(b) Meetings of the trustees are rare. The work is mainly conducted by circulars and decisions taken by only one trustee meet with total approval. Even cheques are signed without queries.

(c) Some trusts do not have either minute books or files of applications for monetary or other help.

(d) Several trusts cannot afford to maintain even a skeleton staff for day-to-day administration, which involves

accounts, income tax, banks, liaison with the Charity Commissioner's office etc.

The load therefore, (rests with) a part-time, poorly paid accountant or clerk. The result thereby, is either litigation or continuous bickerings.

A Surat Agiary

The Institute has on its record a few cases of this nature. To quote only one, an agiary in Surat had about five trustees. But for the last few years, only one of them has been in the picture. Only he is known to the mobeds and other staff of the agiary. They are not even aware of the existence of other trustees because they had left the administration completely in the hands of their colleague. They had signed cheques and documents only 'in good faith'. Considerable damage has been done. Now, two of the trustees have been trying their best to find a solution, to repair it.

(Since the publication of this article, Darabsha Mistry, managing trustee of the Said Pura Agiary, Surat, has writ-

What is needed is not funds, but the will to generate funds.

ten to Dalal about his efforts to renovate the agiary completely and to augment the funds)

Convalescent Homes

Finally, some observations on the convalescent homes in Bombay. The Bandra Parsi Convalescent Home and Shirinbai Cama Convalescent Home have served their purpose admirably in the past. It is time now to think over their utility afresh. It is not suggested that such beneficial institutions should be closed down; but certainly they should not be allowed to become weather-beaten. In the context of the acute shortage of housing, these exquisite sites could be used for more practical purposes. A low cost housing complex with independent wings for the 'homes' for the Parsees, would be in the larger interests of the community and more beneficial too.

The future does not look very bright. A dynamic approach could alone save the Parsee Zoroastrian trusts and properties for future generations.

Godrej heads Extractors

Leading industrialist **Adi B. Godrej** was elected president of the 423 member Solvent Extractors Association of India for the year 1983-84. The association established in the year



Godrej: Successful industrialist

1963, "to foster the development of the solvent extraction industry in India," deals with the extraction of oil from oil-bearing material by a solvent process.

According to the association's write-up, the "industry has achieved phenomenal progress,...(and) in view of the scarcity of vegetable oils and the requirement of the extractions for cattle feed," is expected to progress from year to year. The industry also earns valuable foreign exchange from the export of deoiled cakes and brans. In 1981-82, 33 crores worth of deoiled rice bran was exported, the major markets being Singapore, Holland, the UK, West Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, the USSR and the German Democratic Republic.

Godrej is at present director of several organizations including Godrej Soaps Ltd, Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Co., Teesta Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., Sikkim, and Vegoils Ltd. He is also president of the Central Organisation for Oil Industry and Trade.

Right: Conference room and office interior designed by Rummy Shroff

A designing man

"Good design makes good economic sense for any business, since it steps up work efficiency, creates a conducive work atmosphere and projects a favourable image to the public and clients. Too often an image is thought of in merely cosmetic terms: a trendy new logotype for the firm's writing paper or a flashy new reception area. What professional designers aim at is the creation and projection of an image which will reflect the true character of the organization by means of a comprehensive design package," states **Rummy Shroff**, 38, a well-known interior designer and architect of Bombay, who specializes in designing office interiors.

According to Shroff, media oriented businesses such as advertising agencies have long recognized the value of good

design and he feels particularly encouraged that non-media businesses are beginning to become design oriented as well. "We have now reached a stage when even the more low key, traditional organizations such as banks have begun to call on the services of professionals to plan their work environments."

If in most other professions the biggest challenge is in getting the first assignment, in interior decoration it is doubly difficult "as in this profession you have to deal with other people's money and it takes time to generate trust," warns Shroff. And he should know because before bagging his first and biggest assignment—designing Air-India's shopping complex in 1972—he had a hard time getting work and often had to be prepared to even forego his fees, recalls Shroff who got into interior designing by sheer accident due to the difficulties he encountered in establishing himself as an architect in Bombay.



Armed with a master's degree in architecture from Michigan university in the US and three years' experience with the well-known firm Skidmore Owings and Merrill Architects in New York, Shroff launched his firm, Talati, Shroff and Associates in 1971 in partnership with a friend. Over the next quinquennium he steadily built up a reputation as an interior designer and in 1977 Romy Shroff and Associates, Architects was incorporated. Today a long list of top business houses figure in his roster of clients and he has eight qualified young architects working under him.

Emphasizing the fact that good design indicates that an organization "cares about the people who deal with it and the people who work for it," Shroff feels that one of the most important things an interior designer can do is to create "good vibes," a positive, friendly and comfortable environment. However, striking a note of caution, Shroff says: "This demands a thorough investigation into the way an organization works; for design deals with people rather than with the application of some mysterious set of abstract principles. Good design is thorough and comprehensive—there is no question of hiding the bad side or of creating a front office-back office situation."

According to Shroff, many people are reluctant to approach interior designers because they are afraid that they will be dictated to and that a style or fashion will be imposed upon them. "This is not the case at all as good design is that which is appropriate for the character of the client organization. What we are seeking to create is a distinctive if modern style, it is important to remember that modern materials—of which there is virtually a limitless range—and up-to-date technology can be used to create the widest possible range of environments from the most modernistic to the most restrained and conservative."

Shroff (who has designed, *inter alia*, the corporate offices of United Breweries and Reliance Textiles in Bombay and Bajaj Auto in Poona and has about 25 big jobs in hand at the moment) claims that his firm is trying to follow an international style and create an awareness of new design systems. According to him, there is no such thing as an 'Indian office.' "I'm strongly against juxtaposing Indian handicrafts with sophisticated and

streamlined office equipment, including computers, as it strikes a discordant note," he says. But even as reputed and well established a designer as Shroff feels that the biggest impediment is created by clients who feel that they know more than the designer, interfere and make a mess of things.

Shroff also feels the need for specialization within the profession and urges clients to evaluate the suitability of a particular designer for a specific job as every job requires a different kind of expertise. "A designer who specializes in restaurants may not be the best choice for a commercial office. One way of ensuring that the appropriate designs are submitted for each job would be to pay a minimum fee to several designers and invite them to submit designs. Some private sector organizations are already following this system," says Shroff.

Although by and large the designer's fees are 15 percent of the gross cost of the job, Shroff points out that most clients don't know what services to expect in return for those fees. "Designing isn't a matter of just delivering a bunch of drawings. Understanding the client's requirements is what is essential. This ambiguity regarding what is required of him suits the designer as in most large offices there's a lot of repetitive work for which fees should be on a sliding scale and this should be pointed out by the designers, but in most cases they don't point this out."

According to Shroff, most of the top interior designers are also architects and they are thriving as they are trained to deal with spaces, external as well as internal. "In fact, 70 percent of my work is interior designing. Ideally, an aspiring interior designer should have a degree in architecture and a post-graduate qualification in interior

designing. At the moment, there's a lot of work for interior designers and qualified design assistants are hard to come by."

Although the profession is still in its infancy and groping for recognition, Shroff believes it is beginning to acquire a character. People are fast becoming aware of its utilitarian value and it is no longer considered a mere status symbol to consult a designer. "This profession is challenging, lucrative and fulfilling but to get to the top, there has to be a constant endeavour to improve oneself," he concludes.

Indra Gidwani

Reprinted with permission from *Business World*, April 25-May 8, 1983.

Baxter brings rain

The possibility of creating artificial rain from dry ice to combat the recurring drought situation in the state of Maharashtra was discussed by **Khushru Baxter**, chief executive of the Bombay Carbon Dioxide Gas Corporation, at a meeting with Chief Minister Vasant Patil in June this year, note press reports.

The company, "the only manufacturer of dry ice in the country has pledged to supply (dry ice) free of cost to assist the government in combating the dreadful menace," notes a report in the *Indian Express*. "Dry ice, prepared by the compression of carbon dioxide into a solid state, when sprayed on clouds forms droplets and quickens precipitation and has been successfully administered abroad." Hitherto dry ice, one of the world's coldest and most versatile refrigerants has been used for freezing by ice-cream manufacturers, meat and food exporters, airlines, pharmaceutical and engineering industries, notes a report.

Baxter was also invited by a visiting American team to Madras to participate in efforts to produce artificial rain, and states that the team was extremely enthusiastic about his ideas and has promised its support and assistance.

With a degree in marine engineering from Brunel University while simultaneously serving an engineering apprentice at Firestone, London, Baxter joined the then-new CEAT Tyres in Italy, notes his bio-data, and was sent to India as chief engineer to set up a plant at Bhandup, Bombay. He was project manager of General Tyre in Tehran

Baxter (left) explains the concept of artificial rain to Chief Minister Patil



before joining his brother-in-law Cyrus Engineer in the family business, the Bombay Carbon Dioxide Gas Corporation, now the largest manufacturer of carbon dioxide in India, according to a report, with two new units for the manufacture of dry ice.

Hong Kong's 'Star' Ferry

Almost a century ago, when Hong Kong's residents sailed in sampans across the harbour to Kowloon, Dorabjee Nowrojee, an enterprising Indian immigrant, introduced the first of a fleet of steamships, called the 'Star' Ferry.

Nowrojee, who worked his way up from a cook to the owner of a prestigious Hong Kong hotel, originally bought a launch to ferry himself and his friends between Central and Kowloon, noted Diane Wagner in her article 'Hong Kong's 'Star' Ferry Retains Colonial Past' in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*. "What began as an infrequent service for friends became popular, and demand quickly outgrew



capacity," writes Wagner. Nowrojee then launched his second 'Star' and included the term 'Star' in the names of all his four steamships, a practice that is continued even today by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Wharf and Godown Company, who bought up the 'Star' assets in 1898.

Now a 10-vessel fleet of double-ended ferries, this traditional form of transport faces competition from the subway line which was built beneath the harbour in 1979. Fares have been increased, and the annual crossharbour traffic has dropped. When Nowrojee owned the ferry, Chinese and Euro-

pean passengers paid a nominal fee, according to Wagner, but Nowrojee allowed his own countrymen to ride the ferry free of charge.

The fleet remains virtually unchanged since the turn of the century, and the strictly enforced dress code for first-class travellers, who were required to wear coats, ties and footwear, was not abandoned till the Japanese took over the ferry service during their occupation of Hong Kong during the Second World War.

Nowrojee's 'Star' ferry, a typicality of Hong Kong since the 1870s, will continue, according to John Harris, the company's public transport manager. "A lot of people see the 'Star' ferries as one of the last vestiges of Hong Kong, but they're also an integral, ongoing part of modern Hong Kong," he is reported to have said.

The ferry "retains thousands of regular riders who prefer the fresh air during the six-minute ride," Wagner writes, and one regular morning traveller is reported to have said, "I think going to work across water is a romantic idea."

Wall Street clipping sent by Zarir Cama, Hong Kong.

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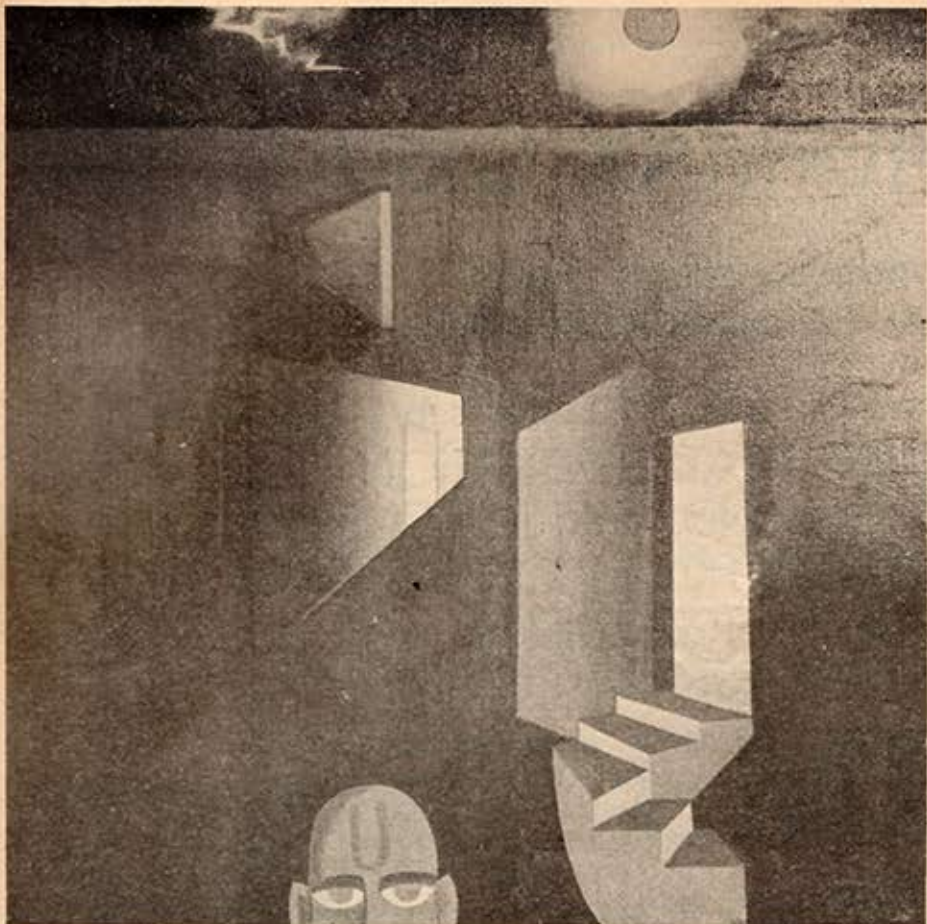
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The forms of Divinity

Hutokshi D. Doctor



With 16 canvases on the theme of divinity, exhibited under the title 'Unspoken Words' at the Taj Art Gallery in Bombay this April, Behram Rana has made his debut into the world of art.

"Rana undoubtedly succeeds in establishing a perfect balance between the colour he uses and theme he chooses," noted the art critic for the *Financial Express*. "His works make an instant impact on the spectator. The rich colour effect arrests the eyes and the underlying spirituality captivates the heart."

A visualizer at Larsen and Toubro, Rana has used conventional Indian symbols of divinity like the *Om*, the Shiva *lingum*, the *trishul* and Ganesha in all his paintings, to visually represent his theme, that divinity in its myriad manifestations is an integral part of life and creation. His painting 'Profile' is dominated by a pile of blue boulders on the seashore which take the *Om* formation, with the sun rising over the horizon in the background. In explanation he says, "A person who believes in God sees God in everything."

'Mind your Mind,' an unusual com-



position in sombre greys, red and black, represents the compartmentalized mind, partly occupied by strong forces like hunger and sex, symbolized in the painting by a stalk of grain and the *lingum*. "You have to live with these forces, control them, and also achieve spiritualism (symbolized by the *Om*) in whatever capacity," says Rana.

In one of his untitled works, painted in two shades of blue, the viewer finds the symbol of *Om* and a tiny figure of Ganesha with uplifted trunk and upraised hand, cleverly concealed

Top: 'Mystery'
Left: 'Watched'

amidst swirls of foliage. "This painting was very spontaneous," comments Rana. "I just sat down, starting with the *Om* and went on to the surrounding designs and then to Ganesha."

In fact, most of the paintings have developed over the last one year from spontaneous sketches done with deft, rough strokes in spare moments, and pasted in a scrap-book. A few of these original ideas were rejected, some emerged as visualized, others as combinations of different sketches.

Since his theme is both serious and philosophical, the tall, bearded and long-haired artist confesses that he has often been told, "Bill, you've got a very deep mind, you're a thinker;" and this, he says, made him realize that painting is recognized as decorative rather than meaningful. "But at the gallery people complimented me for my subject, expression, treatment and colour; the message was appreciated," he says. So that his message could be fully understood by the viewer he composed a few lines of verse which accompanied eight of his 16 canvases.

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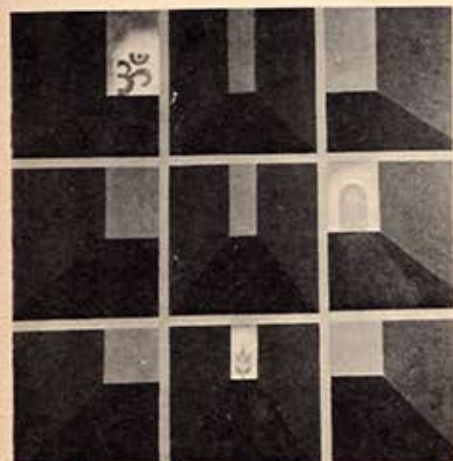
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But Rana, 41, lays claim to no mysticism. "If I go into philosophy I'll lose the artistic touch, the shapes, colours and textures. Mine is a basic feeling rather than a philosophy. I could be completely wrong."

The *Financial Express's* art critic suggested that Rana would go a long way "when he puts all his philosophical thinking at the back of his mind, ceases to be over-burdened by metaphysical symbols (whose power of communication is limited) and achieves the visual freedom necessary to speak purely in terms of line, colour and texture."

"Every work cannot be a masterpiece," Rana quoted his father as saying when, as a boy, he would indulge in a temper tantrum when dissatisfied with his own work. With a desire to study art, he joined the J.J. School of Art in Bombay but left after two years to work as an apprentice and later start a partnership with a friend. Eventually he set up his own small Rana Studio



'Mind your Mind'

where he designed advertisements for several important clients. But he was temperamental and his public relations weak, he says, and he could not keep his clients, and therefore decided to take the appointment of visualizer at a large advertising agency before moving to Larsen and Toubro in 1977. His work as a visualizer has improved his sense of design and better acquainted him with colour, enabling him to "carry a certain decorative sleekness into his work, a sleekness enhanced by his strong flat colours and a neat application of paint," notes *The Sunday Observer*. However, he finds greater freedom as an artist, "you can do whatever you feel, there is more creative expression," and Behram Rana is already visualizing his second exhibition.

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Mehli Casinath:

Tribute to Talent

Ali Rajabally

When one talks of Parsis and the music of the western world, the first person that comes to most people's mind would naturally be Zubin Mehta. He would be followed by young Neville Chinoy, victim of an international air-crash some years ago, and the much talented Hilla Khursedji, who met such a tragic end in London only the other day. And to a person a little older, the talk would revive and stir up early memories of Zubin's father Mehli Mehta, and the days of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra.

But there was another, older than all these mentioned, a man oozing with in-born musical talent who was a violin virtuoso, who must not remain ignored any longer and to whom, late as it may be, at least the Parsi community should not fail to pay their homage.

Turning the clock back to the early '30s there are people who still remember Mehli Mehta, who in those days lived on Gowalia Tank Road, trudging up

Cumballa Hill with his violin-case in his hand. Going past the old Kemp & Co., down towards Nepean Sea Road, he would turn into an imposing gate on the right, that leads to a palatial estate by the sea. This was Casinath Hall, the ancestral domain of Merwanji Bomanji Casinath, the forgotten genius, who was the first person to teach Mehli Mehta how to tuck the violin under his chin.

The Casinath Hall Estate was a storehouse of musical knowledge. This is where young Casinath had ample opportunities to display his unusual talent. He was a Taurean, having been born on May 21, just six years before the turn of the last century and no-one would accuse Taurus people of not being musically inclined. Almost everyone born under this sun sign adores music, almost to the extent of a pro level.

This is not just an astrological rumour, for if you look at the list of those who have embraced the world of music, you'd be astonished to see that a

great number of them are children of this sign. *Apro* Zubin, as the Parsis would say, is one. Also Yehudi Menuhin, Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Margot Fonteyn. Then on the other side of the fence, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, Fred Astaire, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, to name only a few. The zodiacal pull is too strong for them to ignore.

Mehli Casinath learned to play the violin on his own. There was no-one to teach him. And when he reached the interesting stage, when going to a *conservatoire* would change the course of his life, his dream had to remain unfulfilled. He was the only surviving son of his mother, and the hand that had once rocked his cradle, now rocked his world—she couldn't be parted from him, no matter how short the spell. So he remained self-taught, possibly the earliest Parsi who could have earned an international reputation, but was denied the opportunity.

Having mastered the violin as much as one is allowed by fate, he went on to be just as proficient in playing other instruments—piano, C-melody sax, cello,

Casinath, the forgotten genius, was the first person to teach Mehli Mehta how to tuck the violin under his chin.

vibes and also harmonium. This last he needed, for by this time he had also become an exponent of Indian *ragas*.

Not remaining content, he now started giving lessons in all these instruments, for his joy in playing them was so complete that it could do nothing but inspire. As his fame as a music-teacher grew, boys and girls from far and near became his pupils. I know of several parents who bemoan the fact that there is no Mehli Casinath today, to give to their children the same kind of musical grounding they had got from him in their adolescent years.

He may not have achieved international fame but he got the next best thing. Acclaim of a very high order from some of the great internationalists who came to his doorstep, left him speechless. The world of the violin, dur-

ing the years between the two World Wars, was dominated by four giants and between 1928 and the time World War II broke out, three of them had visited Bombay. Mischa Elman, the Russian-American child prodigy, was the only one who didn't.

Efrem Zimbalist, also a Russian-American came here in 1928 and Jan Kubelic, the equally great Czech maestro followed a year later. A few years went by and then came my favourite Jascha Heifitz, the other great Russian-American, who unlike many child wonders had become a greater artiste in his mature years. Again, the crossroads of fate worked in Casinath's favour and he was given an opportunity to come closer to the greats, to entertain them privately in his home, and to be friendly with them. In the process, the tributes they bestowed on him and the testimonials they left behind, should be a source of pride to music lovers, at least within his own community.

There must be many men who play several musical instruments, and a few, like Casinath who play them exceedingly well. But this versatile man had other accomplishments to his credit. He not only ran a private school of music, but was also a composer of uncommon merit. He mainly concentrated on marches, as John Philip Sousa did. And like Sousa, he dedicated them to famous people.

To commemorate the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales to Bombay in 1921, he composed a march and dedicated it to the Prince and as a

Casinath with the Young Men's Parsi Orchestra. Nariman Khursedji and Nani Palkhivala are in the front row (from left)



Dhun and Mehli Casinath with their women's orchestra

gesture of respect, he called it *Parsi Loyalty to Royalty*, a title which would be wholly out of place today but it fitted the occasion.

When Reza Shah I of Iran changed his name to Pahlevi, in an effort to re-found the Pahlevi dynasty, and held his coronation in 1926, Casinath dedicated a march to him and befitting the occasion, named it the *Pahlevi March*. I am told this marching song was often played on occasions by his son Reza Shah II before his regime was overthrown by Khomeini.

The famous *Sanjan March* which even today, more than half-a-century after it was composed, finds the Parsis in a daze of happy nostalgia every time it is played, is his brain-child. And so is the *Zoroastrian March*, as also the *Zoroastrian National Anthem*. (I am told Zubin Mehta's 'A Quest for Zarathustra' is going to be an all-Parsi production, with everything about it as

near all-Parsi as possible. I wonder if he is aware that there was a Parsi musician, as it happens his father's old tutor, who composed some worthwhile scores, that just might be suitable as background music for his epic film!)

Today the world has lost its in-

The Orchestra, in spotlessly white starched *duglo ne patloon* and *kari makhmal ni Parsi topi*, would play all the Parsi favourite numbers.

nocence. But the '30s and the '40s were the days of calm when you could relax, be happy, put up your feet, have another Black Label and dream a while, for tomorrow was a mile away. That era has long since passed but memories of its excitement still remain.

Those were the days when the Parsi *lagan* and *navjote* functions were something to look forward to. They were the big-spenders, the good-livers. The functions were usually held at Albless Baug, or sometimes at the less favourite Cama Baug. (Today's popular choice of Colaba's Jijibhoy Agiary was then unheard of, for some obscure reason.) It was not uncommon for the dinner menu (*minoo*, they pronounced it!) to have 10 sumptuous items on it, not counting *mewa nu achar*, *chocolate mewa na packet* and *pan sopari*. And of course, no function would be complete without liberal helpings of Scotch Whisky, French Brandy and Port. And there would be a band playing popular music. Normally it would be a band consisting of Goan musicians but this is where Mehli Casinath's expertise scored again. It was one more addition to the

long list of his services to his community.

As early as 1930, he had formed a band of his own, a 14-piece orchestra exclusively made up of young Parsis complete with a male crooner. A band after all is as good, or as bad, as the music that comes out of it, and while this band didn't send you flying to the outskirts of the universe, it was surprisingly good; and what's more it was very popular. So much so, that during the marriage season, he was compelled to turn down contracts.

The Casinath band went by the name of Young Men's Parsi Orchestra and was usually referred to by the initials YMPO. It was more of a string band, although they did have piano, clarinet/C-melody sax, bass and drums. But there were as many as 10 violins, that instrument being his forte.

The orchestra's leader and Casinath's right hand man, Jal Ayem, one of his oldest friends, who had stuck with him through thick and thin, was one of the violinists. There were others like Nariman Khursedji, who in later years played with Mehli Mehta in the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. Some may remember him today as the distraught father of the greatly talented but un-

fortunate Hilla Khursedji. Then there was the other young man, a budding lawyer, who was later to become India's leading legal luminary (the alliteration is unavoidable!) His name was Nani Palkhivala. There was yet another youngster who also sat in the first row. Small and pale, memory names him Phiroze Dumri. Much later, he graduated from violin to mouth-organ(!) and became perhaps the greatest mouth-organ player this country has produced. Larry Adler the American harmonica genius who visited India in the late '30s early '40s, dubbed him so, I am told.

The YMPO was a delight to watch. They turned up in their uniform, which was spotlessly white starched *duglo ne patloon* and *kari makhmal ni Parsi topi*. And they would play all the Parsi favourite numbers from *Strauss Waltzes* and *O Sole Mio* to the *Isle of Capri* and *Amapola*. At the end of the evening, as they would strike up the *Zoroastrian National Anthem*, one of his own compositions, you could hear the sound of a thousand chairs scraping the ground, as the entire baug would get on its feet, standing to attention. After this, and only after, the world would hear the familiar strains of *God Save*

the King. And when due respect had been paid to the community, king and country, you would hear the sound of glasses clinking and the word *Salamati* being repeated over and over again, signing off the end of a perfectly happy day.

But this was not all. This amazing man had not forgotten the women of his community. He and his wife Dhun later formed a Parsi women's orchestra which Ms Casinath conducted. As in the case of the YMPO this was also a 14-piece orchestra and since Dhun Casinath was adept at playing the mandolin, this too became a string outfit, but with the mandolin as the predominant instrument. This ladies' orchestra became immensely popular and gave a number of concerts for local charities.

Mehli Casinath was a genial, happy, gregarious giant of a man, in more senses than one. He was over 6 feet tall and I don't believe he ever weighed less than 250 lbs. He died in 1957 at the age of 63, and I am sure those who knew this kind, friendly man, will not accuse me of a lowly pun when I say that as a human being, he was a huge success.

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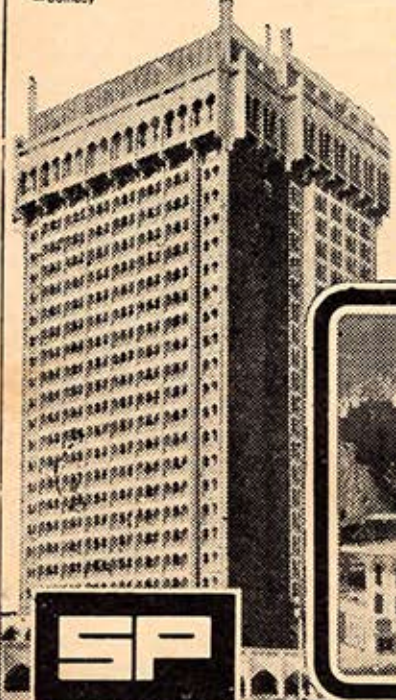
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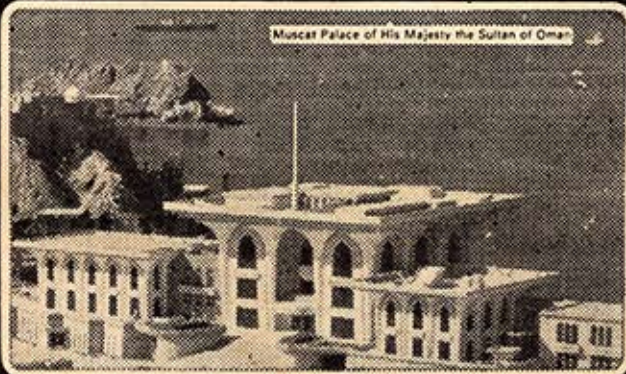
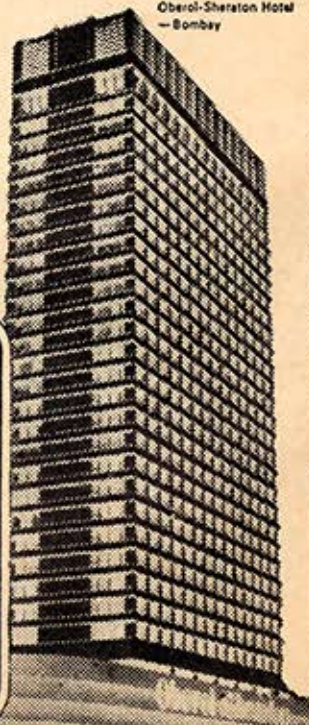
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