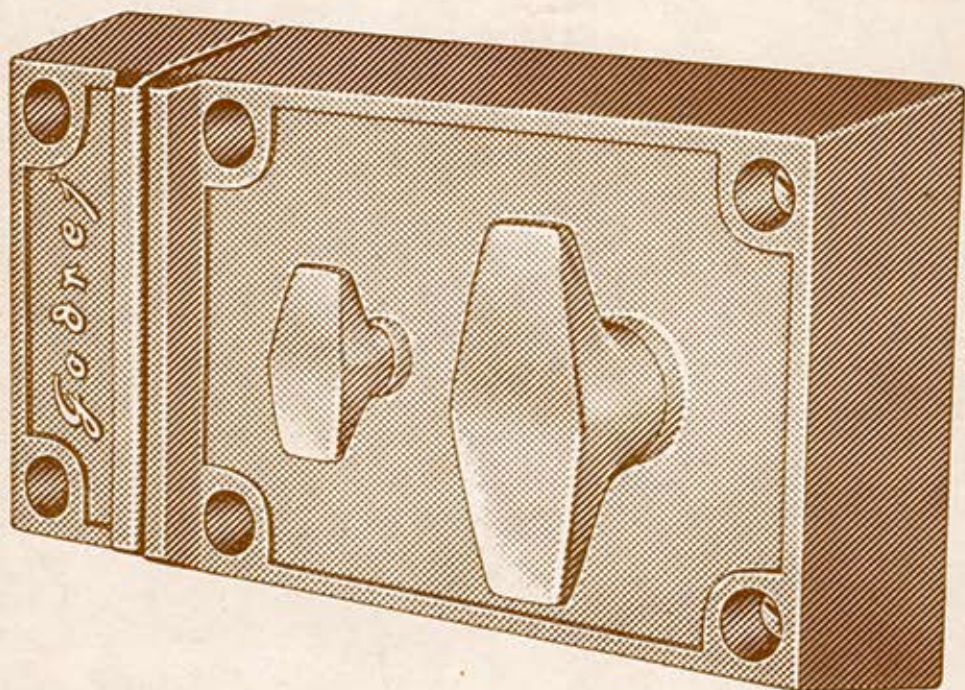


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Parsiana

December 1983
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DESIGN ASSISTANT Kranti Shilotri
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Zarin Billimoria,
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
Cheryl D'Penha
CHIEF EXECUTIVE R.P.Thanavala
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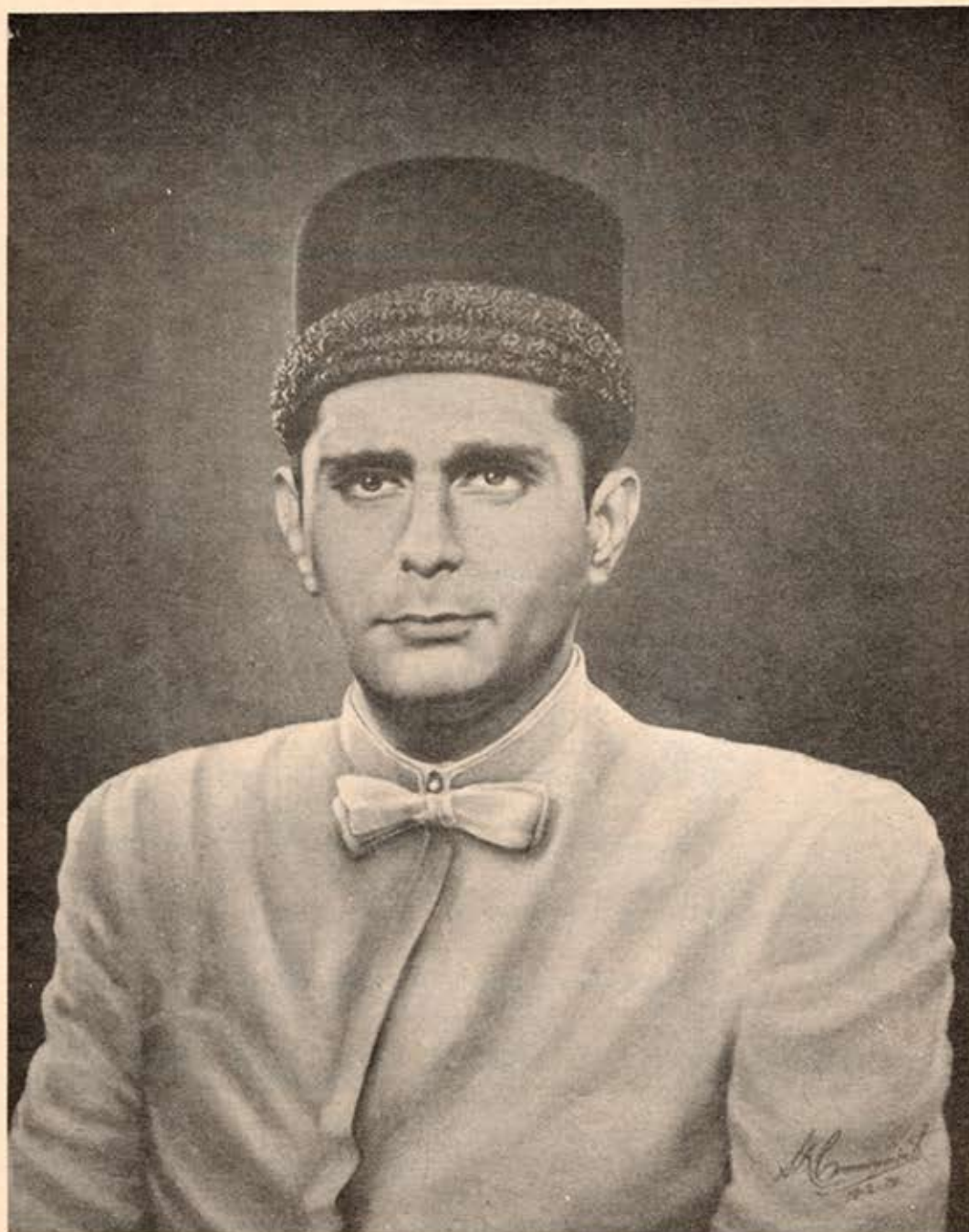
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In Memoriam

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.

Peterson

The "flap" over the navjote of Joseph Peterson has provided occasion for a burst of literary activity which North American Zoroastrians have been distributing to their various associations' members. Personally, I am pleased to note the emergence of some vigorous support for the idea that the North American Zoroastrians have the right to let their own experience, rather than the Parsis' experience in India, be a major factor in their decision making. It is a sign of maturity to show such independence in examining the corpus of the scriptures and the relevance or irrelevance, for themselves, of the varying traditions which emerged as responses to earlier historical exigencies.

CYRUS R. PANGBORN
New Jersey, USA

"The Managing Committee of the M.F. Cama Athornan Institute and the M.M. Cama Education Fund strongly condemn the alleged 'Navjote' and the alleged 'Conversion' to the Zoroastrian Religion of one misguided Christian of America, Joseph Peterson, purported to have been performed and effected by Dr Kersey Antia and Ervad Noshir C. Hormuzdiar, who, this meeting notes with great dismay, were at one time the students of our Athornan Institute.

"The Committee reiterates the following truths, doctrines, rites, traditions and tenets in which the Parsis of India have implicit faith and belief and which the Parsis have been following since centuries and have, therefore, the constitutional guarantee under the Constitution of India.

"The alleged 'Navjote' of any person who is not born of both Parsi parents can never be performed and such a person can never be converted to Zoroastrian Religion and in particular such person cannot be given the Nirangdin—Consecrated Bull's Urine, which is the most vital and essential part of the Navjote Ceremony.

"That the above Truth does not arise out of any disrespect for other religions or the persons born in other Religions but is based upon another Truth taught in the Zoroastrian Scripture that all religions are sent by Ahura through His Prophets and they are all worthy of profound respect, that every human must follow the religion in which he or she is born and has no capacity to 'choose' in the matters of religion.

"The Committee feels that by claiming to choose one Prophet over another, Peterson has ignored and insulted his own Prophet Lord Jesus Christ and His lofty teachings and has proved unfaithful to Him, and that Dr Kersey Antia and Ervad Noshir Hormuzdiar by purporting to do the alleged Navjote have insulted and violated the teachings of both the Prophets and have proved unfaithful to their own Prophet.

"The Committee also reiterates following the age long teachings and tenets of the Zoroastrian religion that Peterson or any person who is not born of both Parsi parents cannot be accepted as a Parsi or Zoroastrian by any alleged Navjote or by any other mode or means

whatsoever and is not entitled to any right or privilege a Parsi or Zoroastrian is entitled to in the matter of religion, community or society.

"Dr Kersey Antia and Ervad Hormuzdiar by purporting to perform the alleged Navjote against all the Zoroastrian tenets, doctrines, traditions, beliefs and rites have forfeited their right to officiate as priests or perform any religious ceremony anywhere and the Committee requests all the Athornans of India to pass a resolution boycotting them as mobeds or priests."

JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHAY
President

The M. F. Cama Athornan Institute
and The M. M. Cama Education Fund

Peterson has rendered a great service to us all, and more so to our religion, in that he has brought to the surface many crucial problems facing us which have been simmering for quite some time. The storm created in India over his navjote is more of a storm in a tea-cup, for we are the minutest of communities in this greatly populous land, and are an "endangered species," with every chance of becoming extinct, like some rare animal, within a century or so.

We have been unable to check the steady decline in our numbers and are not likely to do so. This is because the majority continue to reside in just one over-crowded city, viz. Bombay, and continue to revel in the influence of orthodoxy. If our population is to increase, 60 percent and over of those of marriageable age must marry, and each couple should rear three to four children. This is hardly possible under present conditions when our marriages are so restricted in number and when 20 to 25 percent of these are with non-Parsi spouses. The tragedy is deepened because most of the mixed marriages occur in educated and well-to-do families.

If and when the Parsi population dwindles further or disappears altogether, the Parsi Zoroastrian religion will follow suit. We have therefore to look to our brother Zoroastrians in Iran, and to the recent Zoroastrian emigrants from India to several English-speaking countries of the world to hold the banner of our religion aloft. Living in a very different environment, they will naturally have to make changes and modifications in the customs, practices and rituals of

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the religion, in keeping with circumstances, but the basic teachings and ideals of the Prophet and his religion will endure.

The word "Parsi" which applies to the Zoroastrians in India, will gradually be replaced by the wider term "Zoroastrian."



Peterson's navjote

The activities of the American and Canadian Zoroastrians, as reported in *Parsiana*, indicate a tremendous upsurge of religious enthusiasm among them. Their balanced outlook on Zoroastrian problems of the day is ably demonstrated in the letters of Rohinton Rivetna ("Chicago's Concern") and Ervad Dr Kersi Antia ("Antia's Answer") in your August issue. They are also taking a very sensible step in soliciting the views of Zoroastrian Associations in North America and everywhere else on all vital issues such as conversion, adoption, mixed marriages, etc. before coming to any decisions for future action. They are also framing well-reasoned criteria for acceptance/non-acceptance into Zoroastrianism in the future and have in mind the formation of navjote committees to ensure that the essential criteria are observed before any navjote of a non-Zoroastrian or semi-Zoroastrian is permitted.

There was a time when I lamented the fate of Parsi Zoroastrians migrating to foreign lands from the view-point of the religious future of their children and grand-children, but now I am glad to find that my forebodings have proved wrong, and that the Zoroastrian faith in these countries has displayed a revival beyond all our dreams. Even if the faith

languishes or disappears from India, it will survive and thrive abroad.

I am particularly impressed by the article entitled "Zoroastrian Scout Badge" (*Parsiana*, September 1983) which refers to a 100-page brochure prepared to make Zoroastrian youth more aware of their faith, its history, outlook and achievements, and to encourage the young to gain a meaningful spiritual experience in "living" the faith. Although in India, we have recently seen the birth of the "Zoroastrian Studies," "Mazdayasnie Monasterie," etc. there is little or no central direction to promote enthusiasm in our youth and to guide them. This is our tragedy.

Instead of shouting from the rooftops to condemn our former Zoroastrian brethren, because they have shown a liberal and open mind, let us look within and put our own house in order. Has any one tried to find out how many Parsi Zoroastrians in India wear the sudreh and kusti, how many say their kusti prayers even once a day, however perfunctorily, how many go to the fire-temple even once a year, how many understand what they pray and what our various ceremonies represent, and how many marry non-Zoroastrians and let their children drift into whatever religion they choose? Also, how many follow Babas, Gurus and Christian Science, and why? In our 1,200 odd years in India, what have we done to compare with what our North American brethren have achieved in 30 or 40 years?

All we have done is to allow our religion and fire-temples to languish, to convert our holiest of holies, the Udwada Atash Behram, into a kind of beggars' roost (as described by a visitor from abroad recently in *Parsiana*), and to allow our coming generations to drift in spiritual matters without any meaningful prayers or prayer meetings, without any *kirtans* or songs which are so much emphasized in the Gathas, without giving them any opportunity for personal participation in religious ceremonies, without giving them any lead or guidance in spiritual development. We have several important days in our calendar, such as Navroze, Khordadsal, Zarthost-no-diso, and the numerous Parabhs, Hamkars, etc. Do we ever congregate on such days to offer joint prayers and chants to the glory of Ahura Mazda, and discuss spiritual matters?

Many have waxed hot on the subject of conversion and made all sorts of assertions, even going to the extent of saying that King Vistasp was not con-

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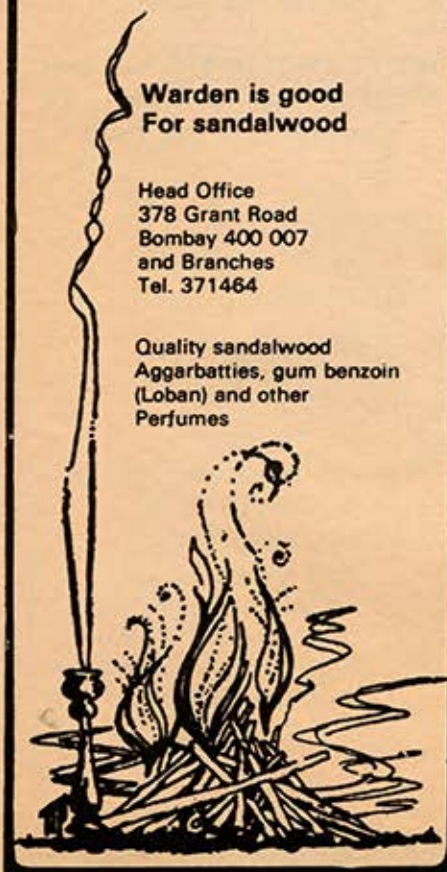


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verted. The Council of Mobeds in Tehran, to whom the matter was recently referred, has given a categorical reply that conversion is certainly permitted in our religion and it has quoted chapter and verse from the Gathas and other sacred books to prove its point, as mentioned in your September issue. If further evidence is needed, I quote from Dr M.N. Dhalla's book *Zoroastrian Theology*: "The Pahlavi Works on Proselytism: Zarathusht first preached his new religion to the people of Iran where he was born; but Ormuzd has commanded that the excellent religion should be spread among all races of mankind throughout the world."

In their commentary on the oft-recurring Avestan formula *Fravarane*, the Pahlavi versionists add an explanatory gloss that every believer undertakes to proclaim the Zoroastrian religion of Ormuzd to the entire world. It is said that the act of the highest merit that a non-believer can perform in his life is to renounce his religion and embrace the Mazdayasnian faith. The great Sasanian monarch, Shapur II, zealously worked for the restoration and promulgation of the faith among the unbelievers with the aid of his illustrious Dastur Adarbad. The *Dinkard* sanctions even the use of force for the conversion of the aliens. A Pahlavi treatise, *Nirangistan-Sanjana*, devoted mostly to the Zoroastrian rituals, attests the practice of admitting outsiders into the Zoroastrian fold.

I would, therefore, appeal to all our fellow Zoroastrians in India not to get unduly upset over the new developments taking place in North America. If their views and your views do not agree, it is best to agree to differ, and leave the others to follow whatever path they choose, because we cannot fully appreciate the conditions under which they have to live. There is no long queue of thousands of people wanting to have their navjotes performed, or to enter our fire-temples in India, or wanting to take advantage of our trust funds and assets in India. There is not likely to be any occasion for our stalwarts here to "bash their faces" or to beat them up. As one of our scholars has said, let them go their own way and we will keep to ours. Tolerance and understanding of each other's point of view are the needs of the hour. Zoroastrianism will survive, whether you like it or not, because it is a universal religion and has a universal appeal.

NOSHIR H. VAJIFDAR
Ootacamund

I think the entire issue is a big fuss. Those who are strongly orthodox will not rationalize and the ultra liberals will wish to push their ways. Tolerance and respect for individual beliefs to me is the only salvation. Mixed marriages are bound to happen and outcasting is not the answer. Personally I am rather sick of the time spent on bickering instead of positive progressiveness from old world or new world Zoroastrians.

FRED E. MORRIS
New Jersey, USA

I have come across the following in Ervad Cawasji Edulji Kanga's translation in Gujarati of the *Vendidad*.

"What happens if an adult person after reaching the age of 15 years does not wear the sudreh and kusti or does not acquire knowledge of the religion, and enters worldly life.

"After taking the fourth step we, the devs, increase his tongue and his fat, as that, like the jadugers destroying countries of the virtuous, he (by his evil) abilities destroys the countries of the virtuous in the world."

Will some learned man say how the navjote of Joseph Peterson can be reconciled with the above, as he is over 15 years old?

How do those who recommend mixed marriages find it compatible with the following excerpts from the *Vendidad*: "Then Ahuramazda said, Oh virtuous Zarathosht! one of the pure minded (into) the evil minded, one of the Mazdayasnans (into) an idolator, one of the innocents (into) the criminal, were to mix his seed, he surely commits adultery; such a person displeases me with his/her bad conduct."

F.R. BAGWALLA

Conan Doyle "Conned"?

With reference to an article in *Parsiana* (August 1982) written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, entitled the "Strange case of George Edalji," I have studied the so-called Edalji case for some years, and I have a manuscript in preparation.

I am afraid that Sir Arthur got it all wrong, from almost every angle. George Edalji was not a shy, reserved young man, a picture of innocence; his father Reverend Shapurji Edalji was not looked down upon at all, he was, as they say "a True Christian." He was renowned for his charitable work amongst the poor of the district; he used to carry out his work

in as anonymous a manner as possible, leaving food parcels on doorsteps etc.

Shapurji appeared to have no idea as to the true nature of his son George, and



George certainly "conned" Conan Doyle.

Shapurji was born in Bombay in 1842, the son of Donaldji Edalji, a merchant. He was educated at the Free Kirk College in your city (now called the Wilson College, I understand).

I have not completed my research on Shapurji, and would be pleased if you could perhaps put me in touch with a Parsi social historian in Bombay.

MICHAEL HARLEY
Staffordshire, England

Dharamsala Appeal

The Khan Bahadur Edulji Chenai Trust Fund maintains a Parsi Dharamsala at Secunderabad for visiting Parsis from outside the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Aside from nine family rooms, the Dharamsala also has a pavilion for weddings and navjotes and a hall for religious and public functions. The structure is nearly 100 years old and consequently calls for intensive maintenance. In spite of the best efforts to carry on with the repairs, a stage has now been reached when the manager's quarters and certain ancillaries will need to be replaced to cater to the long range need of the Dharamsala.

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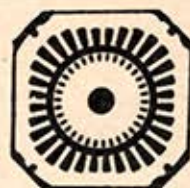
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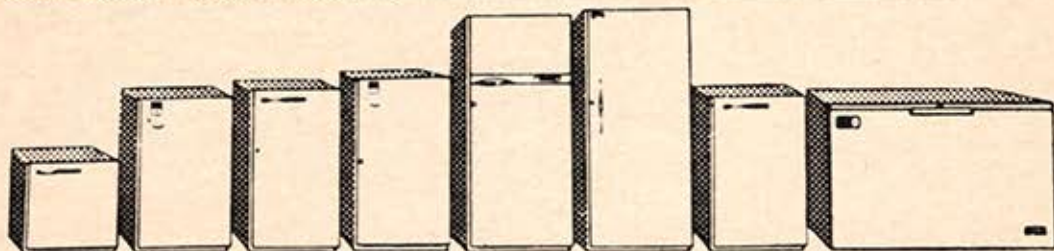
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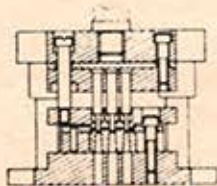
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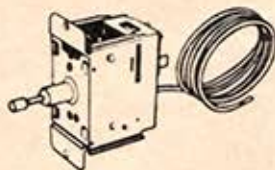
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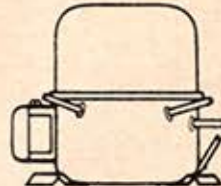
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M. ROSHAN M. PATEL
Hyderabad—Secunderabad

Mobed Nibhav Fund

Since years the community has been talking of the dwindling number of athornans. At times not even a single mobed is available for a specific ceremony. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of those practising mobedi are of the older generation—there are very few youngsters among them.

Why do the sons of athornans discard their parents' profession? Because they can anticipate no rest throughout their working lives; nor is there any fixed income. Only a few get to meet their needs. Some are completely demoralized to find their children half fed and under-educated as compared to others.

Why don't the sons of mobeds themselves work concretely to uphold and enhance the cause? The West must take

the lead. Wherever I have gone I have come across many *ostas* i.e. of the athornan family. Those who have settled in North America, Australia, England and Europe have revived past glory and almost all are prosperous. If each one decided to donate \$ 50 upwards, the athornan fund could rise substantially in but one year. Besides, the associations and societies of the West could collect funds for the benefit of athornans without much difficulty.

JAL F DASTUR
Burnaby, B.C., Canada

Revere, not worship

Though in our religious books no particular way for the disposal of the dead is

prescribed, in chapters three, five, six and seven of the *Vendidad* the system of dokhmenashini is openly decried as being unhygienic as also burial (tombs) being undesirable as it occupies usable agricultural land. Between the two, since fire according to the Avesta is the benevolent agent of God in the service of mankind meant for burning away rubbish for his hygiene, for cooking his food for his health and to turn industrial wheels for his prosperity, for which fire is to be revered, not worshipped, it is the best media.

It may be said that there is no mention of physical fire anywhere in the Gathas or any bar placed on use of fire.

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Events and Personalities

The Ripon Centenary

Membership of the Willingdon and the Bombay Gym may be more sought after, but neither has the exclusiveness of the Ripon Club, which celebrates its centenary in January.

When it was established in 1884, to become its member one had to be a Parsi, male, of certain distinction and Britain returned. For the first few years, non-Parsis were not allowed in the club even as guests (a member finally went to court to get an order to entertain Mr Bennett of Bennett Coleman and Co. to lunch at the club). For the first 50 years, wives of members were only allowed on Sundays, between certain hours. Even today, women are not allowed in the billiards rooms in the afternoons.

Over the years, the club has not changed much. The menu is still very British, kabab is "kabob" and mutton is lamb. Some of the crockery and most of the silver still bears Lord Ripon's family crest. The staff includes a head butler, assistant butlers, pantryman, commissariat, besides the billiards marker, of course.

Tea is still mint tea, the London "Punch" and "New Statesman and Nation" have only recently been taken off the subscription list. And membership is esteemed by its age, rather than its youth.

The club itself resembles the conser-



vative clubs of the London Establishment: Deep sofas, large sideboards, heavy black furniture, oils of illustrious members on the walls.

The membership once included Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta, Sir Jameshetjee Tata, Sir Dinshaw Petit, Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, Sir Homi Mody, all knights and baronets. The best and the most distinguished representatives of the community are still its members.

For many years, the club's clocks showed Bombay time, which is 45 minutes behind Indian Standard Time. A general body meeting had to be summoned to resolve to change the clock. But though the clock may be changed, time has not changed much. Members still sit at a long centre table for leisurely lunches, then relax in a row of easy-chairs, probably the largest collection of easy-chairs anywhere in the world.

The Ripon Club is a part of Bombay's history. On January 28, it will complete a hundred years. And who better to have as the chief guest than the club's most respected member, Nani Palkhivala.

Reprinted from *Mid-Day* December 12, 1983

The day's papers and a Yazdegardi calendar ; Leisurely lunch and easychairs

Photographs by Ayesha Soni



Doctorate awarded

"What we need is not only continuing education programmes for our graduates but a completely new approach towards primary, secondary and college education," said Dr Dara Pirojshaw Antia one of India's leading metallurgists while delivering the convocation address at the Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi on November 18, 1983.

Antia was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, by the university on the occasion "in recognition of his eminent position and attainments", according to P. Sundaram, general manager (administration) of the Indian Institute of Metals of which Antia is an honorary member.

The dean, faculty of Engineering and Technology of the university, while awarding the degree to Antia said about him, "his unfailing and inspiring interest, characterized always by exemplary meticulousness to attain high standards of performance, has always been a unique and constant factor in the steady and rapid growth of this professional body to the status of an internationally recognized institution."

An alumnus of the university, Antia has long been involved with the government's policy planning and industrial development programmes. As secretary of the Metals Development Panel of the Department of Planning of the Government of India and Director of Metals in 1946, he was responsible for the transition of the metallurgical industries from the war time to peace time economy of independent India. He was also chairman of the Metals Development Council for many years and was largely responsible for helping to found the Indian Institute of Metals.

Antia told the graduating students: "We have not only to start training in science early in life but allow children opportunities to see how science and technology work. Electronics and computers should be introduced to them right from school and every high school and college graduate must be able to programme and work with computers."

"India must consider (scientific and technological discoveries) in their long range agricultural planning and must search for ways to combine the bullockcart with the computer. The emergence of advanced bio-technologies holds great promise for transforming rural societies. Such technologies include everything from ocean farming to the use

of insects and other organisms for productive work, the processing of cellulose wastes into meat via micro-organisms and the manufacture of pharmaceuticals from previously unknown or under-utilized plant life."

Moos in the Maruti

When Goodyear announced its second Women's Car Rally in Delhi recently, 36 women immediately queued up for forms. The route lay through Delhi, across the Jaipur desert and back to the capital, a daunting prospect for any but the most adventure-loving types, across sandy tracks and the national highways made dangerous by maniacal truck drivers.

The women were cheered lustily as they started out. But easily the most attractive vehicular entrant was a brand new Maruti—one of the very first to leave the assembly plant at Gurgaon under special loan from the chairman, Mr Krishnamurthy. It was being driven by Ms Dhun Darius Bagli and navigated by the indomitable Meher Heroyce Moos of Air-India, formerly of Bombay, now of Delhi.

With just 24 hours of handling the sleek sophisticated little vehicle, Ms Bagli was ready to try her skill on the roads. She sped along at 120 km. per hour, eyed by many admirers.

It was Meher, the lady who has been practically everywhere, including the South Pole, who told of the other participants, many of them who had had hair-raising experiences. Like the foreigner on whose car a camel leaped, shattering the windscreen and denting the roof badly. It had been hit by a truck coming from the opposite direction and chose to take out its fear and terror in this way. Luckily, the driver was unhurt, and undaunted, she continued till she had crossed the finishing line.

The Maruti did not figure among the winners and this was not really the aim. But at least a point was proved—that it could be driven on rugged country roads with speed and skill, giving the lie to the misconception that it has been built for city roads alone.

Reprinted from *Mid-Day* December 5, 1983.

Economist Jussawalla

"While developing countries were passed over in the Industrial Revolution over 100 years ago, they are today determined not to be passive spectators of the

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information explosion and the communication revolution," said Dr Meheroo Jussawalla, a noted economist and research associate with the East-West Communication Institute in Honolulu, Hawaii, while addressing a seminar on "The Future of the Information Economy in Singapore" organized by the Asian Mass Communication Research Center.

Developing countries are even willing to incur large investment expenditures to leap frog technology as witnessed by the investments in satellites planned for Colombia and Mexico, stated Jussawalla. "Clearly, the developing world is conscious of the social benefits accruing from new telecommunications technology," she said.

Jussawalla has studied ways of improving communication developments in the third world in financial terms. "The economics of communication infrastructures has great policy relevance, specially in developing countries," she said. According to her, in many of these countries between 30 and 40 percent of the gross national product (GNP) is derived from the information sector.

From a report submitted by Delhi-based journalist Taj Rawat.

Dadi's dubious distinction

The following is a letter reprinted from The Sunday Observer, Bombay, of October 30, 1983.

This has reference to the interview with George Fernandes (Oct. 9). I am writing this to correct some statements made by him which are contrary to the facts.

Fernandes stated that the word "Bombay bandh" had been coined by him in 1958. This statement is not correct. The word had been first coined by a Parsi gentleman, Dadi Gowadia, who was victimized by a textile mill (Bombay Dyeing group) for participating in a strike in 1950. He was also one of the organizers of Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Bombay, which led the 63 days' old textile workers strike in 1950.

Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Bombay, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, and all its affiliates as well as the then Socialist Party organized a general one day strike in support of the general strike of textile workers. In one of the meetings of the workers held in support of the strike on 31-8-1950, Dadi Gowadia, on the spur of the moment, announced a Bombay bandh on August 31. Thus the word was first used for the one day strike on 31-8-1950 and not 1958 as claimed by George Fernandes. It is not

fair of George to take credit for coining the word as well as organising the first "Bombay bandh."

This can be verified from the short history of Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Bombay, published in the year 1972 wherein reference has been made to this "Bombay bandh." I happened to be one of the leading organizers of Mill Mazdoor Sabha, Bombay, at that time, which organized the textile strike in the year 1950. George Fernandes was not having the prominent position in the trade union front at that time, which he is perhaps having at present. This, therefore, cannot be the silver jubilee year of "Bombay bandh."

KISAN TULPULE
President, Mill Mazdoor Sabha
Bombay

The last pugree-maker

When Nariman Pugreewala passed away, a part of Parsi culture and tradition died with him. For Nariman was the last of the pugree-makers, the shining, shellecked, proud headgear which Parsi males don on their wedding day adding inches to their stature.

At one time there were as many as 52



The late Nariman Pugreewala at his demanding craft

pugreewallas in business, when it was fashionable to order at least three pugrees a year, which then used to cost between Rs 10 and Rs 20. Slowly, dress modes began to change and the ethnic *dugla* and *fenta-pugree* gave way to the more modern and characterless trousers and shirts.

Nariman, before he retired, offered to teach any youth the trade, but it was a sign of the times that no one was willing to toil for two years perfecting the art for that was what it was.

Fashioned out of cardboard and cloth, the pugree was made in different sizes, Adenwalla the smallest, followed by Desai and Punegar, all varying in height.

The first pugrees were as large as the men of that age; it took 10 yards to make one. The pugree worn by Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy is still preserved in a glass case at the Jeejeebhoy Dadabhoy Agiary at Colaba.

In the days when they used to serve scotch at Parsi dinners, the making of the first pugree was a momentous occasion. A wedding dinner and a bottle of wine were sent to the pugree-maker on the marriage day.

Those days are no more. Just as scotch and wine disappeared from the white-clothed tables laden with the wedding feast, so did the art of pugree-making die out.

A Parsi industrialist is ready to offer Rs 10,000 to any of his brethren willing to learn the trade. But his offer will in all probability not be taken up as the last of the pugree-makers has already made his last pugree.

It is sad when a part of us withers away.

Reprinted from *The Daily* November 7, 1983.

Stall for blind couple

Jehangir Darvish Irani, an employee of the Tata Mill for 18 years, was living in penury due to the industrial unrest in the city mills. So, with the help of Rustom Tirandas (municipal corporator) and ex-Mayor Dr P.S. Pai he was sanctioned a licence to erect a stall at Breach Candy on July 1, 1983.

Suresh Rajda, President of the Lions Club of Central Bombay, donated a provision stall costing Rs 5,000. Pai, who was instrumental in securing this facility for Irani, inaugurated the stall.

Reprinted from *the Daily*, July 2, 1983, from a write-up by Rashid D. Bomanbehram.



Record-breaking Wins

Persis Madan of Maharashtra won six gold medals at the National Aquatic Championships held at Trivandrum in October. The events included the 100 meters backstroke, the 100 meters freestyle, the 200 meters individual medley and the 100 meters women's breaststroke in which Persis set a new record of 1:21.9 seconds, breaking last year's record of 1:23.4 seconds set by Geetha Anand.

Long distance swimmer Anita Sood, Madan's teammate, scored a magnificent win in the 800 meters freestyle for women, clipping 3.4 seconds from her own record of 9:58.0 seconds set last year.

Madan and Sood, together with Kavita Sood, Anita's sister, and Sonal Nanavati also broke the 4 x 100 meters freestyle relay record. They improved their own previous timing by 00.6 seconds, clocking 4:25.6 seconds, say press reports.

Cricket coach retires

Noted cricket coach Keki Tarapore, who has trained the country's top test cricketers such as Prasanna, Chandrashekhar, Vishwanath, Brijesh Patel, Syed Kirmani, Roger Binny and Raghuram Bhatt during his tenure with the Karnataka State Cricket Association retired from the Central Government's Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports on October 31, 1983 at the age of 60, states a write-up by Furrokh S. Bamji of Bangalore.

During Tarapore's tenure with Karnataka, the team won the National Ranji Trophy Championship thrice and four

Tarapore: trained test cricketers



important tournaments in its golden jubilee year of 1982-83.

Tarapore has also served as Senior Cricket Commentator on the panel of All India Radio, Bangalore. For a year he was the chief cricket coach of the NIS at Patiala headquarters and also assisted national coach Hemu Adhikari train Kapil Dev, Ravi Shastri, Maninder Singh, Shivlal Yadav, Gursharan Singh, Pranab Roy and L. Shivramkrishnan amongst others, notes the write-up.

Tarapore began his career in November 1959 when he attended a three-week camp for prospective coaches at Brabourne Stadium Bombay, under the guidance of his 'guru' Prince Duleep-sinji. After a brief stint at Jaipur he was assigned to Karnataka where he has been throughout his career.

"Although Tarapore is superannuated from the National Institute of Sports...it is very gratifying to note that (his) services are now utilized by the Karnataka State Cricket Association... This is proof in itself of (his) ability to coach Indian cricketers", states the letter by Bamji.

Master saheb

Died: Cawasji Edulji Gandevia, trustee of the Gandevi Anjuman Emergency Fund, an advisor to the anjuman at Gandevi in the Valsad district of Gujarat on October 24, 1983, at the age of 93.

Popularly known as "Master Saheb," Gandevia started off as a student at the Sir Cawasji Jehangir Readymoney High School and became a teacher of English at the Gandevi Middle School. "Students still remember his teaching as well as his favorite form of punishment—a tiny, painful pinch," writes his son Faredun.

According to a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* Gujarati daily, of which Gandevia was a correspondent, he was a trustee of the Gandevi Anjuman Emergency Fund and ex-manager of the "Bazam" fund. In 1934 he went to Bombay to collect funds on the occasion of the agiary centenary and he played a dedicated role in the construction of a new building for the Chinoy agiary.

Gandevia was active in social work covering all communities in Gandevi notes Dr Ratan Marshall of Surat in a write-up in the *Jame*. He was connected with the Gandevi Co-operative Bank and the Gandevi library.

He was largely responsible for the formation and working of the Cowasji Dhanjibhai Gazdar Reading Room and Library. In addition, he was a trustee of



Gandevia: 'a tiny painful pinch'

the Zend Avesta classes for Parsis and a committee member for the Sir J.J. Charity Funds.

The trustees of the anjuman held a condolence meeting during which they passed a resolution appreciating his service.

At a condolence meeting held on November 4, the Gandevi Community paid respect to Gandevia at a meeting presided over by noted Bombay Small Causes Court lawyer Ardeshir Katrak, notes the *Jame*.

100 YEARS AGO

The Government vs Jeejeebhoy

The long-pending dispute between the Government and Byramjee Jeejeebhoy, C.S.I., regarding a large piece of land at Goregaon has just been decided by a court of law. The property in question consists of upwards of 700 acres, and the Government not only claimed possession of the land, but sought to recover money which it had brought in since 1865, the date of an award by one of their settlement officers. The defendant alleged that the property formed part of a grant of land made to his predecessor in 1847, and the court has confirmed Jeejeebhoy's claim, ordering the Government to pay the costs of the suit, which must be rather heavy. The amount of money involved in the suit was Rs. 2,16,000.

From The Times of India, November 3, 1883.

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Zoroastrians Abroad

North London's Banner

The gold banner of the North London Zoroastrian Association was unfurled at a function in London on September 4 to celebrate the Parsi New Year and the birthday of Zarathustra notes a report in *The Journal* submitted to *Parsiana* by Cyrus Mehta of Essex.

Depicting the "all-embracing *Farohar*, the soul's pilot which guides us through life beyond life," as the president of the association, Faridoon Madon, explained, the flag was unfurled by chief guest Councillor Iris Woodger, the Mayor of Haringey.

"A self-help voluntary community group, NOLZA aims to promote and advance the education of Zoroastrians in North London," according to the report, "and since their formal launch in May 1982 they have organized events and taken part in conferences with other groups in a bid to widen their horizons."

German Association

To help Zoroastrians in West Germany "get together... and co-operate in social and religious affairs," an association has been formed notes Mehraban Kushesh, one of the group's three temporary committee members.

The other members are Jamshid Zarthoshti, and Esfandiar Moobed. Having published the news in the Zoroastrian magazine *Hukhte* in Tehran, Iran, Kushesh invites all Zoroastrians in West Germany to send in their full address to P.O.B. 7922, 4000 Dusseldorf, West Germany, and "thus help the progress and advancement of (their) aims and objectives."

World Zoroastrian Organization Minutes

The World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) has stated that Joseph Peterson, the US engineer who converted to Zoroastrianism would not be accepted as a member of the world body should he apply.

According to the minutes of the WZO Committee meeting held on August 14 in London, the Committee also stated that Dr Kersey Antia, one of the priests who performed Peterson's navjote, acted "in his personal capacity" and that the WZO "had no prior intimation of Dr Antia's intention and did not back him in the act."

In other news, WZO is considering hosting a conference in London following a suggestion from Prof Kaikhosrov Irani of New York. Irani suggested, "The Conference should be held in the 3rd week of June when the schools close; the length of the conference should be two to three days, incorporating social gatherings; one session should be on Zoroastrian philosophy, religious rites, beliefs etc. (with) no more than three speakers; another session should be on history, heritage and culture and a third session on Zoroastrians in present times; speakers should be authorities on the Zoroastrian religion. Avesta scholars from the western world should be invited; the speeches should not exceed 30 minutes; chartered flights could be arranged from Canada and India, and the Press from India should be invited."

Joint honorary secretary, WZO S. Shahrokh, read a letter received from Prince Emir Movawiah Yazidi from Cairo "wherein an appeal was made to WZO to spread the word of the existence of Zoroastrians and get recognition from the United Nations. The Committee felt that thorough research should be conducted about the Kurds and evidence obtained that would substantiate the contents of the book *To Us Spoke Zarathustra* and also the authenticity of the claim that there are 3,000,000 Zoroastrians in Kurdistan. The matter was left pending till the visit of Prince Movawiah to London."

WZO vice-president S.F. Captain informed the Committee that "Rs 100,000 was offered by a well-wisher as donation through WZO for a building project in Poona provided the following conditions were fulfilled: that Poona Parsi Panchayat became a member of WZO; that the Trustees of Poona Parsi Panchayat individually became members of WZO; that they should enroll about 800 Zoroastrians as members of WZO."

"The (Poona) trustee, Anklesaria, had mentioned to Captain that it would require a General Meeting to settle this matter."

"However, the reply was that if WZO wished to help Zoroastrians, there should be no conditions. Captain wrote back to say that if the conditions were not met, the money would not be forthcoming."

Final acceptance guidelines

The final guidelines for acceptance/non-acceptance into Zoroastrianism have been drawn up and accepted by the

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York at an Open Forum on September 18, 1983.

The guidelines differ from the Religious Advisory Committee's recommendations published in the September 1983 issue of *Parsiana* ("Criteria for conversion") in that the candidates do not have to state why they are forsaking their present religion and no time is required between the candidates announcing their wish to convert and the actual navjote ceremony. Also a clause urging that "no priest violate the recommendations" was dropped.

In a letter Dr Shari Merabi, chairman of the board of trustees of the New York Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple attacked some of the recommendations: "Apparently ZAGNY is endorsing the guideline set forth by its Religious Advisory Council, in which a Navjote Committee will be formed by ZAGNY. The candidate for acceptance to the Zoroastrian faith has first to satisfy a dastoor about his desire and his knowledge of the Zoroastrian fundamentals and then has to go through some tests by the Navjote Committee to prove his qualifications. The details of the test were not announced in the Open Forum. Somebody in the audience predicted that we are going to generate Zoroastrians more knowledgeable than ourselves. My own personal prediction is that no non-Zoroastrian born individual will ever pass the tests of the Navjote Committee and we, the present privileged born Zoroastrians, do not have anything to worry about competition!!"

Merabi preferred the resolution passed in a joint meeting of the New York Arbab Rustam Guiv Trust of California in a letter to be read at the Open Forum said the RAC recommendations "sounds a copy of the regulations of (the) Immigration Office, who try to make it difficult for the new immigrants to enter the country."

Dr Rostam Sarfeh, trustee of the Rustam Guiv Trust of California in a letter to be read at the Open Forum said the RAC recommendations "sounds a copy of the regulations of (the) Immigration Office, who try to make it difficult for the new immigrants to enter the country."

The final guidelines.

MEMORANDUM ON

Definition of A Zoroastrian As Ap-

plicable To The Qualification For Membership, Section 1.02 Under Article 1, of The Byelaws of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York

Based Upon the Recommendation In The Report of The Religious Advisory Committee of ZAGNY, With Suggested Modifications By ZAGNY Board And Confirmed By Consensus of Opinion at the Open Forum on September 18, 1983.

ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE INTO ZOROASTRIANISM

This memorandum deals with the criteria under which one is confirmed a Zoroastrian by Navjote. Navjotes have been traditionally performed for children of Zoroastrian parentage. The community has encountered the question of whether a Navjote can validly be performed of one of Non-Zoroastrian parentage? In other words, does Zoroastrianism permit the acceptance of one of Non-Zoroastrian parentage into the religious community? It is important to note that we use the term "Acceptance" rather than the term "Conversion," as the latter term ambiguously includes both acceptance as well as proselytization. To proselytize, is to seek members of other faith or no faith to join one's own by persuasion or force. This Association makes no such attempt. The present issue is concerned solely with the policy of the Association towards one who chooses on his or her own to follow the religion of Zarathushtra, and expresses a desire to join the Association.

The question we are concerned with is who is eligible to have his or her Navjote performed, and thereby be accepted as a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York?

To clarify and present relevant material for discussion the Board in January 1983, appointed a Religious Advisory Committee including laymen and priests and also the past Presidents of our Association under the Chairmanship of one of the past Presidents, Mr. Erach Munshi. The Board explicitly excluded its present members from the membership of the committee to leave the committee independent of its influence.

A preliminary discussion on this matter took place at an open forum meeting of the General Body in February, 1983. At this open forum the Religious Advisory Committee presented an initial report on this issue. Following the discussions on the Religious Advisory Committee's preliminary report the

ZAGNY Board was mandated to collect and distribute position paper and comments on this issue. Religious Advisory Committee was further assigned a task of developing a detail guideline by fall of 1983.

The report of the Religious Advisory Committee was presented for discussion at the second open forum of the Association in September, 1983. At that time the Board submitted the policy recommendations emerging from the report to the forum for its expression of agreement or otherwise. *This would be of guidance to ZAGNY and would also be communicated to UZANA, as well as to all the Zoroastrian Associations of North America, as the expression of ZAGNY's view on this matter.* The consensus was for accepting the following recommendations:

A WHO IS ZOROASTRIAN?

Any person who has been confirmed into the religion by the performance of the Navjote ceremony and/or the offspring of any person who is Zoroastrian by Navjote, as long as the offspring has not adopted another religion.

B WHO CAN BECOME A ZOROASTRIAN BY NAVJOTE?

- 1 Children of parents who are both Zoroastrians.
- 2 Children of one Zoroastrian parent—either male or female.
- 3 Children legally adopted by a Zoroastrian.
- 4 Spouse of a Zoroastrian, who being well-versed in the Zoroastrian tradition, wishes to be accepted into the Zoroastrian faith.
- 5 Persons of non-Zoroastrian parentage. (Criteria for these listed in paragraph C)

C CRITERIA TO BE FULFILLED BY A PERSON OF NON-ZOROASTRIAN PARENTAGE WHO EXPRESSES INTENTION OF BECOMING A ZOROASTRIAN

- 1 He/she must be capable of reciting the 'kusti' prayers and give account of and significance of the same.
- 2 The candidate should be able to state and willing to espouse the basic concepts of the Zoroastrian view of the world and the way of life.
- 3 The person must be familiar with the religious practices and customs of the Zoroastrian tradition such as jashan, navjote, wedding and the funeral ceremonies.
- 4 It will be the duty of the officiating priest to ensure that the above criteria are fulfilled. If not, the priest will have the

right to reject the request until such time when the candidate is ready to meet the requirements.

D GUIDELINES FOR ASSISTING THE PERFORMING PRIEST AND TO PROVIDE INFORMATION MATERIAL TO THE NON-ZOROASTRIAN CANDIDATE FOR NAVJOTE

- 1 In B (2), B(3) and B(4) of "Who Can Become A Zoroastrian by Navjote" above, Navjote ceremony should be performed with the agreement of both the parents, the child, or the spouse, as the case may be.
- 2 Navjote should be performed by an ordained priest.
- 3 No mass Navjote should be performed by any priest. A priest may perform only one person's Navjote at a time.
- 4 The Priest must be convinced that the person is genuinely interested and not influenced by any non-religious or political motives.
- 5 Prior to the performance of the Navjote, the performing priest and candidate must receive approval by a majority vote from the Navjote Committee set up for that purpose.
- 6 Upon the performance of the Navjote, satisfying the above criteria, the candidate will be eligible to become a member of ZAGNY. However, the candidate must be made aware that He/She may not be accepted as a Zoroastrian by other Association or community.

Note: No pressure or influence either direct or indirect be brought to bear upon any priest by the Board of ZAGNY to perform or not perform Navjote or any religious ceremony of any Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian.

E NAVJOTE COMMITTEE:

The Navjote Committee will be formed by the Board of ZAGNY and will adhere to the guidelines as defined above.

Perpetuating Zoroastrianism in North America

To pay tribute to the memory of a fine young Mobed, the late Ervad Parvez Kotwal, a Memorial Fund has been started in Quebec notes the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago. Its objectives are:

1. To encourage through financial incentives the ordainment of navars and the development of modern aids necessary for their preparation. This incentive will be given in perpetuity in the memory of

Ervad Parvez Kotwal.

2. To encourage the study of either general or specific aspects of Zoroastrian theology through original research in conjunction with an internationally reputed institution of learning. This scholarship will be open to both Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians and will be offered in the name of a Zoroastrian individual who in the opinion of the trustees has contributed significantly to the socio-religious development of the Zoroastrian community in North America.

3. To encourage young Zoroastrian men and women who have exhibited academic excellence through a reimbursable loan to pursue higher studies. Academic excellence to be evaluated in conjunction with a means (need) test. This loan also will be given in the name of a Zoroastrian individual who in the opinion of the trustees has contributed significantly to the socio-religious development of the Zoroastrian community in North America.

Ervad Kotwal was a dedicated Zoroastrian with great potential—a keen outdoorsman and a great lover of nature. He was a devout Boy Scout, a member of the school band and was selected most valuable player of the year in his school house league. He was a promising student of cinematography and TV communications. In 1980 he undertook a trip to India and successfully completed all requirements for *navar* and was ordained. During the past three summers, he worked on a ship ferrying winter supplies to Canada's northern settlements. It was during one of these trips that he was tragically killed at Resolute Bay, on August 31, 1982, at the tender age of 20 notes the ZAMC newsletter.

The patrons of this fund are: Dr Jehan Bagli, Ms Dolly Dastoor, Nozer Kotwal, Dr Farang Mehr, Jamshed Pavri and Mehraban Zartoshty.

Towards Australia's Zoroastrian Centre

"It appears that an amount has been allocated for Australia in the Rustam Guiv Trust," states the February issue of *Manashni*, the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales. "Dr Sarfeh, chairman of the Rustam Guiv Trust, mentions that there are possible New York tax problems but they would endeavour to find ways around them at the appropriate time." However, in accordance with Rustam Guiv's principles, the

local community is required to also pull to do its own.

"This piece of news is indeed encouraging not only to all those who supported the building fund but also to many others who have felt that a Zoroastrian Center is imperative if the Zoroastrian culture is to flourish in Australia."

In 1981/82 AZANSW had made three applications to the State Government, notes Minoo Batliwalla in the newsletter. An application to the Sports and Recreation Department for a grant for a building has not materialized as the Department would now consider grants to those who would build immediately under the Government's Unemployment Relief Scheme.

Two separate applications for a small and a large block of land are still undecided but, Batliwalla informs, from discussions with the Lands Board Office, "the more information the Zoroastrians give in support of their application, especially an assurance of available funds, the better chance they stand in further allocations of land in the coming years."

Neuroticism Sydney Style

Parsis in Sydney are less neurotic than the Parsis in Bombay, reveals a comparative study of the dominance, ambition, neuroticism and social desirability of Sydney's Parsis made by Professor John Ray, notes the May 1983 issue of *Manashni*, the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales. "There is probably a lot less to worry about in Sydney," notes the report.

Ray, whose findings were to be published in the Journal of Social Psychology, is quoted as saying, "I gave the same set of questions to all Sydney Parsis (as Bombay Parsis) by way of a mailed out questionnaire. Those who did not reply after a month got a second questionnaire as a reminder. I thus ended up with 72 completed questionnaires. I give the results below together with results from a random sample of the Sydney population generally.

"So we see that Parsis are about the same on dominance as the Aussies, but are more ambitious. Australians are also clearly less likely to lie about themselves. The most important comparison is neuroticism. Sydney Parsis are a lot less anxious than Bombay Par-

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sis." A similar study done in Bombay resulted in the following findings.

	Bombay Parsis	All Bombay
Dominance	54.77 (5.88)	49.86 (6.20)
Ambition	33.96 (5.65)	35.10 (4.33)
Neuroticism	7.21 (2.98)	6.86 (3.55)
Social desirability	19.38 (2.88)	18.32 (3.06)
	Sydney Parsis	All Sydney
Dominance	55.34 (8.25)	54.88 (8.75)
Ambition	34.63 (5.38)	31.44 (5.83)
Neuroticism	5.84 (3.60)	6.63 (3.57)
Social desirability	18.27 (4.07)	16.01 (4.47)

Funeral Prayers

"Death in the family is something no one would like to talk about. The pathos, suffering and sorrow we face is great," writes Shirley Mahabeshwarwalla in *Manashni* (July, 1983), the newsletter of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales (AZANSW).

"Our community in Sydney is increasing. Currently if one of us suffers this tragedy in Sydney, our total reliance is on Peshotan Katrak if we want prayers to be recited. Peshotan has done the selfless, noble service with total sincerity for years at a lot of personal inconvenience, and I am sure he will continue to do so for many years to come. But what happens if Peshotan is sick or away? We

need some volunteers who can step in if Peshotan is unavailable.

"The idea is to draw up a roster of men who would like to say the prayers before and/or during the funeral. If Peshotan is unavailable the grieved family can ring one of the volunteers who will then recite the prayers. This is voluntary. As soon as we have a few names, they will be published along with their telephone numbers in *Manashni* so that members can make a note in case of an unfortunate event. Peshotan Katrak will then brief us on which prayers are to be recited. This service is only for Zoroastrians who die in Sydney."

Celebrating Amordadegan

Amordadegan, the festival of immortality, was celebrated on July 31 when Fereshteh Arghavani and Ara Anushiravani recited the opening prayers and Armita Sassani spoke in short on the significance of immortality, the last stage of human perfection in Zoroastrian religion, notes *The Zoroastrian*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Center, California.

Earlier, beautifully calligraphed and designed certificates were given to each of the 12 students who graduated from the lower religious classes. The higher classes which began in October 1983 cover the entire texts of the Avesta in two

parts: the Gathic texts and the younger Avestan texts followed by discourses on prayers and ceremonies.

Zerbanoo Gifford: Playing the hand

"The first Asian woman (in the British Parliament) will be a Zoroastrian," confidently smiles Zerbanoo Gifford, currently Harrow's only Asian councillor, who sits on Lord Avebury's Community Relations Panel, the Police Committee, the Liberal Women's Committee etc. "After all there have been three Indians in there before—all Parsis," she says, and she lets it be known that her greatest asset is "being a woman and a Zoroastrian."

During her TV appearance in her campaign during the last general election (which she contested as the Liberal-SDP Alliance candidate for Hertsmere), Zerbanoo related the sugar and milk legend of the Parsi landing in India. "You must enrich the community you join while maintaining your (religio-cultural) commitment and strength," says Zerbanoo, using a concept followed by the Parsis in India for 1,400 years—which resulted in a 13 percent swing in Liberal favour in a predominantly white constituency.

That she lost the seat to the then Tory party chairman Cecil Parkinson was of little consequence. What mattered is that

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she persisted "under a constant barrage of threats against her life and those of her children," as noted *New Life* in its June 24 issue. While Zerbanoo was grateful for the way the police supported her, she says "your genes and *khandaan* is the most important... The way you're brought up makes a difference. It's natural that I should join committees and things and not be paid for it."

Zerbanoo, eldest daughter of Kitty and Bailey Irani, president of the WZO, fondly recalls the grit and determination of her grandparents: of 'mamawaji' Khan Bahadur Shapur Mazda, who at the age of 16 took four years to walk to India from Yazd, finally settling in Calcutta; of 'bapaji' Gover Rustom Irani (88) who as a three-year-old followed a similar track on mule back to eventually settle in Poona. Indeed, it was Gover's serious illness that brought Zerbanoo on a visit. Not wanting to lose forever all those pioneering impressions, Zerbanoo has been taping Gover's stories and hopes to publish them eventually.

Born in India and educated throughout in Britain—in the exclusive Rodean school for girls, then the Watford College of Technology and the London School of Journalism—Zerbanoo worked as the London regional organizer for Oxfam and for the housing charity "Shelter" before her marriage. She is also governor of multi-cultural schools and a trustee of the Sangat Centre, Harrow's community centre for Indians. Her special concerns for the community include the provision of vegetarian meals for home delivery by the council for old people, provision of teaching facilities in Hindi and Gujarati in schools, the availability of homeopathic medicine, yoga and other specialized health care improvements for the immigrant community, notes her bio-data.

August '83 saw the first international Gujarati Conference in London with representatives from Canada, East Africa and India. Zerbanoo participated and spoke for Parsis there "because we as Parsis are an important part of Gujarat."

"I see more Parsis in London than here," says Zerbanoo who is appalled to find "Bombay all run down" and by the sight of Parsis begging: I "did feel very bad—much more than at the sight of an ordinary beggar, that we've allowed such people to go begging... In England I can

do something, I can see the results of social work. Politics (there) is one of the most important vocations... In Bombay it took two hours to get my bag out of the airport and my bag was completely smashed to pieces. There was so much muddle. Immigration took so long to check my British passport. Officials just passed over my request for help. I create such a rumpus when in England an immigrant is held up for so long."

Even in England "state schools have lowered standards, including standards of morality. The old courtesies no longer exist. But among Zoroastrians the old courtesies and politeness may still be found." Whenever she attends the Liberal party conventions she generally rings up a local resident who responds by inviting her to stay with her family for the course of the convention, as for example with Lady Bomanjee in Harrogate, Yorkshire, who maintains an old Parsi household and the late Dr Adarbad Irani's son in Bournemouth where the younger generation has kept the tradition going. "I ask my husband,

'Can you ring up any member of your community and make such a request with the same confidence?' " laughs Zerbanoo.

Husband Richard Gifford is a solicitor specializing in international law who is immersed in his work of helping immigrants contest unjust laws. Sons Mark-Mazda (8) and Alexander Justice (4½) have gone electioneering strapped to Zerbanoo's back. "They've benefitted by constant exposure. Their whole awareness of the world is very different."

"Our house is more Irani than British.... It's so important that we keep the religion going," says Zerbanoo and is annoyed that the children of Zoroastrian mothers cannot be inducted into the religion the same way as those of Zoroastrian fathers. "At least here there is a guarantee that 50 percent of the blood is Zoroastrian," she notes dryly.

"God deals the cards but you have to play your hand," her grandfather had taught her as a little girl. Zerbanoo does—with zest and determination.



Zerbanoo with husband, Richard, and sons Alexander Justice (left), Mark-Mazda (right)

Mazda Leasing: a viable alternative

With the remark "leasing has now become fashionable," noted tax consultant Homi P. Ranina announced that Mazda Leasing Limited will be offering shares to the public in February 1984.

The first Indian leasing company to go into collaboration with a British leasing company, Mazda Leasing Limited is being promoted by a group of well qualified professionals. They are: Ranina (chairman), advocate of the Supreme Court, noted tax consultant and columnist; managing director Homi D. Mehta, former senior executive of the Central Bank of India; and directors Burjor H. Antia, partner of the noted law firm Mulla and Mulla Craigie Blunt and Caroe and director of several companies, Dara K. Deboo, advocate and chairman of Mazda Estate and Finance Pvt. Ltd., Yezdi J. Master and Kersi J. Limathwalla, both chartered accountants, Balkrishan M. Shukla, a banker and Sharu S. Rangnekar, former managing director of Searle India Ltd. and noted management consultant and author.

Mazda has secured a technical and business collaboration with British Equipment (Leasing) Limited, established in UK in 1971. The British company will provide professional advice/information on lease accountancy, management systems and marketing, notes a

brochure of the company.

"We would be in a position to provide equipment like engineering goods of Indian origin to customers in Britain. We would also get introductions to European and US suppliers from the British firm. This export of Indian equipment would mean additional revenue for the company and also serve a social purpose by bringing foreign exchange into the country," said Ranina at the November 25 press conference held at Bombay's Taj Intercontinental.

"Leasing offers a viable alternative to financial borrowings from banks and institutions which have stringent regulations and impose a number of restrictions on the borrowers," he stated.

According to him the company hoped to get most of the funds generated by the public issue from the rural areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat, where agriculturists and others are looking for investment opportunities. The directors are aware of this because some of them are involved with Mazda Estate & Finance Company (P) Ltd. which deals in real estate business in Bombay and Gujarat.

In view of the tremendous prospects for leasing ("there is enough business for another 100 companies") and the tax shelter offered by the high rates of depreciation allowance, the return on investment would be substantial ("10 to 15 percent") from the very first year, stated Ranina.

Katgaras: pioneering travel agents

Once, when reputed travel agent Nari J. Katgara was asked why he had resisted switching from travel business to other industries with higher profits, he replied, "For the fun of it." This characterizes the agent's view towards his work as he pursues a pioneering career in the travel trade.

The travel agency business in India is only about four decades old and in its short history, one family of travel agents stands out—the Katgara brothers. Their parent company Jeena & Company, was founded as early as 1900, though its initial role was that of a shipping and freight agency. Before World War II, however, it had started handling some of the incoming tourists arriving by ship. It was in the late 40s that Nari J. Katgara took charge of Jeena on the death of his father. Soon after, his brother Adi joined him and the two made an excellent team to start a trail in travel promotion, which is the envy of many professionals, even today.

Nari J. Katgara, (57), was the first Indian travel agent to attend the annual convention of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) in 1949. It was here that he realised the potential of tourism and its relevance to the developing Indian economy. He came back brimming with ideas, and in 1951, set up with the help of other colleagues, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI). He also became its first president. On the 25th anniversary of TAAI in 1975, Nari was honoured by the Association with the Agasthya Award for his outstanding services to the Indian travel industry. Similarly, Adi J. Katgara, who joined a couple of years later, started taking keen interest in the development and promotion of tourist business. Both brothers involved themselves actively in international and national travel organizations and with the help of others, founded the Skat Club of India in Bombay, and Nari became its president for two years.

Having realised the potential of tourism and the need for joint marketing, the Katgara brothers were instrumental in setting up the Travel Corporation of India Private Limited (TCI)—a consortium of four major In-

Ranina



Shukla



Rangnekar



Antia



Deboo



Master



Limathwalla



Mehta



JOB BUSINESS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARSI ZOROASTRIANS

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They have pointed out that the real opportunities for higher earnings and future prospects are to be found in occupations other than desk or clerical jobs and have offered to provide facilities for vocational or on job training in such occupations. Some of the areas pinpointed by

them are *Computer Technology and Programming, Technology of Television, Other Audio Visual Equipment and Printed Circuitry, Automobile Engineering, Sanitary Engineering, wood working etc.*

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may apply to the Federation for the specific one in which you are interested, but even if you are not interested in any of these, Please do not wait for the opportunity to knock on your door, instead Let us Together Seek out the Opportunity. Send your detailed Bio-data with photograph, clearly specifying the type of job or Training you are looking for, to :

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Adi and Nari Katgara: several firsts. (Photos by Ayesha Soni.)

dian travel agents, to provide services to incoming tourists. TCI came into being in 1961 with the merger of all the incoming business of the four companies, including Jeena which the Katgaras headed. The new company was a great success. As a result of this cooperative effort, TCI is now one of the largest travel outfits in Asia, with 27 offices in India and seven in foreign countries. Their US branch is a full service travel agency and not merely a tourism promotion liaison office. The company employs 800 people all over the world and in 1982-83, its turnover was Rs 32 crores and foreign exchange earnings amounted to some eight crore rupees.

The Katgaras have several firsts to their credit. TCI has not been just a travel agency but a marketing organization, developing new products and floating new ideas. For instance, they were the first to introduce the idea of All India Tours by coaches; the concept was not an economic success, not because of any lack of effort on the part of TCI, but primarily caused by inter-state restrictions on movement of coaches, a problem that still exists. TCI was responsible for opening the Andaman and Lakshadweep Islands, and even set up the first tourist resort hotel in Port Blair. They pioneered the concept of cruising the Indian Ocean around the Indian coast and to neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and the Maldives. TCI also helped pioneer Ladakh as a new destination for tourists.

Recently, they have announced a subsidiary company—TCI Hotels & Resorts Pvt. Ltd. The company has a dozen hotels under its ownership or under management. The concept was started to

provide modest accommodation at places of tourist interest and has since been extended to sea resorts and other areas.

Again, it was TCI which introduced special interest tours as early as 1964. Among the special interest tours were youth tours, mountaineering, wildlife, monuments, shopping, gems and jewellery, yoga, Buddhist and maharaja tours. On another hand, they pioneered incentive tour marketing which has since developed into an exciting attraction that India offers. However, shopping, forwarding and freight has been the original business of Jeena and it still constitutes their major occupation and the company is one of the largest in the freight and cargo business. Here again, the Katgaras have assisted in the formation of the Air Cargo Association (ACA) and the Air Cargo Club (ACC). Nari Katgara was the president of the ACA for two years.

Another company that the two have established is called Katgara Brothers, to promote Indian export.

Reprinted and abridged from *Destination India*, October '83.

London Pilsner's heady success

The brewery industry in India has long been the preserve of a handful of heavyweights with countrywide operations, notably the late Vital Mallya's United Breweries group and the Mohan Meakins and Shaw Wallace groups. All these groups operate distilleries in addition to their breweries and have effectively combined the marketing of beer with the financial clout earned from hard

liquor sales to carve for themselves substantial slices of the country's beer markets.

This scenario was rudely altered by the inauguration in 1975 of a brewery at Thane near Bombay, by a partnership firm, the Associated Breweries and Distilleries. In just eight years, this single brewery has taken on the industry's heavyweights and successfully captured approximately 50 percent of the prize Bombay market with its three beers, London Pilsner, London Diet and London Premium, and is well entrenched in the Western region. Beginning with a turnover of approximately Rs 60 lakhs in their first year of operation, Associated Breweries notched a turnover of just under Rs 13 crores for the year ended September 1983, and now has an eye on the overseas market.

Primer of sorts

"I'm first and foremost a construction man," says the company's founder Noshir Irani who owns and controls most of the Bakhtawar Construction Company, a Bombay based partnership construction firm that, in turn, controls Associated Breweries. Irani divides his time between construction activities in Bombay and Bangalore, Associated Breweries, horseracing and the Freemasons District Grand Lodge of Western India of which he is the Grand Master.

In 1964 Irani was offered a brewery licence by a freedom fighter, strangely enough over a glass of whisky. He took up the offer and set up a brewery in Goa in 1968 with an installed capacity of 20,000 hectolitre (HL) of beer. The venture was beset with problems of all kinds

and served as a lesson of sorts for the fledgling brewery firm. Irani discovered that it would take a capacity of at least 50,000 HL to produce beer profitably. Inefficient labour and the brewery's distance from Bombay (400 miles) added to its high operating costs and the plant was unceremoniously shut down in 1976-77. Says Irani ruefully, "We lost Rs 32 lakhs on that venture." Armed with the experience gained from the Goa episode, Irani set up the Thane brewery on February 8, 1975, with an installed capacity of 50,000 HL and provision for further expansion.

With an impressive Rs 45 lakh building and a bottling plant imported from Germany at a cost of Rs 2.4 crores, Associated Breweries was all set to infiltrate the Bombay market with its first beer, London Pilsner. By this time Irani's daughter Zeenia Lawyer, who is now the marketing partner, joined the business. Says she of the initial campaign "The market was difficult to penetrate. Shaw Wallace's Skol Breweries had launched their brand, Hayward Lager, a year ahead of us and other brands such as Golden Eagle were already quite popular." The first two years proved tough going indeed. The firm dropped the price of London Pilsner in a bid to outsell their rivals and, as a result, incurred substantial losses. In terms of the all important factor, taste, Associated Breweries found it a hard task to get London Pilsner accepted by Bombay drinkers—they found it a trifle heavy. In addition, the ban on liquor advertising made it difficult to reach the consumer via the media.

Turning point

The year 1977 proved to be the turning point in the company's fortunes. Irani

Irani and Lawyer: backing a winning beer.



Associated Breweries: growth profile (figures in Rs. crores)



decided to seek the services of a professional and invited the master brewer of Ceylon Breweries, D. Murugesan, to visit the brewery as a consultant. Attracted by the challenge of rejuvenating the firm, Murugesan resigned his job and joined Associated Breweries as chief executive in December 1978. A professional brewmaster who trained in the UK and also with Carlsberg (Denmark) and Heineken (Rotterdam), Murugesan brought to his new job the skills honed in



the 17 years he spent with Ceylon Breweries. "I was familiar with all aspects of a brewery, from brewing to marketing, having dealt with all these areas in my previous job," says Murugesan.

His first task was to develop the taste of the beer. This called for some expertise and involved two stages, what Murugesan calls the art and science of brewing. The first part, the art, consists of tasting the beer and finding what is lacking or what is objectionable in the beer. The second part, the science, consists of rectifying the defects in the beer. It was felt that the brewery needed a beer

that, in terms of taste, could find a unique position for itself in the market: Irani himself suggested that prevailing beers were too heavy and based on this suggestion and a fair amount of market research, Murugesan developed the lighter tasting beer that London Pilsner is today.

The next task was to improve the firm's labour relations with its 340 employees (including 140 at the brewery). High quality standards and strict monitoring are essential for the delicate brewery process and employee motivation had to be boosted to achieve this. The firm seems to have employed one of Ouchi's Theory Z parallels and set about creating the feeling of belonging." This was achieved through the use of open dialogue and frequent visits by senior management to the brewery, accompanied by informal conversations with the workers.

One of the brewery's assets is its relatively low employee strength. In terms of turnover, the per capita output of the firm is approximately Rs 3.8 lakhs. The firm has made a conscious effort to prune deadwood and Murugesan himself believes that "it is the effort that counts and not the number of people."

Young professionals were taken on in areas ranging from brewing to marketing and salaries of the workers were progressively raised. The firm formed a marketing team consisting of Zeenia Lawyer, her husband Sohrab (who runs his own business, but finds time to lend a hand), Murugesan, the marketing manager and occasionally, when policy is to be decided, Irani himself.

The firm has no commission scheme for its salesmen and uses a basic salary plus increment scheme to reward salesmen, who are vital to its order, promotion and feedback systems. Says Zeenia Lawyer, "The main idea was and still is to keep us alive in dealers' minds." This product awareness (made all the more difficult by the advertising ban) was developed by frequent visits to dealers. The firm improved its cash flow by charging distributors an advance less

a cash discount of 2 percent (the beer is sold at Rs 106 per dozen). They also attempted to reach the consumer with attractive poster displays at outlets. Lawyer indirectly promoted the beer through the sponsorship of various activities such as cross-country races, shows at Bombay's swank discotheque, Studio 29, and visits to the brewery, such as the Royal Navy's recent visit.

All these moves paid off, and by 1980, aided also by the relaxation of prohibition policies in parts of the Western region, and increases in prices and production, the firm recorded a turnover of Rs 6 crores. By then, the firm was relying on a single product, London Pilsner (it remains the firm's biggest seller) and felt it was time to introduce a new product.

Lawyer suggested that the firm produce a low calorie diet beer, aimed at figure conscious urbanites. In spite of initial resistance from the rest of the marketing team, Lawyer pushed ahead with the project that proved to be an instant success. With the assistance of an advertising agency, Chaitra, the firm mounted a campaign that laid the stress on body weight by enumerating the benefits of a low calorie intake on human figures, particularly around the waist.

Comfortable niche

The product, London Diet, was launched in December 1981, just three months after it was initially proposed, and, says Murugesan, "We sold two months' production in a week." To balance its product line, Associated Breweries also introduced a stronger beer, London Premium, and a pint size version of London Pilsner. It also sells draught beer in kegs (this reduces packaging costs—empty bottles cost between Rs 1.15 to 1.50 per bottle), but these need big outlets with a large turnover, as draught beer is not pasteurised and has a shorter shelf life. Draught beer is now supplied to hotels such as the Taj Intercontinental and the Oberoi Towers, in addition to some other large outlets.

Associated Breweries is now comfortably ensconced in its market niche in the western region and is selling its beer in Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Bangalore, Gujarat (in five star hotels) and Delhi too but what does the future hold for it? Growth has its own problems, and being a partnership firm, taxes are eating away large chunks of the firm's profits. Irani plans to open a plant in Delhi if he can obtain a licence or buy a plant there and says that by next year the firm may go public. This may save the firm from paying ex-

cess taxes and help it to move further towards professionalization, but it will also mean a growth in size and a subsequent devolution of control. The informal relationships and quick action—benefits that accrue from the firm's present small size—will become increasingly difficult to maintain.

However, these are problems of the future. For the present, the firm is busy-ing itself with its export consignment. It will shortly be sending over 15,000 bottles of beer under the brand name 'Maharaja' to California, USA. This is a trial order but even if American consumers dislike the beer, it will not ruffle the company unduly as it manages to sell most of its peak capacity production of 62,500 HL per annum.

Irani, the construction man who made it in beer, himself remains optimistic about the future and points to a slogan on his wall that reads, "I'm always polite to people who disagree with me, they have a right to their stupid opinions." After all, he laid his bets and, in spite of a whole host of problems, succeeded in backing a winner.

SUNIL GOPALAN

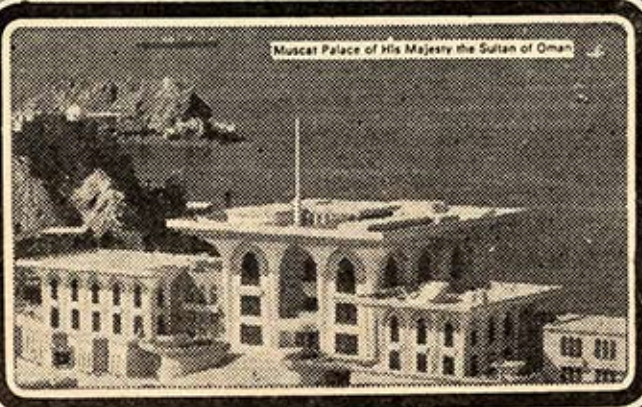
Abridged and reprinted from Business India, October 24—November 6, 1983. Photographs courtesy Business India.

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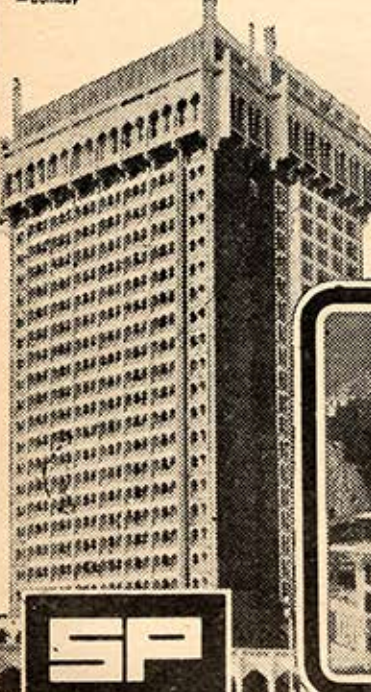
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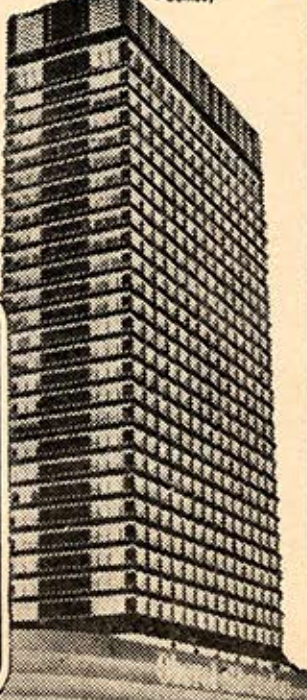


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The Story of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram

Firoze M. Kotwal and James W. Boyd

The article, originally titled "The 151st Anniversary Celebration of the H.B. Wadia Atas Bahram," is reprinted with permission from the Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute (No 50), Bombay 1983, with diacritical marks omitted. The 150th year is referred to as the 151st, the day of installation of the Atas Padsha being reverentially considered the first anniversary.

Among the eight Atas Bahrams in India today, one of the oldest and most prestigious is the Hormasji Bahmanji Wadia Atas Bahram of Bombay. On October 11, 1980 (*roz Srosh, mah Ardibehesht*, A.Y. 1350) the 151st anniversary of the installation of the sacred fire was celebrated. This article contains a brief account of the history of the Wadia Atas Bahram, followed by a description of the ceremonial events that highlighted this important anniversary celebration.

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WADIA ATAS BAHRAM

The temple building

On February 17, 1805 a disastrous fire broke out in the Fort area of Bombay. Three-fourths of the bazaar and about a thousand houses were destroyed. Hundreds of people perished. The Parsis who had lost their homes had to move, and many were relocated in the Dhobitalao and Girgaon area of the city. Because they were in need of a place of worship in the vicinity where they lived, Hormasji Bahmanji Wadia built a temple for an Adaran (second grade) fire in the Charni Wadi area (now called Chandan Wadi). The temple was built in honour of his deceased father, Bahmanji Wadia, the son of the famous shipbuilder who constructed the first dry dock in India (Bombay) in 1750 A.C. On November 26,



Ritual handshake: Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Antia

1805 (*roz Bahram, mah Ardibehesht*, A.Y. 1175) the ceremony for the installation of an Adaran fire was conducted by five pairs of priests (*mobeds*) from Navsari. Dastur Edalji Darabji Sanjana was the priest in charge of all ceremonial observances. Today, in the outer hall surrounding the sanctuary (*gumbad*) of the Adaran an inscription in marble commemorates the event.

Over a quarter of a century later, more than one-tenth (1,074) of all the Parsis in the Bombay area lived in the Girgaon area. Sheth H. B. Wadia, who had passed away in 1826, left instructions in his will to found an Atas Bahram. His second wife, Mithibai, and his sons Bahmanji, Rustamji, and Ardeshtir Hormasji Wadia, therefore established an Atas Bahram in the same Chandan Wadi area where the Adaran had been established 25 years earlier. In 1830 the building of the Hormasji Bahmanji Wadia Atas Bahram was completed. It was located on 4,493 4/9 square yards of land, with an additional 469 1/9 square yards around it. The previous and now adjoining building housing the Adaran was also enlarged.

Formation of the sacred fire

The procedures for the formation of the sacred fire had been set in motion more than a year before the completion date (1830) of the building. The text of a letter from Calcutta to B.H. Wadia has been preserved which states the origins of the fire caused by lightning—one of the 16 types of fires required in the formation of an Atas Bahram. The letter, translated from Gujarati, reads as follows:

To Sheth Wadiaji Bahmanji Hormasji of the Port of Bombay.

The undersigned extend to you their salutations and blessings from the Port of Calcutta. You sent *mobed* Jamshedji Edalji Vajifdar (for the fire). The fire was brought by the Parsi Sohrabji Rustamji Mistri from the garden of Sheth Rustamji Kavasji Banaji, where lightning fell on a *Tad* tree (Gujarati term for a species of palm). It was brought to the house of a Parsi, Meherwanji Limji, on the 15th of June, 1828 A.C. The fire was kept in a fire vase placed in the kitchen where formerly the fire of the late Navroji Sohrabji was kept. The same *mobed*, Jamshedji Edalji, tended the fire five times a day and that fire is sent herewith on the 21st of October, 1829, corresponding to the day 20, month one, 1199 A.Y. At the time when a Parsi, Sohrabji Mistri, brought the fire a Parsi named Jivo and a Parsi named Jamshedji Behramji were present. These two Parsis were interrogated about the fire, and both said that the fire sent to you is the same fire and they witnessed to that.

We the undersigned:

Rustamji Kavasji
Dorabji Behramji
Ratanji Behramji Bisni
Meherwanji Limji
Jamshedji Behramji
Palanji Dorabji Meherji
Navroji Motabhai

Preparations for the enthronement of the sacred fire

Preparations for the enthronement of the Atas Bahram involved the whole Zoroastrian community of India. On October 2, 1830 (No Ruz, A.Y. 1200), the Wadia brothers sent invitations to all Parsi Anjomans in India and requested the leading Zoroastrians of those communities to attend the ceremonies of installation. Six weeks before the consecration of the sacred fire, public notice was also given to the Parsi community in the daily Gujarati paper *Mumbai Samachar* (October 4, 1830). After invoking the creator Ohrmazd it stated:

With the blessed guidance of the true prophet of the Mazdayasnian Religion, a joyous and righteous deed has been accomplished for which we are all very grateful. Bahmanji, Rustamji, and Ardeshir Wadiaji request the presence of the entire Zoroastrian community—*dasturs*, *mobeds* and *behdins*—of all cities, ports and villages of Bombay, Surat, Navsari, Broach, Baroda, Khambhat, Kheda, Godavri, Gandevi, Billimora, Bulsar, Udepur (Udvada), Daman, Nargol, Tarapore, Kalyan, Diu, Thana,

Poona, and the residents on the bank of the river Gor and Jalna, etc. We request all to attend so that the King Shri Atas Bahram Saheb of the holy Zoroastrian religion would bestow upon all people of the good religion joy and happiness on consecration day. By attending at this auspicious time may you acquire the merit of both the worlds by bowing before the glorious face of Shri Atas Bahram Saheb.

Because the consecration of an Atas Bahram is the creation of a new living being, a unique spiritual-material reality which possesses the radiant glory (*xarrah*) of the Lord of Wisdom Himself, preparations for his enthronement also involved an act of clemency worthy of a royal coronation. In commemoration of the enthronement of the victorious king of fires (*aduran padixsay perozgar*), trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat declared that Parsis who had been ostracized from the community for wrongdoing were to be pardoned. Navroji Jamshedji Wadia, one of the trustees of the Parsi Panchayat, recommended to the board among other things that those guilty of wrongdoing should

pay a fine, possibly to a *gahambar* fund, and undergo a purification ceremony of *barasnum*. The pardon would then be complete. Though there was some opposition to this move, the board eventually agreed that the occasion of the installation of the Wadia Atas Bahram was a suitable time for an act of compassion.

Enthronement

The installation celebration was held on November 17, 1830 (*roz Srosh, mah Ardibehesht*, A.Y. 1200). On this day hundreds of Parsis visited the Atas Bahram. According to the editor of the *Mumbai Samachar* there were not less than 1,000 in attendance. *Dasturs* and priests were given shawls and special garments according to their station, and a large banquet was held. The *Bombay Courier* (November 20, 1830) described the hall of the fire temple as "regally ornamented with chandeliers, (and) mirrors..." and the *gumbad* area where the fire was enthroned was described as "paved with marble stones, in the middle of which (was) placed a large silver vase of the value of upwards of 40,000 rupees, in which the holy fire (was) placed." The total expenses of the day

The H.B. Wadia Atas Bahram entrance (photo by Homyar J. Mistry)



amounted to one lac (100,000) rupees. Among others events, the high priest Dastur Edalji Sanjana was presented with 30 shawls by prominent Parsis of the city.

The ritual ceremonies of consecration were supervised by Dastur Edalji Sanjana. Dastur Edalji took the nine-day purification ritual (*barasnum*) in pious memory of Sheth Hormasji B. Wadia. On the day of installation, he performed a *yasna* service dedicated to Mino-Navar (*moti xub*) and conducted the first service of spoken *maora* and ritual offerings of frankincense and sandalwood (*boy* ceremony) before the Atas Bahram. He then conducted a community worship service (*jashan*) in honour of Srosh, Dahman (the *hamkars* or co-workers of that day), and again Srosh. All assembled recited the litany to fire, (*Atas Niyayes*), offered prayers, bowed their heads to the earth and blessed the immortal soul of the late Sheth Hormasji Bahmanji Navroji Wadia. Today, on the outer eastern wall of the central hall an inscription in marble commemorates the installation of this sacred fire.

Dasturs of the Wadia Atas Bahram (1830 to Present)

The eight high priests who have served the Wadia Atas Bahram over the past 150 years have all belonged to the Bhagaria sect (*panth*), one of the five priestly sects in India (Sanjana, Bhagaria, Godavra, Bharucha, and Khambatta). Though of the Bhagaria sect, the first five *dasturs* had the family name of another sect. The reason for this is found in certain events that took place in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Sanjana priests came to Navsari from Bansda with their Atas Bahram in about 1479 A.C.

During their stay of about 260 years (they left for Bulsar in 1740 A.C.) the Sanjanas came in close contact with the Bhagaria priests. They undertook their priestly purification ceremonies (*barasnum*) in the ritual precincts of the Navsari fire temple (Wadi Dar-e Mihr) and initiated their sons into the priesthood (*nawar*) there. In the 16th century, Peshotan, one of the ancestors of Dastur Edalji Sanjana, was adopted by his Bhagaria maternal grandfather Jiva Shayer Chanda Ashdin. Since that time, the descendants of Peshotan have been priests within the Bhagar sect.

Dastur Edalji Darabji Sanjana served for 17 years (1830-1847) as the first *dastur* of the Wadia Atas Bahram. His

NO.	LOCATION	FUNCTION	REMARKS
1	Porch		
2	Kusti concourse	For washing and tying of sacred cord	
3	Verandah		
4	Hall	For performance of marriage and investiture (<i>Naojote</i>) ceremonies by dastur only	Also used for community meetings and for performance of ceremonies of Wadia family
5	Corridor	Leading to ante-room of Atas Bahram, Atas Adaran and <i>Urwisgah</i>	
6	Ante-room	Chairs for priests tending fire (<i>boywaras</i>), also a safe for storing monetary offerings	
7	Prayer hall	For recital of prayers by devotees	
8	Sanctum Sanctorum	Enthronement of Atas Bahram	Provided with <i>pawis</i> and clerestory
9	Extra sanctum sanctorum	For occasional shifting of Atas Adaran	Provided with <i>pawis</i>
10	Platform	For lighting of oil lamps by devotees	
11	Storage	For storing ceremonial implements, oil etc.	Provided with loft
12	Storage	For storing fuel for Bahram fire	
13	Room for nine-day retreat (<i>Nahn-xaneh</i>)	For use of priests during nine-day ritual of purification (<i>barasnum</i>)	Provided with <i>pawis</i> for priestly use when needed
14	Room for death-anniversary ceremonies (<i>baj-rozgar</i>)	For performance of monthly-annual ceremonies as per trust	
15	<i>Urwisgah</i>	Enthronement of Dadgah fire and for performance of high liturgies (<i>Yasna</i> , <i>Vendidad</i> and <i>Baj</i>)	Provided with <i>pawis</i> and clerestory; also used for other major rituals
16	Sanctum sanctorum	Enthronement of Atas Adaran	Provided with <i>pawis</i> and clerestory
17	Well	For devotees (to perform ablutions)	
18	Passage	Leading to Atas Bahram Trust buildings	
19	Reading Room	For priests	
20	Dormitory	For use of priests	
21	Well	For offering <i>haoma</i> libations after <i>Yasna</i> and <i>Vendidad</i> ceremonies; source of pure water	
22	Kitchen	For preparation of food for priests tending fire (<i>boywaras</i>) and other sacrificial offerings (<i>dron</i> , sweetmeats, etc.)	
23	Toilet	Two exclusively for fire-tending priests and the other two for devotees, etc.	
24	Storage	For storing fuel for the sacred fires	
25	Area for nine-day purification (<i>barasnumgah</i>) ritual	For administering ritual of purification to qualify priests for high liturgies	Provided with shed for ewe, bull and storage
26	Services	For preparing hot water, cleaning utensils, etc.	
27	Storage	Cupboards for priests and Parsi servants	
28	Toilet block	For general use	
29	Balcony		
30	Hall	For performance of minor rituals (<i>Afrinagan</i> , <i>Fravasi</i> and <i>Stum</i>) and for All-Souls (<i>Muktad</i>), investiture (<i>Naojote</i>) and marriage ceremonies	Also used for religious lectures
31	Passage	For storing tables, etc.	
32	Storage		
33	Cupola room	For use of priests tending fire only	
34	Secretary's room	For use by secretary and assistant	Contains a safe and steel cabinets for records, etc.
35	Donor's room	For performance of ceremonies of C.P. Wadia's family	
36	Hall	For performance of minor rituals (<i>Arfinagan</i> , <i>Fravasi</i> and <i>Stum</i>) and for All-Souls (<i>Muktad</i>) ceremonies	
37	Cupola	For priests tending fire only	
38	Dormitory	For use of priests	
39	Dormitory	For use of priests tending fire (<i>boywaras</i>)	

adopted brother, Behramji Darabji Sanjana, was appointed to succeed him. He served the fire temple for 10 years, until 1857. His successor was Peshotanji Bahramji Sanjana, whose dasturship spanned 41 years, from 1857-1898. He was the son of a cousin of Dastur E.D. Sanjana, and the adopted son of Dastur B. D. Sanjana. Darabji Peshotanji succeeded his father as *dastur* (1898-1931).

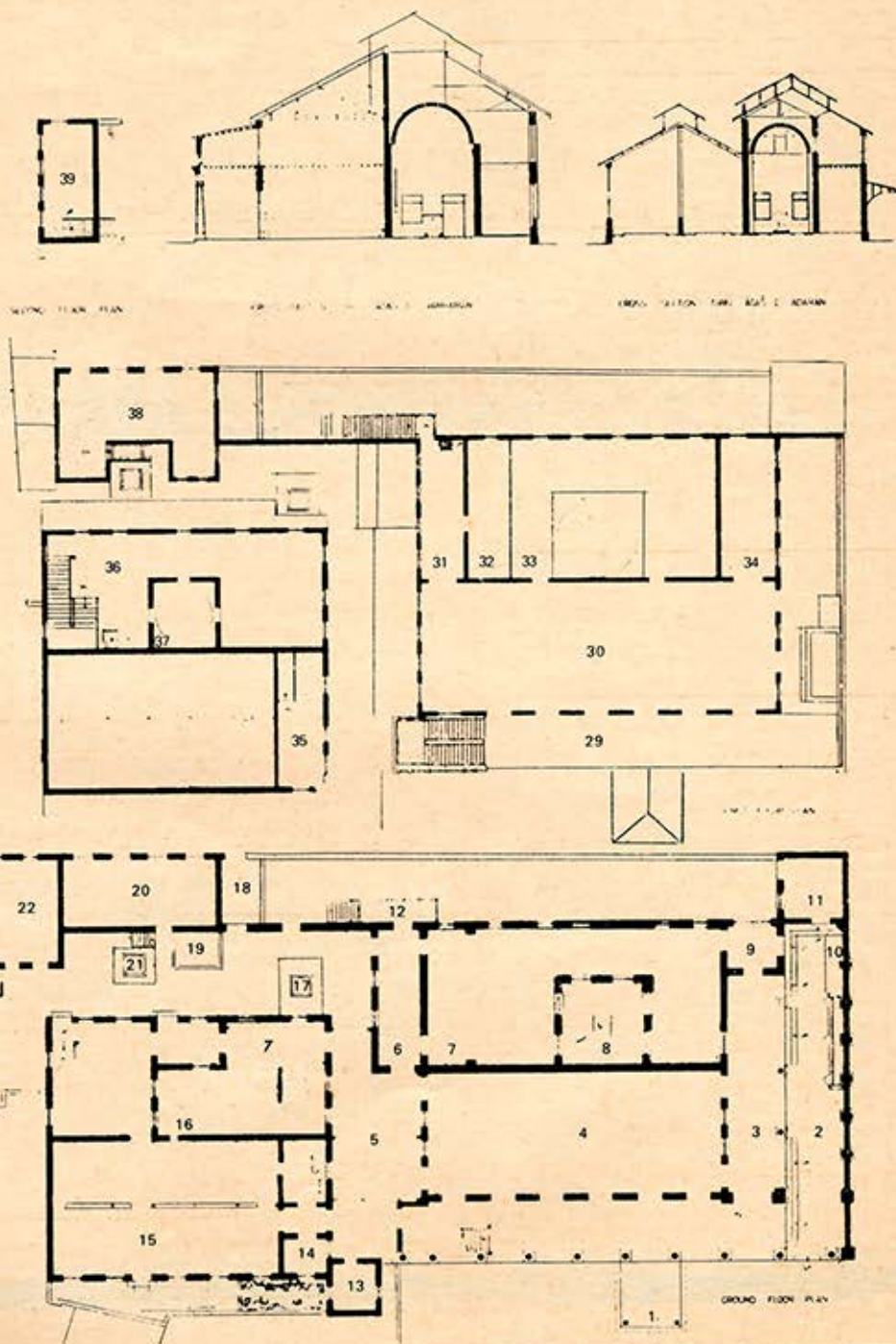
He had the responsibility of directing the centenary celebration of the Wadia Atas Bahram, observed on the 24th of October 1930. The last Sanjana *dastur* to serve the Wadia Atas Bahram was Dastur Rustomji Edulji Sanjana. He held the dasturship from 1931-1938.

Because no Sanjana relations sought the dasturship following the resignation of Dastur Rustomji, the family succes-

sion ceased. Kaikhushru Mahiyar Kutar was selected by the trustees to serve as the next *dastur*. He served the Wadia Atas Bahram from 1938-1948. Dastur Khurshed Shapurji Dabu succeeded him, serving the fire temple for 29 years (1948-77), at which time he retired (d. 1979). The present *dastur*, Dr Firoze Meherji Kotwal (co-author of this article), was installed on May 1, 1977.

The plan of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram

Key to the plan
on facing page.





*Regd. Office: Army & Navy Building
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400 023
Phone: 244727 • Grams: GRINDWELL
Telex: 011-2840 GNO-IN*

II. THE 151ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE WADIA ATAS BAHRAM

In order to preserve the sanctity of the sacred fire during the renovation work of the building, the sacred fire was moved from its own domed sanctuary to the sanctuary (*gumbad*) of the Atas Adaran. The Adaran had been shifted previously to the *Urwisgah*, that area of the temple complex where high liturgies are performed (diagram no. 15). Before the anniversary celebration (*jashan*) could take place, the newly furnished *gumbad* area of the Atas Bahram had to be reconsecrated and the sacred fire re-enthroned. These two ceremonial events were accomplished in the following manner.

Reconsecration of the sanctuary

Beginning on October 2, 1980 (*roz* Day-pa-Adar, *mah* Ardibehesht) in the empty *gumbad* of the Atas Bahram (diagram no. 8), one *yasna* ceremony was performed daily for three successive days in honour of Srosh *yazad*, the spiritual protector of the material world. During the second night (Adar) the *Vendidad* ceremony was also performed. For each of these ceremonies, the stone table on which the fire normally stands (the *atas xan*) served as the ritual table. Another table was brought in to serve as the place for the officiating priest to sit (the *zodgah*) while conducting the rituals.

So that the priests could keep their ritual power (*moti xub*) intact throughout the four days of consecrating ceremonies, they performed regular *baj* (*dron*) ceremonies before they took their meals during each day. On the fourth day (Khorshed) one *yasna* service was dedicated to the creator Ohrmazd. This *Yasna of Dadar* (Creator) *Ohrmazd* was celebrated within the ritual precinct (*pawi*) of the *Urwisgah* (diagram no. 15) to free the sanctuary for preparations for the day of reinstallation.

Prior to this time a silver crown (*taj*) had been hung by means of an iron chain and pulley from the center of the dome above the sanctuary. A pure gold garland, weighing 327 grams, was also hung on the interior marble wall of the *gumbad* to serve as an offering to the sacred fire on his anniversary date. Additional preparations involved the ritual purification of the large fire vase (*af-ringanyu*) and the concave lid which fits over the top of the empty vase (*sarposh*). Through ceremonial washing and *maoric* recitation these were both made *paw*, the highest degree of purity, and then dried



Dasturs JamaspAas, Mirza and Kotwal participating in the dedication along with other dasturs and ervads.

(made *khushk*) and placed separately on the floor of the *gumbad*.

With the utterance of the *Ahuna Vairya* prayer, the priests in charge of maintaining the fire (*boywaras*) carefully transferred the fire vase to the stone table (*atas xan*). Two silver coins and some silver leaves which had been purified were then placed underneath the fire vase. These served as auspicious gifts offered at the feet of the victorious king of fires. The stone table with the fire vase placed on it was then made pure (*paw*) by washing it with water in the manner followed in the *boy* ceremony, thereby ritually guaranteeing the spiritual (*menog*) presence of the fire. The large, deep lid (*sarposh*) was then placed on top of the fire vase and filled with sandalwood dust and chips. The throne of the Atas Bahram, now fully consecrated, awaited the sacred fire to be brought in royal procession that night.

Re-enthronement (*taxt-nishini*)

At midnight (*ushahin gah*) of October 5, 1980 (*roz* Khorshed) a large gathering of devout Zoroastrians, including trustees, priests and *boywaras* led by Dastur Kotwal, celebrated the re-enthronement ceremony. The first two *boywaras* transferred the Atas Bahram, still residing in the *gumbad* of the Adaran, into a small purified fire vase which had been filled to the brim with sandalwood dust and chips. Three times while uttering *humata, hukhta, hvarshata* (good

thoughts, good words, good deeds) a portion of the embers of the Atas Bahram was lifted with a ladle and transferred to the smaller fire vase. A canopy, perforated and shaped like a crown, was placed over the fire.

The sacred fire was then carried to his own sanctuary by two *boywaras* in full ceremonial attire, i.e., each wore a long white organdy robe (*jame*), a sash (*pic-chori*) and a mouth-veil (*padan*). Enclosures (*pawis*), temporarily made with gravel, defined the route taken. Complete darkness surrounded the procession so that no light but that of the radiant Atas Bahram was visible. Priests, around and behind the fire, carried weapons such as swords, daggers and a mace, signifying the fact that they were servitors of the royal Atas and dedicated to his victorious protection. These weapons were later hung on the wall of the sanctuary. A stately procession of lay dignitaries followed the priests.

Upon entry into his own *gumbad*, the Atas Bahram was transferred to his throne, the large fire vase (*af-ringanyu*). The dry sandalwood dust and chips in the deep concave lid (*sarposh*) kindled quickly. With the fire safely re-enthroned, the first *boy* ceremony was conducted in honour of the fire.

The first *boy* ceremony after re-enthronement

In conducting the *boy* ceremony, traditional Zoroastrian practice includes the

ringing of the bell nine times. However this has not been the practice throughout the history of the Wadia Atas Bahram observances. The first high priest, Dastur Edalji Sanjana, had initiated the practice of striking the bell three times in the *boy* ceremony, basing his action on references in the Pahlavi book *Wizirkard i Denig*. This text is now understood by most scholars to be of questionable authenticity. In 1938 Dastur Kaikhushru Mahiyar Kutar, the first priest to follow the long succession of Sanjana dasturs had wanted to establish the authoritative practice of nine bells, but the *boywaras* were not willing due to a prevailing superstition that whoever should strike the fourth bell would immediately suffer a twisted arm. Another rumour was that if the bell were struck nine times rather than the "customary three," one of the trustees would die.

Dastur Kotwal, the present *dastur*, knowing this history, once again brought to the attention of the *boywaras* the fact that the traditional number nine was the correct liturgical observance in the *boy* ceremony honouring a sacred fire. Consequently, on the occasion of this first *boy* ceremony for the re-enthroned Atas Bahram in his new bed of ash, the senior *boywara* Ervad Faramroze M. Antia asked permission of Dastur Kotwal, in front of all assembled and on behalf of all *boywaras*, to strike the bell nine times. Dastur Kotwal responded in the affirmative, with the following explanation:

When all *boywaras* are of one accord as to the proper performance of the holy *boy* ceremony—in this case, striking the bell nine times as is the uniform practice in our whole priestly class—I have no objection to it. The figure nine has considerable significance in Zoroastrian ritual. For example, the *darun* (sacred bread) is marked with nine cuts with the words *humata*, *hukhta*, *hvarshata* (3 times 3) on the same model as the striking of the bell nine times with the words *dushmata*, *duzukhta* and *duszvarshata* (3 strokes with each of the 3 words). Also the *navgireh* (the nine-knotted stick used by the priests while administering the *barasnum*) is tied with the *kusti* (sacred belt) with nine knots, and the *suraxdar taste* (a saucer pierced by holes used as a sieve for filtering *haoma* juice) has nine holes in the middle. Since the practice of striking the bell three times has been in vogue in our Atas Bahram for the past 150

years, it is not proper to switch over to the orderly ancient usage without first reciting the formula of *dasturi*, thereby taking permission of Ahura Mazda, Amahraspands, holy Srosh, Zarathushtra Spitaman, Adarbad Mahraspand, and in conclusion, his successor, the present *dastur*, before embarking on an important religious act of merit. I direct that the ancient usage may be established after reciting the formula of *dasturi*.

The Pazand *dasturi* was said by all *boywaras* in unison: "(We do this) with the religious authority of the creator Ohrmazd, according to the dictates of the Bountiful Immortals (Amesha Spentas), holy Srosh, Zarathushtra Spitaman,



Dastur Kotwal with three of the trustees: Hormasji R. Wadia, Sir Jametjee Jejeebhoy and Hormasji B Wadia (managing trustee)

Adarbad Mahraspandan, and according to the *dastur* of the age, Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal." Thus permission of the divine powers and organizers of the religion was taken, together with the name of the present *dastur*. All was successfully accomplished, and the ancient tradition of the *boy* ceremony for the re-enthroned Atas Bahram reaffirmed.

The *jashan* on October 6, 1980 (*roz Mah*) was the culmination of the shifting and re-enthronement ceremonies. This *jashan* held in the central hall of the fire temple, was dedicated first and foremost to the creator Ahura Mazda. Also honored were Ardibehesht (Best Righteousness), the Bountiful Immortal in charge of fire and through whose spirit the elaborate purifying process of establishing a sacred fire is accomplished; Spandarmad (Bountiful Devotion), the mother earth who gives asylum to the abode of fires; the *yazad* Mah, the spiritual presence in charge of the day on which this *jashan* took place; the spiritual co-workers (*hamkars*) of the day, in this instance the *yazads* Good In-

tention (*Vohu Manah*), the moon (*Mah*), earth (*Gosh*) and joy (*Ram*), and finally Srosh, the vice-regent of Ahura Mazda on this earth.

The jashan of thanksgiving

On the occasion of the 151st anniversary of the installation of the sacred fire, rare gifts of great historical and personal value to the Wadia family were presented to the Atas Bahram and a *jashan* for the whole community was celebrated. Among the rare gifts was an inscribed silver ruler given by Soli K. Modi, executor of the estate of the late Navroji Rustamji Wadia, bearing the date 1754 and the inscription: "Presented by the United East India Company to Lowjee Bomanjee, their Master Shipbuilder at Bombay, as a Memorial for his Long and Faithful Services." The *jashan* itself commenced at 10:00 a.m. (*hawan gah*) of the morning of October 11, 1980 (*roz Srosh, mah Ardibehesht*, A.Y. 1350). It was also performed in the central hall by Dastur Kotwal with the senior *boywara* Ervad Faramroze M. Antia acting as assistant priest (*raspi*).

Over 200 priests took part in the *jashan*, as well as eight out of the 10 *dasturs* in India, including Vada Dastur Meherjirana from Navsari, Dastur Hormazdyar Mirza of Udvada, Dasturs Kaikhushroo Jamaspasa, Faramroze Bode and Nawruz Minocher-Homji of Bombay, and Dasturs Tahmurasp Hozdar and Hormazdyar Jamaspasa of Poona.

Following the liturgical service, Dastur Kotwal delivered a short speech praising the founder of the fire temple, Hormasji Bahmanji Wadia, and offered a short sermon on the religious significance of the Atas Bahram. This significance is traditionally expressed in that great litany to fire, the *Atas Niyayes*, which was recited by all the priests assembled for the *jashan* of this 151st anniversary celebration. A portion of this great litany to fire translates as follows:

Arise for me, O Ahura! Take strength through devotion, O Holiest Spirit, Mazda! (Take) power through the good offering, strong might through righteousness, plenitude through good intention. For (my) help, O far-seeing one, show me the incomparable things which (are) yours—those of the kingdom, O Ahura, which are the reward of good intention. O Bounteous Armaiti (Devotion), instruct our consciences (*daena*) through Righteousness (*asa*)....(AN.1-3) (Y.33.12-14).



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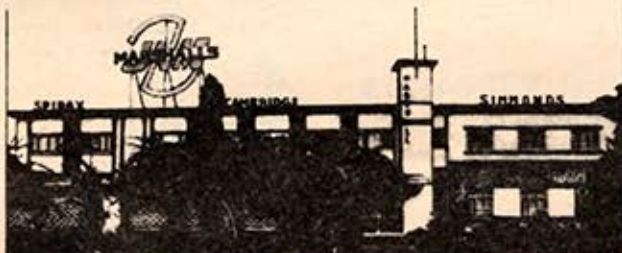
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Graphic A-181

Didn't Zarathustra Convert?

Homi P. Ranina



Some of the intellectuals of our community have raised this question time and again and they have tried to justify conversion on the grounds that Zarathustra himself did so. Therefore, it is argued that it would be right to carry on this practice and, in fact, it is our duty to do so since our community is dwindling.

This raised a very fundamental issue and, therefore, it is necessary to con-

It would be irrational to apply the concept of freedom of choice to matters over which no human being has any control.

sider whether Zarathustra did convert his followers. The word 'convert' has been defined by the Random House Dictionary to mean 'to change from one religion to another'.

Mazdayasni worship was practised by the kings, aristocrats and a few spiritually advanced souls who lived before Zarathustra. However, the majority of the people lived in utter ignorance and indulged in sorcery, witchcraft and idol worship; they did not belong to and did not follow any religion.

Zarathustra's first task was to refine and purify Mazdayasni worship as a distinct monotheistic precept. Through the *Gathas*, Zarathustra exhorted his people to lead a path of righteousness, to choose between right and wrong, good and evil, and he advised his followers to reach God by putting into practice his teachings of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

In several stanzas of the *Gathas*,

Zarathustra referred to the "irreligious," to the evil doers, to the wicked sorcerers and others who knew no religion and who had led a life of hatred, violence and vice. To such people, Zarathustra addressed himself and advocated the path of righteousness and purity of thoughts, words and deeds. He was the first prophet to reveal unto his people the divine laws of God.

Thus, Zarathustra's role was primarily that of a teacher, a preacher and philosopher who taught the people of his times the divine laws of God and he enlightened them on the manner of living which would be in conformity with such laws. In fact, the word 'Zarathustra' means 'man of divine light,' and our prophet was rightly described as such.

In short, Zarathustra enlightened his people, he played the role which a teacher plays towards his pupils, namely, to educate them and enlighten them. When a student learns at the feet of a teacher he is educated and enlightened; it would be absurd to say that he is converted.

The universality of Zarathustra's philosophy is unquestionable. His teachings could be, and should be, followed by every human being, regardless of the religion to which he belongs. But that is quite different from saying that every right-thinking person should renounce the religion of his birth and become a Zarathustrian.

All philosophies are universal and could be practised by anybody. A person could be influenced by the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, or Sri Aurobindo, or Aristotle or Plato and is free to believe in such philosophy while adhering to the basic tenets of his religion of birth. Conversion seems so irrelevant when viewed in this perspective.

Freedom of choice

The pro-conversion lobby glibly talks

about freedom of choice and, for this purpose, draws inspiration from the *Gathas*. Throughout the fabric of the *Gathas* the concept of freedom of choice has been used in the context of the choice between good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice.

It would be irrational to apply the concept of freedom of choice to matters over which no human being has any control, which are, the time and place of birth, the religion and family of birth, the time and place of death, etc. It is absurd for anybody to say that he has freedom of choice in these matters.

To renounce the religion of one's birth is an act of defiance against the will of God and amounts to abrogation of His will. It has to be understood that

To renounce the religion of one's birth is an act of defiance against the will of God.

conversion involves, first, the renunciation of one's religion of birth and secondly, the embracing of another religion. In other words, renunciation of the religion of birth and embracing another religion are two sides of the same coin.

The question which needs to be asked by an objective and impartial person is "Is it right for a person to renounce the religion of his birth?" If this question is asked the whole issue of conversion or voluntary acceptance of faith is seen and comprehended in a totally different perspective.

Abridged and edited from an article by Homi Ranina entitled 'Some Thoughts on Conversion'. Ranina is a noted lawyer and one of India's leading tax consultants.

Sabavala: Portrait of an artist

Behram Contractor

Jehangir Sabavala looks like an aristocrat and an artist, probably because he is both. He belongs to the old Parsi aristocracy of Bombay, the baronets and knights, and he is among the three or four Indian artists whose reputation extends beyond the Jehangir Art Gallery...to Paris and New York. He takes about four years to prepare for an exhibition (a dozen canvases or so, no more) and he sells his works almost overnight (touch wood). The opening of the once-in-four-years Sabavala exhibition is an event in Bombay's high society and art world.

The event was on November 15 when Jehangir Sabavala's latest exhibition opened at the Jehangir Art Gallery.

Sabavala likes people visiting his exhibition, seeing his canvases...he has spent four years working on them. And he wants all sorts of people, not just 15 buyers for 15 canvases: The lunch-hour crowds, housewives, professionals, students from Elphinstone, people who drop into Samovar for a beer, those who have followed Sabavala's works over the years and newcomers. It is his contact with the world, the rest of the four years he is a bit of a recluse, painting from 10 to 6 or till daylight lasts, quiet evenings with friends, gentle talk.

He does not give interviews ordinarily, only when an exhibition is in the offing. Earlier at one of these quiet evenings with friends, he told me: "There is no point in being written about just for the sake of being written about. I must have something to offer the public, an exhibition. Now that I have an exhibition coming, it is all right."

The following morning I went to his house for the interview, Meher Apartments, on top of the Altamont Hill, the bay of Bombay spread out below, blue sea and blue sky in 35 different hues, like a Sabavala painting.

It is a nice house, aristocratic and artistic. Sabavala in faded jeans (evenings,

he wears white churidar and kurta), comfortable, informal. "Come to the studio", he says, opening a door into a small room, daylight pouring in. The studio is very functional, neat and tidy like the artist himself. Paintings stacked up against the walls, ready to be taken to the gallery, well-used brushes lined on the table, palettes in a drawer, an easel, a couple of high stools, an artist and his tools of trade.

Expressive

Sabavala perches himself on a stool, like a Rodin thinker, high forehead, expressive hands, occasionally bursting into a cultured Parsi Gujarati. "Yes, I am busy," he agrees, "last-minute preparations for the exhibition, you know. Invitations, catalogues, in India the artist has to do all that himself. In any case, I always design my own catalogues, it is exciting."

The exhibition was on from November 15 to 21. Then it was going to Calcutta, to the Calcutta Art Gallery of Victor Banerjee (star of David Lean's "Passage To India"). "I have been wanting to show my work in Calcutta, the city is full of intellectuals, painters, writers. We (Bombay artists) show a lot in Delhi, not in Calcutta. Then Victor, the last time he was here, said he would like to have my works in his gallery. Mind you, the Bengalis are a little chauvinist, tend to

shut-out outsiders."

What about Delhi? "One thing I must say about Delhi, the press is very alert to the arts. All the critics come to the exhibitions and within two days of the opening reviews appear in all the papers. Not like here, reviews appearing ten days later. In any case, how many Bombay papers have art critics and regular reviews. I am afraid Bombay does not have a structured approach."

However, as far as the Bombay public is concerned, Sabavala is all compliments. "The public here has grown and matured, if you know what I mean, it is well clued-up to painters and paintings, you can't pull wool over its eyes. And, irrespective of what the papers say the public makes up its own mind about the quality of work."

While the art scene in Bombay is alive as far as the public is concerned, the other aspects have not kept pace. "Just think, after all these years, there are only two galleries, Chemould and Pundole. The others, Aakar and all those, are just hiring rooms; they don't promote a show, they don't have press connections, they don't send out invitations. And there is just one public gallery in Bombay, actually in the whole country, the Jehangir Art Gallery. Seven days is all it can give to an artist. I do not wish to speak about myself, but consider: I have

Shirin and Jehangir Sabavala: 'the public makes up its own mind' Photo by Ayesha Soni





Perched on a stool, like a Rodin thinker. (Photo courtesy Mid-Day.)

worked on my paintings for four years and seven days is all they are permitted to give me. Just seven days to hang the paintings, open the exhibition, exhibit and shut the exhibition."

Sabavala admits that he is a slow painter: "I paint slowly, five to six weeks per painting, the gestation has to take place. I do not flog my paintings, from one exhibition to another. Not that I have anything against that, but it would not suit me. And I do not like over-exposure, people have not heard or seen me in four years. An artist's period of work should not be treated as a period of general publicity. When I am working, I am introspective: quiet, shut in, you are here," he says, waving expressive hands around the studio.

He does not visit many art exhibitions also and this is not a display of pride. He tries to explain it to me patiently: "In all humility I say that at a certain level of maturity, I don't think you can be influenced by too many shows, good or bad. And I am not a vogue or fashion painter that I have to keep up with new styles, I pursue my own path as deeply and seriously as I am capable of."

To him, being an artist is a lonely profession, hard and introspective. I mention Husain. "Yes there are flamboyant artists, but their work also is flamboyant. They will remove their shoes, grow a beard; I can't see myself do that, I couldn't bear it."

True. There is nothing flamboyant about him. He could have been Dr Jussawalla, the same sensitive surgeon's

hands, the same seriousness of approach. To him a painting is a synthesis of emotion, spirit, intellect and technique. "One may not succeed, but the attempt has to be there. Without that a man is not a good painter, he may be a clever artist, a good technician. Without this it is not a painting, it is a picture, and I sharply draw a line between the two. A picture is a part of a decoration on your wall. A painting should command the room, not vice versa; when you enter a room, you should forget the room and talk of the painting, of the soul, effort, strength, weakness of the artist that is indicated in the painting."

Who buys paintings for their rooms? "There are genuine, respectable buyers. Jehangir Nicholson is a buyer and a good buyer. Let me see, who else. Only Parsi names keep coming to my mind, but that is not correct, there are others. The Mahindras buy a lot of paintings, both for their homes and offices, the Tatas, of course, Bombay House is filled with paintings, in the corridors, in the boardrooms. Larsen and Toubro used to buy a lot, I do not know now, whether Nicky Desai buys them."

Sabavala is a fortunate artist, he has reached a stage and status when he can vet his buyers, just as a good author can choose his publishers. And he does not mind selling his painting for a little less money, on instalments, so long as it is put up in a good home, it is discussed in the home.

I can understand Sabavala's feelings for his paintings. A lot of effort goes into it. He explained to me his method of work.

"First, the idea strikes, either visual or through the spoken word. I put it down in an ordinary sketch-book, a pencil sketch. Then I begin groping at it. If it is a human figure, should it be alone or two figures or ten. I do a number of sketches before the idea crystallises. Once that happens, the idea is fairly complete, I have on the sketch-book what I want to transpose on the canvas. Once this is done, I decide on the colours, the colours must marry the subject matter and the drawing. My instinct is not towards bright colours, I use a very subtle range, muted, soft colours, but a very wide spectrum of them, often 50-60 shades. The effort is to make it evocative in colours."

"I also think of the texture of the painting, how thick or thin the colours should be. Mysterious skies, landscapes, which is what I have been doing for years, are done in very thin colours, but

for the density of light or matter, the stroke becomes heavy, the quantity of colour increases. The eye has to be constantly stimulated."

His tools of trade continue to be the classic ones, those with which he started, first at the J.J. School of Arts in Bombay, then in London and Paris: brushes, palette knives, linseed oil and turpentine. "I have great admiration for the artists of today who use just about anything, stones, pebbles, enamel paints, motorcar paints. They are tremendous technical innovations, brilliant. I would have to go back to the US or France to study the new techniques."

But there is a subtle change in the latest show and Sabavala is aware of this. He explained: "I have been concentrating these years in refining the landscape, it is my landscape, intensely personal, the people and figures in these

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man is not a painter,
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technician.'

landscapes have been tiny, not of great importance. But now I have reversed this." Which is true, the figures stand out, the landscape has withdrawn in the distance, but the quality is still the same, a certain soft silver grey mist, the landscape, the people looming behind it. The world as seen by Jehangir Sabavala.

For the rest, I leave it to the critics: Nissim Ezekiel, S.V. Vasudev, Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni, Adil Jussawalla. And to the people for whom Jehangir Sabavala has been painting these last four years. He is looking forward to seeing these people again, coming into the gallery at lunch time, a little shy, hesitant, awkward, asking questions, judging for themselves. This is his audience. As he says himself: "Fifteen pictures require only 15 buyers. But there are thousands of viewers."

Reprinted from Sunday Mid-Day, November 6, 1983.

French Honour for Cama

Noted Bharata Natyam dancer Rohinton Cama became the first Indian artiste to be invited to open the prestigious La Rochelle festival of music and dance in France in November this year.

During his three-week stay, Cama will perform at the renowned Sorbonne University in Paris and in the French towns of Grenoble and Tours. He will also conduct a workshop-cum-lecture demonstration at Lyons.

Parsiana reproduces an article on Cama from The Economic Times (October 23) by Abhinav titled "Bharata Natyam at Sorbonne" which tells of Cama's tour.

Cama: 'superb lines and flawless footwork'



Shirin Isal (nee Baria) has been active for the last several years in Paris trying to promote classical Indian arts.

Those connected with Alliance Francaise Bombay will remember her self-effacing and dedicated attitude to whatever work she undertook. She brings to her present occupation the same fervour and has succeeded in projecting Indian dancers and musicians in Europe. It is sheer hard work which has ultimately helped her gain a lot of respect from the organizers, festival directors and artistes.

When I met Rohinton Cama, the Bharata Natyam exponent, he was busy finalizing the itinerary of his forthcoming tour of France. He was quite excited

as his recital was scheduled at Sorbonne University. This is his third visit to France but the first time that he is taking a team of musicians with him. Thanks to the ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) which granted him three passages, he was at last able to confirm his bookings to Shirin who in turn confirmed his appearances in the festivals. Earlier Shirin had managed to present him with taped music and Rohinton had created a very favourable impression. But the festival directors were keen to have a live orchestra to present him. The ICCR agreed to give him partial aid and others, like Air India, also helped him. He is looking forward to "win the French over."

In a field which is the sole preserve of women, a male dancer has very little chance of "making it" and Rohinton, in spite of his talents, found "the going quite tough." Earlier he had to appear with Protima Bedi, Swapna Sundari, Asha Coorlawala, Chitra Visweswaran and others who were fortunate enough to have their own live orchestra. And among them, a male dancer with taped music had succeeded in arousing sufficient interest to receive repeated invitations. His persistence paid off and finally he is able to go off on his own, in his own right as a solo male dancer.

I saw some of the reviews from his earlier tours and found that he was hailed as a sensational discovery. For after Ram Gopal and in recent times Kamadev, no other male Bharata Natyam exponent has drawn attention in knowledgeable circles. Rohinton, with his excellent training under Vyjayanthimala and later on under Tanjore Kittappa, was earning good notices in Bombay from diehard critics and sponsors. But a few shows here and there were not enough. Shirin, sensing the impact Rohinton had made in his earlier tours in Paris, left no stone unturned and worked hard to project him in Europe.

Now he is all set to conquer Paris. He is scheduled to appear through *Mandapa* run by Milena Salvini, another dedicated dance lover, who has in the past presented the prestigious company and stars of Kerala Kala Mandalam and *Purulia Chhau* at the Sorbonne University Auditorium and later on, at the Maison de la Culture de la Rochelle in south France, at Tours, Lyons and Grenoble.

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Meeting somebody who has been out of the limelight for sixteen long years may be an exciting journalistic adventure but it is certainly not the most pleasant social exercise. There is first of all the question of recognising the person concerned. Yasmin Daji, Miss India 1966, was a slender beauty whom I remembered enshrined on an early *Femina* cover in the days when I hadn't even learnt to read properly. From Miss India 1966 to Ms Nanavati 1983 would surely have changed her. There was no saying she hadn't turned into a frumpy housewife during this intriguing absence from centre-stage. Besides, what did I have to go by—the dimly remembered vision of a fragile girl in a pale pink saree whom I desperately wanted to look like when I grew up:

I sit there waiting for God-Knows-whom. To add to the confusion she has sisters. There's sister Dilroza whose Juhu flat is the venue of the meeting and with whom I've had the most amazing exchange. She opens the door to me, thinking I'm Yasmin! There's also the beautiful Zariné who walks in a while later. I must have 'hello Yasmin' written all over my face

because even before I can open my mouth to make room for my foot she says, "I am Yasmin's sister, she's coming in a short while."

When Yasmin appears I realise I needn't have worried about not

"You remember the pale pink saree I wore? I borrowed it actually, and wore it during the day while we went out shopping."

recognising her. She is still the fragile beauty of the *Femina* days; very much the same—down to the disobediently overlapping front teeth and the charming one-dimpled smile. Her hair, which used to be long in the old days is now worn short, in a casual feathery style, but apart from that I could have been staring at the magazine cover and wanting to grow up to be like her. In my utter delight, I even forget to compliment her.

She opens the conversation herself. "O.K. so which part of my insipid life are you interested in?" she asks. But I'm interested in the basics. Why insipid? Why did she choose to turn down the modelling and film offers that came her way? In the sixties, beauty contests were not the slapdash, dime-a-dozen ladies club affairs they are now. In fact, in 1966 when Yasmin Daji was crowned Miss India, beauty queens were well down a one-way street to fame and fortune. Persis Khambatta and Zeenat Aman were both Miss India before they became anything else. And even today, the logical thing for a Swaroop Sampat or a Shashikala Sheshadri to do is to try and gain an entree to films. But not Yasmin Daji. She did the stipulated modelling contract with Lakme, said a polite 'no thank you' to the film producers and went back to Delhi to resume her interrupted career as a medical student. It was unusual to say the least, and intriguing for the many admirers of that delicately-honed face.

She was always an outsider, she explains, hugging a cushion to herself. She is sprawled comfortably on a floor

The Enduring Charm of Yasmin Daji

Vinati Tikku



mattress in a casual trouser outfit and absolutely at ease. It is not the practised ease of a person who is used to dealing with the press, but the more natural ease of someone who has little to gain by saying anything even remotely impressive or spectacular. But such is the irony of journalism — good people often make very bad copy. She was born in Kanpur, "a hot, dusty U.P. town which I love... naturally," where her father worked in a cotton mill. The young Dajis — there were five of them — had a pleasant if unremarkable childhood. Hindi films, she remembers were a great treat and Dilip Kumar was a hot favourite. "I used to be absolutely in love with him." Later she joined the Lady Hardinge Medical College in Delhi where she presumably worked her way through Gray's Anatomy and other medical textbooks until the day she startled the girls in the hostel common-room by walking in with a trolley loaded with gifts. She had just been declared the most beautiful woman in India!

"I was terrible looking in those days — thick eyebrows and all," she laughs. "My mother had a habit of filling in dotted lines and it was she who applied and sent my picture. I was absolutely casual about it. Ah, you remember the pale pink saree I wore? How amazing! I borrowed it actually, and wore it during the day while we went out shopping. I had planned to wear another saree for the contest in the evening but somehow or the other, maybe it was because I didn't have a matching blouse or something...I don't remember...I ended up at the contest in this awful nylon day-saree. The contest was fairly simple. We just had to walk down the aisle, as far as I can

remember. No, there were no G.K. questions and no talent contest, thank God. Not as far as I can remember, I'm sure I'd have remembered where I'd goofed!" She has a nice, lively sense of humour, that makes sisters Dilroza and Zarine shuffle uncomfortably, wondering whether Yasmin shouldn't be taking the interview more seriously.

But that, as far as I can gather, is not Yasmin's style; She is self-admittedly, "non-serious about everything including my career." She never practised as a doctor except for a brief stint as a research assistant in a hospital preferring to play suburban housewife and mother to sons Raji (12) and Sameer (8) instead. "More fun, less work" she offers by way of a breezy explanation. At Acton, 25 miles west of Boston, where she spent the last 13 years, she occasionally breaks the monotony of domesticity with a modelling stint. She's done some live shows for boutiques, luncheon fashion shows during which outfits are displayed to people having lunch at restaurants, and even, "horrible, boring, industrial shows, where I have to point to machinery. It's difficult for an Indian to break into the modelling world in the States" she explains. "Most clients still want the typical mid-western girl with blonde hair and blue eyes to sell their products." She has no regrets though; as a part-time occupation, modelling is good fun and sometimes good money. In Boston, sometimes, upward of \$ 100 per hour for a photography session. While holidaying in India she did an occasional spot of modelling sometimes but it is with a great deal of effort and some helpful prodding on her sisters' part that she remembers the

names of the campaigns — Khatau, Lure, Goldspot.

At present she is involved with the USA based Bombay Broadcasting Corporation's weekly television show 'Cinema, Cinema' which gives expatriate Indians a feel of home with a theme-based collection of Hindi film songs and an occasional interview with a film star visiting the States. She's already interviewed Sanjeev Kumar, Sharmila Tagore and Parveen Babi, all of whom she found very eloquent. Plus, she's full of plans for a special two hour show on the Kapoor clan, the details of which she hopes to finalise during this trip to Bombay. She confides that she's looking forward to meeting the grand old man Raj Kapoor and talks excitedly about the advance planning that goes into making each programme a success. Of how they keep a tab on Bombay filmland gossip through telex and telephone... she is clearly enjoying her present role. As she has everything else!

Reprinted with permission from *Celebrity*, March 1983. Photograph courtesy *Celebrity*.

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Rohinton Cama belongs to the Parsi community. When he was barely 11 years old, Vyjayanthimala took him under her wing and trained him thoroughly in *Pandanallur* style. The long arduous journey to fame is the result of the hard work he has put in for more than 12 years. There were times when he was worried, as were his parents. A Parsi boy wanting to dance Bharata Natyam and without any backing in the competitive field of female dancers was unheard of. But he was determined and never gave up. He is currently conducting classes under his own institution *Shishya* at the Somani School and is struggling to survive. He has danced at important centers in India and, though he has received favourable reviews, he has not yet 'hit the big time'. He feels confident that now is the time to stick on and he will succeed.

Rohinton has the making of a first class dancer as his training has been thorough. He has by now got enough exposure and performs with great confidence. He has a fine stage presence and good grasp of the technique. He is young and, like other dancers of his age group he has to master the art *abhinaya*. His foot-work is flawless and lines superb. The architectonic beauty of the *Pandanallur* school has found in him a worthy exponent.



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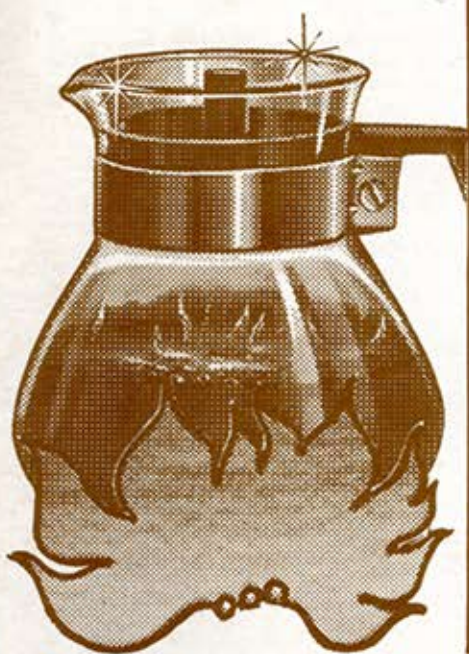
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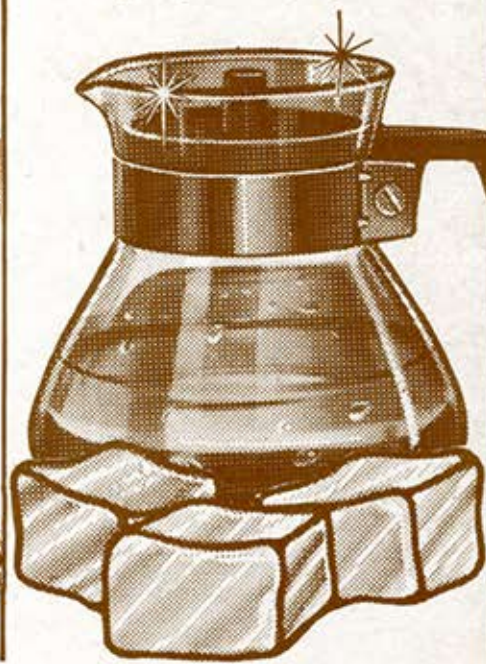
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