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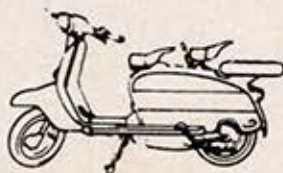
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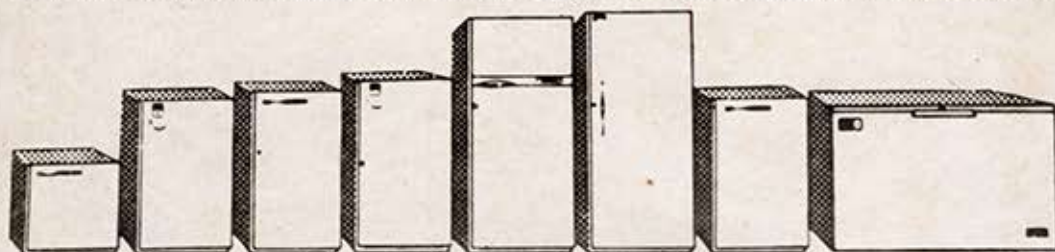
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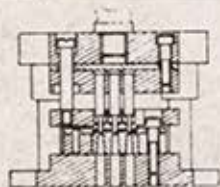
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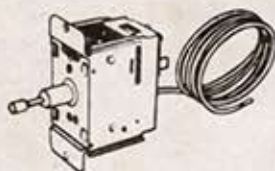
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Parsiana

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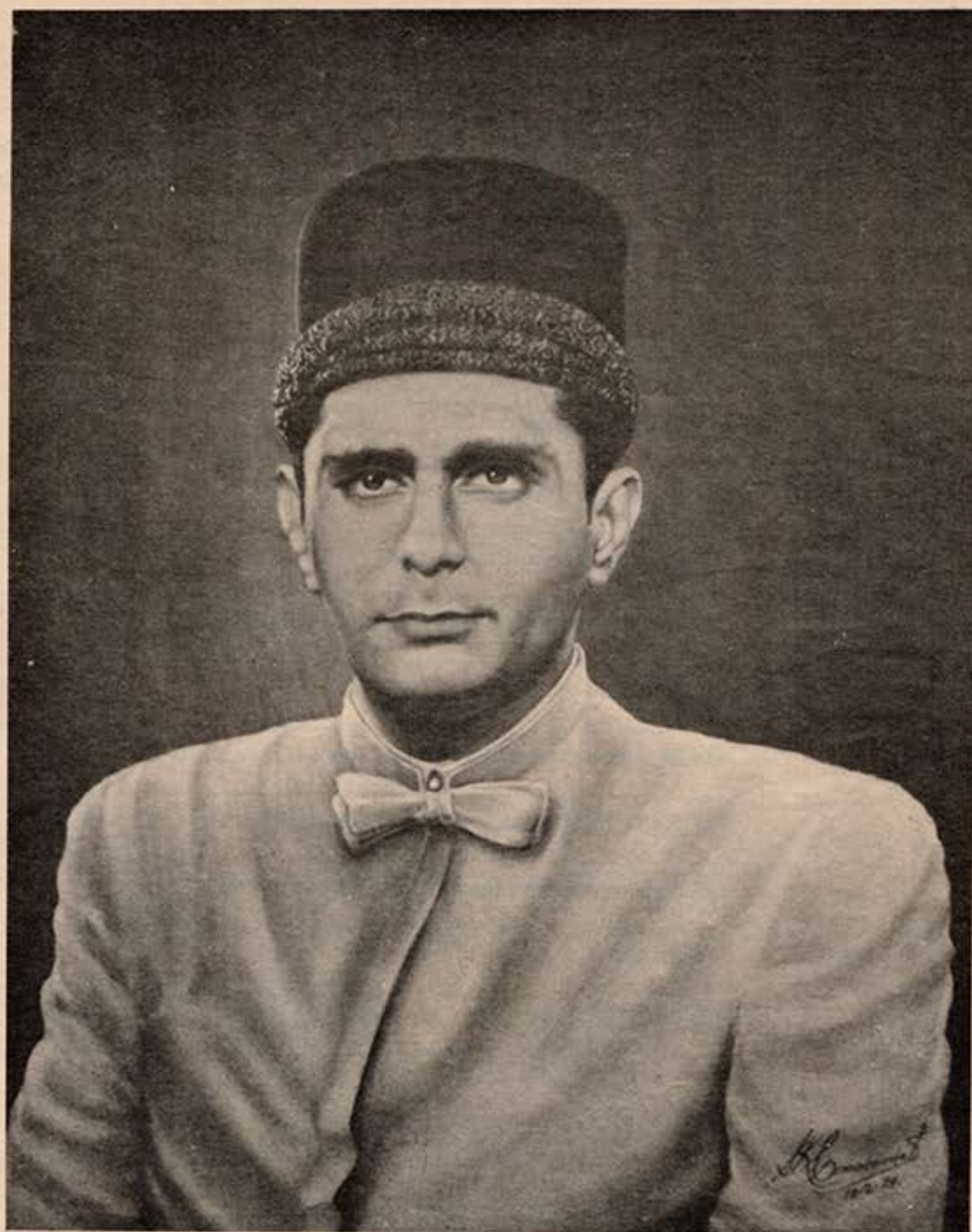
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In Memoriam

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.

Zoroastrian Scout Badge

We, the Religious Sub-Committee of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, have read with interest the article (*Parsiana*, September 1983) titled "Zoroastrian Scout Badge." We commend the gentlemen concerned for having taken upon themselves the project of the 'Good Life' Religious Emblem. We wish many youngsters in New York and other parts of North America will avail themselves of the opportunity offered to them by way of the three-fold purpose within the programme.

We should further like to add and inform readers that in Toronto, Ontario, a team of interested adults has worked on the project of producing a 'Religion in Life' emblem for Zoroastrian Scouts and Girl Guides for the past six years. From the onset the syllabus did not try to teach the recital of prayers—which we feel is the responsibility of every

parent. The syllabus was designed to promote thinking on and feeling for *Humata, Hukata, and Huvarshta*. It was drawn up by piecing together questions asked by our children, such as: 'Who is God?' 'What is He?' 'How do we know He exists?' 'Why do we pray?' 'How should we pray?' 'What are the meanings of the Prayers?' 'How do our beliefs differ to-day from those of ancient times?' 'Who was the first man?' 'What is our history in Persia?' 'Did we have wars?' 'Why are we called Zoroastrians?' 'How do we compare with other religions?' 'How do we practise to be Zoroastrians in Canada?' The interested adults then studied the formats of several different religious pamphlets issued by Scouts Canada in order that our standards of requirement be at par with those for children of other faiths.

Our volunteer adults then worked with the children on the first level of the syllabus and on December 14, 1980 the first two students completed the requirements of Level One, soon to be followed by ten others. To date those first few children have worked on Levels Two and Three and at present are still together tackling Level Four.

We realized that not every girl and boy has joined the Guiding or Scouting movement in Ontario, and therefore for those who have worked equally diligently as the Scouts and Guides we in Ontario issued our Association's certificates for all children who attain the various levels.

The Canadian Zoroastrian Religion in Life Emblem is to be completed in four stages, with a compulsory progression from Level One to Four. The youngest age recommended to start Level One is age seven, and is designed for Brownies and Cubs. Level Two is suitable for Guides and Scouts; Level Three for Pathfinders and Venturers; and Level Four for Rangers, Cadets, Junior Leaders, and Rovers.

This syllabus was circulated to the various provinces in Canada in early 1982 for their comments and/or approval. The requirements of the syllabus were recommended to the Scouting and Guiding Movements of Canada, having received the approval of all the Zoroastrian communities in the various provinces of Canada after the Montreal Congress of 1982. The emblem of the Fravashi was chosen for

the 'Religion in Life' for Zoroastrians, because it symbolizes the essence of God within each one of us.

To date, the syllabus for the Zoroastrian 'Religion in Life' emblem for Scouts and Guides has been accepted by the Scouting and Guiding movements of Ontario. We understand that an official badge depicting a Fravashi will be made available for Canadian boys and girls to wear on their guide/scout uniform. The first of seventeen official Scout/Guide certificates to be awarded was presented on April 13, 1983.

For further information on the Religion in Life Emblem for Girl Guides or Boy Scouts, Canada, queries may be addressed to The Chairman, The Religious Sub-Committee, The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, 3590 Bayview Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario. M2M 3S6.

MINOO TREASURYWALA
Ontario, Canada.

Orthodox Graduates' Association

The United Orthodox Graduates' Association (UOGA) consists of a small number of graduates of the community who wish to lend a helping hand to deserving and needy Parsi Zoroastrians. This band of dedicated, voluntary workers has since over two years been giving employment to a number of persons without expecting any reward or thanks in return. "All we expect you to do is put sandalwood at any Agiari or Atashbehran if you get the job," says its president, Ms Perviz F Dotivala. UOGA appeals to all the members of the community to inform them at 33, M. Karve Road, Bombay 400 004 if they are aware of any job vacancy or to send to the above office on Tuesdays any Parsi needing employment. We give no guarantee but assure you that we shall leave no stone unturned to help.

Last month the UOGA members distributed some homemade cakes, personally to the inmates of the Parakh Dharamshala at Hughes Road. This Dharamshala is under the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the Dharamshala chairperson Dr Nellie Noble and her Ladies Wing. The inmates have hardly any complaints regarding food and

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accommodation. What the UOGA felt was that they could perhaps help the old and invalid inmates by providing recreation once a month. There was a tremendous response from the inmates when asked whether, they would like to have a film or entertainment programme organized for them.

A New Year's party was arranged for them by the UOGA. The hall was festive with buntings, balloons and tapers. The inmates all dressed in their Sunday best were brought down personally by the UOGA members. The film documentary *Happiness Unto Others* was specially screened for them. This was followed by a New Year cake, eats and drinks. Each and every inmate was personally wished Happy New Year and a token gift was given. It was indeed a small gesture but it gladdened their hearts.

The UOGA hopes to continue with its many and varied activities in helping the community by way of giving free clothes at Pateti, employment throughout the year and looking after the welfare of the old and infirm.

ROSHEN P F DRIVER

Medical Ethics?

We have perhaps more qualified professionals per thousand than any other community in India. Their widely recognized eminence was earned not merely by their knowledge and expertise but also by their scrupulous observance of professional ethics both in letter and spirit. However....

My wife and I had to rush our first-born to a child specialist a few days after birth for treatment of an infection. He examined the child with a minimum of fuss and prescribed a lengthy course of antibiotic injections. But, anxious as new parents are, we thought it might be better if we took a second opinion. We therefore went to a Parsi lady child specialist.

She took one look at the child and burst into a tirade of retributes. Reeling under guilt, we thanked the doctor profusely, paid her an exorbitant fee and returned home in a state of shock.

As we sat together to recapitulate we realized that when we had first mentioned the course prescribed by the first doctor, the lady had suggested that the drug was too powerful to be given to such a tiny baby. Then, she herself had recommended the same drug but with the dosage increased!

We decided to take a third opinion. This specialist, also a Parsi, told us that the infection was nothing to worry about and that the drug and dosage prescribed by the first doctor were correct.

We are convinced that the Parsi lady doctor deliberately set about frightening us knowing that we were inexperienced.

It hurt us to see a Parsi doctor having such low scruples. Cashing in on a child's illness is surely not befitting the glorious Parsi traditions that we are all so proud of.

KHURSHED PASTAKIA

In-breeding vs intercommunal marriages

As regards the matter of Parsi boys marrying non-Parsi girls, neither the long history of Zoroastrians nor anthropology, nor tradition support the contention that Parsi boys should marry non-Parsi girls because the community is in danger of degenerating due to excessive intermarriage over too long a period, and that by doing so it would become healthy.

Is it not a fact that the period of peak glory in the history of the Parsis in India was attained in the last century after over a thousand years of not only in-breeding, but more precisely, cousin marriages? And then is it not obvious that the present downfall of the community is apparently due to an increasing tendency of bringing non-Parsi blood into the community? History shows that the children born out of wedlock of Iranian kings and heroes and their non-Iranian spouses were the main culprits for the subsequent downfall of the Great Iranian Empire. Besides, it is absolutely ridiculous to think of some selected "thoroughbred" species of non-Parsi women for the purpose of marrying Parsi boys.

Now we shall look upon this aspect from the genetic point of view. Suppose A is a Parsi male and B is a non-Parsi female in wedlock. C is born of them. Presuming that all such children in this case are males, C marries D (also non-Parsi) and E is born. These children will be called Parsis at least in legal terms. Now an interesting point to ponder upon is that upto which generation will they carry on calling themselves Parsis, and more precisely, what contribution will they make to the religion and the community thereby? We should contemplate this point very seriously, even from the

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few such cases we have at present. And then what about the female children born each generation? In 99 out of 100 cases they will marry outside the community due to their "secular" background, and then how will they be able to carry the torch and flame of the "microscopic" community?

Such steps are obviously suicidal for the community. In fact the community is so small in comparison to other communities, that even the idea of experimenting with such steps for a short period would demolish the entire structure of the community; and that, too, for the very reasons for which our forefathers bade farewell to their motherland and sailed for strange lands.

We have also before us the glorious example of the Jewish community, whose ideals for the preservation of race are almost akin to ours. Though they were stateless and homeless over the centuries, they fervently and steadfastly preserved their blood. It is not necessary to state here their world famous achievements in all fields.

DR ROOYINTAN P. PEER

Conversion

All holy scriptures are man-made. Any

holy scripture is the product of its times. It has a time-value of its own. That's why it is readily accepted by people at the given stage of civilization. The prophets come to them as emancipators.

But time is not a stationary phenomenon. It moves on. And when man refuses to be in tune with his times, he sets the clock of history backwards.

One of our religious practices is the question of conversion. A large majority of Parsis simply cannot brook the idea of a non-Parsi wanting to join the fold.

But when Zarathushtra was ready to spread his message, there was not a single Zoroastrian. He was the original enunciator. Zarathushtra's mission was to make his religion universal. Thus he was certainly in favour of conversion.

During the rule of the Sasanian dynasty, the priest class had become more powerful and received the support of the kings themselves. The priests introduced many religious rites and ceremonies unknown when Zoroaster founded the religion, some of them antithetical to the high ethical teachings in the Gathas.

It was the agricultural section which suffered the most under the tyranny of their masters. To add to this, there were internecine feuds. As a result the social structure and the economy of Iran

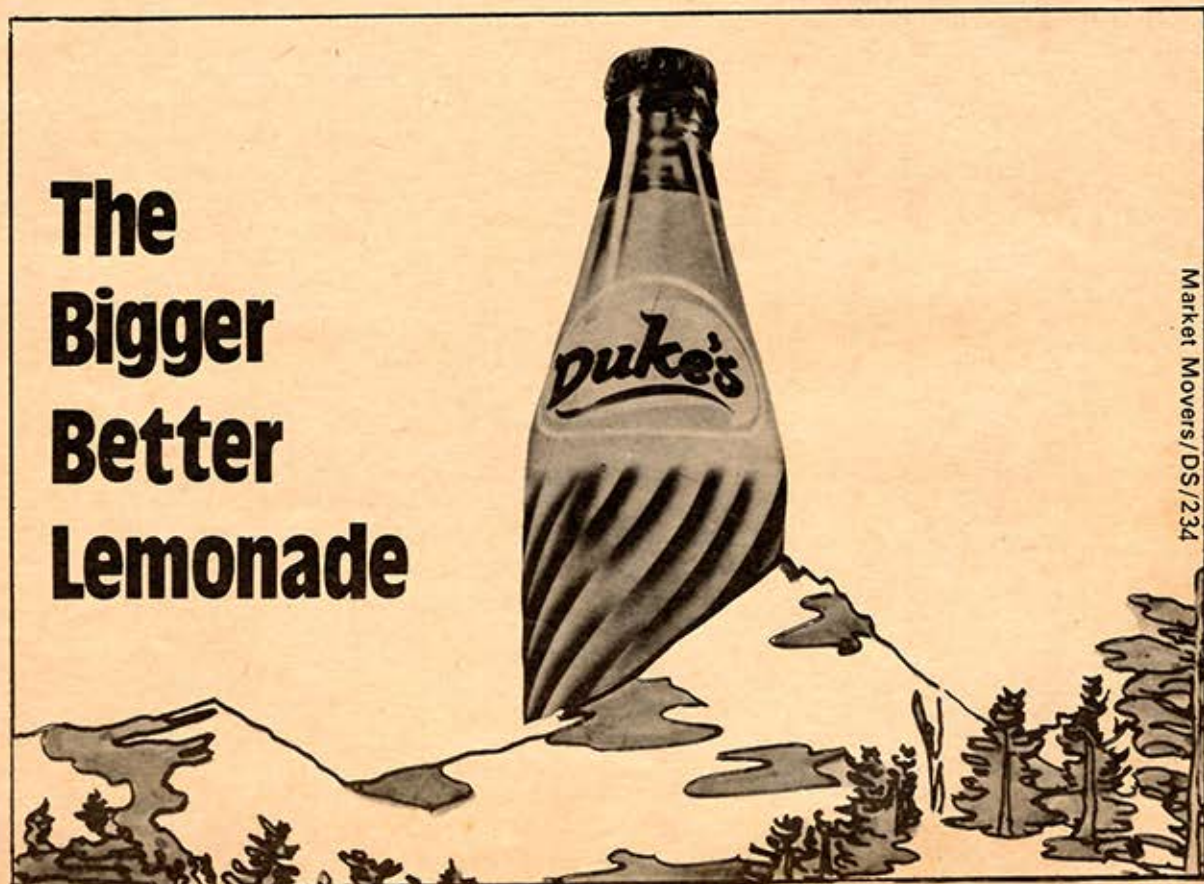
became lopsided. It crippled the nation. It is due to such diverse causes that when Arab Muslims invaded Iran, the established order fell like a house of cards.

Moreover, at that stage Islam came to the people as a comparatively more liberal religion. Prophet Mohammed had proclaimed the Brotherhood of Man. The Koran said that all men who embraced Islam were equal in the eyes of Allah. Besides, Islam like Zoroastrianism was also a monotheistic religion.

Many dedicated Zoroastrians died at the hands of the invaders. But it is a myth that ALL Zoroastrians were converted at the point of the sword. Many among the downtrodden section of Iranians crossed over to the new faith as it offered them a better status in society as equals in the eyes of Allah.

Even some Iranian intellectuals, literati and philosophers also embraced Islam as it offered them greater freedom of expression to voice their heterodox ideas. The history of Islam shows that many of the early leading Arab intellectuals, scientists, philosophers and poets were originally Zoroastrians or born of Zoroastrian parents.

There were, of course, many Iranians who refused to give up their religion.



They took refuge in the mountains. Others escaped by sea. Those who survived the fury of the sea landed in Gujarat.

When we landed, there were many more men than women. It is reasonable to assume that those who could not find Parsi women to marry must have kept non-Parsi women of lower castes as their mistresses and brought up their offsprings as Parsis. Hence the claim of the Parsi to be "blue blooded" and racially pure is a myth.

It is an irony that whenever it has suited the community, it has conveniently discarded its so-called religious practices—practices which are in essence just so-called customs hidden behind the veneer of religiosity. Like other communities the Parsees also are obsessed with paying more attention to peripheral practices in religion.

When some courageous men and women pioneered just mild reforms, they ran the risk of being ostracized. But when others followed in their footsteps in course of time, those very orthodox Parsis who had previously protested vehemently simply slept over it all.

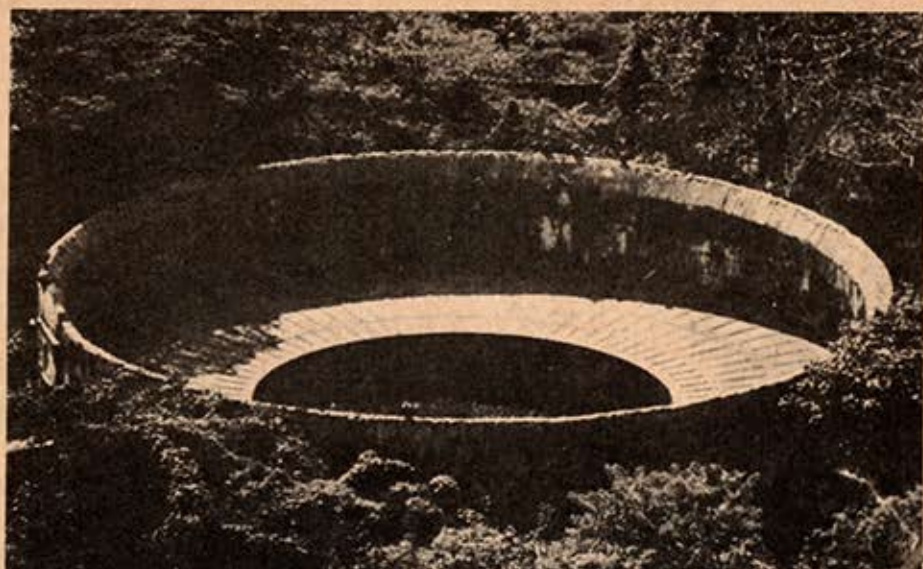
When once you have set your mind against a new trend in religion it is always easy to cull out objections to it from its scriptures, history and law. But it is equally easy for others who hold the opposite view to find other arguments from the same sources in their favour. It is a futile indulgence in forensic. A study of the history of other religions will show us that there have been umpteen similar cases spread over centuries—objections taken initially but later on ironically accepted as religious practices.

It may sound paradoxical but the only constant factor in human society is *change*. It is the only biological imperative that enables humanity to survive. If man refuses to change his thoughts and habits in the context of his times, he stagnates and stagnation is death, biologically speaking.

J.B.H. WADIA

Memories of Doongerwadi

I am 64 years old and am very conversant with the precincts of Doongerwadi from my earliest youth, because my grandfather, the late C.M. Cursetjee, used to take me for walks inside the vast grounds of tangled vegetation where snakes often crossed our path



and drops of dew sparkled where the sun touched them on a cobweb and there was quiet all around. He taught me to sit quietly, listening to the sounds of the tangled wilderness, watch the magnificent peacocks dance to attract their drab brown hens. He taught me to recognize many other birds, that frequented the place because of its isolation.

There was an abundance of vultures then, though they hardly ever nested or reared their young at the Doongerwadi location. Mostly they flew across the harbour to Uran, Elephanta and the Western Ghats, to make their nests on precarious mountain ledges, to lay their eggs and raise their young, without human interference!

Vultures hardly ever eat live animals; but I have seen them, on my way to Poona, attacking the eyes of a half-starved buffalo lying in a fallow field and gouge them out, even before the poor beast had breathed its last! It was a revolting sight, I can assure you; but it is the law of nature that the weaker are devoured by the stronger and vultures are carrion eaters!

PERIN M.R.B. JEEJEEBHAY

Need for Commitment

I believe, the greatest threat to the survival of our community comes from marriage outside our fold. This treasonable behaviour of the youngsters of our community is shockingly shameful. If timely action is not taken by the community on this burning issue the future of our community will be in jeopardy. Let every Zarathushtrian remember, that the God Almighty has given us

birth as Zarhosti to protect and ennoble the religion of our Holy Prophet. A Zarathushtrian without a sense of commitment to his religion and culture cannot exist.

I also notice from *Parsiana* the unnecessary hue and cry being raised by a few members of our community on the navjote of Joseph Peterson when the real burning issues are set aside and even deliberately overlooked. One swallow doesn't make a summer. Let us be magnanimous, let us all welcome Joseph Peterson within the Zarathushtrian fold. The religion of our Holy Prophet is for the entire mankind and not just for 1,27,000 Zarathushtrian souls. For your information, over the past ten years, Mobed Rashid Shahmardan Irani has performed the navjote of at least 500 Muslim Iranians in Iran.

What our forefathers had and what we really lack in large measure is a sense of history and commitment to the religion of our holy prophet. I believe the Parsis cannot exist without imbibing these qualities.

BURJOR S SETHNA
Cleveland, England.

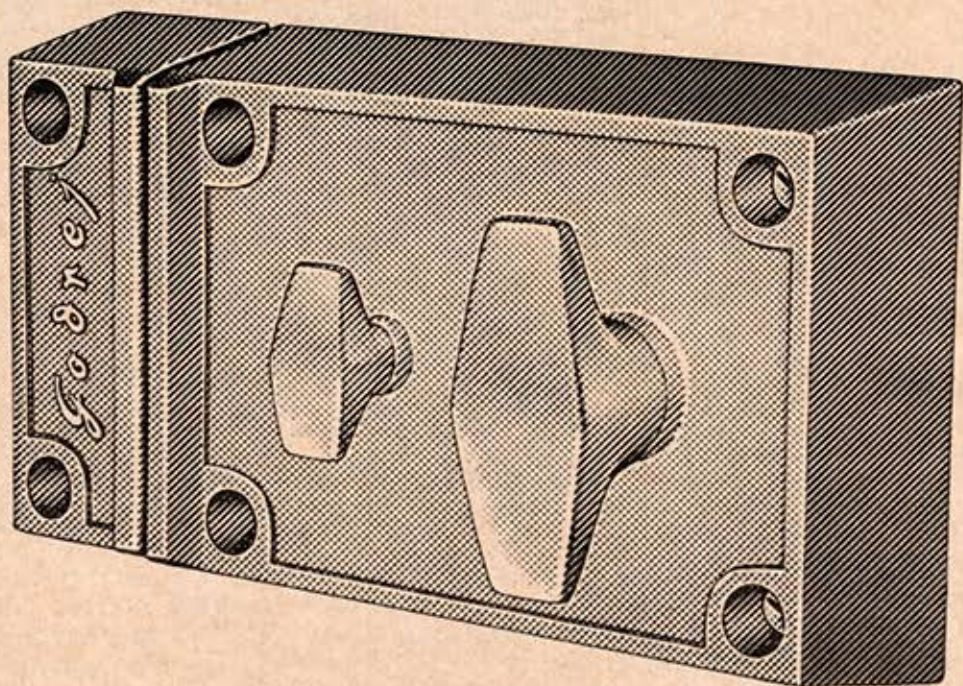
Dwarfing Zoroaster

Zoroaster was a world teacher. Let Parsis know that Zoroaster is there to protect us; we do not need to protect him like a *pardanashin* woman, keeping him away from the gaze of others. Let us not dwarf him into a sectarian saint.

Let us put religion in the rational scheme of things.

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Events and Personalities

Centenary Celebrations at Lady Jamsetji Hill Road

Exactly 101 years ago when the Parsi community of Bombay was perhaps not so much larger than it is now (a lakh or thereabouts, I presume) a man called Nusserwanji Ratanji Tata built a temple in what is now a predominantly Christian/Muslim locality—Bandra.

There were few Parsis then, but all—Parsis, Muslims, Christians—lived, and still live in peaceful coexistence. That man Nusserwanji Ratanji, was the father of the legendary Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata and built his temple on Hill Road. It wasn't always called by the abbreviation then. It's full name is the Lady Jamsetji Hill Road, a name that somehow fell into disuse.

But some time ago, there was a move by our city fathers to rename the road, an exercise that has understandably agitated longtime Bandra inhabitants like Kekoo Gandhi.

Last week, presiding over the agiary's centenary celebrations Kekoo swore to take up the issue with the suburb's Ward Office. Naval Tata, Chairman of the agiary's Board of Trustees for the past 50 years, who graced the occasion promptly announced a donation of three lakhs for the construction of a community-cum-prayer hall. And Dr Firoze Kotwal, who also addressed the gathering, had this story to tell:

It seems a storm broke over the bay in which several people lost their lives. Thereafter, a bridge connecting Mahim with Bandra was built by the Jamsetji Jejeebhoy family. A road named after Lady Jamsetji was also built—Hill Road. Byramjee Jejeebhoy road, going towards Land's End was also built around the same time.

Courtesy The Daily February 15, 1984



The Tata Agiary celebrating its first centenary (Photo: Dolly Soli Divecha)

Naval Tata with Zarire Tata and Ervad Peshotan Peer under the benign stained glass Zar-thost—a short, reverential stop for most Parsis in Bandra (Photo: Rohinton Palkhivala)



Double Discrimination for Indira

A non-Parsi who marries a Parsi faces discrimination from both sides as Prime Minister Indira Firoze Gandhi discovered. She was recently denied entry to the temple of Lord Jaggannath in Puri, Orissa.

According to the Bombay based *Sunday Observer* the main argument against Ms Gandhi's admission is that having married a Parsi she is no longer a Hindu and therefore has no business entering a Hindu temple.

Noted columnist Dhiren Bhagat commented on the above argument in *The Sunday Observer*, September 25, 1983:

"It is an interesting argument and I shall come to it in a minute but before I do I would like to attend to two legal questions that might be provoked by such a stand. One, in what sense is Mrs Gandhi a Parsi? Though she married a Parsi the law does not recognize her as one. The classic legal definition of a Parsi comes to us from Justice Davar in the Sir Jeejeebhoy judgement (BLR 11 p 86) and it is clear on this point: '...the Parsi community consists of Parsis who are descended from the original Persian emigrants and who are born of both Zoroastrian parents, and who also profess the Zoroastrian religion, the Iranis from Persia professing the Zoroastrian religion who came to India either temporarily or permanently and the children of Parsi fathers by alien mothers who have been duly and properly admitted in the religion.'

"Two, granted that the law recognizes her as a Hindu, do the *sebaks* have the legal right to stop Mrs Gandhi from entering the temple? It would appear so. The temple is owned by Lord Jaggannath himself (in India an idol is a legal entity which can sue and be sued, which can even sit on the Board of Directors of a company) and ultimately, of course, it is for Lord J himself to decide whether or not Mrs G enters the temple. But the law does not repose much faith in the ability of the Lord to intervene in worldly affairs; hence the Orissa Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1952, which puts the matter tactfully: '...it is only in an ideal sense that property can be said to belong to an idol; and the possession and management of it must in the nature of things be entrusted to some person as a

shebait or manager... As regards the property the manager is in the position of a trustee.'

"But even if the *sebaks* are well within their legal rights in disallowing Mrs Gandhi from entering the *devasthanam*, it is not clear that they have the moral authority to do so. Let us examine their argument as reported in the papers.

"The headline of the *Observer* story read 'Mrs Gandhi 'not a Hindu', denied entry into Puri Temple'. If the report is correct the Muktimandapa pandits have come to a very peculiar decision for none of the classics they usually consult in deciding such questions, the *Matsya Purana*, the *Niladri Mahodaya* or the *Bamdeb Samhita*, make any reference to either Hindu or Hinduism.



Indira Gandhi: Hindu or Parsi?

"There is a good reason for this: the word *Hindu* is a foreign word, as is the notion itself. It is a Persian word and etymologically does not refer to any religion but rather, is a geographical word, meaning he who lives by the Indus, or Indian. It was not used by Indians till Muslim rule began. So there is no scriptural rule for determining whether or not someone is a Hindu as both the term and the notion didn't exist when the scriptures were put together.

"Yet this is not the first time the pandits at Jaggannath have ruled that someone is 'not a Hindu.' When asked to decide whether or not those who publicly accept food cooked at the hands of Muslims are to be allowed into the temple they ruled *inter alia*: 'If they have been accepting cooked food for more than one year they have become Muslims and should be treated as such...'

"When the *Puranas* were put together the only differences within Indian society were that of caste: as a result the rules in those texts don't deal with the possibility of alien religions. By blindly applying the letter of those texts to modern problems the pandits at Jaggannath have come to absurd decisions like the one I have quoted above. Unlike English judges the pandits don't cite the rules they invoke in their judgements but it's my guess that CC XXVII: 55 of the *Matsya Purana* is the source of this decision: 'A Brahmana who indulges with a Chandala woman or a woman of a different caste or eats their food or accepts a gift from them unknowingly falls from his position. If he does so knowingly he becomes of that caste himself.'

"I have no doubt they have applied this rule to Mrs Gandhi's case as well and declared that she is thus of her husband's caste, i.e. a Parsi. Being a Parsi she is not a Hindu. And not being a Hindu how can she enter Lord Jaggannath's abode?

"This absurd result is but the latest manifestation of an unfortunate tendency that gripped us Hindus when we came in contact with the foreigner: we became obsessed with petty rules of caste identity and forgot that the divine is in all men. 'Our religion is in the kitchen' wailed Swami Vivekananda. 'Our God is the cooking-pot, and our religion is "Don't touch me, I am holy."' If this goes on for another century, everyone of us will be in a lunatic asylum.'

"If only in the interest of public sanity, Mrs Gandhi must enter the Puri temple."

Sir Jamsetji's Birth Bicentennial

The Sir J.J. Parsee Benevolent Institution celebrated the birth bi-centenary of Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy at the Birla Matushri Sabhaghar, Bombay on January 18, 1984.



The first prize-giving ceremony held by Sir Jamsetji at Fort House as re-enacted by children of the J J Schools

Soonawala receiving the Von Grafenberg award from Prof L Mittler of the University of Kiel



Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, 7th baronet and great-great grandson of the first Indian knight and baronet presided over the celebrations. Addressing the packed house, Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy thanked the principals, teachers, students and administrative staff of the Sir J.J. Institutions in the city for "putting up the function with love in memory of Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy."

Attending the function were members of the Jejeebhoy family including senior-most trustee of the institution, Nanabhoy Jejeebhoy, Rustomji Jejeebhoy, and Lady Jejeebhoy. The guests were garlanded by little children dressed in traditional Parsi *jabla* and *topi*.

Staff, with long years of service, were felicitated and presented mementoes by Lady Jejeebhoy. The J.J. Group of Schools in Bombay also presented a play in English on the life of the philanthropist and educationist. Scripted by ex-principal Ms Nergesh Bamji and ex-headmistress Ms Homai Mehta, the play was dramatized, produced and directed by Homi P Tavadia, director of the Hilla Nariman Theatre Group. The dances were choreographed by Ms Hira Desai, with music directed by Bharat Buch.

The late Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy was born in a poor family and rose from being a vendor of empty bottles to being acclaimed as the greatest Indian of his time. It may be noted that several landmarks in the city such as the J J Hospital, the J J College of Art and Architecture, J J group of schools and the J J Dharamsala owe their existence

to the munificence of the late Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy. The Seth Rustomjee J J School Fund, a sister trust of the J J Benevolent Institution, runs two schools in Bulsar, and a school each in Navsari and Bombay.

Courtesy The Daily January 19, 1984.

The Von Grafenberg Award for Soonawala

Dr R P Soonawala, a well-known city obstetrician and gynaecologist, was given the Dr Von Grafenberg award for outstanding work in the field of intrauterine contraception, on November 29, during the fourth world congress on human reproduction, held in Bombay.

The award, instituted by the University of Kiel last year, to commemorate the birth centenary of Dr Von Grafenberg, the pioneer in the field of inter-uterine devices (IUD), carries a medal. Six other doctors around the world have received the award.

Soonawala designed two IUDs, in 1963 and 1972. The one designed in 1972 is called the copper IUD, and is Y-shaped and made of copper wire.

This contraceptive, according to Soonawala is light, not uncomfortable and causes no pain and there is little bleeding. The copper also acts as an anti-fertility device.

Soonawala is the advisor to the government on contraceptives and is also the medical director of the Family Planning Association of India.

• He is a member of the advisory panel

of the Indian Council of Medical Research and is also on the advisory boards of international agencies.

Courtesy The Times of India, December 7, 1983.

Ahmednagar's Horizon

New Horizon is the name of the newly launched newsletter of the Ahmednagar Parsi Anjuman. The first issue of the three page cyclostyled periodical edited by Ms Meher Nagarwalla and Merwan Mehta notes "we start our newsletter with an idea to communicate with our brothers and sisters, both outside and within our hometown (and) to break the communication gap created due to our busy routine."

The objectives of the newsletter are to create a forum, circulate articles of community interest, elaborate and chalk out schemes, advertise services and job vacancies, give news pertaining to anjuman members and so on.

The issue also includes a sketch of the oldest woman of Ahmednagar, Dr Hambai J. Cama. The newsletter notes "Born on 15th August 1898, Miss Cama did her earlier schooling at the Victoria High School & St Helenas in Poona. Her matriculation was completed at the now known, Bhau Saheb Firodia High School with about 600 boys and 3 girls as the strength of the school. Hambai and her sister Tehmina were amongst the three girls. Hambai went for a year to the Wilson College Bombay and later went for her MBBS to the Grant Medical College. Tehmina went on to become the first woman In-



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spector of Factories for the Government of India and later received the 'Kaiser-E-Hind' medal within ten years of service.

"Hambai after serving for a year at the Motlibai Petit Hospital in Bombay as a Lady Fellow, returned to Ahmednagar in the year 1924. She has been here ever since. She never did practice for money but always gave free medicines to the villagers around her. They used to flock to her. In addition to this, she was looking after her family and attended to their affairs. She is still seen pecking at her typewriter on some letter or two. She is so fond of animals that many a roadside dog has found a home. In the year 1926, Tehmina presented Hambai with an Austin and since then she has been a famous sight in Nagar. The last time she took out her car was when she was over seventy with three village boys sitting at the back to push and start the heavy car. With her starters in the back seat she has done quite a jalloping.

"Hambai's life has been and still is one of dedication to all around her. May she live on to become a century batswoman."

New Horizon's address is: Shirin Cottage, Satha Colony, Ahmednagar 414 001.

IDA Chief Dr Keki Mistry

Dr Keki Mistry, consultant orthodontist from Bombay was unanimously elected president of the Indian Dental Association at the Association's 38th annual conference held on the campus of the Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu on December 31, 1983.

In his acceptance speech Dr Mistry emphasized the need for dentistry to be oriented towards community dental health as part of a grand strategy for improving the health of our nation and towards this end he called for a change in the present syllabus so that the concept of community health can begin at the grass roots.

Dr. Mistry is Consultant to the World Health Organisation and to the Indian Armed Forces Medical Services. He is attached to Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, Bombay and to the Parsi General Hospital. He has represented India at many international gatherings and has published several scientific papers. He is Past President of the Indian Orthodontic Society and the International College



IDA President Keki Mistry: grand strategy for dental health

of Dentists, Section VI and is known for his work in community dental health, specially in the rural areas of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. He is the author of the well known book *Dental Health in India and Guidelines to Healthy Living*.

Courtesy Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly, January 1, 1984.

Twin City news

A directory of community members residing in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad is to be published soon, notes the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad newsletter of January.

The anjuman is also activating and renovating its library following requests from the public. "Mrs K B Batliwala who is experienced in this field has volunteered to supervise the proper functioning of the library in future," notes the two page, printed newsletter edited by J D Italia, president of the anjuman and E J Tarapore, honorary secretary.

In other news: Boxer Zarir Vasai-gara won a silver medal in the 30th National Boxing Tournament in the feather-weight class.

Keki Dadabhai was awarded the President's Police Medal for meritorious service.

And the Zoroastrian Club, Secunderabad, played friendly matches of cricket, badminton and table tennis with the Nagpur Parsi Cricket team in October.



Palkhivala: giving himself

Palkhivala Offers to Help

Nani Palkhivala, eminent jurist and senior advocate, Supreme Court of India, has offered to assist in fighting the case of a professor at the Government Law College who is being denied promotion because of his handicap. Palkhivala made his offer while speaking as chief guest at a function held at Prabhadevi organized by the National Association for the Blind (NAB) to celebrate their 32nd anniversary as also the 21st anniversary of the NAB workshop for the blind.

Palkhivala also said that he and wife would make up the shortfall in NAB's Neelum Khurshed Kanga Memorial Fund and added, "Giving money is nothing compared to giving of oneself for good causes like NAB."

Palkhivala presented the Rustom Merwanji Alpaiwalla awards to Ms Neelum Kanga (posthumous), Ms Maki Bhagwagar, Dr H Y Bakre and Dr A C Kapoor. Ms Nargesh Nani Palkhivala gave away the Neelum Kanga prizes to blind women and the Jerbai Gobhai prizes to the trainees of NAB's workshop for the blind. Vijay Merchant, president, NAB, was also present on the occasion.

Courtesy Mid-day January 20, 1984.

Pheroza's Fairy World

This may be a little belated, but ballet dancer Pheroza Lally's performances always merit comment. She gave a solo performance at the Patkar Hall last week

in aid of the Helen Keller Foundation and Perin Nicholson, writing about it, says:

"Pheroza is nothing but a wisp of a girl with a thick cloud of golden brown hair and a highflying talent. She tip-toed joyously as the spring fairy in Mendelssohn's Spring Song; flew with breath-taking speed in the Chopin Etude; soared and leaped with skill and strength in Tchaikovsky's violin concerto in D which was a demanding work. In this ballet, clad in a golden tutu, her lithe fluid grace flooded the audience—and thus was born the soaring skylark..."

"At the end she curtsied in a flood of flowers with a rapt and enchanted audience reluctant to leave Pheroza's fairy world of beauty."

And really, those who have seen her will say that not a single word is exaggerated.

Courtesy Mid-day, January 19, 1984



JRD: unobtrusive help

A Helping Hand

If there is one man in Bombay who seems to display peace and goodwill to all throughout the year, it is this man.

But first the story, sent in very kindly by a regular reader, F S Choksey of Bandra: Caught in a really bad traffic jam at Babulnath Road last week, he looked out of his car to find a Fiat had stalled and was lying diagonally across the road.

Closer inspection revealed that the car was being pushed to the side with great difficulty by two old greying ladies, with their chauffeur at the wheel, guiding the vehicle.

Choksey was alone in his car and he

was thoroughly irked at the complete passiveness displayed by onlookers. Suddenly from a white Mercedes, also driven by a chauffeur, an elegantly-dressed gentleman getting along in years, emerged. He helped the two ladies push their car to the side of the road then returned quietly to his own car.

The man was none other than JRD Tata, doyen of Indian Industry, 78-year-old head of the Tata empire.

Courtesy Mid-day, December 23, 1983

A Talent for Lieder

Lieder is unfortunately a rarely heard form of vocal music in Bombay which is more accustomed to choirs and operatic arias.

Yet this exquisite form of music invented by Schubert and known in English as the "Art Song" for solo voice with piano accompaniment is an intimate, lyric form of music that affords the most ineffable pleasure.

Max Muller Bhavan therefore provided a rare treat for music lovers when they presented Zarine Ghadiali-Hodiwalla (trained in Germany) in a lieder recital.

Zarine's voice has a mellow timbre which is extremely pleasing and she has a marked talent for lieder which requires a special kind of phrasing, breathing and presentation which must be markedly different from the operatic style.

I also had the pleasure of hearing the artist rehearse Schuman's sensitively beautiful song cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben* (A woman's life and love).

Zarine's interpretation was impeccable, every phrase, every nuance rendered in a manner that would have gladdened the composer's heart, and which this critic found totally satisfying.

What is more, the artiste presented for the first time in Bombay's music history (as Dr Lechner, Max Muller Bhavan's dedicated director rightly pointed out) Wagner's song cycle, *Der Wesendonck Lieder* and Mahler's song cycle *Funf Gedichten nach Ruckert Texten*.

Both these late romantic works are swathed in the gentle melancholy of autumnal sunsets and the timbre of Zarine's voice in the lower register had a particularly gratifying and at the same time appropriately tragic quality that these works require.

She was accompanied at the piano by the veteran pianist Zenobia Vakil Patel.

Farrah Rustom

Courtesy Mid-Day, January 12, 1984



Daruwalla: predictable and breezy confidence

Bejan Daruwalla, Astrologer at Large.

Mid-Day astrologer Bejan Daruwalla is perfectly well and having a whale of time in Karachi where he is the guest of Byram Awari, the Asian Games sailing champion.

Recently he was on the front page of the Pakistani daily, *Hurriyat*, being as controversial and cantankerous as he normally is. In the first place, he promptly contradicted a Pakistani astrologer who said that the two countries (India and Pakistan) would be going to war this year. Nothing of the sort, says Daruwalla, in fact they will move closer together.

Quoting from *Hurriyat*: Fifty-two-year old Daruwalla, who belongs to a Parsee family from Ahmedabad, said he could not say anything about President Ronald Reagan appearing as a candidate for the next election.

With predictable and breezy confidence, he told all and sundry that he had predicted Sanjay Gandhi's death (in print) six months before it happened.

For the cricket-mad he had these observations to make. 1985 was going to be a fabulous year for Imran Khan when he will prove himself to the world's best bowler and batsman. For Wasim Raja, the following year will be equally good.

Naturally there were lots of questions about the Third World War but to these he answered cautiously that there would be international "tension" between 1990 and 1991 and that this year things would be bad between January 21 to February 19, April 21 to May 21, July 23 to August 23 and October 23 to November 21. And he added that people can look forward to

earthquakes and floods in several parts of the world.

Courtesy Mid-Day January 17, 1984

Hidayatullah's advice

The text of India's Vice-President Hidayatullah's speech delivered to the members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and the Delhi anjuman on October 8, in New Delhi has been published in the *Fed-News* newsletter of November 1983. Excerpts:

"I am indeed very happy to be amongst you all. I do not really know what I should say and what words of advice and guidance I can speak to a community which is so affluent and so advanced in every sphere. Your problems are in the hands of experienced persons like Mr Nargolwala, Dr Golwala and your Anjumans are fully seized of them. As you perhaps know, I have married a Hindu lady; our cosmopolitan type of family is quite happy.

"So far as the Parsis are concerned, I was asked to make a speech in Bombay and there I quoted from the Bible 'Go ye forth and multiply!' The position is that you are not progressing as fast as the rest of India because you do not admit anybody in your faith and you do not allow any acceptable non-Zoroastrians to come into the Parsi faith.

"I am surprised to find that the World Congress in Tehran which met in 1960 could not make much headway and it took 11 years for the Federation to come into existence. I would suggest that you should make a better job of it and grapple with the problems fast enough and not lose time in needless controversies.

"The Parsis are forthright, very advanced and progressive people and you won't find such people in the rest of India. They are a very old people and have

since made their name in many many fields. You have had your Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Manekshaw, the Naval and Air Chiefs and Justices like Justice Madon of the Supreme Court. You should similarly be progressive in your ideas and thinking, and I am sure your community will make strides. When I see such persons of eminence like the ones I have mentioned, I feel absolutely confident that what I am saying is quite true. I am rather surprised that persons like Justice Madon were not brought to the Supreme Court earlier. In any case, I am sure, he is going to leave a mark on the judiciary. These are the symbols of progress achieved by the Parsis who have supplied, and are supplying and will continue to supply, lawyers and businessmen in Bombay, Delhi and elsewhere. In the field of advocates, the names of Fali Nariman, Soli Sorabji and J. Dadachanji are worthy of mention; they have made their mark on Indian life and your community should be rightly proud of them.

"Unfortunately, however, in India you get submerged in other large communities although you can make your own mark. We find it very difficult to make an impact on the population. At the present time, we have strife all over; the different states of India are witnessing rioting and carnage; communal riots are taking the life out of us, everywhere things are topsy-turvy. Hindus and Muslims are fighting and the only persons not killed are the Parsis.

"Parsis have played a valuable role in the affairs of India and we find that they are giving employment to a large number of people. In Bombay, I was told that Parsis have established their colonies. You have vast resources and you have talented people who can guide the community in the right way. I still feel that you have not exploited your vast resources fully and there is room for proper utilization and deployment of those resources. You have rich people, like Tatas. Parsis in Bombay are well-established in their colonies, entrenched in good business and by and large they are affluent, whereas you have Hindus, Muslims and the labour classes in good numbers, who are poor.

"You are so progress-minded that you will easily and certainly raise money to put up your own colonies in other big cities of India and that will take care of your housing problem. India is in a state of flux at the moment; things are getting out of control. There are rival pulls from

all directions and the ordinary man who wants to obey the law and live peacefully, finds it difficult to fit in this atmosphere. There is so much trouble; law and order has become the biggest problem of the day. Almost all areas are disturbed—none is safe. You are secure as you are a small community; nobody takes notice of you. All your votes taken together do not count for very much. The Parsis, therefore, do not run the risk of being politically jeopardized.

"The Parsis being a small community have to be very cautious in their approach. Let them not be too orthodox lest a few people are lost to you every few years and you are further reduced in numbers. You are an advanced community in India, as I have already said, and I would be very happy to see them achieve this progress."

"My advice to you is that you give a lead to other communities. You have the means to do so; other communities like Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are comparatively backward communities; they are not the people to give the lead which the Parsis can. I am sure you will rise to the occasion to help other communities in distress and you will show the way to them."

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Nergis Nargolwala garlanding Vice President Hidayatullah at the Federation meeting at Delhi





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Poncha's Punchayat Plans

Arnavaz S Mama

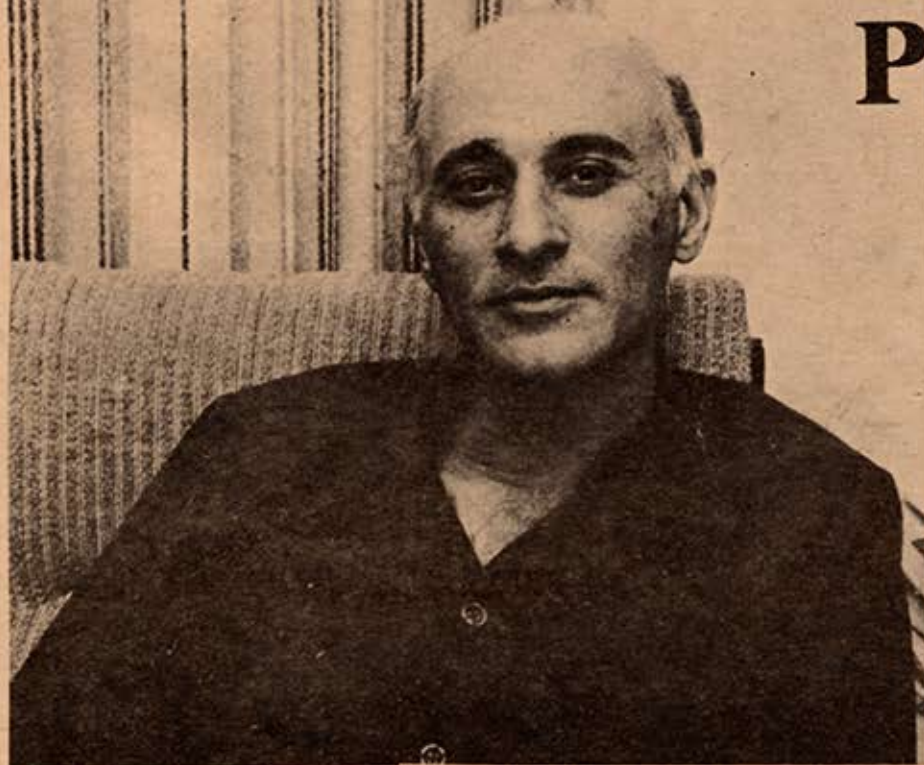


Photo: Ayesha Soni

"Past BPP chairmen were so totally against the ownership flat concept that in the last 20 years they have left half a million square feet unbuilt. Twenty years back you were building at Rs 50 per square foot. Today at Rs 250." Fali Poncha was speaking on a subject which has held his and the community's attention for several years, housing. In April the lithe 49-year-old former insurance executive will contest a trusteeship seat on the Bombay Parsi Punchayat as the candidate of the Committee for Electoral Rights that swept the last Anjuman Committee elections. BPP Trustee Dr Nellie Noble's term expires in April.

If he wins the elections as he is expected to do, housing would be Poncha's main priority. Presently he is a director of Tata Housing and is involved in building "about half a million square feet in Bombay."

"The Punchayat is supposed to be a guiding body. They are trustees of trusts created by donors. There is nothing that has given them any jurisdiction over

religious matters. However, as leaders of the community and by tradition they are expected and required to decide on religious matters. Fortunately there are religious scholars whose guidance must be sought and followed. Endless debates and controversies on religious doctrine also do not come in."

What does 'come in' is the use to which the funds are put. "Twenty to 25 years ago the Punchayat should have established small and medium industries. Lijjat Papads for instance began with an initial investment of Rs 500. The Somaya trust and its Surushi pickles offer healthy employment to several hundred women."

The community's problems stem from the "different approach to service as far as the trustees are concerned. Professional management at the executive level is largely and almost totally missing," avers Poncha. And yet there is a distinct possibility of combining the assets of individual trusts with the management facilities of the BPP. For example, says Poncha, the Gamadia

trust runs a technical education school. Its a magnificent building where a couple of hundred boys could be accommodated but where only 30 or 40 boys now enroll. There is a huge plot of land attached which the trust would consider as their contribution towards establishing an engineering college where you can reserve seats for Parsis—in the Jai Hind College 50 percent seats are reserved for Sindhis" shrugs Poncha.

"It may take the next 100 years to improve the economic conditions of the community" says Poncha, "but should that deter us from making a start?"

Housing

Poncha estimates the cost of developing the BPP's land resources at Rs 11 crores with no funds specifically earmarked by "various donors for the purpose of new housing."

One of the most important planks of the CER manifesto has been housing, subsequently adopted and strengthened by the BPP's Committee for Economic Uplift of Parsi Zoroastrians chaired by Jimmy Guzder to which Poncha and his co-deputy chairmen Minoo Shroff and Dady Engineer were inducted. In creating an overall plan for economic uplift "the main thrust our group felt should be in the area of housing for two reasons: One, when there is acute shortage of housing, any other economic prosperity you would bring to a Parsi family would be nullified by exorbitant rents for shelter. Two, the Punchayat has had the land resources which it is incumbent on its part to develop.

"Well before the Economic Uplift

Committee was formed, we in the CER had worked out an important plan which we have referred to in the past as the Robin Hood concept" relates Poncha. "If I go to a very rich family and explain the community's need for housing, I'd be lucky to get Rs 10,000. But if we got good, well-designed flats which we could sell to the rich..."

The concept was put to the test when S F Engineer advertised two-bedroom flats for Parsis on the upper reaches of Kharegat Colony. "There were no constraints upon this plot from the Urban Land Ceiling Act. The Punchayat would have made much more by selling the land in the open market. But at the outset it was decided that we must not surrender any land assets," explained Poncha.

Indeed, the Punchayat is to get Rs 500 per square foot of land or FSI as it is called i.e. nearly six lakhs of rupees from each buyer of a flat of 1170 sq ft. Construction costs to be borne by the builder/promoter come to two and a half to three lakh rupees. As matters stand, "there are 130 Parsis wanting to, clamouring to, contribute six lakhs of

"We are trying to ensure a fair marking. We are not trying to say that it is deliberately unfair."

rupees to the Punchayat funds" if they are fortunate enough to be allotted one out of the 56 flats to be constructed at Gibbs Road. Presumably, once these funds roll into the kitty the BPP should be able to make farther-reaching plans (see *Parsiana* Nov. '83).

The Scrutiny Cell

Production, as usual, is only one part of the problem. The thorny problem of equitable distribution remains. "Since 1981 when CER got its mandate (from the community) it pitched all out for a scrutiny cell for the allotment of new flats. How do you distinguish between 3,000 applicants as to who is the really deserving case? In the past those applications with patronage would be invariably put up! We suggested that norms be laid down with a merit point rating system duly publicized. On the basis of that every single one of the 3,000 plus applicants should be ranked. We suggested that at least three Parsis who are known

for their integrity and commitment should be invited to serve on this scrutiny cell whose sole function would be to apply the norms of allotment and credit rating system. This cell would have nothing to do with allotment but everything to do with evaluation of the application."

The idea was accepted by the BPP board as part of the suggestions of the Economic Uplift Committee whose every proposal was unanimously arrived at. Alas, when the time came "for allotment of the Godrej Baug tenements, the Punchayat had the scrutiny done by its own staff plus a couple of trustees who volunteered their time. We made a representation to Dr Golvala and the full Board of Trustees, but the Board remained firm in its decision not to induct any outsider but brought in Mr Yagnik, a respected, retired official from the High Court. Although we cannot fault them legally, they considered our demand for a Scrutiny Cell an unwarranted intrusion on their prerogatives.

"My colleagues and I are fairly rigid on this issue. If you want to gain the confidence of the community, you must not only be fair but appear to be fair. They evolved their own checks and balances against wrong ranking. For example, one safeguard was that they would publish the ranking in the press and on the BPP notice board to enable an applicant to see where he stood. But we felt that unless a columnar register was maintained per category of applicants, eg 'Homeless,' 'Engaged couples,' etc, showing the points earned by an applicant under the provisions of the Merit Rating System, an applicant would not be in a position to satisfy himself that the rating was correctly done. Moreover, each column of marks on various heads would be open to inspection and appeal.

"Our demand for a scrutiny cell continues. We shall do everything in our power to bring it about on the macro level before the BPP considers allotment of the 1,000 flats it plans to construct. We have got a signature collection campaign but people unconcerned by the issue shy away considering it a political controversy rather than an issue of principle. Others who have applied do not want to prejudice their case. We are trying to ensure a fair marking" emphasizes Poncha. "We are not trying to say that it is deliberately unfair."

Andheri

Fairly recently Poncha had the oppor-

tunity to work out this sticky distribution issue to his satisfaction when Tata Housing took the lease on the Cama Athornan Trust land in Andheri. "In collaboration with the M. F. Cama Trustees we succeeded in obtaining clearance from the ULC authorities (at a price—35,000 to 40,000 sq ft fully developed, to be sold to the government at a rate of Rs 135 per sq ft) and my company is developing this property where we have plans to build over 200 one-bedroom apartments for

"Invariably, you are refused admission for lack of space when there is enough space for a duplicate hospital."

sale on ownership at a reasonable price (Rs 350 per sq ft—a price that not only includes 20 percent escalation over current costs but the above government stipulation) all of which are already booked. At the end of two years (December '85) 200 Parsi families will have secured extremely decent accommodation.

"Some 1,500 people took the forms" recalls Poncha "but only about 400 applications were received of which some dropped out. Six or seven of these applications were submitted by young women in the age group 25-32 years working in firms where soft loans for housing are available. It takes a lot of courage for a girl to take on that liability. They were the first flats I allotted." All applicants were required to submit detailed particulars of income, family structure and present living conditions and, after the information was processed, were invited for interviews. Most were allotted a flat; "non-resident Parsis were the only non-allottees." Part of the land may one day be utilized for running a secondary school.

Medicare

After housing the next most urgent community problem on Poncha's list is medicare. The B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital is the one trust to which every Parsi family owes more obligation than to any other trust. "Although the Parsi population has dwindled in the last 10 years, there is a larger range of users. We have not learnt to cope with it."

Not forgetting the immense debt of gratitude to the trust and the people ad-

ministering it, the standards of equipment and hygiene need to be propped up, says Poncha. It has "its own electoral college, its own committee of management (but) it cannot continue to disregard priorities as it is doing today. Invariably, you are refused admission for lack of space when there is enough space for a duplicate hospital."

The Priesthood

"The priest can only be self-respecting if he has the money for it—at least Rs 2000 a month. Less than that and the community defaults on its obligation to the priestly class. Cannot new trusts be created to give full-time practising priests a subsidy and housing?" asks Poncha. Referring to the BPP's own paper tack-

ling the problem, Poncha says that since quarters for priests at Doonerwadi would be permitted by the Bombay Municipal Corporation, why not create housing there for about 100 priests. If continued residence is made contingent upon the presence of a practising mobed, it would perpetuate one member of the family going into the priesthood. Also, it is Poncha's opinion that if the "one too many fire-temples could be merged," they might be better tended. However, plans for 16 quarters for priests, it is reported, have been submitted to the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

A double graduate from Sydenham College who honed his managerial skills in insurance for 20 years, the last six in the General Insurance Corporation

which is the holding company of four subsidiaries, wherefrom he resigned in 1977 as manager of Technical and Underwriting, Poncha says, he "prays daily, goes to the firetemple on special occasions, puts more emphasis doing things than on saying things." Poncha enjoys photography, reading, owning horses and riding them along with his two sons: Fali going through his first year of science and Raiomond in his second last year of school. Wife Azarmie is the chief of administration at the ICICI.

"Even if I did not do anything else, I'd be quite happy to have been instrumental in having brought about a housing colony for Parsis" says Poncha referring to the Cama Trust property deal in Andheri.

Who is 'homeless'?

Two categories of applicants have been allotted priorities of 30 percent each—the homeless and engaged couples. But who is 'homeless'? questions Poncha. "There was the case of the lady who worked in the IDBI and whose residence was provided by the bank. She had written to the Panchayat way back in the sixties stating that she would be due for retirement in 1983 when she would have to surrender her present accommodation and would be homeless unless some place was allotted to her. But the Panchayat did not even consider her case when they allotted the Godrej Baug flats: she was not considered 'homeless.' If I've got shelter with a family member, I'm not 'homeless.' Unless I'm shunting between sanatoria I'm not 'homeless'!"

The CER Housing Cell

The CER's own housing cell under Poncha's chairmanship processes reports on BPP and Baug flats lying shut or surreptitiously sold, then brings the matter to the attention of the BPP. Early in 1982 occurred a case in Cusrow Baug when, under cover of a local wedding celebration a flat's tenancy was physically altered overnight. "Under our laws physical possession means winning nine-tenths of the battle" says Poncha. "We took up the matter with the BPP and the Wadia Baug managing committee which is a separate body on which three BPP trustees sit. And though this may be a

case of bolting the stable after the horse has flown, as of then no truck is permitted to come in or go out of the Baugs without prior approval. We have also filed a case against the new incumbents."

Going a step further, repair committees from the various baugs have now begun to function under the CER umbrella. "There was no policy in the BPP for repairs. The Panchayat decided that it would check priorities for carrying out repairs! From the CER, in 1981 and 82 we brought together the Navroze Baug tenants who had been at loggerheads with the managing committee of the Wadia trust. It was a significant achievement in co-operation when groups of blocks were repaired by fifty-fifty contribution in which there had been a stalemate on grounds of personal egos for years," declares Poncha.

Salvaging Kooka Building

Another incident pertains to the Kooka Building at Parel which was requisitioned by the Housing Board as irreparable and a demolition order passed. The trustees of the Kooka Charity Trust did not oppose the order as their earlier attempts to woo tenant participation in necessary repairs had been disregarded by the tenants. However, faced with a demolition order and the prospect of 15 years in a transit camp until the building is rebuilt, chased the tenants hot foot to the CER Housing Committee.

"Do you know what life is like in a transit camp?" questioned Poncha. "We interviewed Parsi families living in transit

camps. It's a chapter from purgatory—there is no privacy, no security, the womenfolk dare not go to the toilets (which are common to the camp) without a male escort to keep guard. At night one member of the family has to maintain constant vigil!"

A working group consisting of a structural engineer, a construction expert and architects inspected Kooka building and came to the conclusion that Rs 2.5 lakhs would be required for adequate repairs. Since the trust had no such money the tenants were asked to bank whatever they were capable of contributing towards this amount. The 15 tenants paid up Rs 80,000 towards this account. Then Rustam Kooka, the senior trustee, went to the Housing Board chairman and the Government of Maharashtra's secretary of housing who agreed to vest the building back with the trust and withdraw the demolition order on the basis of the argument that if repairs cost a mere 20 percent of the total cost of a similar new construction which was reckoned at Rs 12 lakhs, then the building could not be labelled dangerously dilapidated.

"We spent 100 man hours on this project" says Poncha. "It's an example of the lack of co-operation which leads to a stupid situation like this."

The Kooka building is not totally out of the woods yet, for the trust does not want the building back. "However, the tenants would be entitled to recover Rs 1.5 lakhs from the Repairs Cess Board," says Poncha.

Life at the 'Indus

Sooni Taraporevala

What most Bombayites know as RTI used to be called The Sir Ratan Tata Industrial Home For Parsi Women. This was abbreviated by the Parsi community to just one word 'Industrial.' You bought your *Tarapori patio* and *patrel* from Industrial and received your daily *bhonas* (meals) from the Industrial's catering services. Well-to-do Parsis and non-Parsis have different and more expensive reference points. RTI is where you can buy the most scrumptious chocolate cakes; RTI is where you had that gorgeous saree embroidered. The institute has been many things to many people. For most of the women who work there, it has been their whole life.

Begun exclusively for Parsi women by Naoroji Patuck in 1899, the RTI (originally called the Stri Zarhosti Mandal) today employs 350 women in its various departments including cookery, hand embroidery, tailoring, laundry, and weaving. The RTI was, and still considers itself a welfare institution "where poor women could come out of their distressing surroundings to work and earn in a cheerful atmosphere."

The 'Industrial' no longer employs only Parsis and its low wages are compensated by a sense of security. You can enter the doors of RTI at 18, poor and unskilled and stay there all your life until you choose to retire—there is no compulsory retirement age. Many of the women there are over 60. And when you do retire you have at your command considerable skills and many friends—your co-workers who have shared most of your life with you in an atmosphere not unlike a benevolent yet strict Parsi school.

These pictures were taken by Bombay-based photographer, Sooni Taraporevala, 26, and constitute a part of her series on the Parsi community to be published in a forthcoming book.

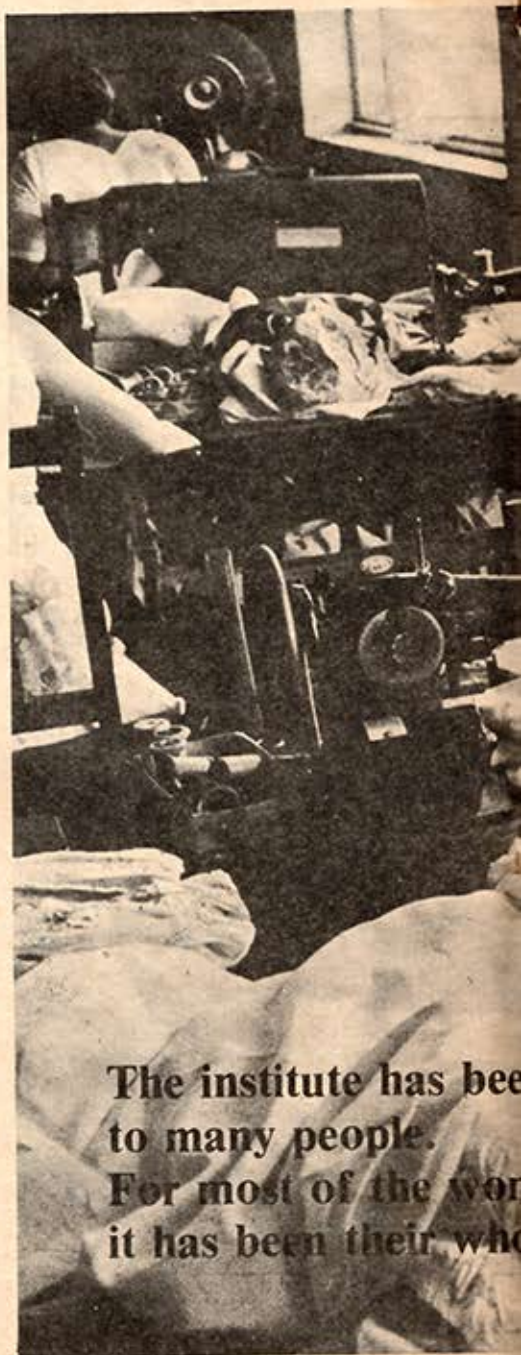
"I think it's important to make invisible people visible," says Ms Taraporevala of her work. "I think photographing the RTI women for instance, gave them some importance and a feeling of dignity. I talked to some of them; knew some of them. I have a relative who has been with the Institute for 38 years and who feels so much a part of the organization. It was through her I got my first personal insights into the RTI."

Most of Taraporevala's subjects include lower and middle class Parsis in their traditional environment "in whose hands the Parsi culture really lives... While charity and generosity has always been an integral part of well-to-do Parsis, what also existed was a strong spirit of camaraderie and a feeling of familiarity. Today, charity is more institutionalized, bureaucratic and unfeeling. The personal touch is missing."

In documenting and capturing the lifestyles, customs, rituals and habits of the community, Taraporevala has been travelling extensively in the Parsi pockets of Western India over the past four years. However, her portfolio has not been restricted to the community that she herself belongs to but include lifestyles of people in rural India, France, Spain and the United States where she completed her higher education. She started out by using a Nikkormat but has recently switched to the Leica "because it's much quieter, quicker and its compactness makes it less obtrusive which is ideally suited to my kind of photograph."

Educated in cinema studies at Harvard and New York Universities, Taraporevala has exhibited her works at two solo shows at Harvard and Princeton and has participated in a group show at the New York University photo gallery. She plans to exhibit her work in Bombay.

Reprinted with permission from *Imprint*, September, 1983.



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it has been their whole

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An oasis of peace

Lakshmi Mohan

Tucked away in a crowded intersection on one of Bombay's busiest roads, is what is, in common parlance, called the Parsi Well, an oasis of peace in the midst of a tumultuous, wind-swept desert—like the quiet centre of a storm. The din fades into incoherent murmurs here and the frenzy subsides into cool, unhurried placidity. The tempo of the city slackens within its unmarked boundaries. The stone seats are strewn with a few people. Gnarled old trees send down drooping branches like a benevolent benediction. And chinks of sunshine lie on the ground in bright little patterns.

This little patch diffuses the atmosphere of a place over which the wave of battle has passed, abandoned and deserted. And trespassing the quiet are the sounds of splashing water and the clanking of metal buckets as water is drawn from the well. Its stone ramparts are dark with age and on the recently constructed grille hang garlands of faded flowers. A young Parsi woman comes in to offer prayers. At one end is a small counter where lamps are sold. These lamps are glasses of oil in which wicks are kept and the tall fair man who looks after the 'shop,' sells them to customers who light them as sacred offerings. The hundred or so *bathis* that are lit everyday are kept on a shelf from where they flare brightly like little sputtering flames of hope. This shop has been let out on condition that the Trust which now manages the well will get a fixed monthly rent of Rs 400 every month for maintenance and other expenses connected with its upkeep. And as one of the Trustees said, "We have now a sum of Rs 1 lakh in the bank, collected over the years from this shop."

There are four or five wells in the area, but it is to this one that divinity is attributed. Known to Parsis as the Bhikha Behram Kuva and to non-Parsis as the Parsi Well, it was sunk in 1725 by Bhikhaiji Behramji Panday, a Parsi philanthropist who belonged to an affluent family of merchants. The island of Bombay was ruled by the East India Company. The whole area from Ram-part Row to Bazaar Gate was then open territory called Esplanade. There was as

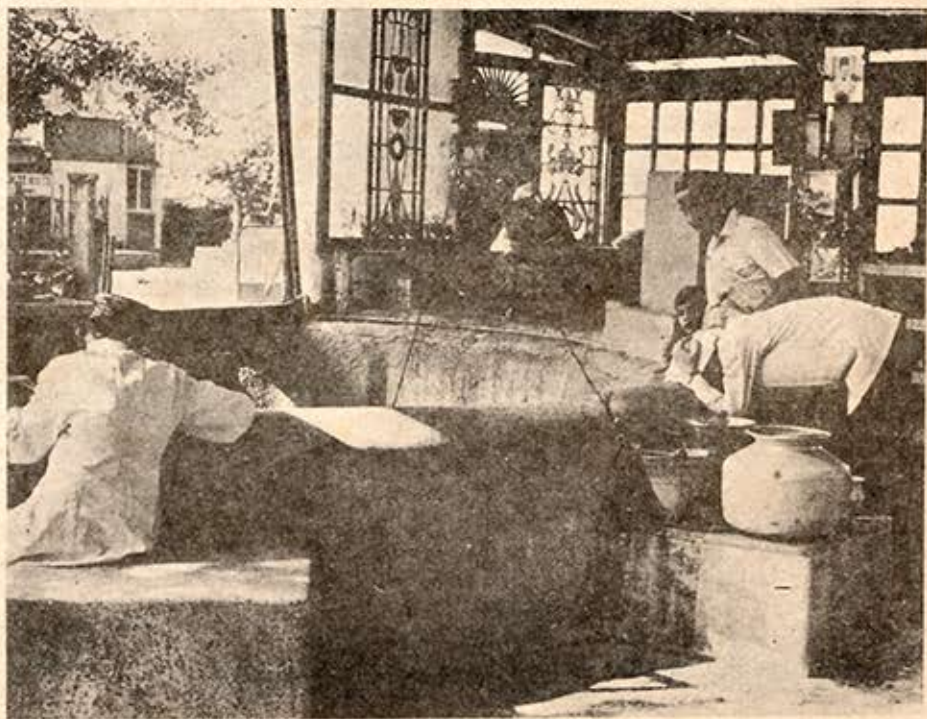
yet no provision for municipal water and the lakes of Powai and Tansa were not contemplated as sources of water supply and so people dug wells for water. According to one wizened old gentleman, every Parsi home had a well those days. Magnanimous citizens of Bombay sunk wells here and there and their vestiges are still to be found in the Azad Maidan and elsewhere in the Fort.

The well near the High Court, sunk around the same time, is still very much in use, though it is not considered sacred.

But most wells yielded only brackish water, which was not surprising since the sea those days extended up to the western side of the Parsi Well. But the well that Bhikhaiji Behramji Panday sank brought forth sweet, crystal clear water. Another striking feature was that its level remained more or less static, even during the hot summer months; it is so even today, despite the continuous use it is put to. The well is fed by eleven perennial springs and when it is emptied and cleaned once every year, it replenishes itself with miraculous haste.

It is superfluous to add that the well has been named after Bhikhaiji Behramji Panday who caused it to be sunk. For long years, it remained a private property in the possession of the Panday family. Bhikhaiji Behramji Panday's third son Fehramji Bhikhaiji Panday, known in the family by the pet name of Fala Kaka was a large-hearted man who, out of sheer generosity threw open the family well to the general public and no restrictions were imposed on who would use it. The Parsi Well has never been a communal well, but a cosmopolitan one, the only stipulation being that the eastern side of the well was to be reserved exclusively for the Parsis for prayers and to ignite *bathis*. The lamps were in those days placed in a niche in the walls of the well and would burn day and night.

Bathi lit, the devotee pays homage to Zarathustra. Left: Bowing to the well in supplication, thanksgiving, piety. (Photos: Ayesha Soni)



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Now, a separate enclosure has been made for the lamps.

The western side of the well is for public use. At all hours one can find *bhayyas* drawing out the water in large metal containers. The utility of the well is evidenced by the fact that quite a number of offices in the Fort area are supplied with water from the Parsi Well and from the well near the High Court. Some years ago, the Parsi Well rendered creditable service in quenching the flames of a huge fire that broke out near the Bandstand opposite the Cooperage.

The Parsi Well has been declared a public charitable well and is managed by

When it is
emptied and cleaned
it replenishes itself
with miraculous
haste.

a Trust. There is a continuing tussle between the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Trust over possession of the well.

To the Parsis, the well is an object of reverence. During the month of April, they worship water, and flowers are hung in colourful profusion around the well. On the eighteenth day of the Parsi Calendar known as Behram Roz, they offer flowers and *bathis* here, and during the thirty days of the special month of Ava Mahina when water is again worshipped, garlands and festoons are strung up on the grille near the well.

One stout, middle-aged lady who has been sitting there every afternoon for the last two decades and more, hunched over a book, silently chanting her prayers, says "I have been coming here for so many years. I don't know anything about its history or antiquity. But, I believe the place has sanctity. I can feel it."

Hundreds of weary office-goers quench their thirst at the well in the midst of their arduous commuting and send up silent prayers of thanksgiving to the man who made it all possible long ago. It is a refuge frequented by people in search of a few moments of idle tranquillity snatched from the monotony of their treadmill, a place often sought for an hour of quiet piety and introspection in the afternoon heat.

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Businessman of the Year 1983: Russi Mody

"The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) has crossed 75 years and has constantly made progressive innovations. It is difficult for a single individual to make a personal impact on such a giant with strong established traditions. But this is precisely what has been done by Russi Mody. Above all he has managed, in most turbulent times, and in the face of very adverse circumstances, to preserve the integrity, spirit and ideals of the founder" (Jamsetjee Tata) so noted the Bombay based fortnightly Business India's publisher Ashok H Advani announcing the magazine's choice of Mody as 'Businessman of the Year 1983'. The selection panel consisted of last year's Businessman of the Year Ajit Narain Haksar, chairman emeritus, ITC; Raghu Raj, chairman, Air India; A.L. Mudaliar, chairman, ICI; S.S. Nadkarni, chairman, ICICI; Vinod L. Doshi, chairman, Premier Automobiles; and M.V. Subbiah, president, AIEI.

Haksar stated the main reasons for choosing Mody are that he is a man-manager without equal, worshipped by Tisco workers and enjoying the loyalty and adoration of his managers.

The Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (Tisco) has for long been a sleeping giant. Government price control on steel and steel products, which lasted for nearly three decades before it was abolished recently, drastically curbed the company's profitability, and thereby affected its financial wherewithal to modernize outdated plant and processes. Moreover, the threat of nationalization remained a bogey which has repeatedly raised its head. Even in the late seventies, there was the notorious George Fernandes-Biju Patnaik plan to nationalize Tisco.

But the period of uncertainty and stagnation is now past. Tisco is not only spending many hundred crores of rupees on a very thorough modernization programme (which will concurrently raise its capacity from 1.5 to two million tonnes per annum), but is also going out actively to promote downstream units, or to take over units in related fields of activity.

At the turning point

Rustomji Hormusji Mody (66), managing director of Tisco since 1974 and also

its vice-chairman since 1978, has been chief executive of the company during a period which many will see as a crucial turning point in the company's history. He is universally acknowledged to have provided outstanding and charismatic leadership; and the new air of dynamism in Jamshedpur and the Tata Centre in Calcutta has been to a large extent his own creation.

Russi Mody, the eldest of Sir Homi Mody's three sons, was sent at a very early age to Harrow for schooling, and then went on to Christchurch College, Oxford, where he received a bachelor's degree in ancient history. S.A. Sabavala, who was a younger contemporary of Mody's at Oxford and is now a director of Tata Sons, recall how, on his return to Bombay, Mody was taken to Sir Ardesir Dalal, then chairman of Tisco. Young Mody confessed that he knew very little and could do even less. He was told to pack his bags and head for Jamshedpur, where he started off on the shopfloor at a salary of Rs 100 a month in September 1939. He has been with the

Tatas ever since, alternating between Calcutta and Jamshedpur.

During his long career, Mody has been through the entire gamut of the steel company's operations. He has been in shift work at the factories; on the commercial side at Calcutta; on deputation from Tisco to the Iron and Steel Controller's office during the Second World War in charge of moving coal and purchasing raw materials for the war effort; and above all, in charge of personnel and industrial relations—an area on which he has left the unmistakable imprint of his unique individual style.

In an extraordinary tribute to Russi Mody, J.R.D. Tata, his longtime chief, says: "In the course of my life I have seen very many people; but more than anyone I can think of, Russi possesses a matchless capacity for leadership. Leadership finally means the ability to inspire loyalty, trust and affection, which he does better than anyone I know. He has exceptional human sympathy and compassion, and total honesty of purpose. He relates to everyone simply and



directly, irrespective of who you are. And he has a true sense of humour—the sort which destroys all pompousness and won't allow you to take yourself too seriously."

The human touch

Adds Sabavala, "His technique is very simple; it's the human touch. He is so good at working with people because he is a man who genuinely loves people. And he loves people because he loves life, you could call him a *bon vivant* in the best sense of the term. He has a remarkable memory for names and faces: he knows many workers by their first names, whose child is sick, whose brother-in-law is giving trouble. He will squat with his workers and eat chapatis with them. In turn, the men worship him."

V.G. Gopal, president of the Tata Workers' Union, has this to say: "In my long career as a trade unionist, I have never seen a top executive of Russi Mody's calibre, intelligence and energy, who combines all these qualities with a

deep sympathy and understanding of labour. J.R.D. Tata has a similar concern for industrial relations. I feel that in any industrial undertaking, the behaviour of the trade union depends to a large extent on the attitudes of the management. Industrial peace and harmony at Tisco is born out of this mutual trust between management and labour."

Gopal goes on to describe the history of industrial relations at Jamshedpur. "Till 1936, the union was weak and struggling, and therefore very militant. After that year, the management of Tisco changed its policy of confrontation. The trade union became not merely acceptable, but also an association which was vital to the interests of the workers, and which therefore had to be fostered."

Mody tells the story of his first foray into industrial relations in his characteristically graphic manner. Once the chairman J.R.D. Tata summoned him from his office at the company's coal department in Calcutta to ask whether it was true that the 15 or 20 men working directly under him were the only

ones who had not joined the recently formed Mercantile Employees' Union in Calcutta. "I said it was true, but could not give him a reasoned explanation as to why it was so. I muttered something about the men wanting to show their appreciation for the sympathetic and courteous manner in which I had dealt with their problems, and left it at that," says Mody.

Early Baptism

The outcome of this interview was that J.R.D. Tata immediately transferred Mody to the newly formed personnel department at Jamshedpur. Nothing exciting happened for a few months, till suddenly, walking back to his office after lunch, Mody found himself surrounded by an angry crowd of men who had stopped work and were assaulting any and all of the supervisors they could lay their hands on.

Mody thinks the reason why he was not dealt with in a similar manner was that he was rather unconventionally dressed (in khadi shirt and shorts), and that he was not very much known inside the plant. "That was when I suddenly realised that all my education, training and background of Harrow and Oxford was not going to be of any use in dealing with this situation," he recalls. "In very broken Hindustani I started asking those nearest to me what was the cause of the trouble and whether I could not be of some help to them. To my amazement, instead of beating me up, they started telling me their grievances, and I found myself quite naturally reacting to them with sympathy. After this had gone on for a few minutes I asked them again, in all innocence, whether they would not like to sit down so that we could have a chat. To my great relief, after a little hesitation, the anger subsided and they sat down to talk to me."

Mody feels that from this moment a rapport was established, and for over 30 years thereafter he has received nothing but the utmost kindness and understanding from labour whenever he has had to deal with them.

Friends and associates narrate many other stories. When he was appointed deputy agent in Calcutta in 1955, and was in charge of the collieries, one of the first things he did was to speak to workers and their representatives in the coalfields to study their problems. The Tata coalfields were then suffering from very low productivity, and incurring a loss of Rs 50 lakhs per year.



'Confrontation is always avoided.'

In a letter to his chairman, Mody asked for an expenditure of Rs 55 lakhs to be spread over two years: Rs 12 lakhs for new roads, Rs 23 lakhs for providing electricity to the workers' colony, and Rs 20 lakhs for supplying drinking water in each of the colliery houses.

"The chairman readily agreed," Mody recalls. "I am quite certain that nobody except J.R.D. Tata would have agreed to an expenditure of this magnitude in a division running on losses, but he did. He saw the point more clearly than any of us at that time. The net result was that after we had spent the money and made friends, shall I say, with our own people in the collieries, we started gaining in productivity and production."

Another famous example is that of the Tisco ferro-manganese plant which Mody took charge of in 1965. He called all the 450 workers to his director's bungalow, 50 at a time, asked them their grievances, and gave on the spot orders to resolve them. The effect on the workers' morale was miraculous, and since then production climbed steeply to well over capacity.

Bit of acting

Mody is full alive to the element of showmanship in such situations. "Never had the workers seen the inside of a director's bungalow. When I made them sit down, and served them cold drinks,

not one would touch his glass. For 15 minutes, I could not get a word out of them. Then when they spoke up, and as I sanctioned boots, helmets and all kinds of things for them, the poor manager was almost collapsing because previously if he had to get any of these small things, he had to go through 15 different tiers before getting a sanction!"

How much of the credit for Tisco's enviable record of harmonious industrial relations goes to Russi Mody? After all, Tisco has had a long history of enlightened management and industrial peace well before Russi Mody came on the scene. Few people know that Tata Steel introduced an eight hour day in 1912, even before it had been generally accepted in the US and Europe. Leave with pay was introduced in 1920, when it was unknown in either Great Britain or the US. The Provident Fund, then unknown in Britain and not legalized in India till 1952, was introduced in Jamshedpur in 1920. Accident compensation was started in the same year and was much more liberal than the Workmen's Compensation Act.

A Joint Works Committee was set up as early as 1919. And in 1956, J.R.D. Tata signed an agreement with the Tata Workers' Union setting up a three-tier consultative structure with Joint Departmental Councils at the base, above them the Joint Works Council for the entire works, and finally the Joint Consultative Council of Management at the top level.

Given this background, what can be considered Russi Mody's own contribution to Tisco's good industrial relations? As Sabavala puts it, "Russi did inherit an excellent structure and a tradition of enlightened management. But because of his exceptional personal qualities, he has been able to extract the maximum potential from this structure, and has brilliantly adapted this tradition to suit changing needs."

He rises early, and holds open house on his verandah every morning from 7 am to 9 am when anybody can walk in and talk about anything he likes—a practice which Mody has now instituted for all his vice-presidents. Every single day, he visits a different department or office and meets 20 to 50 people individually. He answers all their problems in letters he signs personally—and if he has to say no to any request, the letter always gives the reason.

More than gimmicks

Mody's style in industrial relations goes

"Instead of beating me up, they started telling me their grievances, and I found myself quite naturally reacting to them with sympathy."

well beyond keeping the door of his vice-chairman's office open to workers, welcoming workers to report their individual grievances, or personally signing letters to them after their particular requests have been looked into.

He has fostered and encouraged management-labour consultative meetings at the departmental and plant levels, and holds collective meetings with all the supervisors of the company once in three months, with senior managers once a month, and with all the workers annually. Says an observer, "Despite the pressures on his time, he makes it a point to attend at least 25 of the 34 annual meetings of the Joint Departmental Councils, where he personally has to field a number of difficult, pointed and even embarrassing questions. And he does this with great ease and charm—in Hindi."

V.G. Gopal, the Tata Worker's Union president, says that he has never known Mody not to accede to any reasonable request at these meetings, or when questioned seriously on any topic to avoid giving frank answers. Mody says, "On these occasions, anybody has the right to call me a bloody fool, so long as I can also call him so!"

"It is not that I do not sometimes disagree with Russi Mody," says Gopal. "But very often I bring him round to see my point of view. There is trust between us, and confrontation is always avoided." The goodwill between management and labour at Tisco was best illustrated when George Fernandes threatened to nationalize Tisco in 1978. The Tata Workers' Union unanimously adopted a resolution, strongly opposing the nationalization move.

Today, the 35,000 Tisco workers in Jamshedpur, another 20,000 or so in the mines and collieries, and 10,000 in the various depots and offices, regard Russi Mody as a hero. On his birthday, 30,000 workers pour into his bungalow. Profusely garlanded with marigold, he is made to ride an elephant in triumphal procession through the town of Jam-



'He loves people because he loves life'.

Photographs courtesy TISCO News.

shedpur.

There are many who want to cast a slur upon the Tata Workers' Union and call it a 'management-sponsored' outfit. However, Tisco workers do not really seem to think it matters, because splinter or rival groups have very little authority. Tisco workers have obtained better conditions of work and pay compared to say workers in the Bombay-Thane belt who belong to trade unions with a more confrontationist attitude.

Exceptional rapport

Such is the regard which Tisco labour has for Mody that he can appeal to them over the heads of the union leaders, and they will listen to him. This was illustrated in 1979 when the communists made a strong attempt to infiltrate into Jamshedpur by influencing contract labour. Some 10,000 contract labourers entered the plant, and threatened to destroy it unless their demand to be absorbed into the company's payroll was met immediately.

The incident turned into a major law and order situation, but nothing in the plant was damaged. All the regular workers heeded Russi Mody's appeal to save plant and machinery, and as far as they were concerned, anything he said was law.

Managing a labour force of 35,000 at Tisco, and another 8,500 at Tinplate Company and India Tube Company (units now also in Mody's charge) is a

major political task. There is always the threat of religious communalism (unfortunately very much a reality at Jamshedpur), or entry of other trade unions of a different ideological persuasion. Though the claim by the Tatas that there have been '50 strike-free years' is only true in a technical sense (there has been no official strike, but many little incidents), Russi Mody has managed this very difficult task exceedingly well.

While he has conceded—in fact usually pre-empted—reasonable demands, he has occasionally been tough with labour. But on the other hand, there is his extraordinary credibility with both the workers and the trade union. It is universally acknowledged that Mody has never done anything to undermine the union, and has actually gone to great lengths to strengthen it.

An interesting question is why Tisco, alone in Jamshedpur, has this enviable industrial relations record, and not other Tata companies such as Telco. Sabavala offers an explanation: "The Tisco culture is quite different. Partly this is because by now it has had three generations of workers, father to son, who have acquired a vested interest in keeping things going. Every worker has been given the right, after 20 years of service, to have his sons employed in the company. But Telco is quite different. It was set up much later, so you don't have workers whose families have been employed in the company for genera-

Manager after manager told the consultant that they loved Russi but had no job satisfaction because he took their hard work and devotion for granted.

tions. The nature of the work too is different. Tisco employs mainly local people, but Telco people come from all over. The culture in Tisco is therefore much more paternalistic than in Telco."

As for the many hundred Tisco managers at Jamshedpur and Calcutta, Mody has similarly provided strong and charismatic leadership. A well-informed observer has this comment to make: "Tisco is really a team effort. Russi's remarkable success lies in inspiring the team to think big, to aim for great things, and never dampening anybody's spirits at the conceptualization stage."

Managerial style

Mody's faithful deputies at Jamshedpur—J.J. Irani (vice-president, operations), K.C. Mehra (vice-president, commercial) and R.N. Sharma (vice-president, administration and collieries)—all speak of his ability to get to the heart of any matter, technical or otherwise, with incisive speed. And they all speak of Mody's style as one of delegation of responsibility. Insiders as well as outside observers speak of the complete freedom the vice-presidents have in running day-to-day operations.

This was not always so. An old Tisco hand remembers the occasion when a leading management consultant was brought in to examine the functioning of Tisco's senior management. Manager after manager told the consultant that they loved Russi but had no job satisfaction because he took their hard work and devotion for granted. To Mody's credit, he took this feedback seriously and drastically altered his style.

All those who know him speak of Russi Mody as a very "result-oriented" manager and a hard taskmaster. He can be ruthless with inefficiency. At the same time, he is said to possess an unerring knack of finding the right person for the right job, and is reputed to be an excellent judge of character. "After selecting a person and putting him in the proper position, Mody lets him get on with his job. This is one great secret of his success as chief executive of Tisco," says

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Irani.

On the other hand, Mody had been known to make considerable changes and shake-ups in the many organizations he is now associated with. He has sometimes fired people, or shunted them aside, and promoted relatively junior people to positions of high responsibility. Which means he has trod on some people's toes. But on the other hand, he is reputed to be scrupulously fair.

Ultimately his charm and sense of humour, combined with candour and a certain driving honesty, earn him universal respect.

Mody reacts strongly to the suggestion that his style of management is 'paternalistic.' "That's rubbish!" he says. "What you can say is that I am a father-figure to a lot of people. A 'paternalistic' style means that the father is always right—and I certainly am not always right."

It is true that Mody has allowed brighter middle-level managers in Tisco much greater leeway. A number of them have shot up to the topmost levels, something unheard of earlier in Tisco, where seniority of age and years of service were important criteria. And the change is not merely confined to the managerial hierarchy. When Mody took over, the average age of superintendents in Tisco was 54. Currently, it is 35.

No constraint too big

An associate describes Mody's style of operation as 'rolling back the constraints.' "Often, organizations meticulously identify constraints, and then decide to live with them. Russi Mody will act, and overcome these limitations."

Most industrialists and top level managers in our country have rather predictable views on economic affairs. But Mody is refreshingly original. For example, he wholeheartedly welcomed the nationalization of the coal industry, stressing that it should have been nationalized 20 years ago. His reasons: that the coal industry was vital to our requirements; that it had not given a fair deal to the consumer, the labour and the nation; that illicit and unscientific mining had been the order of the day; and that natural resources of the nation were being frittered away.

Fifteen years after nationalization, while mining has become more scientific and labour is better paid, the consumer still gets a raw deal in being forced to buy expensive poor quality coal. Mody deplores the fact that many thousand crores

of rupees have been poured into the public sector undertaking, and which earn no returns at all simply because of lack of proper management. He considers this the worst sort of profligacy, and terms it industrial vandalism. In his view, there is no Indian 'public' or 'private' sector in industry—there is merely the efficient and inefficient sector.

Mody's ability to get along with everyone—including Bihar politicians—is legendary. An illustration is the Bihar government's decision to hand back the administration of the steel city to Tisco, after an ill-considered attempt to take over the company's 'zamindari' in 1970. The roots of the dispute go back many years to 1956, when the Bihar Land Reforms Bill was passed, and the Singhbhum zamindaris were vested in the Bihar government.

The district commissioner at that time felt that the law also applied to the 25 square miles that were owned by Tisco, on which the steel plant and Jamshedpur township was built, and parts of which had been leased out to other firms. To get over this difficulty, the state government specifically excluded Jamshedpur from the scope of the Land Reform Act by inserting an amendment. There the matter rested, till in 1970, the Communist Party of India and the socialists pressurized the government to repeal the amending clause. On the intervention of V.V. Giri, the matter was dropped, but again taken up two years later.

This time, the Bihar government actually took possession of the township despite Tisco's appeal to the Supreme Court. Ironically, the company continued to bear responsibility—and pay for—schools, health services, markets, parks, and other civic amenities in the township of which it was arbitrarily deprived of ownership. Bokaro, a mere 90 miles away, was considered an 'industrial estate,' while Jamshedpur was called a 'zamindari.'

For eleven long years, the fate of Jamshedpur remained uncertain, with a marked deterioration in civic conditions. Squatting and encroachments became common in the hitherto efficiently-run, clean township. All development work planned by the company had to be suspended until the issue of ownership was decided one way or the other.

That the Bihar government finally decided to return possession of Jamshedpur to the company is credited almost entirely to Russi Mody's indefatigable

efforts. According to J.R.D. Tata, who had reportedly almost given up the cause as lost, this would never have happened without Russi Mody.

Today, morale is very high at Tisco. And the organization is really spreading its wings. The major development activity of course, is the modernization programme, on which over Rs 200 crores has already been spent, and some Rs 350 crores are earmarked for the second phase. How far the 'Mody factor' has played a part in the long overdue modernization is a riddle. But observers are unanimous that while external circumstances helped, Mody played no mean role in giving a vital push to plans which had remained merely on the drawing board over 20 long years.

With an eye to the future, Russi Mody has spearheaded Tisco's attempts to grow vertically by prudent acquisition. Though most managers prefer to wait and watch, this aspect of Mody's management strategy has emerged as a significant achievement that has been considerably underplayed.

Mody is not merely giving Tisco a new look, he is looking across to other companies in related fields and giving them new directions. He has been instrumental in saving the jobs of 5000 workers in Tinplate Company (turnover in 1981: Rs 61 crores, net worth: Rs 7.31 crores) a matter referred to earlier. The Indian Tube Company (ITC) (turnover in 1981: Rs 98 crores, net worth: Rs 20.28 crores) another unit employing 3,500 people in the township, is proposed to be merged with Tisco, a move which would mean considerable savings on raw materials costs for ITC.

Of course, Tinplate Company and ITC are really Tata companies in Jamshedpur of which Mody has only assumed management to nurse them back to health. A major investment in the next few years will however be in a completely new company, a joint sector project with Orissa's IPICOL called IPITATA, which is setting up a sponge iron plant at a cost of Rs 28 crores where half of the 90,000 tonnes per annum output will be bought by Tisco, and used for its own steelmaking processes.

The other major investment proposed by Tisco is the takeover of Metal Box's bearings plant at Kharagpur. "Purchase of the Kharagpur plant is logical forward integration," says Mody. "Tisco manufactures the rings used for bearings, and about three or four years ago we had

continued on page 35

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Piloo Pochkhanawala: The Third Dimension

Rekha Sarin

When one thinks of sculpture, Piloo Pochkhanawala's name comes instantly to mind. This kind of instant association is worth more to an artist perhaps than any accolade. Over the years, Pochkhanawala has come to be regarded as a pioneer of contemporary sculpture in India.

"To me, sculpture represents a third dimension. It speaks a volume of strength and substance and therefore leaves me more moved than painting", she declares.

Career in advertising

For Pochkhanawala, this was a medium she stumbled upon quite by chance. Having graduated with a degree in commerce from the Sydenham College, Bombay, she embarked on a career in advertising with Asia Art as general manager.

A commercial assignment took her to Europe in 1951 and brought her in touch with the art that was to become almost her life-breath. "I did take in the vast collection of paintings when I visited the museums there. But every time I looked at the major works of modern sculpture, I felt struck as if by a visual bolt."

Although previously she had dabbled in drawing and portraiture she now felt intensely drawn to this new medium. The works of Henry Moore in Britain made a tremendous impact on her. "They reflect a remarkable vitality of life," says Pochkhanawala. When she returned home she found herself yearning to discover her own form of self-expression.

Meanwhile, she moved over to MCM as consultant director, looking after exhibitions and three-dimensional presentations, trying all the while to reconcile her newly discovered artistic urge with the routineness of a full-time job. Ultimately, she was to abandon her career in advertising altogether.

Her first attempt at sculpture was the figure of a head worked in clay. These initial, fumbling forays into the realm of art were guided by Pansare. "For me, he was a valuable mentor. He encouraged me to experiment with whatever material I fancied." Her desire to go beyond mere carving caused her to discard wood and stone as working mediums and experiment instead with welded metal.

Since then she has worked with a variety of materials, cast aluminium, mild steel, terracotta and her current medium, aluminium alloy.

"With scrap metal, there is still a chance of not finding the exact piece, whereas with this material, I can totally impose my own ideas and concepts." Explaining her experiment with different materials she goes on to say, "I have

found each medium equally creative. It's just that a particular medium should not be a limiting force to the inner creative energies of the artist. It is the concept that should suggest the medium," she asserts.

Homage to the sea

One of her more satisfying achievements in aluminium alloy castings is a series of sea-scapes which were created as a homage to nature and the sea. "Having lived in Bombay all my life, I was disturbed by the vandalism that masqueraded in the name of progress and prosperity. I felt that the city was being choked and the only point of contact with nature was the sea. This alone offered a sense of space."

"Texture plays a major role in my sculpture," she elaborates. "I seek to emphasise movement and texture which are so evocative of the mood rather than geometric forms."

In other subjects such as "Masks-Death" she has used terracotta juxtaposed against steel in order to capture the frozen moment prior to the cessation of struggle.

"Once an idea comes to the mind, one's whole experience, planning and discipline have to be put to work. I have to be both practical and creative at the same time in order to put an abstract idea into a three-dimensional medium," says Pochkhanawala.

According to her she creates for the sheer joy of self-expression. "The artist presents his work as a *fait accompli* and the response and reaction of the public is an afterthought." She recalls with pleasure, the unexpected response that her work has evoked in people. At the Mukund Iron and Steel factory, she had 'sculpted' a large welded figure out of reject castings which the workers at the factory wished to borrow for a few hours. Somewhat bemused she agreed, only to find that it had been used as a focal point for their Dassera *puja*, duly bedecked and garlanded!

For an artist, Pochkhanawala is surprisingly practical. She finds that in order to experiment and have more scope for casting, she has to take on commissions, although she concedes that in a commissioned piece the excitement



Pochkhanawala: practical and creative

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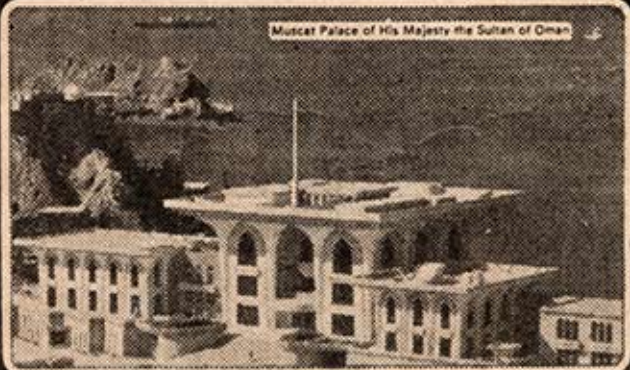
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of creation is lost to a certain extent.

High costs

The investment in a piece of sculpture is often very high and the process of creation can prove to be expensive; however she estimates the ratio of the cost of material to the final selling price to be thirty per cent. But the balance is certainly not pure profit, she points out. Quite a large margin of expenditure goes in other factors such as procurement of space for exhibition, and transportation. The latter requires insurance—"like when transporting merchandise", as Pochkhanawala puts it practically. "So one has to be half a businessman in order to be a sculptor. Finally, there's always the waiting game, for not every piece is guaranteed to sell."

Although contemporary sculpture is growing in popularity Pochkhanawala feels that the art is beset with problems, particularly in Bombay. "In an industrial town like Bombay, very few are prepped for art casting as priority is given to industrial casting," she laments. For this reason, many artists have chosen to settle instead in Delhi.

She believes that sculpture holds great scope for development in the future. "There is so much building activity in the cities and the government has provided a clause that a certain percentage of expenditure be devoted to art in the building. This itself helps in the promotion of sculpture."

She herself has been commissioned to undertake sculpture for large commercial organisations. Among these is the 30 foot open air sculpture in the city square executed for the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking of the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

She has also been successful in designing stage decor and has created eye-catching monoliths from thermocole and aluminium castings for plays such as *Cyrus the Great* and *Tughlaq*.

Laurels received

Her work has gained her acclaim and awards from several art organisations, including the National Award from the Lalit Kala Academy (National Academy of Art, New Delhi).

Yet Pochkhanawala has no intention of resting on all the laurels she has earned. "I would like to continue experimenting with metals—as well as terracotta. The best has yet to come," she declares quite emphatically.

Reprinted from *Business India*, August 1-14, 1983.

continued from page 31

considered Japanese collaboration in setting up a new bearings unit. When the Metal Box offer came up, therefore, we considered it very seriously and ultimately clinched a deal."

In fact, Tisco has availed of an excellent investment opportunity, and has obtained the MB plant very cheap. After four to five crore expenditure for balancing equipment, the replacement value of the plant is expected to be of the order of Rs 40 to 45 crores. Russi Mody may actually be thinking of an alternative engineering manufacturing complex at Kharagpur, because Tisco together with three other Tata companies have also bought a 20 percent equity stake in Davy Ashmore India Limited, which has a small unit at Kharagpur for the manufacture of engineering equipment. Davy Mackee, UK, owns 40 percent of Davy Ashmore's equity. Tisco and the other Tata companies have purchased shares which have been disinvested by the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation.

Not so bleak

Tisco's energetic forays into fields of manufacturing activity related to steel-making seem to show unexciting results on the surface. Tisco's profits for the half year from April to September 1983 was a mere Rs 16 lakhs, as compared to Rs 15.5 crores in the corresponding half year in 1982.

But when examined more closely, this deceptive drop in profits reveals an enormous build-up of reserves of strength. Depreciation for the six months ending September 30, 1983, has gone up to Rs 23.50 crores compared to Rs 13.95 crores, adding Rs 9.55 crores to the cash reserves of the company on this account alone. And the Rs 200 crores or so already spent on the modernization programme will begin to be reflected in financial terms fairly soon.

Tisco suffers substantially from over-

managing. J.J. Irani admits that the company's total workforce should ideally be about 10,000 less than the current level of 65,000. A 10 per cent increase in the wage bill annually means a large additional expenditure of Rs 12 to 14 crores. It will be a measure of Russi Mody's skill in industrial relations if Tisco can successfully implement what looks like a very attractive voluntary retirement scheme. V.G. Gopal, speaking for the trade union, says he is assured that there would be no redundancy and that labour will not be thrown out into the streets. But to smoothly implement such a sizable reduction in the workforce will be a major test for Tisco in the years ahead.

Russi Mody often ascribes his success to a large measure of luck and to plenty of instinct. Peers in industry speak of Mody's candour, forthrightness, and the strength of his convictions—"the sheer guts of the man." As A.L. Mudaliar puts it, "There may be different views of his role as a manager—paternalistic, autocratic, or benevolent—but what matters at the end of the day is how the community of workers views him." His management style has not been learnt from Western text books—it is a genuinely Indian management style evolved through hard experience.

That is the man—Businessman of the Year 1983—a man who many consider to be perhaps the finest man-manager in industry today. He presides over a set up that has been christened Russi Mody's Eastern Empire. The extravagance of his lifestyle does not always meet with everyone's approval—he flies his own personal plane and is given to high living—yet he manages to relate to people of all kinds and at all levels in a way that usually inspires devotion. His style is a unique blend of elements—a blend that is almost inconceivable except within the ambient of the Tata tradition.

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Graphic A-181

Deboo: Contemporary and Innovative

Abhinav

From India, two dancers, both from the Parsee community, have been hitting the headlines on the international scene.

Uttara Asha Coorlawala trained by Martha Graham and several other modern dancers divides her time between India and the States, packing in a lot of performances in Europe. Astad Deboo is another dancer, self-taught and later on trained in the Jose Limon technique and other modern dances, is equally busy performing in India and abroad, giving workshops and finalizing his itinerary well in advance.

He was in town to see the authorities at the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to finalize his tour programme to Korea where he was due to participate at Seoul in the ten-day Pan Music Festival which began November 15. Besides a solo appearance, Astad presented two sets of workshops.

Taking advantage of this participation in the festival Astad has explored other avenues to appear in nearby countries. He is invited to dance in Jakarta at the International Dance Festival at the Taman Ismail Marzuki in December and at the invitation of Sal Murgiyanto, head of the dance department of the

Jakarta Arts Council. He will spend time with the teachers and students at the center. In the pipeline are visits to Hongkong for the Hongkong Arts Festival in 1985 and to Philippines to dance and conduct workshops, apart from stopovers at Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. And in Tokyo he will spend time with the renowned Modern Dance Company of Japan, Sankai Juku for a week.

Naturally he was breathless giving details of all these festivals and I indeed marvelled at his grit and perseverance. Having known him for more than ten years and also being witness to his struggle in India and abroad, I have always admired his determination and hard work. Whether it is a specially commissioned show by the Max Mueller Bhavan or a show sponsored by himself with the help of his well wishers and friends. Astad puts in a lot of work, attending to 1000 chores singlehanded so that nothing is left to chance. "The trouble is that I cannot repeat my shows, as I have other engagements line up", he said, with a note of despair.

He has been busy the whole year doing a variety of jobs to support his career as a dancer and his international beat is equally fascinating. In February he conducted a workshop for ten days at Pune for Mohan Agashe's theatre group. The most exciting project was of choreographing sequences for the film *Quest for Zarathustra* directed by Cyrus Bharucha and starring Zubin Mehta.

That took him to the *Hall of Mirrors* and *Big Apple*, New York and all over Europe. The *Theatre Bevaegelse* invited him to conduct a workshop in modern dance at Copenhagen. From there to Oslo and Stockholm and when in the States, he took training with the *Pilobolus Dance Company*. Later on in London, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, he gave Kathakali dance demonstrations and his repertoire included his own creative pieces. He has landed with a repeat invitation for March 1984.

Astad referred to the strain and the uncertainties. "I never know if at all I will be able to make it to the international festivals where I am booked, for the air passages are prohibitive and every time one does not get passages from the ICCR. Nor can one depend upon them as they have to sponsor many artistes. But they have been very helpful as once you go to one country, somehow things develop and you meet other kindred souls who extend help. It is indeed amazing how things work out in the end."

Astad's is not the story of a dancer who has a steady following in India. He has chosen the medium which has, in the Western context, total acceptance. Therefore he can train with the *Pilobolus Dance Company* and also give lessons in jazz and other workshops. His own performances with music by different composers has been quite varied and exciting. For instance, to Ravel's music *Bolero*, his creative responses were very successful and have left an indelible impression. His work is also contemporary and innovative. As in *Jazzmattazz*, there was a lot of humour and fun and period dancing.

The quick changes and slick presentations were well received by both the masses and the cognoscenti. However Astad is looking forward to the East and West Dance Encounter arranged by the Max Mueller Bhavan and the NCPA in Bombay in January next year where, along with other participants, he will be explaining his work with demonstrations and creative pieces.

From his travels and exposure he has gained a lot and, being a gifted and a restless soul, it is always interesting to watch his work. He has over the years consolidated sufficient experience and made a mark on the international scene as a modern dancer from India.

Reprinted from *The Economic Times*, November 13, 1983.



By Law (D)!

Parsis and Conversion—An objective study
by S.R. Vakil 32 pp.

S. R. Vakil, erstwhile trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet and an eminent jurist has published this 32-page booklet, probably, to give wider circulation to his article which was earlier published in *The Bombay Samachar*.

Law is Vakil's home ground and he strokes confidently and knowledgeably on this pitch. Wielding his pen with the virtuosity of a buccaneering pamphleteer and a belligerent prosecutor rolled in one, Vakil advances a simple argument in his objective study on conversion, on the rights to proselytize. He states that under Article 25 of the Indian constitution, all citizens are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. Vakil hence concludes that this right cannot be taken away on grounds of any alleged negative custom, namely, the promise believed to have been given by the first settlers in India that they would not convert the Hindu population of the Raja who gave them refuge.

The booklet is a welcome addition to the available literature on this subject. While both orthodox and reformist-inclined Parsi scholars have laid threadbare this argument by quoting passages from the scriptures to meet their ends, Vakil looks at the problem from a fresh angle. And in hitting out at the priests and the panchayets whose theocracy could deny the community members their constitutional rights, Vakil exhibits a realism so far amiss in solving a religious problem that continues to divide the community.

The booklet has been published at a time when its need is being greatly felt. And coming events (which have already cast their shadows) will make the booklet a veritable guide for all rational Parsis. Zubin Mehta's film may attract converts to the religion. And Peterson's navjote, which was "disapproved" by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, may just be the first in what could prove to be a series of nightmares for those who wish to appoint themselves as conscience-keepers to the community.



Dastoorji Khurshed Daboo: erudition, broad-mindedness, selflessness, sincerity.

At a time not much in the distant future, when only uncluttered thinking could save the community from floundering on rocks in a choppy sea, Vakil's booklet could serve as a beacon light.

Homi Rogers

Galaxy of Parsi Saints: The Milky Whey

Galaxy of Parsi Saints by Ervad Erach D. Daboo.
Publisher Jayantilal Amratlal Shah, Ahmedabad 8.
80 pp. Price Rs.6

Galaxy of Parsi Saints is a collection of articles on holy Parsis, interspersed with essays on Zoroastrianism. Published by a staunch admirer of Zoroastrianism and a friend of the author, the booklet aims

to perpetuate the lecture(s) delivered by Ervad Daboo in Surat on this subject.

The book narrates thumb-nail biographies of 17 "saints". These have not been arranged either in chronological or alphabetical order, and the text therefore, for no explainable reason, jumps from mythical and legendary heroes from the *Shahnameh* to historically-known figures. Unfortunately, even the years of mortal life of the latter are not mentioned. For example, we do not glean from the book as to when during our 1,200 years stay in India did saints like Cama Homa and Dastoor Pesooji live in Broach. And while Daboo mentions that Behdin Homa was a weaver in Broach at a time when the "kabiseh" controversy was raging, he does not

mention anywhere in this write-up the years during which the community was wracked with this controversy. Readers, especially the target audience, cannot be expected to know the period in reference. The book thus does not lend an over-all perspective, so necessary for a total appreciation of persons who have done the religion proud by their glorious deeds.

Similarly, the analytical mind of the young cannot find satisfaction in a sentence like "Dastoor Kookadaroo prayed in the fire temple the whole night, performed various religious ceremonies and through his power and expertise in Alchemy, he produced the requisite quantity of gold..." Did the reverend Dastoor produce this amount required for the shortfall in funds through the power of his prayers or was it through the scientific knowledge of alchemy?

The only write-up that holds interest is on Dastoorji Khurshed Daboo. K.N. Panthaky sketches this respected priest with verve, and portrays him as a true spiritual leader who won the admiration of the community by his erudition, broad-mindedness, selflessness and

sincerity. We do not know whether the Dastoorji performed any miracles; the write-up too does not credit him with any. Yet, due to the reverence and regard the community held for him, wherein his word was regarded as the law, Dastoorji Daboo achieved the major miracle of keeping the community united despite innumerable splits in the interpretation of scriptures by sections of the community, who were not necessarily "reformist." (Remember the opposition from the orthodox when Daboo reduced the gatha prayer period from 18 to 10 days?)

Incidentally, the back cover of the book has a picture of poet Firdousi Tusi, the immortal bard of Iran (also counted in the book as a "saint") "Contemplating future events..." Surely, Jayantilal (the publisher) who like Firdousi's patron, Mahmud of Ghazni, has a poem extolling his virtues written and published in the introductory pages of the book, knows that Firdousi was not a seer. Or, did the absence of dates befuddle him too?

Homi Rogers

Second Edition

The second edition of the book, *Zarathushtra And His Teachings*, written by the late Dastur Khurshed S. Daboo has been published by the P. N. Mehta Education Trust. The book details the life and teachings of the Prophet and explains the concepts and practices of the Zoroastrian religion.

The book has been written for young readers and the chapters include "Why do we need any religion?", "Zoroastrian ethics" and "The Purpose of religious rites and ceremonies."

The book is available without charge from Keki P. Mehta, managing trustee, P. N. Mehta Education Trust, Cook's Building, 3rd floor, 324, Dr D. N. Road, Fort, Bombay 400 001.

Khordeh Avesta in Hindi

Khordeh Avesta, published by A.F. Taraporewala, Madras, 1982. Pages 237, Price Rs 3.

"This book will be useful for Parsi children who cannot read Gujarati," states A.F. Taraporewala in his preface

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to the book entitled *Pak Khordeh Avesta* in the Devnagri script. Since Gujarati is not taught in schools outside Gujarat while Hindi is, the book should have a wide readership.

The last 30 pages of the book contain brief English explanations of the prayers. (Ashem Vohu: "I realise that the person who is righteous (good) for the sake of being righteous is the happy person").

Stamping Grounds Abroad

India Used Abroad by Vispi S. Dastur (333 pp including 70 art plates. Price Rs. 30).

"The Indian Post Office is an established pioneer...from it radiated postal communication to West Asia on the one hand and the Far East on the other. Thus Indian stamps are found Used Abroad in varied circumstances in various countries of the world," notes eminent philatelist and postal historian, Vispi Shapur Dastur in the preface of his latest book *India Used Abroad*.

The term *India Used Abroad* refers to the use of Indian stamps in foreign countries. Indian stamps were supplied to either "provide a new stamp issuing country with its initial supply, others were lent to a neighbouring country to tide over a temporary shortage of its own stamps; yet others were overprinted to signify military occupation," notes Dastur.

The book covers "the whole panorama of the use abroad of Indian stamps in diverse places such as Aden, Abyssinia, Zanzibar, Malaya etc" notes the cover blurb. Moreover "there are 1000 different postal markings, 200 diagrams, 100 covers, maps etc. to illustrate the text."

The Foreign Post Office was born in the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-57. Notes Dastur, "The Government of India proclaimed war on November 1, 1856....The bulk of the fleet left Bombay on November 13....A field post office accompanied the force and is the first recorded case of regular Indian postal personnel accompanying a military force on active service; it is proudly celebrated as the birth of the Indian FPO."

In the early years ships carried mail from Bombay to Basra which was the starting point of a regular camel post to Aleppo which was linked by a horse post to Constantinople. "Lord Nelson sent news of his victory of the Nile to the Bombay Government by this route in 1798....In 1862 a regular six-weekly mail

service between Bombay and Basra was undertaken by the British India Steam Navigation Company...This regular mail service now required regular post offices to ensure proper postal services. Accordingly... regular Indian P.O.s were opened in various towns, the first being at Muscat and Bushire on May 1, 1864."

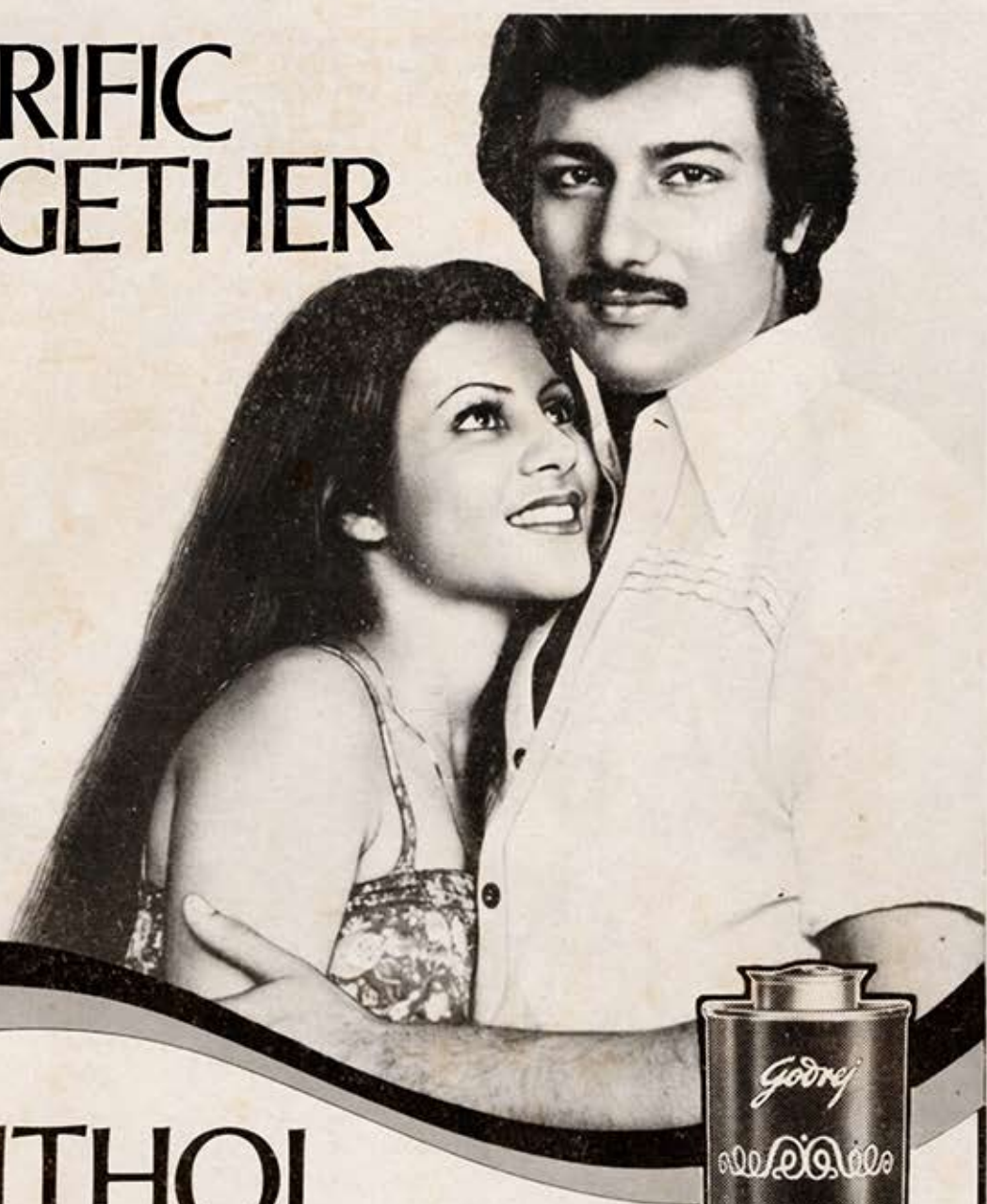
In the course of the Second Afghan War (1878-81) "postal volunteers were called from various parts of India... One of the postal officials who saw active service and whose devotion to duty was commended was an Indian (Parsee) Official, D. M. Lalcaca (Lalkaka), who was awarded a medal for meritorious service in the Afghan Campaigns."

Dastur traces the considerations involved in fixing postal rates at the time of the Boxer Rebellion (1900-1904) in North China. "As per normal practice Indian stamps and postal stationery were taken by the postal authorities, but, it was found inadvisable to use them owing to the fact that it would be impossible to sell them at a price exactly equivalent to the face value of the stamps etc. in view of the local rate of exchange (Re 1 as 7=1 dollar or 1 anna = 4.35 cents.) If the anna was considered equal to four cents the PO would lose and the customer would gain 0.35 cents and if it was fixed as equal to five cents the P.O. would gain and the customer's loss would be 0.65 cents. The second alternative was ruled out as it would cause hardship to the soldiers. However, in order to avoid someone taking advantage by buying the Indian stamps wholesale for remittance to India, it was decided to overprint the Indian stamps with the letters 'C.E.F.' i.e. 'China Expeditionary Force.' This localised the use of the stamps; orders were given that such stamps should be sold only to soldiers and officers in uniform."

Vispi Shapur Dastur, a chartered accountant by profession and a Special Executive Magistrate, is a philatelist and postal historian holding positions of rank in various philatelic organizations. His bio-data notes that he is the first Indian to win a vermeil Gold at an International Philatelic Exhibition for an exclusive *India Used Abroad* collection and was awarded the India Study Circle for Philately's Roake Trophy for original research in Indian philately in 1978.

The book is dedicated to the late Jal Cooper, the eminent Indian philatelist with whom the author was joint honorary secretary of the Empire of India Philatelic Society.

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